

1 Peter 3:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.

Analysis

Peter concludes Psalm quotation with divine oversight. "For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous" (hoti ophthalmoi kyriou epi dikaious)—God watches the righteous attentively, providentially caring for them. "And his ears are open unto their prayers" (kai ōta autou eis deēsin autōn)—God listens when righteous pray, hearing and answering. The contrast: "But the face of the Lord is against them that do evil" (prosōpon de kyriou epi poiountas kaka)—God opposes evildoers. His "face against" indicates judgment, not blessing. This provides motivation for godly living—God sees, hears, and responds to both righteousness and evil.

Historical Context

This verse assured persecuted believers that God sees their righteous suffering and hears their prayers. Though enemies seemed triumphant, God would judge evildoers ultimately. The promise of divine attention (eyes over righteous, ears open to prayers) provided comfort—they weren't abandoned or forgotten. Conversely, evildoers' apparent success was temporary; God's face set against them guaranteed eventual judgment. Early church martyrs died confident God saw their faithfulness and heard their prayers, trusting ultimate vindication. This echoes Hebrews 11—faith sees what's invisible, trusts God's promises despite contrary appearances.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does knowing God's eyes are 'over' you and His ears 'open' to your prayers affect your confidence in difficult circumstances?
2. Why should the truth that God's face is 'against evildoers' comfort the righteous and warn the wicked?

Interlinear Text

ὅτι οἱ ὄφθαλμοὶ κυρίου ἐπὶ δικαίους καὶ ὥτα
For G3588 the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous and ears
G3754 G3788 G2962 G1909 G1342 G2532 G3775

αὐτῶν εἰς δέησιν αὐτῶν πρόσωπον δὲ κυρίου
his are open unto prayers his the face but of the Lord
G846 G1519 G1162 G846 G4383 G1161 G2962

ἐπὶ ποιοῦντας κακά¹
are over them that do evil
G1909 G4160 G2556

Additional Cross-References

John 9:31 (Parallel theme): Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth.

Proverbs 15:29 (Righteousness): The LORD is far from the wicked: but he heareth the prayer of the righteous.

Proverbs 15:3 (Evil): The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.

Proverbs 15:8 (Prayer): The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD: but the prayer of the upright is his delight.

2 Chronicles 7:15 (Prayer): Now mine eyes shall be open, and mine ears attent unto the prayer that is made in this place.

2 Chronicles 16:9 (References Lord): For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him. Herein thou hast done foolishly: therefore from henceforth thou shalt have wars.

James 5:16 (Righteousness): Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

Psalms 65:2 (Prayer): O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come.

Deuteronomy 11:12 (References Lord): A land which the LORD thy God careth for: the eyes of the LORD thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year.

Psalms 80:16 (Parallel theme): It is burned with fire, it is cut down: they perish at the rebuke of thy countenance.