

Psalms 119:83

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For I am become like a bottle in the smoke; yet do I not forget thy statutes.

Analysis

For I am become like a bottle in the smoke—(פָּגַיְתִּי בְּנֵאֵד בְּקִיטֹּוֹר) nod (wineskin/bottle) made from animal hide would shrivel, blacken, and become brittle when hung in smoke. This vivid metaphor depicts suffering's shriveling effect: the psalmist feels dried up, darkened, useless. **Yet do I not forget thy statutes** (מִשְׁפָּטִיךְ לֹא שָׁכַחְתִּי) contrasts external deterioration with internal fidelity—though shriveled by affliction, he hasn't forgotten (lo shachachti) God's mishpatim (statutes/judgments).

Paul experienced similar depletion—'outwardly perishing' while 'inwardly renewed' (2 Corinthians 4:16). Job felt reduced to skin and bones (Job 19:20) yet clung to hope. Suffering may shrivel the body but cannot destroy a soul anchored in God's Word.

Historical Context

Ancient wineskins hung near cooking fires would cure or become ruined by excessive smoke. The image would resonate with daily life in biblical households. This metaphor appears only here in Scripture, demonstrating the psalmist's creativity in expressing suffering while maintaining the acrostic structure of Psalm 119.

Related Passages

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. When have you felt 'shriveled by smoke'—depleted by prolonged trial yet still clinging to God's Word?
2. How does suffering test whether your obedience depends on feelings or foundational commitment?
3. What spiritual disciplines help you 'not forget' God's statutes when affliction clouds your mind?

Interlinear Text

ל א ע ק י ב תְּבִנָּתִי כְּנָאָד בְּלִיט וּר כְּנָאָד בְּלִיט וּר
H3588 H1961 For I am become like a bottle in the smoke thy statutes H3808
H4997 H7008 H2706
שְׁכַחֲתִי:
yet do I not forget H7911

Additional Cross-References

Job 30:30 (Parallel theme): My skin is black upon me, and my bones are burned with heat.

Psalms 119:176 (Parallel theme): I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek thy servant; for I do not forget thy commandments.

Psalms 119:16 (Parallel theme): I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word.

Psalms 119:61 (Parallel theme): The bands of the wicked have robbed me: but I have not forgotten thy law.

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