

Psalms 119:109

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

My soul is continually in my hand: yet do I not forget thy law.

Analysis

My soul is continually in my hand (נַפְשִׁי בְּכַפִּי תָמִיד, nafshi vekhapi tamid)—an idiom meaning constant danger of death. Job uses identical language: **I have put my life in my hand** (Job 13:14). The phrase evokes a soldier carrying his life in his palm, ready to be snatched away. The psalmist's danger is unceasing (tamid, continual, perpetual).

Yet the response is stunning: **yet do I not forget thy law** (וְתוֹרַתְךָ לֹא שָׁכַחְתִּי, vetorarkha lo shakhachti). Mortal peril does not produce amnesia about God's Torah. This mirrors Jesus in Gethsemane—facing death yet submitting to the Father's will. Daniel's friends in the furnace (Dan 3:16-18) show the same resolve: even if God doesn't deliver us, we will not forget His commands. Faithfulness in extremity is the acid test of genuine faith.

Historical Context

David frequently faced mortal danger from Saul's pursuit and later Absalom's rebellion. The imagery would resonate with any Israelite facing persecution for Torah observance, particularly during the Maccabean crisis when keeping the law meant death (1 Macc 1:60-63).

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. When your life feels precarious and threatened, what anchors your soul to God's word?
2. How does remembering God's law function as spiritual survival in life-threatening circumstances?
3. What practices help you maintain faithfulness to Scripture when everything else is uncertain?

Interlinear Text

מִנְפֹשׁ י	בְּכַפִּי י	תָּמִיד	לֹא יִתְּנֶנְךָ	שָׁכַחְתִּי:
My soul	in my hand	is continually	thy law	yet do I not forget
H5315	H3709	H8548	H8451	H3808 H7911

Additional Cross-References

Judges 12:3 (Parallel theme): And when I saw that ye delivered me not, I put my life in my hands, and passed over against the children of Ammon, and the LORD delivered them into my hand: wherefore then are ye come up unto me this day, to fight against me?

Job 13:14 (Parallel theme): Wherefore do I take my flesh in my teeth, and put my life in mine hand?

1 Corinthians 15:31 (Parallel theme): I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily.