

Psalms 86:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Preserve my soul; for I am holy: O thou my God, save thy servant that trusteth in thee.

Analysis

Preserve my soul; for I am holy: O thou my God, save thy servant that trusteth in thee. David requests preservation (shomrah, שְׁמֹרָה, guard/keep) of his nephesh (נֶפֶשׁ, soul/life), asking God to protect his entire being from threats. The plea combines physical safety and spiritual preservation, recognizing that both dimensions of existence depend on divine guardianship.

The bold claim **I am holy** (ani chasid, אֲנִי חָסִיד) doesn't assert sinless perfection but covenant faithfulness. Chasid denotes one who practices chesed (steadfast covenant love), who maintains loyalty to God's covenant. David appeals to his relationship status—he belongs to God's holy people and should therefore receive covenant protection. This parallels Israel's corporate claim: "You shall be holy, for I am holy" (Leviticus 19:2).

The verse balances confidence in covenant standing with humble dependence: **thy servant that trusteth in thee**. David's trust (boteach, בֹּטָח) grounds his appeal, not presumption but faith in God's covenant promises. This faith-based petition models Christian prayer that approaches God's throne boldly (Hebrews 4:16) through Christ's righteousness, not personal merit.

Historical Context

The concept of holiness as covenant relationship rather than sinless perfection pervades Old Testament theology. Israel was holy (set apart) because chosen by

God, called to reflect His character. David, as anointed king, had special covenant status, but his holiness depended on maintaining faithful relationship with God, not on performance perfection. His confidence rested on God's promise to David's house (2 Samuel 7:8-16).

Related Passages

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How can believers claim holiness before God without denying ongoing struggle with sin?
2. What's the relationship between trusting God and experiencing His preservation in your life?
3. How does understanding holiness as covenant relationship rather than performance change your prayer life?

Interlinear Text

שְׁמֹרֶה	נַפְשִׁי	כִּי	קָדֵשׁ יְדִי	אֲנִי	הוֹשֵׁעַ	עַבְדְּךָ	אֶתְּהָ
Preserve	my soul	H3588	for I am holy	H589	save	thy servant	H859
H8104	H5315		H2623		H3467	H5650	
אֱלֹהֵי י	הַבּוֹטֵה בִּי	אֵלַי:					
O thou my God	that trusteth	H413					
H430	H982						

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 4:3 (References God): But know that the LORD hath set apart him that is godly for himself: the LORD will hear when I call unto him.

Psalms 25:2 (Faith): O my God, I trust in thee: let me not be ashamed, let not mine enemies triumph over me.

John 17:11 (Holy): And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.

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