

Psalm 109:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Hold not thy peace, O God of my praise;

Analysis

"Hold not thy peace, O God of my praise." This opening petition Elohei tehilati al techaresh (God of my praise, do not be silent) appeals to God to speak and act. Tehilah (praise) is the root of Tehillim (Psalms, literally "praises")—even in distress, the psalmist identifies God as object of praise. Charash (be silent/keep quiet) can indicate either literal silence or inactive indifference. The plea asks God to break His silence by defending His servant against false accusation. Divine silence during injustice tests faith (Psalm 28:1, 35:22, 83:1). Yet God's apparent silence isn't indifference—He reserves judgment for proper timing. This imprecatory Psalm (containing curses on enemies) must be understood within theodicy: when will God vindicate righteousness and judge wickedness?

Historical Context

David likely wrote this during persecution, either by Saul or during Absalom's rebellion. False accusation was common in ancient courts—no presumption of innocence, limited due process, accusers' word heavily weighted. Proverbs warns extensively against false witness (Proverbs 6:16-19, 12:17, 14:5, 19:5). The ninth commandment forbids bearing false witness (Exodus 20:16). Yet false accusations plagued God's people throughout history—Joseph, Naboth (1 Kings 21), Jeremiah, Daniel's friends, Daniel himself, Jesus, Stephen, Paul. The imprecatory Psalms (35, 55, 59, 69, 109, 137) aren't personal vindictiveness but appeals for divine justice against wicked who oppress righteous.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How should believers respond when God seems silent in the face of injustice or slander?
2. What is the proper role of imprecatory prayer (calling for God's judgment on the wicked) in Christian spirituality?
3. How does maintaining praise ("God of my praise") even while pleading for vindication demonstrate mature faith?

Interlinear Text

תְּחִרְשֵׁ: אֱלֹהִים הַלְּתִי אֶל
O God of my praise Hold not thy peace
H430 H8416 H2790

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 28:1 (Parallel theme): Unto thee will I cry, O LORD my rock; be not silent to me: lest, if thou be silent to me, I become like them that go down into the pit.

Psalms 83:1 (Peace): Keep not thou silence, O God: hold not thy peace, and be not still, O God.

Deuteronomy 10:21 (Resurrection): He is thy praise, and he is thy God, that hath done for thee these great and terrible things, which thine eyes have seen.

Jeremiah 17:14 (Resurrection): Heal me, O LORD, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved: for thou art my praise.

Isaiah 42:14 (Peace): I have long time holden my peace; I have been still, and refrained myself: now will I cry like a travailing woman; I will destroy and devour at once.

Psalms 118:28 (Resurrection): Thou art my God, and I will praise thee: thou art my God, I will exalt thee.

Exodus 15:2 (References God): The LORD is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him.

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