

Psalms 77:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

I remembered God, and was troubled: I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed. Selah.

Analysis

I remembered God, and was troubled (אֶזְכָּרָה אֱלֹהִים נַאֲ�ָמֵנָה)—paradoxically, remembering God brings hamah (tumult, groaning, disturbance) rather than peace. When God's promises seem contradicted by present suffering, the very thought of God intensifies anguish. This exposes faith at its breaking point: when theology collides with experience, when doctrine offers no immediate comfort.

I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed (אָשִׁיךְ וְתַתְעַטֵּף רֹוחִי). The verb siach (שָׁׁיכָה) means to muse, meditate, or complain—contemplative brooding. Ta'ataph (תַּעֲטֵף) means to be feeble, faint, or overwhelmed—literally "covered over," suggesting suffocation or being buried under grief. **Selah** (סֶלָה) marks a musical pause, inviting reflection on this profound tension: faith that cries out while feeling crushed.

Historical Context

The psalm's dramatic movement from despair (vv.2-9) to remembrance (vv.10-20) mirrors Israel's cyclical history of affliction and deliverance. The Book of Lamentations expresses similar anguish after Jerusalem's destruction, yet concludes with hope in God's mercies (Lamentations 3:19-24). This pattern demonstrates that honest lament is not faithlessness but faith seeking understanding.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. Why might remembering God sometimes increase rather than decrease spiritual distress?
2. What does the inclusion of *Selah* suggest about the value of pausing in our grief?
3. How do Christ's words "My God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46) validate anguished questioning?

Interlinear Text

וְיִזְכַּרְתִּי	אֱלֹהִים	וְאַתָּה	אָשָׁר	וְתִתְמַטֵּן
I remembered	God	and was troubled	I complained	was overwhelmed
H2142	H430	H1993	H7878	H5848
רוּחַ	בָּלָה:			
and my spirit	Selah			
H7307	H5542			

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 61:2 (Parallel theme): From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I.

Job 31:23 (References God): For destruction from God was a terror to me, and by reason of his highness I could not endure.

Psalms 42:5 (References God): Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance.

Psalms 43:5 (References God): Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.

Psalms 42:11 (References God): Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.

Job 7:11 (Spirit): Therefore I will not refrain my mouth; I will speak in the anguish of my spirit; I will complain in the bitterness of my soul.

Job 6:4 (Spirit): For the arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit: the terrors of God do set themselves in array against me.

Jeremiah 17:17 (Parallel theme): Be not a terror unto me: thou art my hope in the day of evil.

Lamentations 3:39 (Parallel theme): Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?