

# Psalms 86:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Shew me a token for good; that they which hate me may see it, and be ashamed: because thou, LORD, hast holpen me, and comforted me.

## Analysis

**Shew me a token for good** (שְׁחַתְּעַמְּ אֹתֶל טוֹבָה, aseh-immi ot le-tovah)—Ot means sign, token, evidence; tovah means for good, for favor. **That they which hate me may see it, and be ashamed** (וַיַּרְאוּ שְׁנָאֵי יְבָשָׁו, ve-yir'u son'ai ve-yevoshu)—Bosh means be ashamed, embarrassed, put to shame. **Because thou, LORD, hast holpen me, and comforted me** (כִּי-אַתָּה וְהִתְהִירָתִי וְנַחֲמָתִי) ki-attah YHWH azartani ve-nichamtani)—Azar means help, aid; nacham means comfort, console.

David asks for visible evidence of God's favor so his enemies will see and be ashamed. This isn't vindictiveness but longing for God's name to be vindicated. When God helps his people publicly, it silences mockers and glorifies his name. The psalm ends with confident past tense: "thou hast holpen me and comforted me"—anticipating the answer before it arrives.

## Historical Context

Throughout Scripture, God gave visible signs to vindicate his servants: fire from heaven for Elijah (1 Kings 18), Daniel unharmed in the lions' den (Daniel 6), Peter freed from prison (Acts 12). These tokens silenced enemies and strengthened faith.

## Related Passages

---

**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

## Study Questions

---

1. When have you wished for visible evidence of God's favor to silence critics?
2. How does this verse balance legitimate desire for vindication with potential pride or vengeance?
3. What does it mean to end a lament prayer with past-tense confidence: "thou hast helped me"?

## Interlinear Text

---

שְׁנָא־ יִירְאָא וְלֹט וְבָהּ אִזְתָּעַט עַמְּשָׁה  
Shew H5973 me a token H226 for good H2896 me may see H7200 that they which hate H8130

עִזְרָתְךָ נִיְּבָשׁוּ אַתָּה הִנֵּה ! בְּאֵת שָׁוֹעָה  
it and be ashamed H954 H3588 H859 because thou LORD H3068 hast holpen H5826

וְנִכְמַתְנִי  
me and comforted H5162

## Additional Cross-References

---

**Judges 6:17** (Parallel theme): And he said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, then shew me a sign that thou talkest with me.

**Psalms 40:1** (References Lord): I waited patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry.

**1 Corinthians 5:5** (References Lord): To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

**Isaiah 38:22** (References Lord): Hezekiah also had said, What is the sign that I shall go up to the house of the LORD?

**Psalms 109:29** (Parallel theme): Let mine adversaries be clothed with shame, and let them cover themselves with their own confusion, as with a mantle.

**Psalms 74:9** (Parallel theme): We see not our signs: there is no more any prophet: neither is there among us any that knoweth how long.

---

From KJV Study • [kjvstudy.org](http://kjvstudy.org)