

Psalm 89:43

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thou hast also turned the edge of his sword, and hast not made him to stand in the battle.

Analysis

Thou hast also turned the edge of his sword (תָּשִׁיב צָרֶיךָ tashiv tzur charbo)—tzur (edge/blade) is turned back (shub, reversed), making the weapon ineffective. The king's sword, meant to execute God's justice, is blunted. **And hast not made him to stand in the battle** (וְלֹא קָרַםְתָּה בְּמַלְכָה) (velo haqimoto bamilchamah)—God withheld the strength to stand firm (qum, stand, endure) in combat.

Divine warrior imagery pervades the Old Testament; Israel's king fought YHWH's battles (1 Samuel 18:17). But here God ensures defeat. The theological point: military strength means nothing without divine enablement. "Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the LORD our God" (Psalm 20:7). When God withdraws support, no weapon prevails. Conversely, Christ's sword—the Word proceeding from His mouth (Revelation 19:15)—never turns back empty (Isaiah 55:11). His victory in spiritual battle is absolute.

Historical Context

Judah's final kings (Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, Zedekiah) couldn't withstand Babylon despite military resistance. 2 Kings 24-25 chronicles futile defense. Zedekiah's rebellion failed catastrophically—his sons were slaughtered before his eyes, then his eyes were gouged out (2 Kings 25:7). The king couldn't "stand" because God had withdrawn enabling power. This fulfilled the covenant curse: "The LORD shall cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies" (Deuteronomy 28:25).

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. When has your "sword" (abilities, efforts, strategies) been ineffective despite your best efforts? Did you recognize God's hand in the failure?
2. How does this verse challenge any confidence in human strength apart from God's enablement?
3. How is Christ's sword (the Word of God, Hebrews 4:12; Revelation 19:15) different from all earthly weapons that can be turned back?

Interlinear Text

אַתָּה שִׁבֵּצְתָּ אֶת־אָבִיךָ

H637 Thou hast also turned H7725 the edge H6697 of his sword H3808

H2719

וְלֹא־קִימַת־בְּמִלְחָמָה:

and hast not made him to stand in the battle

H6965

H4421

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