

Psalm 18:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The LORD rewarded me according to my righteousness;
according to the cleanliness of my hands hath he recompensed
me.

Analysis

Yahweh dealt with David 'according to my righteousness' and 'cleanliness of my hands.' This seems to contradict salvation by grace until recognizing David speaks of covenant faithfulness, not sinless perfection. The Hebrew 'tsedaqah' (righteousness) refers to conformity to covenant, and 'bor' (cleanliness) to integrity. This anticipates justification by faith—believers are declared righteous through Christ's righteousness (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Historical Context

Written after David consistently refused to harm Saul despite opportunity (1 Samuel 24, 26), demonstrating covenant faithfulness that God rewarded.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How do you understand the relationship between grace and righteous living?
2. In what ways does covenant faithfulness differ from earning salvation?

Interlinear Text

בָּרָא	כָּלֹק	לִתְחַדֵּשׁ	בָּרָא
rewarded	The LORD	me according to my righteousness	according to the cleanliness
H1580	H3068	H6664	H1252
לְבָנָה	בָּרָא	לִתְחַדֵּשׁ	לְבָנָה
of my hands	hath he recompensed	H0	H7725
H3027			

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 24:4 (Parallel theme): He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.

1 Corinthians 3:8 (Parallel theme): Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.

Matthew 6:4 (Parallel theme): That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.

Proverbs 11:18 (Righteousness): The wicked worketh a deceitful work: but to him that soweth righteousness shall be a sure reward.

Hebrews 7:26 (Parallel theme): For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;

Isaiah 49:4 (References Lord): Then I said, I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain: yet surely my judgment is with the LORD, and my work with my God.

Isaiah 62:11 (References Lord): Behold, the LORD hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him.

Psalms 58:11 (Righteousness): So that a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth.

Job 22:30 (Parallel theme): He shall deliver the island of the innocent: and it is delivered by the pureness of thine hands.

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