

Psalms 33:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

To deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine.

Analysis

Behold, the eye of the LORD is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy. After dismantling false securities (vv. 16-17), David presents true security—God's attentive care for those who fear Him and hope in His mercy. This verse provides positive contrast to vain human confidences.

Behold introduces emphatic declaration—pay attention to what follows. After negative statements (horses don't save, strength doesn't deliver), David commands attention to positive reality. The eye of the LORD is upon introduces personal, particular divine attention. Not vague providence but specific oversight. Eye represents focused attention, caring watchfulness, purposeful engagement. God doesn't generally oversee creation; He particularly watches over specific people—those who fear Him.

Them that fear him identifies first characteristic of those receiving divine attention. Fear (yare) means reverent awe, covenant faithfulness, worshipful obedience. Not terror but appropriate response to God's majesty and holiness. Those who fear God take Him seriously, worship rightly, obey willingly. This fear is covenant response—acknowledging God's lordship, trusting His character, submitting to His will. It's relational, not merely intellectual.

Upon them that hope in his mercy provides second identifying characteristic. Hope (yachal) means wait expectantly, trust confidently. His mercy (chesed) is covenant lovingkindness—loyal, steadfast, faithful love. Those who hope in God's mercy trust

His covenant commitment, rely on His faithful character, expect His gracious intervention. They don't presume on their righteousness or strength but depend on God's chesed. This hope is grounded confidence, not wishful thinking.

The parallelism (fear/hope, God/His mercy) reveals integrated faith. True fear of God includes hoping in His mercy; genuine hope in mercy requires fearing Him. These aren't contradictory but complementary—reverent awe doesn't exclude confident trust; expecting mercy doesn't diminish holy respect. Reformed piety maintains this balance—God is simultaneously awesome (to be feared) and gracious (to be hoped in). The eye of LORD rests on those holding both truths together.

Historical Context

God's eye upon His people appears throughout Scripture. Genesis 6:8 says Noah found grace in eyes of LORD. Deuteronomy 11:12 promises God's eyes are always upon promised land. Ezra 5:5 declares God's eye was upon Jewish elders, preventing opposition. Psalms repeatedly celebrate God's watchful care over His people (Psalms 32:8, 34:15).

Fearing God characterizes Old Testament piety. Abraham feared God (Genesis 22:12). Job was man who feared God (Job 1:1). Psalms call God's people fearers of the LORD (Psalms 15:4, 22:23, 25:14). This fear combined with trusting mercy defined covenant relationship—respect for God's majesty didn't preclude confidence in His grace. New Testament continues this: work out salvation with fear and trembling (Philippians 2:12) while approaching throne of grace with boldness (Hebrews 4:16).

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does God's eye being upon you provide greater security than any human strength or resource?
2. What does it mean practically to fear God—how does reverent awe manifest in daily life?
3. How can you cultivate hope in God's mercy without presuming on His grace?
4. What is relationship between fearing God and hoping in His mercy—how do these fit together without contradicting?
5. In what specific ways have you experienced God's attentive care when you feared Him and hoped in His mercy?

Interlinear Text

לְהַצִּיל	מִמָּוֶת	נַפְשָׁם	וּלְחַיֵּיתָם	בְּרָעָב:
To deliver	from death	their soul	and to keep them alive	in famine
H5337	H4194	H5315	H2421	H7458

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 37:19 (Parallel theme): They shall not be ashamed in the evil time: and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied.

Proverbs 10:3 (Parallel theme): The LORD will not suffer the soul of the righteous to famish: but he casteth away the substance of the wicked.

John 10:28 (Parallel theme): And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.

Isaiah 33:16 (Parallel theme): He shall dwell on high: his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure.

Psalms 91:10 (Parallel theme): There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.

Psalms 37:3 (Parallel theme): Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.

John 10:30 (Parallel theme): I and my Father are one.

Acts 12:11 (Parallel theme): And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews.

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