

Psalm 85:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Shew us thy mercy, O LORD, and grant us thy salvation.

Analysis

Shew us thy mercy, O LORD, and grant us thy salvation. This verse continues the prayer for restoration, specifically requesting two divine gifts: mercy and salvation. The imperative hare'enu (הָרָאֵנוּ, "show us") means "cause us to see, reveal, make visible." The people don't merely want to hear about God's mercy abstractly but to experience it concretely—to see tangible evidence of His covenant love in their circumstances.

"Thy mercy" (chasdeka, חֶסֶדְךָ) translates the rich Hebrew word chesed (חֶסֶד), often rendered "lovingkindness, steadfast love, covenant faithfulness." Chesed describes God's loyal, enduring, covenant love that doesn't depend on the beloved's worthiness but on the lover's character. It's love that keeps promises, maintains relationships despite betrayal, and persists through hardship. Israel appeals to God's chesed—His covenant commitment to Abraham's descendants that transcends their unfaithfulness.

"And grant us thy salvation" (ve-yish'akha titen-lanu, וְיִשְׁאַלְךָ תִּתְּנָאֵל) requests the gift of deliverance. The Hebrew yesha (יְשָׁאָה, "salvation") means "deliverance, rescue, victory"—God's powerful intervention to save His people from threats, enemies, or judgment. The verb natan (תִּתְּנָאֵל, "give, grant, bestow") emphasizes salvation as gift, not earned wage. The imperfect form "grant" suggests polite request or (wish): "would you please give us your salvation?"

Together, mercy and salvation address both the problem (sin requiring mercy) and the solution (deliverance through salvation). The people need mercy to cover their covenant violations and salvation to rescue them from resulting consequences.

This prayer anticipates the New Testament gospel: "God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us... hath saved us" (Ephesians 2:4, 8).

Historical Context

Covenant Loyalty and God's Saving Acts

The concept of chesed (covenant faithfulness) is central to Old Testament theology. When Moses asked to see God's glory, God proclaimed: "The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness [chesed] and truth" (Exodus 34:6). This became Israel's creedal confession, repeated throughout Scripture (Numbers 14:18, Nehemiah 9:17, Psalm 103:8, 145:8, Joel 2:13, Jonah 4:2). God's chesed defines His character—He is the faithful covenant-keeper who loves persistently.

Israel's history demonstrated this chesed repeatedly. Despite constant rebellion, God showed mercy: forgiving the golden calf apostasy (Exodus 32-34), providing manna despite complaining (Exodus 16), giving water from rocks (Exodus 17), not abandoning them during judges' era (Judges 2:18-19), restoring after exile (Ezra 1). Each deliverance showcased God's chesed—love that exceeded what Israel deserved, grace that persisted despite repeated failure.

"Salvation" (yesha) appears throughout Psalms (3:8, 35:3, 62:1-2, 96:2, 98:2-3) as God's characteristic action. He saved from Egypt (Exodus 15:2), from Philistines (1 Samuel 14:23), from Assyria (2 Kings 19:34), from Babylon (Ezra 1:1-4). These temporal salvations pointed toward ultimate salvation from sin and death. Isaiah prophesied a Servant who would bring salvation to earth's ends (Isaiah 49:6). The angel announced Jesus's name means "Yahweh saves" (Matthew 1:21) because He would save His people from their sins.

Paul explains the relationship between mercy and salvation: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us" (Titus 3:5). Mercy provides salvation's foundation—we're saved not because we deserve it but because God is merciful. Ephesians 2:4-5 says: "God, who is rich in mercy...

even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved)." Psalm 85:7's prayer finds ultimate fulfillment in the gospel.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. What does it mean to ask God to "show" His mercy rather than merely hoping He feels merciful toward us?
2. How is God's covenant faithfulness (*chesed*) different from human love that depends on the beloved's worthiness?
3. What is the relationship between mercy (God's loving-kindness) and salvation (God's deliverance), and why must both be present?
4. How does Israel's historical experience of God's repeated salvations encourage believers to trust Him for present deliverance?
5. How does Psalm 85:7's prayer for mercy and salvation find ultimate fulfillment in the gospel of Jesus Christ?

Interlinear Text

לְכָה יְשַׁעַת תַּתֵּן כִּי מִשְׁעָד בְּנֵינוּ שְׁאֵלָה יְהִי הָרָא כֵּן
Shew O LORD us thy mercy us thy salvation and grant H0
H7200 H3068 H2617 H3468 H5414

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 91:16 (Salvation): With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation.

Psalms 50:23 (Salvation): Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God.

Jeremiah 42:12 (Grace): And I will shew mercies unto you, that he may have mercy upon you, and cause you to return to your own land.

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