

Psalms 119:23

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Princes also did sit and speak against me: but thy servant did meditate in thy statutes.

Analysis

Princes also did sit and speak against me: but thy servant did meditate in thy statutes. Opposition intensifies to include powerful leaders. **Princes** (sarim, שָׁרִים) are rulers, officials, or those with political authority and social influence. They **sit** (yashvu, יִשְׁבּוּ), suggesting formal gatherings or judicial sessions, and **speak against** (nidbberu-bi, נִדְבְּרָה־בִּי) indicates conspiring, plotting, or slandering. The psalmist faces organized, high-level opposition—not random persecution but calculated hostility from the powerful.

The contrast is sharp: **but thy servant did meditate in thy statutes** (avdekha yasiach bechuqqekha, עֲבֹדָךְ יִשְׁאַח בְּצֻקָּתֶךָ). While princes plot evil, God's servant contemplates divine truth. **Meditate** (siach, שִׁיחָה)—the same verb describing the princes' scheming—here describes righteous reflection. The psalmist refuses to be distracted or intimidated by powerful enemies; he remains absorbed in God's **statutes** (chuqqim, צֻקִּים). This echoes the experiences of Joseph, Daniel, and supremely Jesus, who faced opposition from religious and political authorities yet remained faithful to God's Word.

Historical Context

Throughout biblical history, God's servants faced opposition from rulers—Moses from Pharaoh, David from Saul, Jeremiah from Judah's kings, the apostles from the Sanhedrin. Psalm 2 depicts kings conspiring against God's anointed, a pattern fulfilled in Jesus' trial (Acts 4:25-28). The psalmist's meditation during persecution

models the response of the faithful remnant who trusted God's Word despite political hostility.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How do you maintain spiritual focus and Bible meditation when facing opposition or criticism?
2. What does it look like practically to respond to powerful adversaries by meditating on Scripture rather than defending yourself?
3. How does identifying as 'thy servant' provide perspective when facing attacks from those with worldly power?

Interlinear Text

וְיָשַׁבְתִּי בְּרִים נִצְבֵּה וְיִשְׁבֶּבְתִּי
H1571 also did sit Princes H0 and speak against me but thy servant
H3427 H8269 H1696 H5650

וְיִשְׁתַּחֲווּ בְּחֻקָּיךְ
H7878 H2706
did meditate in thy statutes

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