

Psalms 109:28

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Let them curse, but bless thou: when they arise, let them be ashamed; but let thy servant rejoice.

Analysis

Let them curse, but bless thou (יְקַלְלֵהֶם וְאַתָּה תְּבָרֵךְ, yekallelu-hemmah ve-attah tebarekh)—Kalal means curse; barakh means bless. **When they arise, let them be ashamed; but let thy servant rejoice** (קָמוּ וְיִבְשׁוּ וְעַבְדְּךָ יִשְׂמַח, kamu vayyevoshu ve-avdkha yismach)—Bosh means be ashamed, put to shame; samach means rejoice, be glad.

David contrasts human cursing with divine blessing. When enemies curse, it's impotent; when God blesses, it's effective. This recalls Balaam's inability to curse Israel: "How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed?" (Numbers 23:8). Their rising up ends in shame; God's servant ends in joy. This principle is visible throughout Scripture—Pharaoh cursed Israel but was destroyed; Haman cursed Mordecai but was hanged. God's blessing outweighs all human cursing.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern cultures took cursing seriously, believing words had power. Israel understood that only God's words carry ultimate power—human curses against those God blesses are futile. Jesus taught this in the Beatitudes: "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you... Rejoice, and be exceeding glad" (Matthew 5:11-12).

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How do you respond when people curse, slander, or wish evil upon you?
2. What does it mean practically to trust God's blessing more than fearing human curses?
3. How does Jesus's teaching in Matthew 5:11-12 transform this verse for Christians?

Interlinear Text

יִקְלְלוּ	יְהִי הָ	וְאַתָּה הָ	תְּבַרְךָ יְיָ	מִן
Let them curse	H1992	H859	but bless	thou when they arise
H7043			H1288	H6965
וַיִּבֹּשׁוּ	וְעַבְדְּךָ	יִשְׁמַח:		
let them be ashamed	but let thy servant	rejoice		
H954	H5650	H8055		

Additional Cross-References

Numbers 23:20 (Blessing): Behold, I have received commandment to bless: and he hath blessed; and I cannot reverse it.

Hebrews 12:2 (Parallel theme): Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

John 16:22 (Parallel theme): And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.

Psalms 109:17 (Blessing): As he loved cursing, so let it come unto him: as he delighted not in blessing, so let it be far from him.

Numbers 22:12 (Blessing): And God said unto Balaam, Thou shalt not go with them; thou shalt not curse the people: for they are blessed.

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