

Psalms 49:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Wherefore should I fear in the days of evil, when the iniquity of my heels shall compass me about?

Analysis

The riddle begins: 'Wherefore should I fear in the days of evil, when the iniquity of my heels shall compass me about?' The 'days of evil' are times of trouble and danger. 'Iniquity of my heels' may refer to enemies who dog the psalmist's steps or to sins that pursue him. Either way, the question probes the grounds of fear.

Historical Context

The heel imagery appears in Genesis 3:15 (the serpent strikes the heel) and Genesis 25:26 (Jacob grasped Esau's heel). It suggests being pursued, tripped up, or attacked from behind.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. What are the 'days of evil' in which fear seems warranted?
2. How do past sins or present enemies 'compass us about'?

Interlinear Text

לָמָּה	אֵי יִרָא	בְּ יָמַי	כֵּעַ	עַוֹן	עֲקֵבַי
H4100	Wherefore should I fear	in the days	of evil	when the iniquity	of my heels
	H3372	H3117	H7451	H5771	H6120
יְסוּבֵנִי:					
shall compass					
H5437					

Additional Cross-References

Acts 27:24 (Parallel theme): Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee.