

Psalms 119:158

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

I beheld the transgressors, and was grieved; because they kept not thy word.

Analysis

I beheld the transgressors, and was grieved (רָאִיתִי בִגְדִים וְאֶתְקוּטָה, ra'iti bogdim va'etqotatah)—Bogdim are 'traitors, treacherous ones,' from bagad (betray covenant). Qut means 'feel disgust, loathe, be grieved.' The psalmist's response isn't self-righteousness but holy grief at covenant-breaking: **because they kept not thy word** (אֲשֶׁר אֶמְרָתְךָ לֹא שָׁמְרוּ, asher imratekha lo shamaru). Shamar (keep, guard, observe) is precisely what bogdim refuse.

Paul echoes this in Philippians 3:18: 'Many walk...enemies of the cross of Christ...I tell you even weeping.' Grief over others' sin marks spiritual maturity, not judgmentalism.

Historical Context

The term bogdim often denotes apostate Israelites rather than pagan outsiders (Jeremiah 3:8; Malachi 2:10-16). The psalmist grieves over covenant members who abandon God's Word—a recurring tragedy from the golden calf to Judas. His holy sorrow mirrors God's own grief over faithless Israel (Hosea 11:8).

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How do you cultivate grief over sin (yours and others') rather than self-righteous judgment or indifferent tolerance?
2. What's the difference between the world's offense at moral failure and the believer's grief over covenant-betrayal?
3. How does Jesus's weeping over Jerusalem (Luke 19:41) model the psalmist's response to transgressors?

Interlinear Text

כָּא יִתִּי	ב גְּדִים	וְאֶתְקוֹטָהּ	אֲשֶׁר	א מְרִתְךָ	ל א
I beheld	the transgressors	and was grieved	H834	not thy word	H3808
H7200	H898	H6962		H565	

שָׁמְרוּ:

because they kept

H8104

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 139:21 (Parallel theme): Do not I hate them, O LORD, that hate thee? and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee?

Psalms 119:53 (Word): Horror hath taken hold upon me because of the wicked that forsake thy law.

Psalms 119:136 (Word): Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law.