

Psalms 34:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken.

Analysis

He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken. David declares God's meticulous protection of righteous—even preserving bones, not breaking even one. This emphasizes divine care's comprehensiveness and finds prophetic fulfillment in Christ's crucifixion.

He keepeth all his bones promises detailed protection. Keepeth (shamar) means guards, watches over, preserves. All his bones (kol 'etsem) represents entire physical body. Bones are body's framework, structure, core. Preserving bones means preserving life itself. All emphasizes comprehensive care—every bone, no exceptions. This is meticulous, thorough, complete protection extending to body's smallest parts.

Not one of them is broken intensifies promise. Not one ('echad) means not a single one, not even one. Is broken (shabar) means smashed, fractured, shattered. Combined, this promises absolute preservation—not merely protecting most bones or important bones but every single bone. This level of detail demonstrates God's intimate care. He doesn't generally oversee righteous but specifically preserves each part.

This verse has prophetic dimension. John 19:31-36 records that soldiers broke legs of two criminals crucified with Jesus to hasten death before Sabbath, but finding Jesus already dead, they didn't break His legs. John comments: These things were done that Scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of Him shall not be broken. John sees Psalm 34:20 fulfilled in Christ. As Passover lamb's bones weren't broken (Exodus 12:46, Numbers 9:12), Jesus the Lamb of God had no bones broken.

David's testimony about God preserving righteous becomes prophecy of Messiah's preservation.

For believers, this promises God's comprehensive care. If He numbers hairs on our heads (Matthew 10:30), He certainly preserves our bones. Nothing escapes His notice; no detail is too small for His attention. Ultimate fulfillment comes in resurrection—God will raise our bodies (bones and all) glorified and immortal (1 Corinthians 15:42-44,52-53). Preservation begun now completes then.

Historical Context

Keeping bones has deep Old Testament roots. Genesis 50:25 records Joseph's request: God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here. Exodus 13:19 fulfills this: Moses took Joseph's bones. Dry bones vision (Ezekiel 37) promises resurrection through bones coming together. Bones represent enduring core of physical existence.

John's Gospel presents Jesus as fulfillment of Old Testament types. He's Passover Lamb (John 1:29,36, 19:36), whose bones weren't broken. He's lifted up like bronze serpent (John 3:14-15, Numbers 21:9). He's true temple (John 2:19-21). John sees Psalm 34:20's fulfillment in Christ establishing typological connection between David's testimony and Jesus' passion. What was true of righteous generally finds perfect fulfillment in the Righteous One specifically.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. What does God's promise to keep all bones reveal about His detailed, comprehensive care for His people?

2. How does Psalm 34:20's fulfillment in Christ's crucifixion deepen your understanding of both passage and gospel?
3. In what ways does God's meticulous protection (preserving every bone) comfort you regarding His care for your life's details?
4. How does this verse's promise relate to resurrection hope—God preserving and ultimately raising our bodies?
5. What does typological connection between righteous generally and Christ specifically teach about reading Old Testament Christologically?

Interlinear Text

שֹׁמֵר	כָּל	עַצְמוֹתָיו	אֶחָד	מֵהֶם	לֹא	נִשְׁבְּרָה:
He keepeth	H3605	all his bones	not one	of them	H3808	is broken
H8104		H6106	H259	H2007		H7665

Additional Cross-References

John 19:36 (Parallel theme): For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken.

Psalms 35:10 (Parallel theme): All my bones shall say, LORD, who is like unto thee, which deliverest the poor from him that is too strong for him, yea, the poor and the needy from him that spoileth him?

Psalms 91:12 (Parallel theme): They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.