

Psalms 84:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

O LORD God of hosts, hear my prayer: give ear, O God of Jacob. Selah.

Analysis

O LORD God of hosts, hear my prayer: give ear, O God of Jacob. Selah. The psalmist's plea interrupts the celebratory pilgrimage narrative with urgent petition. This shift from descriptive praise to direct address reflects the pattern of biblical prayer: recounting God's faithfulness grounds present petition. "**Hear my prayer**" (שִׁמְעָה/shim'ah tefillati) employs the imperative—a bold yet appropriate appeal based on covenant relationship.

The dual invocation—"Lord God of hosts" (אלֹהִים צָבָאֹת/Yahweh Elohim Tseva'ot) and "God of Jacob" (אֱלֹהִי יַעֲקֹב/Elohei Ya'akov)—balances transcendence and intimacy. The Lord of heavenly armies, commander of all powers, is simultaneously the God who wrestled with Jacob and kept covenant with the patriarchs. This combination assures that the sovereign Lord is personally invested in His people's welfare.

"**Give ear**" (הַעֲזִיןָ/ha'azinah) intensifies the petition—literally "turn your ear," suggesting attentive listening. "**Selah**" marks a pause for musical interlude and meditation. The prayer doesn't specify its content (revealed in verse 9), creating space for worshipers to insert their own petitions. This universalizes the psalm's application.

Historical Context

The dual divine names reflect Israel's theological development. 'LORD God of hosts' (Yahweh Elohim Tseva'ot) emerges prominently during the monarchic period, especially in warfare contexts (1 Samuel 17:45, 2 Samuel 5:10). 'God of Jacob' anchors hope in the patriarchal covenant, recalling God's promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Together these names assure that the God who defeated foreign armies is the same God who blessed the vulnerable patriarchs and will defend their descendants.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does addressing God with multiple names/titles deepen prayer—what does each title emphasize about His character and your relationship?
2. What is the significance of balancing God's transcendent power ('LORD God of hosts') with His personal covenant faithfulness ('God of Jacob') in prayer?
3. How can Selah pauses in our own prayers create space for listening and meditation rather than merely presenting requests?

Interlinear Text

אָלֹהִים יְהִי תְּפִלָּתִי שְׁמֻעֵה בָּאֹתָה אָלֹהִים יְהִי

O LORD H3068	God H430	of hosts H6635	hear H8085	my prayer H8605	give ear H238	God H430
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סֶלָה: יְשֻׁקֵב

of Jacob H3290	Selah H5542
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