

Lamentations 1:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

They have heard that I sigh: there is none to comfort me: all mine enemies have heard of my trouble; they are glad that thou hast done it: thou wilt bring the day that thou hast called, and they shall be like unto me.

Analysis

Others hear but don't help: "They have heard that I sigh: there is none to comfort me" (shame'u ki-ne'enchah ani ein menachem li). Enemies are aware of suffering but offer no compassion. Worse: "all mine enemies have heard of my trouble; they are glad that thou hast done it" (kol-oyevai shame'u ra'ati sasu ki atah asita). The verb sus (שָׁעַשׂ, "glad, rejoice") indicates perverse joy in others' misfortune. Proverbs 24:17-18 warns: "Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth...lest the LORD see it, and it displease him." Obadiah 1:12 condemns Edom: "thou shouldest not have looked on the day of thy brother in the day that he became a stranger." Yet Jerusalem acknowledges: "thou hast done it"—recognizing God's hand in judgment. This prevents misplaced blame. The verse concludes with petition: "thou wilt bring the day that thou hast called, and they shall be like unto me" (heveta yom-karata veyihyu kamoni). Requesting that God's judgment extend to mockers demonstrates that vengeance belongs to God (Romans 12:19), not us.

Historical Context

Surrounding nations' schadenfreude (joy in others' misfortune) at Judah's fall is documented throughout Scripture. Psalm 79:4 laments: 'We are become a reproach to our neighbours, a scorn and derision to them that are round about us.' Psalm 137:7 calls for God to remember Edom's mockery. Ezekiel 25-26 pronounces

judgment on Ammon, Moab, Edom, Philistia, and Tyre for rejoicing over Jerusalem's fall. The prayer for enemies to experience similar judgment reflects imprecatory psalms (Psalms 35, 69, 109, 137, 139:19-22). These aren't personal vindictiveness but appeals for God's justice. They recognize that mocking God's people mocks God Himself. The New Testament shows Christ absorbing such mockery (Matthew 27:39-44) and praying for persecutors' forgiveness (Luke 23:34), demonstrating the greater mercy available in the new covenant. Yet Revelation shows final judgment will vindicate God's people and judge mockers (Revelation 18:20, 19:2).

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How should we respond when others rejoice in our suffering or failures, and what does it mean to leave vengeance to God?
2. What's the difference between imprecatory psalms/prayers (appealing for God's justice) versus personal revenge or vindictiveness?
3. How does Christ's prayer for His mockers' forgiveness (Luke 23:34) challenge yet fulfill the desire for divine justice in this verse?

Interlinear Text

ל	ו	מִנְחָם	ל	ו					
They have heard	H3588	that I sigh	H589	there is none to comfort	H0				
H8085		H584	H369	H5162					
כָּל	שָׁמַע	בָּעֵת	שָׁמַע	כָּל					
H3605	me all mine enemies	H341	They have heard	H8085	of my trouble	H7451	they are glad	H3588	H7797
H859	that thou hast done	H6213	it thou wilt bring	H935	the day	H3117	that thou hast called	H7121	
וְיִהִי	כְּמֹוּנִים								
H1961	and they shall be like	H3644							

Additional Cross-References

Lamentations 1:8 (Parallel theme): Jerusalem hath grievously sinned; therefore she is removed: all that honoured her despise her, because they have seen her nakedness: yea, she sigheth, and turneth backward.

Psalms 35:15 (Parallel theme): But in mine adversity they rejoiced, and gathered themselves together: yea, the abjects gathered themselves together against me, and I knew it not; they did tear me, and ceased not:

Jeremiah 50:11 (Parallel theme): Because ye were glad, because ye rejoiced, O ye destroyers of mine heritage, because ye are grown fat as the heifer at grass, and bellow as bulls;

Lamentations 2:15 (Parallel theme): All that pass by clap their hands at thee; they hiss and wag their head at the daughter of Jerusalem, saying, Is this the city that men call The perfection of beauty, The joy of the whole earth?

Lamentations 1:22 (Parallel theme): Let all their wickedness come before thee; and do unto them, as thou hast done unto me for all my transgressions: for my sighs are many, and my heart is faint.

Lamentations 1:16 (Parallel theme): For these things I weep; mine eye, mine eye runneth down with water, because the comforter that should relieve my soul is far from me: my children are desolate, because the enemy prevailed.

Jeremiah 51:24 (Parallel theme): And I will render unto Babylon and to all the inhabitants of Chaldea all their evil that they have done in Zion in your sight, saith the LORD.

Lamentations 1:2 (Parallel theme): She weepeth sore in the night, and her tears are on her cheeks: among all her lovers she hath none to comfort her: all her friends have dealt treacherously with her, they are become her enemies.

Lamentations 1:4 (Parallel theme): The ways of Zion do mourn, because none come to the solemn feasts: all her gates are desolate: her priests sigh, her virgins are afflicted, and she is in bitterness.

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