

Psalm 109:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Let them be before the LORD continually, that he may cut off the memory of them from the earth.

Analysis

Let them be before the LORD continually (וְיִהְיֶה נֶגֶד־יְהוָה פָּמִיד, yihyu neged-YHWH tamid)—the sins remain נֶגֶד (neged, "before, in front of") God perpetually (פָּמִיד, tamid, "continually, always"). This contrasts sharply with Psalm 103:12: "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us." **That he may cut off the memory of them from the earth** (וַיַּכְרֵת מִאָרֶץ זִיכְרָם) —the purpose clause: sins kept before God so their זִיכָר (zecher, "memory, remembrance") may be קָרַת (karat, "cut off") from earth.

David prays for the opposite of what God promises the righteous. Proverbs 10:7 says "the memory of the just is blessed," but the wicked become a curse. Isaiah 65:15 pronounces similar judgment: "Ye shall leave your name for a curse unto my chosen." The theological point: sins confessed and forsaken are removed from God's memory (Heb 8:12); sins cherished and unrepented remain perpetually before His tribunal, ensuring the sinner's name perishes.

Historical Context

Ancient cultures preserved names through monuments, genealogies, and oral tradition. To be "cut off from the earth" meant no memorial stone, no descendants reciting your lineage, no psalms or proverbs bearing your name—total historical erasure as judgment.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does the contrast between sins "continually before the Lord" versus "removed as far as east from west" motivate repentance?
2. What does it mean that confession and forsaking sin removes it from God's active judgment (Heb 8:12)?
3. How should awareness of legacy and memory shape how we live before God and others?

Interlinear Text

נָתַד	בְּקִי	א-	לֹהֵה	ה-	תִּמְמָה	תִּמְמָה	תִּמְמָה	תִּמְמָה
H1961	H5048		Let them be before the LORD	H3068		continually	that he may cut off	H3772
מִן	אָרֶץ		זְיכָרָם					
of them	from the earth		the memory					
	H776		H2143					

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 34:16 (References Lord): The face of the LORD is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.

Psalms 90:8 (Parallel theme): Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance.

Job 18:17 (Parallel theme): His remembrance shall perish from the earth, and he shall have no name in the street.

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