

Psalms 74:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For God is my King of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth.

Analysis

For God is my King of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth. After describing the devastation (verses 3-11), the psalmist pivots to affirmation. Despite present ruin, he declares continued faith in God as King. This transition from lament to confidence is characteristic of Israel's psalms of complaint—they rarely end where they begin.

"God is my King" (Elohim malki, אֱלֹהִים מֶלֶךְ) asserts divine sovereignty even amid apparent defeat. If earthly kingdoms have conquered Israel, God remains the true King. The personal pronoun "my" makes this confession intimate—not abstract theology but personal allegiance.

"Of old" (miqqedem, מִקְדֵּם) reaches back to primordial time, before the current crisis, before the exodus, to the foundations of creation. God's kingship is not recent or contingent; it is eternal and unchangeable. Present circumstances cannot negate ancient reality.

"Working salvation in the midst of the earth" (po'el yeshu'ot beqerev ha'aretz, פֹּעַל יְשׁוּעָה בְּקָרְבָּהָרֶץ) uses a present participle—God is continually working salvation. Yeshu'ot (plural) indicates multiple acts of deliverance. "In the midst of the earth" emphasizes that God's saving work occurs in the visible, public, earthly realm—not in some distant heaven. This sets up the recitation of God's mighty acts that follows (verses 13-17).

Historical Context

The affirmation of God as King was central to Israel's faith, especially during times when human kingship failed or when foreign powers dominated. The "enthronement psalms" (Psalms 93, 95-99) celebrate Yahweh's universal reign. Even in exile, when no Davidic king sat on the throne, Israel confessed that God remained King.

The appeal to God's ancient works was a standard element of Israelite prayer. Recounting the exodus, the creation, the wilderness provision reminded both God and the community of His saving character. If God acted powerfully in the past, He could act again. Memory became the foundation for hope.

The phrase "in the midst of the earth" has eschatological overtones. While Israel might be marginalized geographically and politically, their God worked at the center of cosmic reality. This anticipated prophetic visions of Jerusalem as the navel of the earth (Ezekiel 38:12) and the center from which divine rule would extend.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does affirming God's kingship function as an act of faith during times of apparent defeat?
2. What role does remembering God's past acts play in sustaining hope during present crises?

3. How does the present participle ('working') encourage faith that God is still active even when His activity is not visible?
4. What does it mean for your faith that God works 'in the midst of the earth' rather than from a distance?

Interlinear Text

פָּאָרֶץ: בְּקָרְבָּן שׁוֹעַ וְתִּפְעַל מִלְּכָה יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים
For God is my King of old working salvation in the midst of the earth
H430 H4428 H6924 H6466 H3444 H7130 H776

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 44:4 (Kingdom): Thou art my King, O God: command deliverances for Jacob.

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