

Psalm 109:24

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

My knees are weak through fasting; and my flesh faileth of fatness.

Analysis

My knees are weak through fasting; and my flesh faileth of fatness. Physical deterioration accompanies David's spiritual anguish. Kashal (קָשָׁל, weak/stumbling) describes knees that can no longer support body weight, while **my flesh faileth of fatness** uses kaḥash (קָהַשׁ, grow lean/waste away), indicating severe emaciation.

The fasting mentioned here likely combines religious discipline with grief-induced loss of appetite. In Israel's culture, fasting expressed mourning, repentance, and urgent petition before God. David's physical weakness testifies to the intensity and duration of his suffering—this is no brief trial but prolonged affliction that has consumed his body.

This verse anticipates the Suffering Servant who was "despised and rejected" with "no beauty that we should desire him" (Isaiah 53:2-3). Christ's physical suffering on the cross, weakened by beatings and crucifixion, fulfills the pattern of the righteous sufferer who trusts God through bodily affliction. The visible wasting of David's body makes his suffering undeniable and intensifies his appeal for divine intervention.

Historical Context

Fasting was central to Israelite spirituality, practiced individually during crisis and corporately during national calamity. Extended fasting demonstrated the seriousness of one's petition and was often accompanied by wearing sackcloth and

sitting in ashes. The physical toll described here suggests weeks or months of distress, not brief discomfort, reflecting the gravity of David's situation—likely political conspiracy threatening his life and kingdom.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does physical fasting or self-denial help focus spiritual attention on God during crisis?
2. What role should bodily disciplines play in Christian spirituality that emphasizes salvation by grace, not works?
3. How does Christ's physical suffering and weakness validate bringing all dimensions of suffering—body, soul, and spirit—to God?

Interlinear Text

מַשְׁתַּחַן: כַּפֵּן שׁ וְבָשָׂר וְמִצְרָם כַּפֵּן שׁ וְבָשָׂר וְמִצְרָם
My knees are weak through fasting and my flesh faileth of fatness
H1290 H3782 H6685 H1320 H3584 H8081

Additional Cross-References

Hebrews 12:12 (Parallel theme): Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees;

Matthew 4:2 (Parallel theme): And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred.

