

Psalms 38:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

My lovers and my friends stand aloof from my sore; and my kinsmen stand afar off.

Analysis

My lovers and my friends stand aloof from my sore; and my kinsmen stand afar off. Social isolation compounds physical suffering—lovers and friends (אֶחָד, ohev rea, intimate companions) and kinsmen (קָרוֹב, qarov, near relatives) all stand aloof (עֲדָשׁ, amad neged, position themselves opposite/apart) from his sore (נֶגֶע, nega, plague/stroke).

The term nega can mean plague or divine stroke, suggesting ritual uncleanness that required separation (Leviticus 13:45-46). David's companions aren't merely uncomfortable—they're avoiding contamination. This prefigures Christ's abandonment: 'All the disciples forsook him and fled' (Matthew 26:56). The righteous sufferer experiences isolation as part of bearing sin's curse.

Historical Context

Levitical purity laws mandated separation from those with certain skin diseases or discharges. If David's condition was deemed ritually unclean, even family would be required to maintain distance. This social death intensified the suffering—humans are made for community, and isolation was considered nearly as severe as physical death.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

1 Corinthians 13:4 – Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. When has facing consequences of sin led to social isolation? How did you respond spiritually?
2. How does others' avoidance of those in disgrace reveal human fear of contamination versus Christ's solidarity with sinners?
3. Who in your community is experiencing 'sores' (public failure, scandal, shame) that causes others to 'stand aloof'—and how might you draw near instead?

Interlinear Text

אֶחָד	וְרֹעֵה	מִנְגָּד	נְגָעָה	עַמְדָה	קָרְבָּה
My lovers	and my friends	aloof from	my sore	stand	and my kinsmen
H157	H7453	H5048	H5061	H5975	H7138

מִרְחָה קָעֵמְדוֹן
afar off stand

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 31:11 (Parallel theme): I was a reproach among all mine enemies, but especially among my neighbours, and a fear to mine acquaintance: they that did see me without fled from me.

Luke 23:49 (Parallel theme): And all his acquaintance, and the women that followed him from Galilee, stood afar off, beholding these things.

Psalms 88:18 (Love): Lover and friend hast thou put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness.

Matthew 26:56 (Parallel theme): But all this was done, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled.

John 16:32 (Parallel theme): Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.

Luke 22:54 (Parallel theme): Then took they him, and led him, and brought him into the high priest's house. And Peter followed afar off.

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