

Psalms 139:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me.

Analysis

If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me—David explores a third hypothetical escape: concealment in darkness (choshek, חֹשֶׁךְ). Cover me (shuf, שִׁי) means to overwhelm or crush—darkness as refuge from exposure. But the conditional sentence breaks mid-verse (completed in v. 12): what we expect to be dark becomes light.

This anticipates both moral and literal truths. Morally: secret sins performed 'under cover of darkness' stand revealed to God (Ephesians 5:11-13). Literally: night doesn't diminish God's vision. We hide in darkness hoping for invisibility, but God dwells in unapproachable light (1 Timothy 6:16) and sees perfectly in absolute darkness.

Historical Context

In pre-electric ancient world, darkness was total—no streetlights, no ambient glow. Night brought genuine concealment, making it prime time for crime and immorality. David's assertion that even night becomes light to God would have sounded radical, challenging assumptions about darkness as hiding place.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. What do you do under 'cover of darkness'—literal night or metaphorical secrecy—that you wouldn't do in broad daylight before witnesses?
2. How does knowing that darkness and light are alike to God affect your willingness to confess hidden sins?
3. What darkness in your life—depression, ignorance, sin—needs to become 'light about you' through God's illuminating presence?

Interlinear Text

אִם אֶמַּר	אֲנִי	חֹשֶׁךְ	יְשׁוּפֵי	לַיְלָה	אֶרְאֶה
If I say	H389	Surely the darkness	shall cover	me even the night	shall be light
H559		H2822	H7779	H3915	H216

בְּעִדְנִי

about me

H1157

Additional Cross-References

Job 12:22 (Light): He discovereth deep things out of darkness, and bringeth out to light the shadow of death.

Jeremiah 23:24 (Parallel theme): Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the LORD. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the LORD.

Psalms 94:7 (Parallel theme): Yet they say, The LORD shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it.