

Psalms 89:42

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thou hast set up the right hand of his adversaries; thou hast made all his enemies to rejoice.

Analysis

Thou hast set up the right hand of his adversaries (הָרִימוֹתָ יְמִין צָרָיו) haremota yemin tzarav)—the "right hand" symbolizes power and victory. God didn't merely permit enemy triumph; He actively exalted (haremota, lifted up, established) their strength. **Thou hast made all his enemies to rejoice** (הִשְׁמַחְתָּ כָּל־אֹיְבָיו) hismachta kol-oyevav)—samach indicates jubilant celebration. God gave His covenant people's foes cause for gladness.

This disturbing theology appears throughout Scripture: God uses pagan nations to judge His people (Habakkuk 1:6; Isaiah 10:5). The right hand of Babylon was God's instrument. Yet paradox deepens: ultimately God would exalt the right hand of His Anointed (Psalm 110:1; Acts 2:33-34). Christ's enemies rejoiced at the cross (Luke 23:35), thinking they'd triumphed. Easter morning reversed every enemy celebration. The resurrection declares whose right hand truly prevails.

Historical Context

Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon celebrated Judah's conquest. The Babylonian Chronicle records: "The king of Babylon mustered his army and marched to Hattu [Syria-Palestine]...He besieged the city of Judah and captured the king." Babylon's gods seemed victorious over YHWH. Yet within 50 years, Babylon fell to Persia, and the Jews returned—God's right hand outlasted all adversaries.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. How do you reconcile God's sovereignty with evil people prospering? Does God merely permit or actively use their success?
2. When enemies of the gospel seem to triumph, how does Christ's resurrection guarantee their celebration is premature?
3. What does Psalm 110:1 (Christ at God's right hand) teach about whose victory is ultimately exalted?

Interlinear Text

תָּהָא רִימוֹתְךָ	יָמֶיךָ יְיָ	צָדֶיךָ יְיָ	תָּהָא שְׂמֵיךָ תִּתְּ	כָּל
Thou hast set up	the right hand	of his adversaries	to rejoice	
H7311	H3225	H6862	H8055	H3605
אֶתְּכֵיךָ:				
thou hast made all his enemies				
H341				