

Psalms 78:53

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he led them on safely, so that they feared not: but the sea overwhelmed their enemies.

Analysis

And he led them on safely, so that they feared not: but the sea overwhelmed their enemies. God's guidance produced **safely** (labetach, לָבֶטַח)—confident security amid danger. The Hebrew root batach means to trust or feel secure, indicating that safety was both objective (God's protection) and subjective (Israel's confidence). They **feared not** because divine presence banishes terror (Psalm 23:4).

The dramatic contrast—Israel's safety versus Egypt's drowning—underscores God's discriminating judgment. **The sea overwhelmed their enemies** (kissah et-oyeveihem, כִּסָּה אֶת־אֹיְבֵיהֶם) recalls the Red Sea crossing (Exodus 14:26-28), where the same waters that saved Israel destroyed Pharaoh's army. This pattern repeats throughout redemptive history: baptism saves believers but signifies judgment for unbelievers (1 Peter 3:20-21).

The psalm emphasizes divine agency—God led, God made safe, God overwhelmed. Israel's role was passive trust; Yahweh did the fighting. This anticipates Paul's teaching that salvation is by grace through faith, not human effort (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Historical Context

The Red Sea deliverance became Israel's foundational salvation event, commemorated annually in Passover. Crossing through water prefigured Christian

baptism (1 Corinthians 10:1-2). For Asaph's audience facing Assyrian threats, remembering God's past deliverances encouraged faith that He would act again—a principle Jesus affirmed (Matthew 6:25-34).

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. What 'seas' in your life has God parted for you while overwhelming your spiritual enemies?
2. How does rehearsing past deliverances strengthen faith during present trials?
3. In what ways does baptism symbolize both salvation for believers and judgment for Christ-rejecters?

Interlinear Text

וַיֵּלֶךְ ה'	לְבִטָּח	וְלֹא	כִּי יִדְּאוּ	וְאֵת	אֹיְבֵיהֶם
And he led	them on safely	H3808	so that they feared	H853	their enemies
H5148	H983		H6342		H341
כִּפְּסָהּ	הַיָּם:				
overwhelmed	not but the sea				
H3680	H3220				

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 15:10 (Parallel theme): Thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea covered them: they sank as lead in the mighty waters.

Hebrews 11:29 (Parallel theme): By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned.

Psalms 136:15 (Parallel theme): But overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red sea: for his mercy endureth for ever.

Exodus 14:15 (Parallel theme): And the LORD said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward:

From KJV Study • kjevstudy.org