

Psalms 109:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Let his children be fatherless, and his wife a widow.

Analysis

Let his children be fatherless, and his wife a widow (יְהִי־וָנָבִיִּי יְתוֹמִים וְאִשְׁתּוֹ אֶלְמָנָה, yihyu-vanav yetomim ve'ishto almanah)—this verse intensifies the judgment to include generational consequences. The words יָתוֹם (yatom, "orphan") and אֶלְמָנָה (almanah, "widow") denote the most vulnerable classes in Israelite society, those God specifically protects (Ex 22:22-24; Deut 10:18).

The irony is deliberate: the persecutor made others vulnerable; now his own family joins the ranks of the defenseless. Yet this isn't arbitrary cruelty—it reflects covenant curses in Deuteronomy 28:41 ("Thou shalt beget sons and daughters, but thou shalt not enjoy them") and the principle of intergenerational consequences (Ex 20:5). David isn't creating new punishments; he's invoking Torah-prescribed sanctions for covenant betrayal. Critically, God's special care for widows and orphans means even the enemy's family ultimately falls under divine providence—justice doesn't contradict mercy for the innocent.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern warfare routinely resulted in widowhood and orphanhood. David himself became fatherless when Jesse likely died during his fugitive years, and he made orphans and widows through legitimate warfare. But David never betrayed covenant loyalty—that distinction justifies this imprecation against covenant-breakers.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How do generational consequences of sin reflect both God's justice and the seriousness of covenant leadership?
2. What does God's special protection of widows and orphans reveal about His character even in contexts of judgment?
3. How should the reality of our actions affecting our families motivate holiness and faithfulness?

Interlinear Text

יְהִי	בְּנֵי יוֹ	יְתוֹמֵי יִם	וְאִשְׁתּוֹ	אֶלְמָנָה:
H1961	Let his children	be fatherless	and his wife	a widow
	H1121	H3490	H802	H490

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 22:24 (Parallel theme): And my wrath shall wax hot, and I will kill you with the sword; and your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless.

Jeremiah 18:21 (Parallel theme): Therefore deliver up their children to the famine, and pour out their blood by the force of the sword; and let their wives be bereaved of their children, and be widows; and let their men be put to death; let their young men be slain by the sword in battle.

Lamentations 5:3 (Parallel theme): We are orphans and fatherless, our mothers are as widows.

