

Psalms 31:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

I have hated them that regard lying vanities: but I trust in the LORD.

Analysis

I have hated them that regard lying vanities: but I trust in the LORD. This verse declares a fundamental choice between worthless idols and the faithful covenant God. The Hebrew phrase "lying vanities" (havlei-shav, הַבְּלִי־שָׁב) combines two words for emptiness, falsehood, and worthlessness—describing idols as deceptive nothings that promise much but deliver nothing. The word havel appears prominently in Ecclesiastes as "vanity," denoting that which is fleeting, empty, and meaningless.

"I have hated" (saneti, שָׁנַתִּי) expresses intense aversion and moral rejection, not mere preference. This reflects covenant loyalty's requirement to reject all rivals to Yahweh's exclusive claim on worship and allegiance. The contrast "but I trust in the LORD" (ani al-YHWH batachti, אַנְּיָה עַל־יְהוָה בָּתַחְתִּי) presents the positive alternative: confident reliance on Yahweh's character, promises, and covenant faithfulness.

Theologically, this verse articulates a choice every believer faces: place confidence in false securities (wealth, power, human approval, religious performance) or trust wholly in the living God. The New Testament develops this theme extensively—warning against idolatry in its many forms (1 Corinthians 10:14; Colossians 3:5; 1 John 5:21) while calling believers to single-minded devotion to God through Christ. The verse challenges any divided loyalty, calling for wholehearted trust in God alone as the source of security, meaning, and hope.

Historical Context

Psalm 31 is a lament psalm attributed to David, likely written during one of his many periods of distress and persecution. The historical superscription doesn't identify a specific occasion, but themes of enemies, distress, and divine refuge suggest experiences like his flight from Saul or Absalom's rebellion. David's rejection of "lying vanities" may reference the idolatry prevalent in surrounding nations or the false securities (military alliances, political maneuvering) that kings typically relied upon.

The psalm's language echoes Israel's covenantal commitment to exclusive Yahweh worship versus the polytheism of Canaan and neighboring nations. Ancient Near Eastern people commonly "hedged their bets" by worshiping multiple deities, but Israel's covenant required total allegiance to Yahweh alone. David's declaration represents covenant faithfulness in practice—choosing singular trust in God over pragmatic reliance on false securities.

This psalm gained significance in Christian tradition when Jesus quoted verse 5 from the cross ("into thy hands I commit my spirit," Luke 23:46). This connection shows that David's trust in God amid affliction typologically pointed forward to Christ's perfect trust in the Father through suffering and death. The psalm thus bridges Old Testament covenant faithfulness with New Testament redemptive suffering.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. What are the "lying vanities" most tempting to contemporary believers—what false securities or worthless pursuits compete for your trust?
2. How does hatred of false securities differ from mere avoidance, and why does wholehearted devotion to God require this intensity?
3. In what areas of life do you find yourself trusting in visible, tangible securities rather than the invisible but faithful God?
4. How does the consumerist, materialistic culture create "lying vanities" that promise fulfillment but deliver emptiness?
5. What spiritual practices help maintain exclusive trust in the LORD when circumstances tempt us to seek security elsewhere?

Interlinear Text

וְהִנֵּה	אֵל	לֹא	אָנֹכִי	שְׁאֵל	בְּשִׁמְךָ	יִמְשְׁרֵךְ	בְּבָלִי	שְׁגַנְתִּי
I have hated	them that regard	vanities	lying				in the LORD	
H8130	H8104	H1892	H7723	H589	H413		H3068	
בְּטֻחָתִי								
but I trust								
H982								

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 24:4 (Parallel theme): He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.

Jonah 2:8 (Parallel theme): They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy.

Psalms 26:5 (Parallel theme): I have hated the congregation of evil doers; and will not sit with the wicked.

Jeremiah 10:15 (Parallel theme): They are vanity, and the work of errors: in the time of their visitation they shall perish.

Jeremiah 10:8 (Parallel theme): But they are altogether brutish and foolish: the stock is a doctrine of vanities.

1 Corinthians 8:4 (Parallel theme): As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one.

1 Corinthians 10:20 (Parallel theme): But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils.

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