

Psalm 6:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Return, O LORD, deliver my soul: oh save me for thy mercies' sake.

Analysis

David pleads for God to 'return' - implying God seems absent or withdrawn. 'Deliver my soul' requests rescue from death or destruction. The appeal to God's 'mercies' (Hebrew 'chesed' - covenant love) grounds the request in God's character and promises, not David's merit. This demonstrates Reformed theology: we appeal to God's mercy, not our worthiness. The prayer for salvation is ultimately answered in Christ, whose name 'Yeshua' comes from the same Hebrew root as 'save' used here.

Historical Context

The sense of God's absence was a common lament theme in psalms, not indicating actual divine abandonment but the feeling thereof during trial. David's appeal to covenant mercy shows he understood salvation as based on God's faithful character. This anticipates the gospel, where God saves for His name's sake (Ezekiel 36:22).

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. When God seems absent, what truths about His character anchor your prayers?
2. How does appealing to God's mercy rather than your merit change how you pray?

Interlinear Text

מָשָׁכָה: שׁוֹבֵת הַנֶּהָרֶת וְאֶלְעָגָלָה
לְמַעַן הַשְׁיָעָנִי נְפָשִׁי סְלָא הַיְהָ שׁוֹבֵת הַנֶּהָרֶת וְאֶלְעָגָלָה
Return O LORD deliver my soul oh save me for thy mercies
H7725 H3068 H2502 H5315 H3467 H4616 H2617

Additional Cross-References

Daniel 9:18 (Parallel theme): O my God, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes, and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name: for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies.

Psalms 17:13 (References Lord): Arise, O LORD, disappoint him, cast him down: deliver my soul from the wicked, which is thy sword:

Psalms 80:14 (Parallel theme): Return, we beseech thee, O God of hosts: look down from heaven, and behold, and visit this vine;

Psalms 22:20 (Parallel theme): Deliver my soul from the sword; my darling from the power of the dog.

Psalms 116:4 (References Lord): Then called I upon the name of the LORD; O LORD, I beseech thee, deliver my soul.

Psalms 121:7 (References Lord): The LORD shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul.

Psalms 90:13 (References Lord): Return, O LORD, how long? and let it repent thee concerning thy servants.

Malachi 3:7 (References Lord): Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the LORD of hosts. But ye said, Wherein shall we return?

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