

Psalms 119:87

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

They had almost consumed me upon earth; but I forsook not thy precepts.

Analysis

They had almost consumed me upon earth—kim'at (almost) reveals how close destruction came; killuni (they consumed/finished me) from kalah (to complete, destroy) shows total threat. Ba'aretz (on earth) emphasizes mortality's vulnerability. **But I forsook not thy precepts** (וְאַנְּיִ לֹא-עָזַבְתִּי פְּקָדָתִי) pivots dramatically: va'ani (but I) contrasts their action with his; lo azavti (I did not forsake) from azav (abandon, leave) shows tenacious loyalty to God's pikudim (precepts).

This models Jesus who, though brought to the point of death, never abandoned the Father's will (Luke 22:42). Paul testified: 'Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed' (2 Corinthians 4:9). The difference between martyrdom and apostasy often comes down to this: did they forsake God's precepts when tested unto death?

Historical Context

The Maccabean period witnessed martyrs who died rather than forsake Torah (2 Maccabees 6-7). Jesus commended the church at Smyrna for faithfulness 'unto death' (Revelation 2:10). The Kaph stanza depicts a believer at death's threshold yet maintaining covenant loyalty—anticipating the 'great cloud of witnesses' who endured similarly (Hebrews 11:35-38).

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. What would it take for you to forsake God's Word—and what does your answer reveal about your foundation?
2. How do you prepare spiritually for potential persecution that could threaten your physical life?
3. When 'almost consumed,' what practices or truths anchor you to God's precepts?

Interlinear Text

עָזָן בְּתִי לֹא תִּאְכֵל כִּי מִעַט

They had almost consumed me upon earth but I forsook

H4592

H3615

H776

H589

H3808

H5800

גַּדְלִים:
not thy precepts

H6490

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 10:28 (Parallel theme): And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

Isaiah 58:2 (Parallel theme): Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God: they ask of me the ordinances of justice; they take delight in approaching to God.

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

1 Samuel 26:24 (Parallel theme): And, behold, as thy life was much set by this day in mine eyes, so let my life be much set by in the eyes of the LORD, and let him deliver me out of all tribulation.

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