

Psalms 55:22

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.

Analysis

Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved. This verse offers divine counsel for carrying life's heavy loads. The Hebrew verb hashlekh (הִשְׁלַךְ, "cast") is an imperative meaning to throw or hurl with force—not tentatively place but actively, decisively transfer. The word yehav (יִהְיֶה, "thy burden") literally means "what He has given you," suggesting that even our difficulties are allowed by God's sovereign hand and therefore can be entrusted back to Him.

"The LORD shall sustain thee" uses yekhalkelakh (יִכְלֶלְךָ), meaning to support, nourish, or provide for completely—as a parent cares for a child. This promise assures continuous divine provision for those who cast their cares on Him. The phrase "never suffer the righteous to be moved" employs yitten la'olam mot (יִתֵּן לְעוֹלָם מוֹט), literally "He will not give forever tottering"—God will not allow the righteous to be permanently shaken or overthrown.

This verse establishes the biblical pattern of anxiety management: acknowledge our insufficiency, actively transfer our burdens to God through prayer, and trust His faithful sustaining power. Peter quotes this principle in 1 Peter 5:7, "casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you." The promise isn't absence of trials but divine strength to endure them. The "righteous" here refers not to the morally perfect but to those in right covenant relationship with God through faith—those who trust rather than self-rely.

Historical Context

Psalm 55 is a lament psalm attributed to David, likely written during Absalom's rebellion when his trusted counselor Ahithophel betrayed him (2 Samuel 15-17). The psalm's context reveals David fleeing Jerusalem, betrayed by his own son and closest advisor, facing a coalition of enemies seeking his destruction. Verse 22 serves as the psalm's theological climax and practical counsel amid this crisis.

Ancient Near Eastern culture emphasized honor, loyalty, and covenant faithfulness. Betrayal by family or close associates was considered especially heinous, threatening not only physical safety but one's very identity and social standing. David's reference to a companion who "broke his covenant" (v. 20) would have resonated with ancient readers who understood the sacred nature of covenant bonds.

The instruction to cast burdens on Yahweh contrasted sharply with pagan practices where people burdened themselves with rituals, offerings, and appeasement to manipulate deities. Israel's God invites relationship and promises to sustain His people through trials rather than demanding they earn His favor. This verse became a foundational text for Jewish and Christian understanding of prayer, anxiety, and divine providence. In exile, when the covenant community faced national catastrophe, this promise that the righteous would not be permanently moved provided hope that God's purposes would ultimately prevail despite present circumstances.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. What burdens are you currently carrying that God wants you to actively cast upon Him rather than manage yourself?

2. How does understanding that your burdens are "what He has given" change your perspective on difficulties?
3. What is the difference between casting your burden on the LORD and expecting Him to immediately remove all problems?
4. How does this verse address both the sovereignty of God (He allows the burden) and the responsibility of believers (we must cast it)?
5. In what ways did Jesus perfectly embody this truth, casting His burdens on the Father while bearing the ultimate burden of our sin?

Interlinear Text

עַל הַשָּׂלָה	יְהוָה הוּא	יְהִיבְךָ	וְהוּא יִבְלֶה לְךָ	לֹא
Cast	upon the LORD	thy burden	and he shall sustain	
H7993	H5921 H3068	H3053	H1931 H3557	H3808
יִתֵּן	לְעוֹלָם	מִן	לְצַדִּיק:	
suffer	thee he shall never	to be moved	the righteous	
H5414	H5769	H4131	H6662	

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 37:5 (References Lord): Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.

1 Peter 5:7 (Parallel theme): Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

Matthew 6:25 (Parallel theme): Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

Psalms 62:6 (Parallel theme): He only is my rock and my salvation: he is my defence; I shall not be moved.

Psalms 16:8 (References Lord): I have set the LORD always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.

Psalms 37:24 (References Lord): Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholdeth him with his hand.

Psalms 27:14 (References Lord): Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD.

Psalms 62:2 (Parallel theme): He only is my rock and my salvation; he is my defence; I shall not be greatly moved.

Matthew 11:28 (Parallel theme): Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Psalms 62:8 (Parallel theme): Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us. Selah.

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