

Psalms 146:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The LORD preserveth the strangers; he relieveth the fatherless and widow: but the way of the wicked he turneth upside down.

Analysis

The LORD preserveth the strangers; he relieveth the fatherless and widow: but the way of the wicked he turneth upside down. God's special care for society's most vulnerable—shomer gerim (שֹׁמֵר גֵּרִים) "guards strangers/sojourners"—those without tribal protection or land rights. Yatom ve'almanah (יָתוֹם וְאַלְמָנָה) "orphan and widow" were defenseless without male protectors. God personally defends those humans neglect or exploit.

The way of the wicked he turneth upside down (vəderek rēsha'im ye'avvet, וְדֶרֶךְ הַרְשָׁעִים יַעֲוֶת)—avat (עָוַת) means to twist, pervert, overturn. God actively opposes the wicked's path, ensuring their schemes fail. This judicial reversal anticipates Mary's Magnificat, where God casts down the mighty and exalts the humble (Luke 1:52-53).

Historical Context

Mosaic Law commanded special protection for strangers, orphans, and widows (Exodus 22:21-24, Deuteronomy 10:18, 24:17-21), threatening divine wrath on oppressors. Prophets condemned Israel's failure to care for the vulnerable (Isaiah 1:17, Jeremiah 7:6, Zechariah 7:10). This verse celebrates God's faithfulness to His own commands.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How should God's care for strangers, orphans, and widows shape the church's ministry priorities?
2. What modern equivalents to 'strangers, orphans, and widows' should receive special Christian compassion?
3. How can believers trust God to overturn the wicked's way when they seem to prosper indefinitely?

Interlinear Text

יְהוָה הוּא	שָׁמַר	אֶת	גֵּר יִם	יֵת וָאֵם	וְאֶלְמָנָה
The LORD	preserveth	H853	the strangers	the fatherless	and widow
H3068	H8104		H1616	H3490	H490
יְעוֹדֵד	וְדֶרֶךְ	רָשָׁע יִם	יַעֲוֶה:		
he relieveth	but the way	of the wicked	he turneth upside down		
H5749	H1870	H7563	H5791		

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 68:5 (Parallel theme): A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, is God in his holy habitation.

Psalms 147:6 (Evil): The LORD lifteth up the meek: he casteth the wicked down to the ground.

Proverbs 15:25 (References Lord): The LORD will destroy the house of the proud: but he will establish the border of the widow.

Jeremiah 49:11 (Parallel theme): Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive; and let thy widows trust in me.

Malachi 3:5 (References Lord): And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the LORD of hosts.

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