

Psalms 86:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For great is thy mercy toward me: and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell.

Analysis

For great is thy mercy toward me (כִּי־חַסְדְּךָ גָדוֹל עָלַי, ki-chasdekha gadol alai)—Chesed means steadfast love, covenant loyalty, mercy; gadol means great, large, abundant. **And thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell** (וְהִצַּלְתָּ נַפְשִׁי מִן־הַצֵּלָה, ve-hitzalta nafshi mi-she'ol tachtiyyah)—Hitzalta means you have delivered; she'ol tachtiyyah means the lowest Sheol, the depths of the grave.

This verse grounds praise (v. 12) in specific deliverance. God's chesed isn't abstract but experienced—he rescued David from death itself. "Lowest hell" (Sheol) represents not just physical death but the realm of the dead, separation from God. New Testament believers read this christologically: Jesus descended to the grave and rose, delivering all who trust him from ultimate death (Ephesians 4:8-9).

Historical Context

David repeatedly faced mortal danger—from Goliath, Saul's spear, enemy armies, Absalom's coup. Each deliverance confirmed God's chesed. Early Christians applied this verse to Christ's resurrection, seeing it as the ultimate deliverance from Sheol's depths.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. From what specific "depths" has God's mercy delivered you in the past?
2. How does remembering past deliverances strengthen faith during present trials?
3. How does Christ's descent to death and resurrection fulfill this verse ultimately?

Interlinear Text

כִּי	חַסְדְּךָ	גָּדוֹל	עַל־י	וְהוֹצַלְתָּ	נַפְשִׁי
H3588	is thy mercy	For great	H5921	toward me and thou hast delivered	my soul
	H2617	H1419		H5337	H5315
וּלְ	הַמָּוֶת	מִן־הַמָּוֶת			
hell	from the lowest				
H7585	H8482				

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 56:13 (Parallel theme): For thou hast delivered my soul from death: wilt not thou deliver my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living?

Psalms 57:10 (Grace): For thy mercy is great unto the heavens, and thy truth unto the clouds.

Luke 1:58 (Grace): And her neighbours and her cousins heard how the Lord had shewed great mercy upon her; and they rejoiced with her.

Psalms 116:8 (Parallel theme): For thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling.

Psalms 16:10 (Parallel theme): For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

Psalms 30:3 (Parallel theme): O LORD, thou hast brought up my soul from the grave: thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit.

Job 33:28 (Parallel theme): He will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light.

1 Thessalonians 1:10 (Parallel theme): And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.

Psalms 88:6 (Parallel theme): Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps.

Job 33:24 (Grace): Then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom.

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