

Jeremiah 18:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Give heed to me, O LORD, and hearken to the voice of them that contend with me.

Analysis

Jeremiah's appeal to God: "Give heed to me, O LORD, and hearken to the voice of them that contend with me." Facing human opposition, the prophet turns to divine advocacy. "Give heed" (haqshiyah, הַקְשִׁיבָה, pay attention) and "hearken" (shema, שְׁמַע, listen) both request God's attentive concern. The phrase "hearken to the voice of them that contend with me" asks God to hear the accusers' false charges so He can vindicate His servant.

This prayer models appropriate response to opposition: appeal to God rather than seeking personal revenge (Rom 12:19, 1 Pet 2:23). Jeremiah commits his cause to the Righteous Judge who knows all hearts (1 Pet 4:19). Rather than defending himself or plotting counter-attacks, he seeks divine intervention and vindication. This reflects confidence that truth will ultimately prevail because God sees and judges righteously.

The principle extends to all believers facing opposition for righteousness' sake. Christ taught blessing comes to those persecuted for His name (Matt 5:10-12). The proper response isn't retaliation but prayer, trusting God to vindicate in His time. Reformed theology emphasizes that final judgment belongs to God alone—Christians must not usurp His prerogative but wait patiently for His justice.

Historical Context

Prophets regularly appealed to God when facing opposition (1 Kgs 19:10, Ps 7, 35, 109, 140). These lament psalms and prophetic complaints don't represent weak faith but confident appeal to the divine court. Ancient Near Eastern legal culture involved appeal to higher authorities when justice was denied locally. The ultimate appeal was to God Himself, the Supreme Judge over all earthly courts.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How do you typically respond to opposition—with self-defense, retaliation, or appeal to God?
2. What does it mean to commit your cause to God rather than taking matters into your own hands?
3. How does Christ's example of committing Himself to the Father during unjust suffering guide your response to opposition?

Interlinear Text

לְקַשׁ יְבָה
Give heed to me O LORD and hearken to the voice of them that contend
H7181 H3068 H413 H8085 H6963 H3401

Additional Cross-References

Nehemiah 6:9 (Parallel theme): For they all made us afraid, saying, Their hands shall be weakened from the work, that it be not done. Now therefore, O God, strengthen my hands.

Psalms 109:28 (Parallel theme): Let them curse, but bless thou: when they arise, let them be ashamed; but let thy servant rejoice.

Jeremiah 20:12 (References Lord): But, O LORD of hosts, that triest the righteous, and seest the reins and the heart, let me see thy vengeance on them: for unto thee have I opened my cause.

Micah 7:8 (References Lord): Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the LORD shall be a light unto me.

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