

Psalms 59:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The God of my mercy shall prevent me: God shall let me see my desire upon mine enemies.

Analysis

The God of my mercy shall prevent me: God shall let me see my desire upon mine enemies. This verse expresses confident expectation of divine intervention and vindication. "The God of my mercy" (Elohei chasdi, אֱלֹהֵי חַסְדִּי) is literally "God of my covenant love." Chesed is that rich Hebrew word meaning loyal love, steadfast faithfulness, covenant commitment. God's covenant love toward David defines God's relationship and guarantees His protective action.

The possessive construction is significant: not merely "God who shows mercy" but "God of MY mercy"—the God whose covenant love is personally directed toward me. This echoes Ruth's declaration about Boaz: "The LORD bless him! He has not stopped showing his kindness [chesed] to the living and the dead" (Ruth 2:20). God's covenant commitment to David ensures divine intervention.

"Shall prevent me" (yeqaddemeni, יִקְדָּמֵנִי) uses qadam, meaning to go before, meet, anticipate, come to meet. In older English, "prevent" meant to go before, precede, anticipate (from Latin praevenire, "to come before"). God will meet David—will intervene before enemies destroy him, will act preemptively on David's behalf. Modern translations render it "will meet me" or "will go before me," capturing the Hebrew sense of God taking initiative.

"God shall let me see my desire upon mine enemies" (Elohim yareni beshoreray, אֱלֹהִים יִרְאֵנִי בַשֹּׂרֵרַי) is literally "God will cause me to look upon my watchers/enemies." Shorim means watchers, those lying in wait—fitting the context where

Saul's men watched David's house to kill him (v.1 superscription). David confidently expects to see his watchers defeated, to witness God's vindication.

This isn't petty vengeance but righteous vindication. David appeals to God's justice against those who oppose God's anointed king. The enemies aren't merely David's personal antagonists but opponents of God's purposes. David expects God to demonstrate His righteousness by vindicating the innocent and judging the guilty. This anticipates Christ's teaching: "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord" (Romans 12:19, quoting Deuteronomy 32:35).

Historical Context

The phrase 'God of my mercy' reflects covenant theology central to Israel's faith. God had bound Himself to Israel (and specifically to David through the Davidic covenant, 2 Samuel 7) in unchanging love. This covenant commitment wasn't based on Israel's merit or David's worthiness but on God's faithful character. Even when Israel was faithless, God remained faithful because 'he cannot deny himself' (2 Timothy 2:13).

The concept of God 'going before' His people pervades Old Testament narrative. The pillar of cloud and fire went before Israel through the wilderness (Exodus 13:21). God promised Moses: 'My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest' (Exodus 33:14). Joshua was assured: 'The LORD, he it is that doth go before thee' (Deuteronomy 31:8). This divine precedence meant God prepared the way, fought battles beforehand, and ensured victory before His people even engaged.

David's expectation to 'see desire upon enemies' must be understood within biblical justice framework. Ancient Near Eastern justice operated on *lex talionis* (law of retaliation)—proportionate punishment for wrongs committed. David doesn't seek excessive revenge but appropriate justice. His psalms repeatedly appeal to God as righteous judge to vindicate the innocent and punish the guilty (Psalms 7, 17, 26, 35, etc.).

This principle finds fuller revelation in New Testament. Jesus taught: 'Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you' (Matthew

5:44), and 'Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord' (Romans 12:19). Believers aren't to take personal revenge but to entrust justice to God. The desire to 'see' God's justice doesn't mean taking pleasure in others' suffering but confidence that God will ultimately set all things right.

For persecuted believers throughout history, this verse offered hope. When facing unjust treatment with no earthly recourse, they trusted the God of their covenant love would 'go before' them and vindicate them. Whether vindication came in this life or the next, they were confident God would demonstrate His righteousness and justice.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. What does it mean that God is 'the God of my mercy' (my covenant love), and how does His personal covenant commitment guarantee His protective intervention?
2. How does understanding 'prevent' as 'go before' or 'meet' (rather than modern sense of 'stop') illuminate God's preemptive action on behalf of His people?
3. What is the difference between desiring personal revenge and expecting divine vindication, and how does David's appeal to God's justice rather than taking personal vengeance model righteous response to enemies?
4. In what ways does God 'go before' believers today, anticipating needs and acting preemptively on their behalf?
5. How should believers today understand 'seeing desire upon enemies'—is this about personal satisfaction in others' downfall or confidence in God's righteous judgment?

Interlinear Text

אֵל לֵה יִם חֲסֵדִי יִקְדָּמִי נִי אֵל לֵה יִם יֵרָא נִי
The God of my mercy shall prevent The God shall let me see
H430 H2617 H6923 H430 H7200

בְּשִׁרְיָי:
my desire upon mine enemies
H8324

Additional Cross-References

1 Peter 5:10 (Grace): But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.

Psalms 54:7 (Parallel theme): For he hath delivered me out of all trouble: and mine eye hath seen his desire upon mine enemies.

Psalms 21:3 (Parallel theme): For thou preventest him with the blessings of goodness: thou settest a crown of pure gold on his head.

Psalms 59:17 (Grace): Unto thee, O my strength, will I sing: for God is my defence, and the God of my mercy.

Isaiah 65:24 (Parallel theme): And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.

Psalms 92:11 (Parallel theme): Mine eye also shall see my desire on mine enemies, and mine ears shall hear my desire of the wicked that rise up against me.

Psalms 54:5 (Parallel theme): He shall reward evil unto mine enemies: cut them off in thy truth.

Psalms 56:2 (Parallel theme): Mine enemies would daily swallow me up: for they be many that fight against me, O thou most High.

Psalms 56:6 (Parallel theme): They gather themselves together, they hide themselves, they mark my steps, when they wait for my soul.

Psalms 79:8 (Parallel theme): O remember not against us former iniquities: let thy tender mercies speedily prevent us: for we are brought very low.

From KJV Study • kjevstudy.org