

Psalms 18:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The sorrows of death compassed me, and the floods of ungodly men made me afraid.

Analysis

The 'cords of death' entangled David—Hebrew 'chebel' (ropes/snares) suggests being bound for execution. The 'torrents of destruction' ('beliyaal'—worthlessness/chaos) overwhelmed him. This vivid imagery portrays mortal danger and spiritual attack. It anticipates Christ's suffering where death's cords literally bound Him, yet He broke them in resurrection (Acts 2:24). Reformed theology sees death as the curse of sin that Christ defeated.

Historical Context

Reflects multiple occasions when David faced imminent death, from Saul's pursuit to Philistine threats to Absalom's rebellion—death seemed inevitable without divine intervention.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How do you respond when circumstances feel like death's grip?
2. What does Christ's victory over death mean for your current struggles?

Interlinear Text

אָפּפּ וָנִי	סְבִלִי	מֵוֹת	וְנִחִלִי י	בְּלִי עַל
compassed	The sorrows	of death	me and the floods	of ungodly men
H661	H2256	H4194	H5158	H1100

יִבְעֲתוּנִי:
made me afraid
H1204

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 116:3 (Parallel theme): The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow.

2 Corinthians 1:9 (References God): But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead:

Psalms 124:4 (Parallel theme): Then the waters had overwhelmed us, the stream had gone over our soul:

Psalms 22:16 (Parallel theme): For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet.

Matthew 26:47 (Parallel theme): And while he yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders of the people.

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