

Psalms 109:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

As he clothed himself with cursing like as with his garment, so let it come into his bowels like water, and like oil into his bones.

Analysis

As he clothed himself with cursing like as with his garment (וַיַּلְבַּשׁ קֶלֶלָה כְּמַדָּן) vayilbash kelalah kemado)—the verb **לְבַשׁ** (lavash, "clothe, put on") pictures cursing as a garment (תַּעַלְלָה, mad). Cursing became his identity, what he wore publicly. **So let it come into his bowels like water** (וַתִּתְּבַּא כְּמַיִם בְּקֶרְבָּו) vattavo chamaim bekirbo)—it enters his **kerav** (kerev, "inward parts, bowels"), like water penetrating. **And like oil into his bones** (וְכַשְׁתַּן בְּעָצְמוֹתָיו) vechashemen be'atsmotav)—oil soaks into **atzamot** (atsamot, "bones").

The imagery intensifies: cursing moves from external garment to internal essence—saturating every fiber of being. Water and oil both penetrate thoroughly; oil especially sinks into porous bone. Numbers 5:22-27 describes similar language for the adultery curse-water entering the body. The point: the enemy so internalized cursing that it defines him inside and out. Therefore judgment penetrates equally deeply—he cannot escape what has become his very nature. This anticipates Romans 1:24-28: God "gave them up" to their own desires, which became their judgment.

Historical Context

Clothing metaphors appear throughout Scripture for character and calling (Job 29:14; Isa 61:10; Rom 13:14; Gal 3:27). To "clothe yourself with cursing" means making malice your public identity—the reputation you cultivate and display.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. What are you "clothing yourself with" daily—what character traits do you put on and project to others?
2. How does the progression from external (garment) to internal (bowels, bones) warn against tolerating sin?
3. What does it mean for cursing (or blessing) to penetrate "like water and oil" into your very being?

Interlinear Text

וַיְלַבֵּשׂ	הַלְלָה	כַּמְדִינָה	כַּמְדִינָה	כַּמְדִינָה
As he clothed	himself with cursing	like as with his garment	so let it come	like water
H3847	H7045	H4055	H935	H4325
בְּעִצּוּמָה וְ	בְּלִבְבָּסְךָ	כַּשְׁמִינִי	בְּלִבְבָּסְךָ	בְּעִצּוּמָה וְ
into his bowels	and like oil	into his bones		
H7130	H8081	H6106		

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 73:6 (Parallel theme): Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain; violence covereth them as a garment.

Numbers 5:22 (Parallel theme): And this water that causeth the curse shall go into thy bowels, to make thy belly to swell, and thy thigh to rot: And the woman shall say, Amen, amen.