

Psalms 124:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

If it had not been the LORD who was on our side, when men rose up against us:

Analysis

The hypothetical continues with repetition for emphasis: 'If it had not been the LORD who was on our side, when men rose up against us.' The repeated condition reinforces the centrality of divine aid. The phrase 'when men rose up against us' specifies the threat - human enemies attacked Israel. The word 'rose up' (Hebrew 'qum') suggests hostile action, rebellion, or war. The emphasis on 'men' highlights that despite being merely human (not divine), these enemies posed existential threat to Israel. The verse creates tension - overwhelming human opposition versus divine protection. The repetition also functions liturgically, possibly as call-and-response in corporate worship, where one voice speaks and the congregation repeats. This pattern embeds the truth deeply through repetition.

Historical Context

Israel faced constant threats from surrounding nations - Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Edom, Moab, Ammon, and others. Despite being merely human kingdoms, they wielded power that could have destroyed Israel. Only divine protection preserved the covenant people through centuries of geopolitical vulnerability. The phrase 'men rose up' captures the recurring pattern of opposition Israel faced.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. Why does the psalm repeat the condition rather than moving immediately to the consequence?
2. How does recognizing enemies as 'men' (merely human) affect our perspective on opposition?
3. What does the pattern of 'men rising up' against God's people reveal about spiritual warfare?
4. How does repetition in Scripture and worship serve to deepen truth's impact?
5. In what ways do Christians face enemies 'rising up' against them, and how does God's partisan support apply?

Interlinear Text

יִלְלֵי	! הַיְהוָה	שָׁמָּה יְהוָה	לִי נֹכַח וְ	בָּקַע וְ	עָלָה יָנוּ
If	it had not been the LORD	H1961	H0	rose up	H5921
H3884	H3068			H6965	
:אֲדָמָה					
who was on our side when men					
H120					

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 3:1 (References Lord): LORD, how are they increased that trouble me! many are they that rise up against me.

Psalms 37:32 (Parallel theme): The wicked watcheth the righteous, and seeketh to slay him.

Psalms 22:16 (Parallel theme): For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet.

