

Psalm 137:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones.

Analysis

Happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones. Scripture's most disturbing verse, expressing raw rage against Babylon. Context: Psalm 137 laments exile, remembering Babylon's brutal child-killing (Lamentations 2:19-21). This invokes lex talionis: "as you did, so shall it be done." It's imprecatory (calling for divine justice), not prescriptive. God did judge Babylon. Such passages validate righteous anger while reminding us vengeance belongs to God (Romans 12:19).

Historical Context

Babylon's 586 BC destruction was genocidal. Children murdered before parents' eyes. Psalm 137 captures trauma and rage. Babylon fell to Persia in 539 BC, experiencing similar violence. History confirmed divine justice.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How do you handle Scripture expressing violent rage?
2. What distinguishes imprecatory prayer from personal vengeance?
3. How does loving enemies relate to psalms calling for judgment?

Interlinear Text

אָשָׂר יְהִי שָׂאֵחַ זֶה יִגְפְּגֶה אֶת אֶל עַל לְלִיל יְהִי
Happy shall he be that taketh and dasheth thy little ones H413
H835 H270 H5310 H5768

בְּשָׁלָע:

against the stones

H5553

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 13:16 (Parallel theme): Their children also shall be dashed to pieces before their eyes; their houses shall be spoiled, and their wives ravished.

Hosea 13:16 (Parallel theme): Samaria shall become desolate; for she hath rebelled against her God: they shall fall by the sword: their infants shall be dashed in pieces, and their women with child shall be ripped up.

Nahum 3:10 (Parallel theme): Yet was she carried away, she went into captivity: her young children also were dashed in pieces at the top of all the streets: and they cast lots for her honourable men, and all her great men were bound in chains.

Hosea 10:14 (Parallel theme): Therefore shall a tumult arise among thy people, and all thy fortresses shall be spoiled, as Shalman spoiled Beth-arbel in the day of battle: the mother was dashed in pieces upon her children.

2 Kings 8:12 (Parallel theme): And Hazael said, Why weepeth my lord? And he answered, Because I know the evil that thou wilt do unto the children of Israel: their strong holds wilt thou set on fire, and their young men wilt thou slay with the sword, and wilt dash their children, and rip up their women with child.

