

Isaiah 29:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

That make a man an offender for a word, and lay a snare for him that reproveth in the gate, and turn aside the just for a thing of nought.

Analysis

That make a man an offender for a word (מַחֲטִי'עֵי אָדָם בְּדָבָר, machati'ey adam bedavar)—those who make (חָטָא, chata, to sin) a man an offender for a דָּבָר (davar, word). **And lay a snare for him that reproveth in the gate** (וְלַמּוֹכִיחַ בַּשַּׁעַר יִקְשֹׁן, velammokhiach basha'ar yeqoshun)—they lay יָקֹשׁ (yaqosh, a snare) for the מוֹכִיחַ (mokhiach, reprover, one who brings correction) in the שַׁעַר (sha'ar, gate, place of justice). **And turn aside the just for a thing of nought** (וַיִּטּוּ בְּתוֹהוּ צַדִּיק, vayattu vatohu tsadiq)—they נָטָה (natah, turn aside) the צַדִּיק (tsadiq, righteous) with תוֹהוּ (tohu, emptiness, nothing, falsehood).

Isaiah details the mechanics of injustice: weaponizing words to entrap the innocent, setting legal snares for those speaking truth in the gate (court), perverting justice through false accusations. The 'gate' was where elders adjudicated disputes—Israel's judicial system. Corrupt officials made speaking truth dangerous, entrapping prophets and righteous people with legal technicalities. Jesus faced this: Pharisees sent spies 'that they might take hold of his words' (Luke 20:20), laying verbal snares to trap Him into treasonous or blasphemous statements.

Historical Context

Amos condemned those who 'hate him that rebuketh in the gate' (Amos 5:10). Jeremiah was arrested, beaten, and imprisoned for prophesying truth (Jeremiah

37-38). Jesus was convicted on false testimony (Matthew 26:59-61). The apostles faced manufactured charges (Acts 6:11-14). Throughout history, corrupt systems criminalize truth-telling, making righteousness itself prosecutable.

Related Passages

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How do corrupt systems 'make offenders for a word'—criminalizing truth-telling or biblical standards?
2. What does it mean to 'reprove in the gate' in contemporary contexts, and what risks does it carry?
3. When have you witnessed or experienced the righteous being 'turned aside' through false accusations?

Interlinear Text

מַחֲטִיִּיאַ י	אָדָם	בְּדָבָר	וְלִמּוֹךְ יֵחַ	בֵּשֶׁ עֵר
an offender	That make a man	for a word	for him that reproveth	in the gate
H2398	H120	H1697	H3198	H8179
וַיִּקֶּשׂ וַיִּשְׂרֹף	וַיִּטֵּן	בֵּת הוֹ	צַדִּיק:	
and lay a snare	and turn aside	for a thing of nought	the just	
H6983	H5186	H8414	H6662	

Additional Cross-References

James 5:6 (Righteousness): Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you.

Acts 3:14 (Righteousness): But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you;

