

Psalms 89:33

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Nevertheless my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail.

Analysis

Nevertheless my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. The crucial turning point: after detailing discipline for covenant violation (vv. 30-32), God declares that punishment will not mean abandonment. **Nevertheless** (wə-ḥasdî, וְחַסְדִּי prefaced by the adversative waw) signals dramatic reversal. Despite deserved judgment, **my lovingkindness** (ḥasdî, חַסְדִּי)—that covenantal hesed (חֶסֶד), loyal love—**will I not utterly take from him** (lō'-'āpîr mē-'im-mô, לֹא-אֶפִּיר מֵעִמּוֹ). The verb pārar (פָּרַר) means to break, annul, make void, frustrate.

Nor suffer my faithfulness to fail uses wə-lō'-'āšaq-qêr be-'ēmûnâtî (וְלֹא-אֶשְׁקַר בְּעִמּוּנָתִי). The verb šāqar (שָׁקַר) means to deal falsely, act treacherously, lie. God's 'ēmûnāh (עִמּוּנָה, "faithfulness") cannot fail—He cannot deny His own character or break His word. This echoes Numbers 23:19: "God is not a man, that He should lie...has He said, and will He not do it?"

This verse is the theological hinge of the Davidic covenant. Despite Israel's unfaithfulness, God's hesed remains; despite human failure, divine 'ēmûnāh stands firm. This is not because Israel deserves it but because of God's character and covenant oath. Paul references this in Romans 3:3-4: "What if some did not believe? Will their unbelief make the faithfulness of God without effect? Certainly not!" God's covenant promise to David found ultimate fulfillment in Jesus Christ, the faithful Son who never broke covenant, guaranteeing eternal hesed for all who trust in Him.

Historical Context

When Jerusalem fell in 586 BCE and the Davidic monarchy ended, it appeared God had broken His covenant. Psalm 89:38-51 expresses this anguish. Yet God's lovingkindness was not utterly removed—He preserved a remnant, brought them back from exile, maintained David's genealogical line through centuries of foreign rule, and ultimately sent Jesus, the Son of David, through whom the covenant promises were eternally secured. God's faithfulness did not fail, though tested through centuries of apparent silence.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does the word 'nevertheless' in this verse reveal the heart of the gospel—that God's love is not contingent on human faithfulness?
2. What does it mean that God will not 'suffer His faithfulness to fail'—how is God's character the ultimate guarantee of His covenant promises?
3. How does Jesus Christ embody both the judgment for covenant-breaking (bearing the rod and stripes) and the preservation of God's hesed and faithfulness?

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