

Psalms 69:34

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Let the heaven and earth praise him, the seas, and every thing that moveth therein.

Analysis

For the LORD heareth the poor, and despiseth not his prisoners. This verse provides theological foundation for the encouragement just offered (verse 33). "The LORD heareth the poor" (אֶל־עֲבְיוֹנִים יְהוָה/ki-shomea el-evyonim YHWH) declares God's attentiveness to the needy, afflicted, and vulnerable. Evyonim (poor/ needy) emphasizes material and social poverty. God isn't deaf to their cries but actively listens and responds.

"Despiseth not his prisoners" (וְעַתָּה לֹא בִזָּה/ve'et-assirav lo vazah) declares God doesn't scorn, reject, or treat with contempt those imprisoned—whether literal captives or metaphorically those bound by suffering, oppression, or sin. "His prisoners" (אֲסִירָיו/assirav) indicates covenant relationship—they belong to God even in bondage. God doesn't abandon His people to their captivity but remains committed to their deliverance.

This theme pervades Scripture. God heard Israel's cry from Egyptian bondage (Exodus 2:24, 3:7). He brings prisoners out of darkness (Psalm 107:10-14). Christ came "to preach deliverance to the captives" (Luke 4:18, quoting Isaiah 61:1). The gospel is fundamentally message of liberation—God hears the enslaved and delivers them.

Historical Context

Israel's foundational narrative was liberation from bondage. The exodus demonstrated that Yahweh hears enslaved people's cries and intervenes powerfully to deliver (Exodus 2:23-25, 3:7-10). This shaped Israel's identity: they were the people God heard and rescued. Every subsequent deliverance referenced this original liberation.

"Prisoners" could be literal (those in dungeons, exile, or foreign captivity) or metaphorical (those bound by sin, oppression, or affliction). Throughout biblical history, God's people experienced both. David himself knew literal imprisonment and pursued status (1 Samuel 23-24). Israel faced exile in Babylon. Yet God repeatedly demonstrated He neither forgets nor despises His imprisoned people.

Jesus applied Isaiah 61:1-2 to His ministry: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me... to preach deliverance to the captives... to set at liberty them that are bruised" (Luke 4:18). His death and resurrection accomplished ultimate liberation from sin's bondage (Romans 6:6-7, 17-18, 8:2).

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does God's attentiveness to the poor challenge societal tendencies to ignore or blame the vulnerable?
2. In what ways are you 'imprisoned'—whether by circumstances, sin patterns, or spiritual bondage—and how do you cry to God from that place?

3. How does Israel's exodus narrative shape Christian understanding of salvation as liberation?

Interlinear Text

וְכָל	יָם הַיָּם	וְאֶרֶץ	שָׁמַיִם	יְהוָה הַלְלוּהוּ
	him the seas	and earth	Let the heaven	praise
H3605	H3220	H776	H8064	H1984
בָּם:	רֵם שׁ			
H0	and every thing that moveth			
	H7430			

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 49:13 (Parallel theme): Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains: for the LORD hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted.

Psalms 96:11 (Parallel theme): Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof.

Psalms 150:6 (Resurrection): Let every thing that hath breath praise the LORD. Praise ye the LORD.

Isaiah 55:12 (Parallel theme): For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.