

Isaiah 66:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Hear the word of the LORD, ye that tremble at his word; Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake, said, Let the LORD be glorified: but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed.

Analysis

God addresses the faithful remnant: "Hear the word of the LORD, ye that tremble at his word." The Hebrew charadim (tremble) describes reverential fear and responsive obedience—those who take God's word seriously. These face opposition: "Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake, said, Let the LORD be glorified: but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed." The faithful experience hatred and excommunication from their own ethnic/religious community. The opponents' taunt, "Let the LORD be glorified," suggests they justified persecution as serving God—a bitter irony. Yet God promises vindication: He will appear to the faithful's joy and persecutors' shame. From a Reformed perspective, this describes the perennial experience of the true church suffering persecution from nominal religion. Jesus warned that expulsion from synagogues would be considered service to God (John 16:2). Paul experienced persecution from fellow Jews (Acts 9:23, 2 Corinthians 11:24-26). True believers often face their fiercest opposition from religious establishment, not pagans. Yet God promises eschatological vindication.

Historical Context

The post-exilic community divided between faithful and compromising. The faithful remnant faced opposition from the religious majority (Nehemiah 6:10-14, Malachi

3:13-18). This pattern intensified in Jesus' era—the faithful few following Christ were excommunicated from synagogues (John 9:22, 12:42, 16:2). Throughout church history, reformers and revivalists faced persecution from established religious institutions. The promise of vindication sustained them—God would appear to demonstrate who truly served Him (Malachi 3:17-18, 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10).

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. What does it mean to 'tremble at God's word' in contemporary context?
2. How should believers respond when persecuted by religious people claiming to serve God?
3. What comfort does God's promised vindication provide to those currently facing opposition for faithfulness?

Interlinear Text

אָמַרְתִּי דְּבָרִים שָׁמְעוּ
Amarti דברים שמעו

Hear at his word Let the LORD ye that tremble

H8085

H1697

H3068

פִּתְרֵד יְמִינְךָ

H2730

אֶל

H413

דְּבָרִים

H1697

אָמַר

H559

שְׁמַיִּים לְמַעַן אֲחִיכָּם שְׁנָאִיכָּם מַבְדִּיכָּם

Your brethren that hated you that cast you out for my name's

H251

H8130

H5077

שְׁמַיִּים

H4616

H8034

וְיִגְבַּד הָיָה תְּנַרְאֶה הַיּוֹם בְּשִׁמְתַּחַת מִזְבֵּחַ

be glorified Let the LORD but he shall appear to your joy

H3513

H3068

H7200

וְיִתְהַגֵּן

H1992

וְיִבְשְׂוּ:

and they shall be ashamed

H954

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 66:2 (Word): For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.

Psalms 38:20 (Parallel theme): They also that render evil for good are mine adversaries; because I follow the thing that good is.

Matthew 10:22 (Parallel theme): And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.

Isaiah 5:19 (Parallel theme): That say, Let him make speed, and hasten his work, that we may see it: and let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw nigh and come, that we may know it!

Proverbs 13:13 (Word): Whoso despiseth the word shall be destroyed: but he that feareth the commandment shall be rewarded.

Jeremiah 36:16 (Word): Now it came to pass, when they had heard all the words, they were afraid both one and other, and said unto Baruch, We will surely tell the king of all these words.

John 9:34 (Parallel theme): They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out.

Song of Solomon 1:6: Look not upon me, because I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me: my mother's children were angry with me; they made me the keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept.

1 John 3:13 (Parallel theme): Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.

Luke 13:17 (Glory): And when he had said these things, all his adversaries were ashamed: and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him.