

Psalms 85:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him; that glory may dwell in our land.

Analysis

Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him; that glory may dwell in our land. After prophetic assurance that God will speak peace (v. 8), this verse specifies the promise: salvation is near for those who fear God. The emphatic *akh* (אֲכֵן, "surely") introduces confident assertion. *Karov* (קָרוֹב, "nigh, near") suggests imminent arrival—salvation isn't distant future hope but approaching reality. This nearness encourages hope during present difficulty.

"His salvation" (*yish'o*, יִשׁוּעוֹ) refers to God's comprehensive deliverance—spiritual, national, eschatological. *Yesha* (יְשׁוּעָה) encompasses rescue from enemies, restoration of blessing, vindication of the righteous, and ultimate redemption. The possessive "his" emphasizes that salvation originates with God, not human effort. He is both its source and content.

"Them that fear him" (*lirei'av*, לִירֵאָיו) identifies salvation's recipients. *Yir'ah* (יִרְאָה, "fear") means reverent awe, worshipful respect, obedient submission—not terror but proper response to God's majesty and holiness. This "fear" manifests in covenant faithfulness, moral obedience, and dependent trust. The promise is conditional—salvation comes to those who maintain right relationship with God. This doesn't contradict grace (salvation is God's work) but recognizes that God saves those who turn to Him in faith.

"That glory may dwell in our land" (*lishkon kavod be'artzenu*, לְשֹׁכֵן כְּבוֹד בְּאֶרְצֵנוּ) states salvation's ultimate purpose. *Kavod* (כְּבוֹד, "glory") refers to God's manifest

presence—His weighty, visible, transformative presence among His people. *Shakan* (שָׁכַן, "dwell") means "to settle, reside, tabernacle"—permanent habitation, not temporary visit. The vision is of God's glory filling the land as it filled the tabernacle (Exodus 40:34-35) and Solomon's temple (1 Kings 8:10-11).

Historical Context

The concern for God's glory dwelling in the land reflects Israel's unique theology—God's presence among His people was the nation's supreme privilege and purpose. The tabernacle and temple existed so God could dwell with Israel (Exodus 25:8, 29:45-46). When Israel sinned grievously, God's glory departed (1 Samuel 4:21-22, Ezekiel 10:18-19, 11:22-23). The exile meant not just geographic displacement but loss of divine presence. Ezekiel watched God's glory leave the temple before Babylon destroyed it—the ultimate tragedy. When exiles returned and rebuilt the temple, older people who remembered Solomon's temple wept because the new one lacked former glory (Ezra 3:12, Haggai 2:3). God promised through Haggai that future glory would exceed the former (Haggai 2:9), but initially the return seemed disappointing. Psalm 85:9's hope was that complete restoration would bring God's glory back permanently.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. What does it mean to 'fear' God in the biblical sense, and how does this differ from being afraid of Him?
2. How is God's 'glory dwelling in the land' more than merely symbolic or abstract—what does His manifest presence look like concretely?
3. How did Jesus fulfill this promise as 'Immanuel' (God with us), and how will it be ultimately fulfilled in the new creation (Revelation 21:3)?

Interlinear Text

קָרַב אֵלַי	לִירֵא יוֹ	יִשְׁעִי	לִשְׁכֹּן	כָּבוֹד	
H389	is nigh	them that fear	Surely his salvation	may dwell	him that glory
	H7138	H3373	H3468	H7931	H3519
בְּאַרְצֵנוּ:					
in our land					
H776					

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 46:13 (Salvation): I bring near my righteousness; it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry: and I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory.

Zechariah 2:5 (Glory): For I, saith the LORD, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her.

John 7:17 (Parallel theme): If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.

Luke 2:32 (Glory): A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.

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

Zechariah 2:8 (Glory): For thus saith the LORD of hosts; After the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you: for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye.

Ezekiel 26:20 (Glory): When I shall bring thee down with them that descend into the pit, with the people of old time, and shall set thee in the low parts of the earth, in places desolate of old, with them that go down to the pit, that thou be not inhabited; and I shall set glory in the land of the living;

Isaiah 4:5 (Glory): And the LORD will create upon every dwelling place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory shall be a defence.

Acts 13:16 (Parallel theme): Then Paul stood up, and beckoning with his hand said, Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience.

Psalms 119:155 (Salvation): Salvation is far from the wicked: for they seek not thy statutes.

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