

Psalms 89:49

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Lord, where are thy former lovingkindnesses, which thou
swarest unto David in thy truth?

Analysis

Lord, where are thy former lovingkindnesses, which thou swarest unto David in thy truth? (אֵיךְ חַסָּדֶיךָ הָרִאשִׁימִים אֲדֹנָי נִשְׁבַּעְתָּ לְדָוִד בְּאֱמוּנָתְךָ ayyeh chasadekha harishonim adonai nishba'ta le-david be-emunah) expresses anguished searching. Chasadim harishonim (former mercies/lovingkindnesses) refers to God's covenant love shown previously. Nishba'ta (thou swarest) recalls God's oath; emunah (truth, faithfulness) grounds the appeal in God's character.

This is covenant lawsuit language—Israel holding God to His sworn testimony. The psalmist isn't doubting God's existence but His consistency: Where is the chesed displayed to David, promised to his descendants? The "former" mercies seem absent in present catastrophe. Yet the answer: God's chesed never ceased; it was being demonstrated in discipline that would ultimately restore (Lamentations 3:22: "It is of the LORD's mercies that we are not consumed"). The ultimate chesed sworn to David came in Christ, "of whom it is witnessed, Thou art a priest for ever" (Hebrews 7:17)—the eternal King from David's line. God's oath stands forever (Hebrews 6:13-18).

Historical Context

God's oath to David (2 Samuel 7:11-16; Psalm 89:3-4, 35-37) was unconditional: "I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me." Exile seemed to contradict this. The answer: God's oath wasn't to biological succession but to the Messianic seed. Christ, David's son, fulfills the

oath eternally. God's "former mercies" to David were types of eternal mercies in Christ.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. When God's "former" mercies seem absent, how do you distinguish between doubting God's character and questioning His timing?
2. How does God's oath to David (2 Samuel 7) ultimately find fulfillment in Christ rather than biological descendants?
3. What does Hebrews 6:13-18 teach about the unchangeable nature of God's sworn promises?

Interlinear Text

אֵי הָא	חֶסֶד יְיָ	הָרִאשֹׁנִים יִמִּין	אֲדֹנָי י	נִשְׁבַּע עֲתָה
H346	lovingkindnesses	where are thy former	Lord	which thou swarest
	H2617	H7223	H136	H7650
לְדָוִד	בְּאֱמוּנָתְךָ:			
unto David	in thy truth			
H1732	H530			

Additional Cross-References

2 Samuel 7:15 (Parallel theme): But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee.