

Psalms 109:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But do thou for me, O GOD the Lord, for thy name's sake:
because thy mercy is good, deliver thou me.

Analysis

"But do thou for me, O GOD the Lord, for thy name's sake: because thy mercy is good, deliver thou me." This verse shifts from imprecation against enemies to petition for personal deliverance. Ve'atah Adonai YHWH aseh itti l'ma'an shemekha (But you, Lord YHWH, do for me for your name's sake) grounds the appeal in God's reputation and character, not the psalmist's merit. L'ma'an shemekha (for your name's sake) indicates concern for divine honor—God's reputation is at stake when His servants suffer unjustly. Ki tov chasdekha (because good is your mercy/lovingkindness) affirms God's character. Tov (good) means beneficial, pleasant, agreeable, morally right. Chesed (mercy/lovingkindness/covenant loyalty) is God's faithful love. The plea hatsileini (deliver me) requests rescue. The basis: God's name/reputation and His good mercy—not human worthiness.

Historical Context

Appeals to God's name appear frequently in Scripture when God's reputation is threatened by His people's suffering. Moses interceded after golden calf: "Why should Egyptians say, 'He brought them out to harm them'?" (Exodus 32:11-14). Joshua prayed similarly after Ai's defeat (Joshua 7:9). The prophets appealed to God's name (Jeremiah 14:7, Ezekiel 20:9). The logic: if God's covenant people are destroyed or permanently oppressed, God's power and faithfulness are questioned by watching nations. This isn't manipulative but theologically sound—God is jealous for His glory (Isaiah 48:9-11), and His reputation is bound to His people's

welfare. The New Testament similarly appeals to God's name and character (Romans 2:24, James 2:7).

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. How does praying "for your name's sake" shift focus from personal benefit to divine glory?
2. What is the connection between God's mercy being "good" and His willingness to deliver?
3. In what situations is appealing to God's reputation (rather than our merit) the most appropriate basis for petition?

Interlinear Text

שְׁתִּיבְרֹךְ אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
H859 thou for me O GOD H3069 the Lord H136 But do H854
H4616 for thy name's H8034

כִּי־בְּשָׁעָה־זֶה יְהוָה־אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְמַלֵּךְ עַל־עַמּוֹן
H3588 is good H2896 sake because thy mercy H2617 deliver H5337

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 31:3 (Parallel theme): For thou art my rock and my fortress; therefore for thy name's sake lead me, and guide me.

Psalms 69:16 (Good): Hear me, O LORD; for thy lovingkindness is good: turn unto me according to the multitude of thy tender mercies.

Psalms 63:3 (Parallel theme): Because thy lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee.

Psalms 86:5 (Grace): For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.

Psalms 25:11 (References Lord): For thy name's sake, O LORD, pardon mine iniquity; for it is great.

Psalms 86:15 (Grace): But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth.

John 17:1 (Parallel theme): These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee:

Psalms 69:29 (References God): But I am poor and sorrowful: let thy salvation, O God, set me up on high.

Psalms 23:3 (Parallel theme): He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

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