

Psalm 89:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him.

Analysis

God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints (אל נערץ בסוד קדשים) —Na'aratz (feared, held in awe) describes reverent dread before God's holiness within the sod (council, secret assembly) of qedoshim (holy ones). This may refer to the heavenly court or to Israel's worship assemblies. **And to be had in reverence of all them that are about him** (ונרא על כל סביעו) —Nora (awesome, dreadful) extends to all who surround His throne.

True worship balances intimacy with reverence. While God invites us near through covenant love (hesed), His holiness remains terrifying. Isaiah 6:1-5 captures this—seraphim cover themselves in God's presence, crying 'Holy, holy, holy.' Hebrews 12:28-29 commands we serve God 'with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire.' The modern church often loses this balance, emphasizing intimacy without the trembling awe due to infinite majesty.

Historical Context

The 'assembly of the saints' connects to Israel's covenant community gathered for worship at the tabernacle/temple. God's manifest presence (Shekinah glory) made these encounters both inviting and terrifying—the same God who dwelt among His people also consumed Nadab and Abihu (Leviticus 10:1-2) for irreverent approach.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How can you cultivate both intimacy with God and appropriate fear/reverence in your prayer and worship?
2. In what ways might contemporary worship have lost the element of reverent fear? How can it be recovered?
3. How does Jesus as our High Priest enable bold approach (Hebrews 4:16) while maintaining God's awesome holiness?

Interlinear Text

רַבָּה־הַקָּדָשׁ־יְמִינֵי־בָּסִיד־נְאָרָז־אֵל
God to be feared in the assembly of the saints is greatly
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סְבִיבָיוֹן־כָּל־עַל־נָזֶב־אֵל
and to be had in reverence H5921 H3605 of all them that are about
H3372 H5439

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 47:2 (Parallel theme): For the LORD most high is terrible; he is a great King over all the earth.

Acts 5:11 (Parallel theme): And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.

Jeremiah 10:10 (References God): But the LORD is the true God, he is the living God, and an everlasting king: at his wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide his indignation.

Jeremiah 10:7 (Parallel theme): Who would not fear thee, O King of nations? for to thee doth it appertain: forasmuch as among all the wise men of the nations, and in all their kingdoms, there is none like unto thee.

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