

Psalms 119:116

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Uphold me according unto thy word, that I may live: and let me not be ashamed of my hope.

Analysis

Uphold me according unto thy word, that I may live (סִמְכֵנִי כְאִמְרָתְךָ וְאֶחְיֶה, somkheni khe'imratkha ve'echyeh)—the verb samakh means support, sustain, uphold, like a pillar supporting a building. Without divine support, the psalmist will collapse. The plea is grounded **according unto thy word**—not arbitrary favor but covenant faithfulness to God's promises. **That I may live** shows the stakes: spiritual survival depends on God's upholding power.

And let me not be ashamed of my hope (וְאֶל־תִּבְיֹשֵׁנִי מִשְׁבְּרִי, ve'al-tevisheni misivri)—the verb bosh means to be put to shame, disappointed, confounded. Paul echoes this: **Hope maketh not ashamed** (Rom 5:5). The psalmist's confidence rests on God's proven reliability—those who hope in His word will never be ultimately disappointed, though they may suffer temporarily. This is the anchor of Christian assurance.

Historical Context

Israel's hope was repeatedly tested through exile, persecution, and delay of promises. The psalmist's prayer reflects the tension between present weakness and future vindication. Those who trusted God's word despite circumstances were never ultimately ashamed (Dan 3:17-18, Heb 11:13-16).

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. What specific promises in God's word do you need Him to uphold you by today?
2. How do you maintain hope in God's word when circumstances seem to contradict His promises?
3. In what ways has God upheld you in the past, preventing you from being ashamed of your hope?

Interlinear Text

סִמְךָ נִי	כְּאִמְרֹתֶיךָ	וְאֶחֱיָה	וְאֶלִּי
Uphold	me according unto thy word	that I may live	H408
H5564	H565	H2421	
וְלֹא אֶשְׁבֹּחֶיךָ	וְלֹא אֶשְׁבֹּחֶיךָ		
and let me not be ashamed	of my hope		
H954	H7664		

Additional Cross-References

Romans 5:5 (Hope): And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

Psalms 25:2 (Parallel theme): O my God, I trust in thee: let me not be ashamed, let not mine enemies triumph over me.

1 Peter 2:6 (Word): Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.

Isaiah 41:10 (Parallel theme): Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.

Psalms 54:4 (Parallel theme): Behold, God is mine helper: the Lord is with them that uphold my soul.

Psalms 37:24 (Parallel theme): Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholdeth him with his hand.

Psalms 37:17 (Parallel theme): For the arms of the wicked shall be broken: but the LORD upholdeth the righteous.

Romans 10:11 (Word): For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

Isaiah 42:1 (Parallel theme): Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.

Isaiah 45:17 (Parallel theme): But Israel shall be saved in the LORD with an everlasting salvation: ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end.