

Psalms 118:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The LORD is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?

Analysis

"The LORD is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?" The confession YHWH li (the LORD for me/on my side) expresses covenant confidence—God as ally, advocate, defender. The result: lo ira (I will not fear). Fear dissipates when God's presence is assured. The rhetorical question mah ya'aseh li adam (what can man do to me?) deflates human threat. Adam (man/humanity) represents human opposition—whether armies, authorities, or adversaries. Compared to YHWH's power and commitment, human hostility becomes impotent. This echoes Moses's confidence: "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31) and David's defiance of Goliath (1 Samuel 17:45-47). The verse doesn't deny human threats but relativizes them—with God as ally, no human enemy can ultimately prevail.

Historical Context

Israel faced constant military threats—Egyptians, Philistines, Ammonites, Moabites, Assyrians, Babylonians. Yet Israel's survival depended not on military might but divine protection. When trusting God, small forces defeated large armies (Gideon: Judges 7, Jonathan: 1 Samuel 14). When relying on human alliances, even large forces failed (Isaiah 30:1-7, 31:1-3). David's victories flowed from covenant confidence (1 Samuel 17:37, 2 Samuel 22:1-51). Later martyrs demonstrated similar fearlessness: Daniel in the lions' den, three friends in the furnace, early Christians facing Roman persecution. Hebrews 13:6 quotes this verse, applying it to New Covenant believers.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. In what specific situations do human threats tempt you to fear despite God's presence?
2. How does regularly affirming "the LORD is on my side" reshape emotional responses to opposition?
3. What is the difference between biblical fearlessness (trusting God despite danger) and foolish recklessness (presuming on God)?

Interlinear Text

יְהוָה	לִי	אֵל	אֵיךְ	אֵל	לִי	יַעֲשֶׂה	מָה
The LORD	H0	H3808	is on my side I will not fear	H4100	do	H0	man
H3068			H3372		H6213		H120

Additional Cross-References

Hebrews 13:6 (References Lord): So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

Romans 8:31 (Parallel theme): What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?

Psalms 56:4 (Parallel theme): In God I will praise his word, in God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me.

Psalms 56:11 (Parallel theme): In God have I put my trust: I will not be afraid what man can do unto me.

Psalms 56:9 (Parallel theme): When I cry unto thee, then shall mine enemies turn back: this I know; for God is for me.

Jeremiah 20:11 (References Lord): But the LORD is with me as a mighty terrible one: therefore my persecutors shall stumble, and they shall not prevail: they shall be greatly ashamed; for they shall not prosper: their everlasting confusion shall never be forgotten.

Isaiah 51:12 (Parallel theme): I, even I, am he that comforteth you: who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass;

Psalms 23:4 (Parallel theme): Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Psalms 46:11 (References Lord): The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah.

Psalms 146:5 (References Lord): Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the LORD his God: