

# Exodus 22:28

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thou shalt not revile the gods, nor curse the ruler of thy people.

## Analysis

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**Thou shalt not revile the gods, nor curse the ruler of thy people.**

'Revile the gods' (לֹא תִקְלֹל אֱלֹהִים, Elohim lo teqallel)—'gods' is likely judges/rulers (elohim can mean God, gods, or judges; Psalm 82:6). The parallel with 'ruler' (נָשִׂיךְ, nasi) supports this. Paul quotes this in Acts 23:5 regarding the high priest—even corrupt authority deserves respect for office's sake. The principle: honor authority even when disagreeing. Peter and Paul command respect for governing authorities (Romans 13:1-7, 1 Peter 2:13-17). We can critique policy without cursing persons. Daniel and his friends obeyed Babylon's king when possible, disobeyed when conscience required, but never 'cursed' him.

## Historical Context

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The Hebrew elohim is ambiguous—can mean God, gods, judges, or rulers. Context (parallel with 'ruler') suggests judges/magistrates. Respecting authority, even flawed authority, maintains social order.

## Related Passages

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**Psalms 19:1** — Heavens declare God's glory

**Genesis 1:1** — Creation of heavens and earth

## Study Questions

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1. How can Christians balance respect for governing authorities with prophetic critique of injustice?
2. What does Paul's application of this verse (Acts 23:5) teach about respecting even corrupt leaders?

## Interlinear Text

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אֱלֹהִים	לֹא	תִּקְלֹל	אֶת	רֹאשׁ	בֵּיתְךָ	לֹא	תִּקְלֹל
the gods	H3808	Thou shalt not revile		the ruler	of thy people	H3808	nor curse
H430		H7043		H5387	H5971		H779

## Additional Cross-References

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**Acts 23:5** (Evil): Then said Paul, I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest: for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people.

**Ecclesiastes 10:20** (Curse): Curse not the king, no not in thy thought; and curse not the rich in thy bedchamber: for a bird of the air shall carry the voice, and that which hath wings shall tell the matter.

**Jude 1:8** (Evil): Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities.

**2 Peter 2:10** (Evil): But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.

**Exodus 21:17** (Curse): And he that curseth his father, or his mother, shall surely be put to death.

**Acts 23:3** (References God): Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee, thou whited wall: for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law?

**Psalms 32:6** (References God): For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found: surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him.

**Psalms 138:1** (References God): I will praise thee with my whole heart: before the gods will I sing praise unto thee.

**1 Samuel 24:6** (Parallel theme): And he said unto his men, The LORD forbid that I should do this thing unto my master, the LORD'S anointed, to stretch forth mine hand against him, seeing he is the anointed of the LORD.

**1 Samuel 24:10** (Parallel theme): Behold, this day thine eyes have seen how that the LORD had delivered thee to day into mine hand in the cave: and some bade me kill thee: but mine eye spared thee; and I said, I will not put forth mine hand against my lord; for he is the LORD'S anointed.