

Psalms 10:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

LORD, thou hast heard the desire of the humble: thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear:

Analysis

LORD, thou hast heard the desire of the humble: thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear. As the psalm moves toward conclusion, David affirms with confidence that God has heard the prayers of the oppressed. This verse balances the opening question (verse 1) with confident assurance. God may seem distant, but He hears and will act. The verse addresses both divine response and divine preparation.

"LORD, thou hast heard the desire of the humble" (ta'avat anavim shamata Yahweh, תַּאֲוַת עֲנָוִים שָׁמַעַתָּ יְהוָה) employs the perfect tense—God has heard. Ta'avah means desire, longing, or request. Anavim (humble, meek, afflicted) describes those who are lowly and dependent on God—not proud or self-sufficient. Shama means to hear with attention and intent to respond. God has already heard; the answer is assured even if not yet experienced.

"Thou wilt prepare their heart" (takhin libbam, תַּכִּין לִבָּם) uses kun (to establish, prepare, make firm, make ready). God prepares the heart of the humble to receive His answer. This may include strengthening their faith, purifying their motives, or readying them for what He will do. The same word appears in 9:7 describing God preparing His throne for judgment. Just as God establishes His throne, He establishes the hearts of His people. Prayer is not one-directional—God not only hears our prayers but prepares us through the process of praying.

"Thou wilt cause thine ear to hear" (taqshiv oznekha, תִּקְשִׁיב אוֹזְנְךָ) intensifies the

assurance. Qashav means to prick up the ears, to listen attentively. God's "ear" represents His attentive responsiveness. The future tense indicates continuing divine attention—God will keep listening. This anthropomorphic language portrays God as leaning in, listening carefully, missing nothing of His people's cries.

The verse creates a beautiful theology of prayer: God hears the humble's desire, prepares their hearts, and attentively listens. Prayer is thus dialogical—we speak, God hears; God prepares us, we become ready to receive; we continue to cry out, God continues to listen. The verse assures suffering believers that their prayers are not ignored.

Historical Context

The theme of God hearing prayer runs throughout Scripture. When Israel groaned under Egyptian bondage, "God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant" (Exodus 2:24). Repeatedly in Judges, when Israel cried out, God raised up deliverers (Judges 3:9, 15; 4:3; 6:6-7). Hannah's prayer was heard (1 Samuel 1:19-20). Hezekiah's prayer was heard (2 Kings 20:5). Daniel's prayer was heard (Daniel 9:23, 10:12).

The concept of God preparing the human heart appears in various forms. Ezra testified: "I set my face unto the LORD God... and he granted me according to the hand of the LORD my God upon me" (Ezra 7:27-28, Nehemiah 2:8). Paul wrote that "God, who worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13). God's preparation of our hearts enables us to desire rightly and receive gratefully what He gives.

Jesus later taught: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you" (Matthew 7:7). James warned that asking must be with right motives (James 4:3). The consistent biblical teaching is that God hears genuine prayer offered in faith and humility, and He works in both the asking and the answering.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does the assurance that God 'has heard' change your experience of waiting for answered prayer?
2. What does it mean that God 'prepares' the hearts of the humble, and why is this preparation necessary?
3. How is prayer transformative for the one praying, not just instrumental in obtaining answers?
4. What characterizes the 'humble' whose prayers God hears, as distinct from the proud who do not seek Him?

Interlinear Text

תַּאֲוֹת	עֲנֵי יִם	שָׁמַעְתָּ	יְהוָה	תַּכּוּן	לִבָּם
the desire	of the humble	thou hast heard	LORD	thou wilt prepare	their heart
H8378	H6035	H8085	H3068	H3559	H3820
יִבְרָא	אֶזְנוֹ:				
to hear	thou wilt cause thine ear				
H7181	H241				

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 145:19 (Parallel theme): He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him: he also will hear their cry, and will save them.

2 Chronicles 34:27 (References Lord): Because thine heart was tender, and thou didst humble thyself before God, when thou heardest his words against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, and humbledst thyself before me, and didst rend thy clothes, and weep before me; I have even heard thee also, saith the LORD.

Psalms 34:15 (References Lord): The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry.

Isaiah 65:24 (Parallel theme): And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.

Psalms 37:4 (References Lord): Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.

1 Peter 3:12 (References Lord): 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.

1 Chronicles 29:18 (References Lord): O LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, our fathers, keep this for ever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of thy people, and prepare their heart unto thee:

Psalms 9:12 (Parallel theme): When he maketh inquisition for blood, he remembereth them: he forgetteth not the cry of the humble.

Psalms 102:17 (Parallel theme): He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer.

Proverbs 16:1 (References Lord): The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the LORD.