

Psalms 109:29

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Let mine adversaries be clothed with shame, and let them cover themselves with their own confusion, as with a mantle.

Analysis

Let mine adversaries be clothed with shame (יִלְבֶּשׁוּ צוֹרֵרָי קִלְמָה, yilbeshu tzorerai kelimah)—Labash means clothe, be dressed in; kelimah means shame, disgrace, dishonor. **And let them cover themselves with their own confusion, as with a mantle** (וְיַעֲטוּ כִמְעִיל בִּשְׁתָּם, ve-ya'atu kham'il boshtam)—Atah means wrap oneself, cover; me'il means robe, mantle; boshet means shame, confusion.

David uses clothing imagery—enemies will be wrapped in shame as visibly as wearing a robe. This isn't vindictive but judicial: the shame they intended for David returns upon them. Esther 6:11-12 illustrates this—Haman was forced to honor Mordecai publicly, then "went home mourning, and having his head covered" (a sign of shame). The imagery of shame as clothing appears often (Psalm 35:26, 132:18, Job 8:22).

Historical Context

In ancient honor-shame cultures, public disgrace was worse than physical punishment. Clothing communicated status and honor; to be "clothed with shame" meant social ruin. David's enemies sought to shame him with false accusations; he prays they'll reap what they sowed.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does the honor-shame dynamic of this verse translate to contemporary Western culture?
2. When is it right to pray for your adversaries' public disgrace versus praying for their repentance?
3. How do imprecatory psalms square with Jesus's command to love enemies and pray for persecutors?

Interlinear Text

יִלְבָּשׁ וְ	שׁוֹטְנִי	כְּלָמָה	וַיַּעֲטוּ	כְּמָעַיִל
be clothed	Let mine adversaries	with shame	and let them cover	as with a mantle
H3847	H7853	H3639	H5844	H4598
בְּשִׁתָּם:				
themselves with their own confusion				
H1322				

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 35:26 (Parallel theme): Let them be ashamed and brought to confusion together that rejoice at mine hurt: let them be clothed with shame and dishonour that magnify themselves against me.

Psalms 132:18 (Parallel theme): His enemies will I clothe with shame: but upon himself shall his crown flourish.

Job 8:22 (Parallel theme): They that hate thee shall be clothed with shame; and the dwelling place of the wicked shall come to nought.

Psalms 6:10 (Parallel theme): Let all mine enemies be ashamed and sore vexed: let them return and be ashamed suddenly.

Psalms 140:9 (Parallel theme): As for the head of those that compass me about, let the mischief of their own lips cover them.

Jeremiah 20:11 (Parallel theme): But the LORD is with me as a mighty terrible one: therefore my persecutors shall stumble, and they shall not prevail: they shall be greatly ashamed; for they shall not prosper: their everlasting confusion shall never be forgotten.

Daniel 12:2 (Parallel theme): And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

Micah 7:10 (Parallel theme): Then she that is mine enemy shall see it, and shame shall cover her which said unto me, Where is the LORD thy God? mine eyes shall behold her: now shall she be trodden down as the mire of the streets.

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