

Psalm 139:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?

Analysis

These rhetorical questions assert God's omnipresence—His presence fills all space, leaving nowhere beyond His reach. "Whither shall I go" (אֵלֶּה אָלֶךָ/anah 'elekh) asks where could I possibly walk. "From thy spirit" (מִרְוחַךְ/me-ruchakha) can mean "from your Spirit" or "from your presence"—the two are inseparable. "Flee from thy presence" (מִפְנֵיכָךְ/mipanekha 'evrach) uses the word for running away, escaping—yet God's presence is inescapable. Verses 8-12 elaborate: heaven, Sheol, sea's far side, darkness itself—God is there. This isn't threatening but comforting—we're never beyond God's care, never isolated, never abandoned. It also means we're never beyond accountability—sin cannot be hidden.

Historical Context

David wrote this profound meditation on God's omniscience and omnipresence. Ancient Near Eastern polytheism believed gods had limited domains—sea gods ruled oceans, mountain gods ruled heights, underworld gods ruled death. Israel's radical monotheism declared Yahweh sovereign everywhere. This psalm may reflect David's experiences as fugitive when God's presence sustained him in wilderness, caves, and enemy territory. The New Testament confirms that in Christ, God's presence is promised never to leave us (Hebrews 13:5).

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. Is God's inescapable presence more comforting or convicting to you right now, and why?
2. How does recognizing that you cannot flee from God's presence affect your response to sin, suffering, or seeking Him?

Interlinear Text

מִפְנֵת יְהָוָה אֵלֶּנֶת מִרְוַעַת בָּשָׂר וְאֶלְעָנָה
from thy presence from thy spirit

אַבְּרָחָה:
or whither shall I flee

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Additional Cross-References

Jonah 1:3 (Parallel theme): But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD.

Jonah 1:10 (Parallel theme): Then were the men exceedingly afraid, and said unto him, Why hast thou done this? For the men knew that he fled from the presence of the LORD, because he had told them.