

Psalms 89:39

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thou hast made void the covenant of thy servant: thou hast profaned his crown by casting it to the ground.

Analysis

Thou hast made void the covenant of thy servant (נְאַרְתָּ בְרִית עַבְדְּךָ ne'arta berit avdekha)—the verb na'ar means to despise, reject, or nullify. The psalmist accuses God of abrogating His own berit (covenant), the solemn oath to David. **Thou hast profaned his crown by casting it to the ground** (חִלַּלְתָּ לְאַרְץ נִזְרוֹ chillalta la-aretz nizro)—chilel means to desecrate, treat as common or unholy what should be sacred. The crown (nezer, also used for priestly diadem) symbolized divine appointment; its defilement represents the king's humiliation.

This accusation is theologically stunning: God is charged with covenant violation. Yet Scripture permits such bold prayer because covenant relationship allows fierce honesty. The language anticipates Christ, whose crown was mocked (Matthew 27:29) and whose covenant blood appeared "cast to the ground" at Golgotha—yet precisely through that profaning, the eternal covenant was established (Hebrews 13:20). The covenant wasn't made void; it was fulfilled through the Anointed One's suffering.

Historical Context

The Davidic covenant (2 Samuel 7; Psalm 89:3-4, 28-37) promised unconditional permanence: "If his children forsake my law...I will visit their transgression with the rod...Nevertheless my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him" (vv.30-33). Yet by 586 BC, no Davidic king ruled. The crown lay in Babylon's dust. Only Christ's resurrection vindicated the covenant's eternity.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does God's apparent "covenant-breaking" in allowing exile teach the difference between discipline and abandonment?
2. What "crowns" (honors, callings, ministries) might God allow to be profaned to achieve deeper purposes?
3. How does Hebrews 13:20 ("the blood of the everlasting covenant") answer this verse's charge that God made void the covenant?

Interlinear Text

וַיַּאֲרֶתָהּ	בְּרִית	עַבְדְּךָ	חָלַל לְךָ
Thou hast made void	the covenant	of thy servant	thou hast profaned
H5010	H1285	H5650	H2490
לָאֵרֶץ	כִּתּוּלָּהּ		
by casting it to the ground	his crown		
H776	H5145		

Additional Cross-References

Lamentations 5:16 (Parallel theme): The crown is fallen from our head: woe unto us, that we have sinned!

Psalms 74:7 (Parallel theme): They have cast fire into thy sanctuary, they have defiled by casting down the dwelling place of thy name to the ground.