

Psalm 118:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Let the house of Aaron now say, that his mercy endureth for ever.

Analysis

Let the house of Aaron now say, that his mercy endureth for ever. Following verse 2's call to Israel, this verse summons the priestly line—Aaron's descendants who served in tabernacle and temple. The triple call (Israel v. 2, Aaron's house v. 3, God-fearers v. 4) creates expanding circles of testimony from covenant community to priests to all who revere God, including proselytes. Yomru na beit Aharon (let the house of Aaron now say) uses the cohortative to urge action.

Aaron's house bore unique responsibility: mediating between God and people, offering sacrifices, teaching Torah, pronouncing blessings (Numbers 6:22-27). If anyone knew God's enduring mercy, priests did—they witnessed daily atonement, saw God accept sacrifices, experienced forgiveness despite Israel's rebellion. Yet priests themselves needed mercy: Aaron made the golden calf (Exodus 32), his sons Nadab and Abihu offered unauthorized fire and died (Leviticus 10:1-3), later priests often became corrupt (1 Samuel 2:12-17, Malachi 1:6-14). Priestly testimony to God's chesed isn't based on their worthiness but God's faithfulness to His covenant promises.

Historical Context

The house of Aaron received exclusive priestly rights through God's covenant (Exodus 28:1, Numbers 18:1-7). After the exile, returning priests faced enormous challenges: defiled temple site, opposition from surrounding peoples, limited resources, questions about legitimate priestly lineage. Ezra and Nehemiah

carefully verified Aaronic descent (Ezra 2:61-63, Nehemiah 7:63-65). Despite centuries of failure, exile as judgment for covenant breaking, and the trauma of dispossession, God's mercy endured—He restored priests to temple service. This demonstrated that God's covenant faithfulness transcends human unfaithfulness. In Christ, all believers become a royal priesthood (1 Peter 2:9), testifying to mercy through the great High Priest who perfectly mediates God's covenant love.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How should those in spiritual leadership roles particularly testify to God's mercy given both their privileges and failures?
2. What does the inclusion of priests in corporate testimony teach about the universality of human need for God's *chesed*?
3. How does the New Testament reality of all believers as priests expand the scope of those called to declare God's enduring mercy?

Interlinear Text

לְעֹזֶל מִן־אַמְרוֹן בֵּית אַבְרָהָם כִּי אַבְרָהָם
now say H4994 Let the house of Aaron H3588 endureth for ever that his mercy
H559 H1004 H175 H5769 H2617

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