

Psalms 31:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Blessed be the LORD: for he hath shewed me his marvellous kindness in a strong city.

Analysis

Blessed be the LORD: for he hath shewed me his marvellous kindness in a strong city. David's lament transforms fully into praise as he declares God's covenant love demonstrated through deliverance. This models faith journey from petition through trust to thanksgiving—pattern of many Psalms and much Christian experience.

Blessed be the LORD initiates worship. Hebrew *baruk* means to bless, praise, adore. When humans bless God, we acknowledge His worthiness, goodness, power. We cannot add to God's blessedness, but honor Him by declaring His excellency. This blessing formula appears throughout Scripture, marking transitions from trial to testimony, petition to praise. David has moved from lament's darkness to worship's light.

For he hath shewed signals cause for blessing. Hebrew *pala* means to be wonderful, extraordinary, surpassing. God has done something remarkable beyond normal experience or expectation. His intervention was not merely adequate but marvelous—inspiring awe and wonder. This distinguishes God's works from human efforts; His deliverances reveal supernatural power and care.

His marvellous kindness translates *chesed pala*—extraordinary covenant love. *Chesed* is God's loyal, steadfast, faithful love rooted in covenant commitment. Not earned or merited but flows from God's character and promise. Modifying *chesed* with *pala* emphasizes God's love exceeded expectations—He lavishly exceeded

minimum obligations. Grace upon grace, love beyond measure.

In a strong city (Hebrew 'ir matsor—fortified city, place of siege) provides geographical specificity or metaphor. God's kindness manifested powerfully in place of confinement and danger. Reformed theology emphasizes God's love is not abstract sentiment but concrete action—He shows kindness through tangible deliverance.

Historical Context

David experienced several instances where God delivered from besieged cities. Most notably, God warned him to leave Keilah before Saul arrived (1 Samuel 23:7-13). God's foreknowledge and timely revelation displayed marvellous kindness, preventing capture.

Phrase strong city may echo Psalm 31:21 in Hebrew texts, where similar language appears. Early church fathers interpreted strong city Christologically. Augustine saw it as church—city of God under assault by world but preserved by divine kindness.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does David's progression from lament to praise model healthy processing of suffering?
2. What is significance of God's kindness being described as marvellous rather than merely adequate?

3. How has God shown you His covenant love in unexpected or surpassing ways?
4. Why is it important to recognize God's blessing specifically rather than offering vague gratitude?
5. In what ways does church corporately experience God's marvellous kindness as strong city under siege?

Interlinear Text

בָּרַךְ יְיָ	יְהוָה	כִּי	הִפָּלַיָא	לִי חַסְדּוֹ	וְ
Blessed	be the LORD	H3588	for he hath shewed me his marvellous	kindness	H0
H1288	H3068		H6381	H2617	

בֵּיט יִרְמְצוֹר:	
city	in a strong
H5892	H4692

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 17:7 (Parallel theme): Shew thy marvellous lovingkindness, O thou that savest by thy right hand them which put their trust in thee from those that rise up against them.

1 Peter 2:9 (Parallel theme): But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

Psalms 98:1 (References Lord): O sing unto the LORD a new song; for he hath done marvellous things: his right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory.

Psalms 118:23 (References Lord): This is the LORD'S doing; it is marvellous in our eyes.

Jeremiah 1:18 (Parallel theme): For, behold, I have made thee this day a defenced city, and an iron pillar, and brasen walls against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, against the princes thereof, against the priests thereof, and against the people of the land.

