

Psalms 89:51

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Wherewith thine enemies have reproached, O LORD;
wherewith they have reproached the footsteps of thine
anointed.

Analysis

Wherewith thine enemies have reproached, O LORD; wherewith they have reproached the footsteps of thine anointed (אֲשֶׁר חִרְפוּ אוֹיְבֶיךָ יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר חִרְפוּ עֲקֵבוֹת מְשִׁיחֶךָ asher cherfu oyevekha YHWH asher cherfu iqqevot meshichekha)—the repetition of cherfu (they have reproached) intensifies the mockery. **Thine enemies** (oyevkha) attack not Israel primarily but YHWH Himself. **The footsteps of thine anointed** (עֲקֵבוֹת מְשִׁיחֶךָ iqqevot meshichekha)—iqqevot means heels, footsteps, tracks. They mock every step the Messianic king takes, deriding his path.

This climactic verse reveals the core issue: attacks on God's people are attacks on God. Persecuting the Messiah is persecuting YHWH (Acts 9:4: "Why persecutest thou me?"). Christ's every step—from Bethlehem to Calvary—was mocked. His footsteps led to the cross, where enemies believed they'd triumphed. Yet those very footsteps crushed the serpent's head (Genesis 3:15; Romans 16:20). The psalm ends without resolution, a lament awaiting answer. The answer came Easter morning: the reproached Anointed rose, vindicated. Every footprint of Christ's obedience purchased redemption. Now believers follow His footsteps (1 Peter 2:21), sometimes reproached, ultimately glorified.

Historical Context

The psalm concludes Book III of the Psalter (Psalms 73-89) with unresolved lament—appropriate for exile's darkness. Verse 52 is a doxology closing Book III, not part of the lament. The reproach of the anointed intensified through exile, inter-testamental period, and climaxed at Christ's crucifixion when mockers said, "He saved others; himself he cannot save" (Matthew 27:42). Only resurrection vindicated the reproached steps of Messiah.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does recognizing that attacks on believers are attacks on Christ (Acts 9:4) reframe your response to persecution?
2. What "footsteps of the anointed" are you called to follow, even when they lead through reproach (1 Peter 2:21)?
3. How does the psalm ending without resolution (until the doxology) teach us to wait for God's vindication in His timing?

Interlinear Text

אֲשֶׁר	חַרְפוּ וְ	אֹיְבֵי יְדָו	יְהוָה	אֲשֶׁר
H834	have reproached	Wherewith thine enemies	O LORD	H834
	H2778	H341	H3068	
חַרְפוּ וְ	עֲקֵב וְ	מְשִׁיחֶךָ:		
have reproached	the footsteps	of thine anointed		
H2778	H6119	H4899		

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