

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 (וַיִּלְבַּשׁ קֶלְלָה כְּמָדוֹ, vayilbash kelalah kemado)—the verb לָבַשׁ (lavash, "clothe, put on") pictures cursing as a garment (מָד, mad). Cursing became his identity, what he wore publicly. **So let it come into his bowels like water** (וַתָּבֹא כַּמַּיִם בְּקֶרֶבוֹ, vattavo chamaim bekirbo)—it enters his קֶרֶב (kerev, "inward parts, bowels"), like water penetrating. **And like oil into his bones** (וּכְשֶׁמֶן בְּעֵצְמוֹתָיו, vechashemen be'atsmotav)—oil soaks into עֲצָמוֹת (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

| | | | | |
|-----------------|----------------------|--------------------------|----------------|------------|
| וּלְבָשׁ | קִלְלָהּ | כְּמָדָו | וַתָּבֹא | כַּמַּיִם |
| As he clothed | himself with cursing | like as with his garment | so let it come | like water |
| H3847 | H7045 | H4055 | H935 | H4325 |
| בְּקִרְבּוֹ | וְכַשֵּׁמֶן | בְּעֵצְמוֹתָיו | | |
| 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.