

Psalm 109:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Let there be none to extend mercy unto him: neither let there be any to favour his fatherless children.

Analysis

Let there be none to extend mercy unto him (אֲלֵהִי לֹא מִשְׁחַח חֶסֶד, al-yehi-lo moshech chases)—literally "let there be no one drawing out chesed to him." The verb מִשְׁחַח (mashach, "extend, draw out") with חֶסֶד (chesed, "covenant loyalty, steadfast love") depicts someone reaching out with loyal love. David prays this be withheld. **Neither let there be any to favour his fatherless children** (אֲלֵהִי חָנוּן לִתְמַמָּה, ve'al-yehi chonen liyetomav)—חָנוּן (chanan, "show favor, be gracious") is denied even to orphans.

This seems harsh until we grasp covenant theology: the persecutor showed no חֶסֶד to those who showed him chesed (v. 5). He violated the fundamental covenant principle—therefore covenant privileges are forfeited. Yet God's character transcends this: He remains "the father of the fatherless" (Ps 68:5) even for children of the wicked. David's prayer reflects temporal judgment and social isolation, not eternal damnation for the innocent. The prayer highlights the persecutor's legacy: he creates a family no one wants to help.

Historical Context

Israelite society depended on kinsman-redeemer systems (גָּאֵל, go'el) and covenant community support for widows and orphans. To have "none to extend mercy" meant complete social ostracism—the community withdrawing from one who betrayed community bonds.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does the withdrawal of chesed (covenant loyalty) illustrate the relational consequences of betraying trust?
2. What tension exists between praying for an enemy's isolation and God's character as defender of the fatherless?
3. How does our treatment of the vulnerable reveal whether we truly understand chesed?

Interlinear Text

ל	ו	רִיחִי	אֶל	מֵשֶׁךְ	לֹא	רִיחִי	אֶל
H408	H1961	H0	Let there be none to extend	H4900	mercy	H408	H1961
				לִרְתּוֹךְיָוִן:			
unto him neither let there be any to favour				his fatherless children			
H2603				H3490			

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