

Psalms 69:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Because for thy sake I have borne reproach; shame hath covered my face.

Analysis

Because for thy sake I have borne reproach; shame hath covered my face.

This verse explains why David can appeal to God—his suffering stems from faithfulness to God, not personal wrongdoing. "For thy sake" (אֵלֶיָּהּ/alekha) indicates the causative relationship: loyalty to God provoked the persecution. "Reproach" (חֶרֶפָּה/cherpah) signifies public disgrace, scorn, and taunting—not merely private suffering but public humiliation.

"Shame hath covered my face" uses vivid imagery of shame as a garment or veil obscuring one's countenance. In honor-shame cultures, "face" represented one's social standing, dignity, and reputation. To have shame cover one's face meant complete loss of honor in the community's eyes. The perfect tense of "hath covered" (כִּסְּתָהּ/kissətah) indicates a completed, ongoing state—David remains under this shameful condition.

This verse anticipates Isaiah's Suffering Servant, who gave his back to smiters and "hid not my face from shame and spitting" (Isaiah 50:6). It finds ultimate fulfillment in Christ, who "endured the cross, despising the shame" (Hebrews 12:2) and whose visage was "marred more than any man" (Isaiah 52:14). The righteous sufferer's shame becomes, paradoxically, the means of humanity's glory.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern culture was profoundly honor-based. Public shaming represented social death—exclusion from community standing and protection. Reproach involved not mere disagreement but public mockery, slander, and attempts to destroy reputation. For David as king, such shame threatened not only personal dignity but national stability and God's covenant promises.

The phrase "for thy sake" echoes earlier psalms (Psalm 44:22, "For thy sake are we killed all the day long") and anticipates Paul's quotation in Romans 8:36. It establishes a pattern of righteous suffering that would characterize God's people throughout redemptive history.

In Jewish tradition, this verse was read in light of Israel's suffering through exile and diaspora. For Christians, it became central to Passion theology—Christ bore ultimate reproach and shame so believers might be clothed with righteousness and glory.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. Have you experienced reproach specifically because of faithfulness to Christ, or has your suffering been from other causes?
2. How does distinguishing between suffering 'for His sake' and suffering from our own foolishness affect our spiritual response?
3. What does Christ's willing acceptance of shame reveal about God's values versus worldly honor systems?

H5921

H5375

H2781

H3680

H3639

H6440

Hebrews 12:2 (Parallel theme): Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.