

Psalms 119:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy judgments at all times.

Analysis

My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy judgments at all times. This verse expresses intense spiritual hunger. **My soul breaketh** (garsah nafshi, גָּרַסָה נַפְשִׁי) uses a verb meaning to crush, break, or shatter—depicting overwhelming, almost painful desire. The psalmist's innermost being (nephesh, נֶפֶשׁ) is consumed with **longing** (ta'avah, תַּאֲוָה), a word often describing craving or intense yearning. This is not casual interest but desperate hunger for God's **judgments** (mishpatekha, מִשְׁפָּטֶיֶךָ), His authoritative decisions and moral verdicts.

The phrase **at all times** (bekhol-et, בְּכָל-עֵת) indicates constant, unrelenting desire—not intermittent interest but continuous craving. This echoes Jesus' beatitude: 'Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness' (Matthew 5:6). Such intense spiritual appetite is evidence of new birth; the unregenerate neither desire nor delight in God's law (Romans 8:7). As newborn babies crave milk, so believers should crave spiritual food (1 Peter 2:2).

Historical Context

The psalmist's language of soul-crushing longing stands in stark contrast to Israel's repeated pattern of despising God's Word (Numbers 15:31, 2 Samuel 12:9). The remnant who truly treasured God's law experienced this consuming hunger, especially during periods when God's Word was rare (1 Samuel 3:1) or when persecution made accessing Scripture dangerous. This verse reflects the heart of those who valued God's revelation above life itself.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. When was the last time you experienced soul-crushing hunger for God's Word?
2. What factors in your life diminish spiritual appetite for Scripture?
3. How can you cultivate the kind of intense, continuous longing for God's judgments described in this verse?

Interlinear Text

בָּרָךְ	מִשְׁפָּט יְיָ	אֵל	לְתַאֲבָה	נַפְשִׁי	וְגִרְסָה
breaketh	My soul	for the longing	H413	that it hath unto thy judgments	H3605
H1638	H5315	H8375		H4941	

עַתָּה
at all times
H6256

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 84:2 (Parallel theme): My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the LORD: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.

Psalms 63:1 (Parallel theme): O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is;

Psalms 119:131 (Parallel theme): I opened my mouth, and panted: for I longed for thy commandments.

Psalms 119:174 (Parallel theme): I have longed for thy salvation, O LORD; and thy law is my delight.

Psalms 119:40 (Parallel theme): Behold, I have longed after thy precepts: quicken me in thy righteousness.

Job 27:10 (Parallel theme): Will he delight himself in the Almighty? will he always call upon God?

Proverbs 17:17 (Parallel theme): A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.

Psalms 106:3 (Judgment): Blessed are they that keep judgment, and he that doeth righteousness at all times.

Proverbs 13:12 (Parallel theme): Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life.

Song of Solomon 5:8: I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved, that ye tell him, that I am sick of love.