

Psalms 88:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves. Selah.

Analysis

Thy wrath lieth hard upon me (סַחֲחָה עָלַי חֲמָתְךָ, samkhah alay chamatekha)—The verb "lieth hard" means to press down, to lean heavily upon, suggesting crushing weight. Chemah (חֲמָה) denotes burning wrath, fierce anger. Unlike psalms that blame enemies or Satan, Heman identifies God Himself as the source of his affliction—a brutally honest theology that refuses to sanitize suffering by separating it from divine sovereignty.

Thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves (וְכָל־מִשְׁבָּרֶיךָ עָנִיתָ, vekhol-mishbarekha inita)—The imagery shifts to drowning under relentless waves, each one sent by God. Mishbar means breaker, the crashing surf that overwhelms. The totality—"all thy waves"—suggests unrelenting assault. Jonah used similar language (Jonah 2:3), but his psalm moved to deliverance; Psalm 88 offers no such relief. This previews Christ in Gethsemane, crushed under the weight of divine wrath against sin, waves of judgment breaking over Him for our redemption.

Historical Context

The attribution to Heman "upon Mahalath Leannoth" may indicate a mournful tune for singing this lament. That Israel included this unresolved anguish in their hymnbook reveals mature faith—acknowledging that God sometimes permits crushing suffering without providing immediate explanation or relief, preparing the way for understanding the cross.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How do you reconcile God's love with experiences where His wrath seems to press down upon you?
2. What does it mean that Christ bore the full weight of divine wrath in your place?
3. Why is it important that Scripture validates feelings of being overwhelmed by "all" of God's waves rather than requiring false optimism?

Interlinear Text

עַלִּי	סִמְכָה	חֲמַתְךָ	וְכָל	מִשְׁבַּרְיָךְ
H5921	lieth hard	Thy wrath	H3605	me with all thy waves
	H5564	H2534		H4867
עַנֵּנִי יְיָ			סֵלָה:	
upon me and thou hast afflicted			Selah	
H6031			H5542	

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 42:7 (Parallel theme): Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts: all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me.

Job 6:4 (Parallel theme): 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.

1 Peter 2:24 (Parallel theme): Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

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