

Psalms 89:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For the LORD is our defence; and the Holy One of Israel is our king.

Analysis

For the LORD is our defence—(כִּי לְהִיא מִצְמָנוֹ) Magen (shield, defense, protector) identifies Yahweh Himself as Israel's security, not armies or walls. **And the Holy One of Israel is our king**—(וְלִקְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל מֶלֶכְנוּ) Qedosh Yisrael (Holy One of Israel) is Isaiah's favorite divine title, emphasizing God's transcendent purity and covenant loyalty. He alone is melek (king).

This verse climaxes the doxological section before the psalm shifts to lament. God as 'shield' recalls Abraham's covenant (Genesis 15:1, 'I am thy shield') and Deuteronomy 33:29 ('the shield of thy help'). The 'Holy One of Israel' became the messianic title par excellence—Jesus is simultaneously transcendently holy and covenantally committed to His people. Earthly kings (even David) are merely under-shepherds; Yahweh is the true King, and Christ incarnates this kingship (John 18:37, Revelation 19:16).

Historical Context

This verse was written centuries before the monarchy's collapse, yet it asserts that even while Israel had earthly kings, Yahweh remained the ultimate sovereign. The exile would later prove this—though the Davidic throne fell, God's kingship endured, awaiting restoration through the Messiah.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 – Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 2:1 – Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. What false 'shields' (security systems, relationships, wealth) are you tempted to trust instead of the LORD as your defense?
2. How does the title 'Holy One of Israel' balance God's transcendent otherness with His intimate covenant commitment?
3. In what ways does acknowledging Christ as King practically reorganize your priorities and allegiances?

Interlinear Text

מֶלֶךְנוּ יְשָׁרָאֵל לְיְהוָה מֶלֶךְ נָנוּ וְלִקְדָּשׁ מֶלֶךְ נָנוּ כִּי יְהוָה הַיְהּ

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 47:9 (Parallel theme): The princes of the people are gathered together, even the people of the God of Abraham: for the shields of the earth belong unto God: he is greatly exalted.

Psalms 71:22 (Holy): I will also praise thee with the psaltery, even thy truth, O my God: unto thee will I sing with the harp, O thou Holy One of Israel.

Isaiah 43:3 (Holy): For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee.

Isaiah 1:4 (Holy): Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward.

Isaiah 33:22 (Kingdom): For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king; he will save us.

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