

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 (עֲשֵׂה־עִמִּי אוֹת לְטוֹבָה, 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** (וְיִרְאוּ שׁוֹנְאֵי וַיֵּבוֹשׁוּ, 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 יְהוָה עֲזַרְתָּנִי וְנַחַמְתָּנִי, 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.

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.