

Psalms 9:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For the needy shall not alway be forgotten: the expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever.

Analysis

For the needy shall not alway be forgotten: the expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever. Immediately after declaring judgment on the wicked (verse 17), David balances divine justice with divine mercy. God's judgment on the oppressor ensures that the oppressed will not be permanently forgotten. This verse provides eschatological hope for those who suffer.

"The needy shall not alway be forgotten" (ki lo lanetzach yishakach evyon, קַיְלָא לְנֵצֶח יִשְׁאָכֵחַ evyon) addresses the evyon (needy, destitute, poor)—those in desperate want with no resources. "Shall not alway be forgotten" uses shakach (to forget) negated with lanetzach (forever, perpetually). While the needy may feel forgotten temporarily, this is not their permanent state. God's justice ensures that their cause will eventually be remembered and vindicated.

"The expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever" (tiqvat aniyyim tovad la'ad, תִּקְוָת עֲנֵיִם תּוֹדֵד לְעָד) parallels and intensifies the first clause. Tiqvah (expectation, hope) represents not mere wishful thinking but confident anticipation based on God's promises. Aniyyim (poor, afflicted, humble) describes those who are economically disadvantaged and socially marginalized. "Shall not perish" (tovad, תּוֹדֵד) means it will not be destroyed, lost, or come to nothing. La'ad (forever, perpetually) reinforces lanetzach—this is an eternal promise.

The verse functions as divine reassurance to the suffering. While injustice may prevail temporarily, while the wicked may prosper for a season, while the poor may

suffer now, their hope is not in vain. God sees, remembers, and will act. The double negative ("not always," "not forever") acknowledges present suffering while promising future vindication. This sustains faith during prolonged trials.

Historical Context

The plight of the poor was a constant concern in ancient societies with no social safety nets. Without family support, the poor could die of starvation, exposure, or violence. Israel's law provided some protections (gleaning rights, Sabbath rest, Year of Jubilee), but these were often ignored by the powerful (Amos 2:6-7, 5:11-12; Isaiah 3:14-15, 10:1-2).

The prophets consistently championed the cause of the poor, declaring that God has not forgotten them even when human society has. Isaiah promised: "The meek also shall increase their joy in the LORD, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel" (Isaiah 29:19). Zephaniah declared that God would "leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the LORD" (Zephaniah 3:12).

Jesus' ministry embodied this principle. He announced that He came to "preach the gospel to the poor" (Luke 4:18), blessed the poor in spirit (Matthew 5:3), and declared that the kingdom belongs to such (Luke 6:20). James later rebuked the church for dishonoring the poor (James 2:5-6). The consistent biblical witness is that God has special concern for the economically and socially marginalized, and their hope will not ultimately be disappointed.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. How does God's promise that the needy will 'not always be forgotten' provide hope during present suffering?
2. What is the 'expectation' or hope of the poor, and why is this hope secure despite circumstances?
3. How does this verse balance realism about present injustice with confidence in ultimate justice?
4. What responsibility does the church have to be the visible expression of God's remembering the needy?

Interlinear Text

תַּקְנֵּת	תַּ	אָבִי	וְ	לֹא	כִּי	לֹא	צָחַ	לֹא	צָחַ	וְ	יִשְׁכַּחַ	וְ	יִשְׁכַּחַ	וְ	אָבִי	וְ	תַּקְנֵּת	
H3588	H3808	shall not alway		H5331		H7911	be forgotten		H34		For the needy		H8615	the expectation				
לֹא	יָמַם		תַּאֲבֵת		לֹא	לְשָׁמֵד:												
H6035		shall not perish		H6		H5703	for ever											

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 12:5 (Parallel theme): For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the LORD; I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him.

Proverbs 23:18 (Parallel theme): For surely there is an end; and thine expectation shall not be cut off.

Proverbs 24:14 (Parallel theme): So shall the knowledge of wisdom be unto thy soul: when thou hast found it, then there shall be a reward, and thy expectation shall not be cut off.

James 2:5 (Parallel theme): Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?

Psalms 102:17 (Parallel theme): He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer.

Psalms 72:4 (Parallel theme): He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor.

Psalms 102:20 (Parallel theme): To hear the groaning of the prisoner; to loose those that are appointed to death;

Psalms 109:31 (Parallel theme): For he shall stand at the right hand of the poor, to save him from those that condemn his soul.

Luke 1:53 (Parallel theme): He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away.

Luke 6:20 (Parallel theme): And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said, Blessed be ye poor: for your's is the kingdom of God.

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