

Psalm 119:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thou hast rebuked the proud that are cursed, which do err from thy commandments.

Analysis

Thou hast rebuked the proud that are cursed, which do err from thy commandments. The focus shifts to God's judgment on the arrogant. **Rebuked** (ga'arta, גָּעַרְתָּ) is a strong term for sharp correction or stern reproof, used of God silencing the sea (Psalm 106:9) and rebuking demons (Zechariah 3:2). The object is **the proud** (zedim, זָדִים), those marked by insolent presumption and arrogant self-sufficiency. These are **cursed** (arurim, אָרָרִים), under divine condemnation—the opposite of the blessed person in verse 1.

The proud are characterized by their wandering: they **err from thy commandments** (hashoggim mimitzovtekha, הַשְׁגַּגִּים מִמִּצְוֹתֶךָ). Shagah (שָׁגַח) suggests going astray, missing the path. Pride leads inevitably to disobedience; those who exalt themselves refuse submission to God's authority. Proverbs 16:18 warns, 'Pride goeth before destruction,' and James 4:6 declares, 'God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.' Jesus embodied humility (Matthew 11:29), and His kingdom inverts worldly values where the proud are brought low (Luke 1:51-52).

Historical Context

Throughout Israel's history, proud nations and individuals faced God's rebuke—from Pharaoh to Nebuchadnezzar to Herod. The curse on the proud echoes Deuteronomy's covenant curses (Deuteronomy 28:15-68) and foreshadows the eschatological judgment when God will humble all human pride (Isaiah 2:12-17).

The psalmist, likely facing opposition from arrogant enemies, finds comfort in God's justice.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. In what areas of life are you most vulnerable to pride and self-sufficiency?
2. How does God's pattern of rebuking the proud and blessing the humble shape your attitude toward authority?
3. What is the relationship between pride and straying from God's commandments in your own experience?

Interlinear Text

מִמְצָוֹתֶיךָ:	בְּשָׁגִים	אֲרֹזֶן יְמִינֶךָ	בְּעֶרֶת	בְּעֶרֶת
from thy commandments	which do err	that are cursed	the proud	Thou hast rebuked
H4687	H7686	H779	H2086	H1605

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 119:10 (Word): With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments.

1 Peter 5:5 (Parallel theme): Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

Psalms 119:118 (Parallel theme): Thou hast trodden down all them that err from thy statutes: for their deceit is falsehood.

Luke 18:14 (Parallel theme): I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

Psalms 119:110 (Parallel theme): The wicked have laid a snare for me: yet I erred not from thy precepts.

Deuteronomy 30:19 (Parallel theme): I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live:

Deuteronomy 28:15 (Word): But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee:

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