

Psalms 16:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope.

Analysis

Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope. This verse marks the transition from trust declared (v.1-8) to confidence expressed (v.9-11). The word "therefore" (לכן/lakhen) indicates logical consequence—because the LORD is at my right hand (v.8), therefore joy and confidence follow.

"My heart is glad" (שָׁמַח לְבִי/samach libi) describes deep, internal joy. Samach means to rejoice, be glad, be joyful. The heart (lev) represents the inner person—mind, will, emotions, core identity. This isn't superficial happiness dependent on circumstances but profound gladness rooted in God's presence and faithfulness. Despite external threats requiring the prayer "preserve me" (v.1), the psalmist's heart is genuinely glad because God is his portion (v.5) and the LORD is at his right hand (v.8).

"My glory rejoiceth" (בָּגֵד קְבוֹדִי/vayagel kevodi) intensifies the joy. Yagel means to rejoice, exult, be jubilant. Kevodi (my glory) likely refers to the psalmist's innermost being, perhaps his soul or even the tongue through which he praises God. The Septuagint translates this "my tongue rejoiced," which Acts 2:26 follows. Whether soul or tongue, the point is that joy pervades the psalmist's entire being—not merely emotional gladness but exultant praise.

"My flesh also shall rest in hope" (אֶפְ-בָּשָׂר יִשְׁקֹן לְבָטָח/af-besari yishkon lavetach) extends confidence to physical existence. Basar (flesh) refers to physical body, mortal frame. Yishkon means to dwell, settle, tabernacle—the same verb used for

God dwelling among His people. Lavetach means in security, safety, confidence, trust. The body will "dwell in security" or "rest in hope."

This phrase becomes crucial for the psalm's Messianic interpretation. Peter argues (Acts 2:26-27) that this confidence in bodily preservation couldn't refer ultimately to David, whose body decayed, but prophesies Christ's resurrection. David trusted God would preserve him through mortal dangers, yet he died. Jesus trusted the Father through death itself, and God vindicated that trust through resurrection—His flesh literally resting in the tomb in hope and emerging victorious.

For believers, this verse promises ultimate bodily resurrection. Though the body returns to dust, it "rests in hope"—not hopeless finality but confident expectation of resurrection. Our mortality is temporary; God will not abandon our bodies to decay but will raise them in glory (1 Corinthians 15:42-44).

Historical Context

The Hebrew concept of joy differs from modern emotionalism. Biblical joy (simchah, gil) is grounded in God's character and acts, not circumstances. Nehemiah 8:10 declares: "the joy of the LORD is your strength." Habakkuk 3:17-18 expresses joy in the LORD despite complete material loss. This joy transcends circumstances because it's rooted in unchanging divine faithfulness.

Ancient Near Eastern religion offered little hope regarding death. Egyptian religion developed elaborate afterlife theology for pharaohs and nobles, but common people faced uncertain fate. Mesopotamian religion pictured Sheol-like underworld existence—shadowy, joyless survival. Greek mystery religions promised initiates better afterlife, but with little certainty. Against this backdrop, biblical faith offered genuine hope rooted in God's character and covenant faithfulness.

Old Testament afterlife theology developed gradually. Early texts emphasize earthly blessings as covenant rewards, with Sheol (the grave) pictured as shadowy existence. Yet hope emerges: Job's confidence ("I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin

worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God," Job 19:25-26), Isaiah's promise ("Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise," Isaiah 26:19), Daniel's prophecy ("many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life," Daniel 12:2).

Psalm 16:9-11 contributed to this developing hope. Though David may have understood it primarily as confidence in divine preservation through mortal dangers, his words carried deeper prophetic meaning realized in Christ's resurrection. Jesus's resurrection vindicated and clarified Old Testament hope, transforming vague afterlife hope into certain bodily resurrection guarantee.

Early Christians, facing persecution and martyrdom, found profound comfort in these verses. Their flesh might be destroyed by Roman swords, wild beasts, or flames, yet it rested "in hope"—confidence in resurrection because Christ rose bodily. This transformed martyrdom from tragedy to victory.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How can your heart be 'glad' when circumstances are threatening (the psalm opens with 'preserve me')?
2. What is the relationship between joy in the LORD and joy in circumstances, and how does one sustain the other?
3. What does it mean that your 'flesh shall rest in hope,' and how does this address fear of death?
4. How did Christ's literal bodily resurrection fulfill this psalm's prophecy and guarantee believers' resurrection?

5. In what ways does hope of resurrection change how you view your mortal body and physical existence?

Interlinear Text

בָּשָׂרִי אֶפְרַיִם כְּבָדִי לְבָבִי שָׁמָעַ חֲלֹמָה לְכָלָל יְגַלְּתִי
H3651 is glad H8055 Therefore my heart H3820 rejoiceth H1523 and my glory H3519 H637 my flesh H1320

לְבָטָחָה יְשָׁכֵן
also shall rest in hope
H7931 H983

Additional Cross-References

Acts 2:26 (Hope): Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope:

Psalms 30:12 (Glory): To the end that my glory may sing praise to thee, and not be silent. O LORD my God, I will give thanks unto thee for ever.

Psalms 57:8 (Glory): Awake up, my glory; awake, psaltery and harp: I myself will awake early.

Psalms 108:1 (Glory): O God, my heart is fixed; I will sing and give praise, even with my glory.

Isaiah 26:19 (Parallel theme): Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.

Proverbs 14:32 (Hope): The wicked is driven away in his wickedness: but the righteous hath hope in his death.