

Psalms 9:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Put them in fear, O LORD: that the nations may know themselves to be but men. Selah.

Analysis

David prays for the nations to remember their creatureliness. The Hebrew 'morah' (fear/terror) indicates holy reverence, not mere anxiety. This Reformed perspective affirms that acknowledging our humanity before God is the beginning of wisdom (Proverbs 9:10) and necessary for salvation—we must know we are not God.

Historical Context

Written during a period when surrounding nations threatened Israel with military might, forgetting their accountability to Israel's God.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does modern culture deny human creatureliness and dependence?
2. What practices help you maintain proper fear of the Lord?

Interlinear Text

גּוֹיִם יְדֻעַ וְיִתְּפַחַד הָיָה בְּמִזְרָחָה לְפָנֶיךָ יְהֹוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֲנָשׁוּם וְאַנְשׁוּם
Put O LORD them in fear may know that the nations
H7896 H3068 H4172 H1992 H3045 H1471
themselves to be but men Selah
H582 H1992 H5542

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 31:3 (References Lord): Now the Egyptians are men, and not God; and their horses flesh, and not spirit. When the LORD shall stretch out his hand, both he that helpeth shall fall, and he that is holpen shall fall down, and they all shall fail together.

Psalms 62:9 (Parallel theme): Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie: to be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity.

Psalms 76:12 (Parallel theme): He shall cut off the spirit of princes: he is terrible to the kings of the earth.

Jeremiah 32:40 (Parallel theme): And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.