

Psalms 31:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Have mercy upon me, O LORD, for I am in trouble: mine eye is consumed with grief, yea, my soul and my belly.

Analysis

Have mercy upon me, O LORD, for I am in trouble: mine eye is consumed with grief, yea, my soul and my belly. David returns to petition, demonstrating that faith's assurance doesn't eliminate honest acknowledgment of suffering. This presents totality of human affliction—emotional, spiritual, physical.

Have mercy (Hebrew chanan—show favor, be gracious) appeals not to deserving but to God's character. Reformed theology emphasizes all blessing flows from grace, not merit. Even in extremity, David doesn't claim rights but begs mercy—recognizing position as dependent creature before sovereign Creator.

Mine eye is consumed with grief (Hebrew 'ashash—waste away) uses vivid physical imagery for emotional pain. Grief (ka'as) denotes vexation and provocation. David's weeping has literally affected physical vision—authenticating suffering and showing how psychological pain manifests somatically.

Yea, my soul and my belly extends affliction's reach. Soul (nephesh) represents essential being. Belly (beten) refers to innermost parts, gut-level anguish. This comprehensive suffering prepares readers for Christ, the Man of Sorrows who experienced grief's fullness.

Historical Context

Eyes consumed with grief appears elsewhere (Psalms 6:7, 88:9), common Hebrew poetry for describing depression. David's court life included many occasions for such grief—family betrayals, national crises, personal failures.

Ancient medicine didn't separate physical and emotional health. David's description reflects Hebrew anthropology's integrated view of human nature. Person couldn't experience purely emotional suffering without physical manifestation.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does David's honesty challenge Christian cultures pressuring constant positivity?
2. What does it mean to appeal to God's mercy rather than your worthiness when distressed?
3. In what ways do emotional and spiritual struggles manifest physically in your experience?
4. How does Jesus' comprehensive suffering enable Him to sympathize with your weaknesses?
5. What permission does this verse give believers to express grief fully before God?

Interlinear Text

ל	צ	ר	י	יהוָה	בְּנֵי	עַשְׂשֵׂה
Have mercy	upon me	O LORD	H3588	for I am in trouble	H0	is consumed
H2603		H3068		H6887		H6244
with grief	mine eye	yea my soul		and my belly		
H3708	H5869	H5315		H990		

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 6:7 (Parallel theme): Mine eye is consumed because of grief; it waxeth old because of all mine enemies.

Psalms 73:26 (Parallel theme): My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.

Psalms 88:9 (References Lord): Mine eye mourneth by reason of affliction: LORD, I have called daily upon thee, I have stretched out my hands unto thee.

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