

Psalms 84:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed.

Analysis

Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed. The petition's content emerges: intercession for the king, God's anointed representative. **"Behold"** (הִנֵּה/re'eh) is imperative, asking God to see and consider. **"O God our shield"** (אֱלֹהִים מְגִנָּנוּ/Elohim maginnenu) identifies God as protector, the defensive covering for His people. This military metaphor appears frequently in Psalms (3:3, 18:2, 28:7), assuring that God shields His vulnerable people from enemies.

"Look upon the face of thine anointed" (וְהִבַּט פָּנָי מְשִׁיחָךְ/vehabbet penei meshichecha) petitions God to regard His anointed king favorably. **"Thine anointed"** (מְשִׁיחָךְ/meshichecha—Messiah) refers immediately to the Davidic king but carries messianic implications. To "look upon the face" means to show favor, acceptance, blessing (Numbers 6:25-26).

Structurally, this intercession for the king functions representatively. As the king goes, so goes the nation. His wellbeing ensures communal security. Yet beyond the historical king, Christian interpretation sees ultimate fulfillment in Christ, God's Anointed One. The Father's favorable regard of the Son ensures salvation for all who are in Him (Ephesians 1:6).

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern kingship ideology held that the king's relationship with deity determined national fortune. A king favored by the gods brought prosperity; divine displeasure meant national calamity. In Israel, the Davidic covenant (2 Samuel 7) promised an eternal dynasty, linking national hope to the king's faithfulness and God's covenant loyalty. When the psalm was sung during pilgrimage festivals, prayers for the king's welfare were prayers for communal security. Post-exilic Judaism, lacking a reigning Davidic king, interpreted such psalms messianically, longing for the promised Anointed One who would restore Israel. Christians recognize Jesus as this ultimate Anointed, upon whose face God looks with infinite favor.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does praying for leaders ('thine anointed') relate to Christian responsibility to intercede for governing authorities (1 Timothy 2:1-2)?
2. In what ways does God's favorable regard for Christ ('look upon the face of thine anointed') become the basis for His acceptance of believers?
3. What does it mean to call God 'our shield'—in what practical ways have you experienced His protection?

Interlinear Text

מִן גִּנּוֹ	רֵא ה	אֱלֹהִים	וְהִבֵּט	פָּנָיו	מִשִּׁיחֶךָ:
our shield	Behold	O God	and look	upon the face	of thine anointed
H4043	H7200	H430	H5027	H6440	H4899

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 2:2 (Parallel theme): The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying,

Genesis 15:1 (Parallel theme): After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.

Psalms 132:17 (Parallel theme): There will I make the horn of David to bud: I have ordained a lamp for mine anointed.

Psalms 89:20 (Parallel theme): I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him:

Psalms 98:1 (Parallel theme): O sing unto the LORD a new song; for he hath done marvellous things: his right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory.