

Psalms 101:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

I will early destroy all the wicked of the land; that I may cut off all wicked doers from the city of the LORD.

Analysis

I will early destroy all the wicked of the land; that I may cut off all wicked doers from the city of the LORD. This concluding verse describes David's commitment to swift justice, particularly in Jerusalem. "I will early destroy" (lab'qarim atzmit, לַבִּקְרִים אֶצְמִית) literally means "morning by morning I will destroy"—suggesting regular, diligent administration of justice. Tzmit (צַמֵּת) means to destroy, silence, or cut off completely.

"All the wicked of the land" (kol-rish'ei-aretz, כָּל־רִשְׁעֵי־אֶרֶץ) uses resha (רָשָׁע), denoting guilty, criminal, or morally corrupt individuals. This isn't arbitrary persecution but judicial punishment of proven evildoers. The phrase "of the land" may refer to all Israel under David's jurisdiction or specifically to prominent cases requiring royal adjudication.

"That I may cut off all wicked doers from the city of the LORD" provides David's purpose: purifying Jerusalem. "Cut off" (l'hakhrit, לְהַכְרִית) is covenant language for excommunication or capital punishment—removing corrupting influences from God's people. "The city of the LORD" (ir-Yahweh, עִיר־יְהוָה) is Jerusalem, chosen by God as His dwelling place (Psalm 48:1-2, 87:3).

This verse reflects the king's responsibility for justice, particularly capital cases. David commits to addressing wickedness promptly ("early/morning by morning") rather than allowing corruption to fester. The goal isn't personal vengeance but maintaining Jerusalem's sanctity as the city where God's presence dwelt.

Historical Context

In ancient Israel, the king served as supreme judicial authority, hearing cases brought by citizens and rendering final verdicts (2 Samuel 14:4-11, 15:1-6, 1 Kings 3:16-28). 'Morning by morning' reflects the practice of holding court at dawn, when people would bring cases for royal adjudication (2 Samuel 15:2; Jeremiah 21:12).

Jerusalem's status as 'the city of the LORD' meant maintaining its holiness. God's presence dwelling in the Temple required corresponding moral purity in the city's inhabitants (Psalm 15, 24). Tolerating flagrant wickedness in Jerusalem defiled the sacred space and invited divine judgment.

Biblical law prescribed capital punishment for serious offenses: murder (Genesis 9:6; Exodus 21:12), adultery (Leviticus 20:10), idolatry (Deuteronomy 13:6-11), blasphemy (Leviticus 24:16), and rebellion against parents (Deuteronomy 21:18-21). While these seem harsh, they reflect the seriousness of sin and the necessity of protecting community from corrupting influences.

The New Testament shifts emphasis from civil execution of justice to church discipline (Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5) and anticipates final judgment when Christ returns to judge the living and dead (2 Thessalonians 1:7-10; Revelation 19:11-21). Meanwhile, governing authorities bear the sword to execute wrath on wrongdoers (Romans 13:4).

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. How do we balance this commitment to 'destroy wickedness' with New Testament emphases on mercy, patience, and redemptive discipline?

2. What does 'morning by morning' justice suggest about the dangers of delayed justice or allowing corruption to accumulate unchecked?
3. How should church discipline reflect both the Old Testament concern for community purity and New Testament hope for restoration?

Interlinear Text

לְבֹקֶר יִם	אֶצְמֶ יִת	כָּל	רָשָׁעִי	אֶרֶץ	לְהַכֹּת יִת
I will early	destroy	H3605	all the wicked	of the land	that I may cut off
H1242	H6789		H7563	H776	H3772
מִעִיר	יְהוָה	כָּל	פֹּעֲלֵי	אָוֶן:	
from the city	of the LORD	H3605	doers	all wicked	
H5892	H3068		H6466	H205	

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 75:10 (Evil): All the horns of the wicked also will I cut off; but the horns of the righteous shall be exalted.

Proverbs 16:12 (Evil): It is an abomination to kings to commit wickedness: for the throne is established by righteousness.

Jeremiah 21:12 (Evil): O house of David, thus saith the LORD; Execute judgment in the morning, and deliver him that is spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor, lest my fury go out like fire, and burn that none can quench it, because of the evil of your doings.

Psalms 48:8 (References Lord): As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the LORD of hosts, in the city of our God: God will establish it for ever. Selah.

Proverbs 20:8 (Evil): A king that sitteth in the throne of judgment scattereth away all evil with his eyes.

Psalms 48:2 (Parallel theme): Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King.

Psalms 46:4 (Parallel theme): There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High.

Proverbs 20:26 (Evil): A wise king scattereth the wicked, and bringeth the wheel over them.

Hosea 9:3 (References Lord): They shall not dwell in the LORD'S land; but Ephraim shall return to Egypt, and they shall eat unclean things in Assyria.

Micah 3:9 (Parallel theme): Hear this, I pray you, ye heads of the house of Jacob, and princes of the house of Israel, that abhor judgment, and pervert all equity.

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