

Psalms 89:38

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But thou hast cast off and abhorred, thou hast been wroth with thine anointed.

Analysis

But thou hast cast off and abhorred, thou hast been wroth with thine anointed—the devastating "but" (Hebrew וְאַתָּה ve-attah) reverses everything promised in verses 1-37. Three Hebrew verbs intensify God's rejection: zanach (cast off, spurned), ma'as (abhorred, rejected with disgust), and 'avar (been wroth, overflowed with fury). The object is **thine anointed** (מְשִׁיחְךָ meshichekha)—literally "your Messiah," the Davidic king God Himself chose.

This verse forms the dramatic turn from covenant promise to covenant crisis. The same God who swore eternal faithfulness to David (vv.3-4, 19-37) now appears to have broken His oath. The psalmist doesn't soften reality—he holds God accountable to His own Word. This brutal honesty characterizes biblical lament: faith doesn't deny suffering but brings it directly to God. The rejection of "thine anointed" anticipates Christ's cry of dereliction (Matthew 27:46), when the ultimate Anointed One experienced divine wrath for covenant breakers.

Historical Context

Written during the Babylonian exile (586 BC), when Jerusalem fell and the Davidic dynasty ended with Zedekiah's capture and blinding. The "anointed" king, meant to rule forever (2 Samuel 7:12-16), was instead dethroned. This wasn't mere military defeat—it appeared God had repudiated His unconditional covenant. The psalm reflects Israel's theological crisis: How can God be faithful if His promises fail?

Related Passages

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does this verse model honest lament—bringing God's apparent contradictions directly to Him rather than suppressing doubt?
2. When have you felt God has "cast off" His promises to you? How did you process that with Him?
3. How does Christ's experience of being "cast off" on the cross (Isaiah 53:4, Matthew 27:46) guarantee that believers will never ultimately be abandoned?

Interlinear Text

וְאַתָּה הָ	וְנִחַתְּ	וְתִמְאָס	הָ תַעֲבִי רָבָה	עַם
H859	But thou hast cast off	and abhorred	thou hast been wroth	H5973
	H2186	H3988	H5674	
מְשִׁיחֶךָ:				
with thine anointed				
H4899				

Additional Cross-References

1 Chronicles 28:9 (Parallel theme): And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the LORD searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever.

Deuteronomy 32:19 (Parallel theme): And when the LORD saw it, he abhorred them, because of the provoking of his sons, and of his daughters.

Psalms 89:51 (Parallel theme): Wherewith thine enemies have reproached, O LORD; wherewith they have reproached the footsteps of thine anointed.

From KJV Study • kjevstudy.org