

Psalms 140:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Grant not, O LORD, the desires of the wicked: further not his wicked device; lest they exalt themselves. Selah.

Analysis

Grant not, O LORD, the desires of the wicked: further not his wicked device; lest they exalt themselves. Selah. David prays for divine intervention to thwart enemies' plans. "Grant not, O LORD, the desires of the wicked" (al-titen YHWH ma'awayei rasha, אַל-תִּתֵּן יְהוָה מַאֲוַי רָשָׁע) requests God withhold success from evil aspirations. Natan (נָתַן, "grant, give") is causative—"do not cause to happen." Ma'awayim (מַאֲוִיִּם, "desires, wishes") are cravings, longings, ambitious goals. Rasha (רָשָׁע, "wicked") describes morally guilty, covenant-breaking persons. David asks God to prevent wicked people from achieving their evil goals.

"Further not his wicked device" (zemamo al-taphek, זַמְמוֹ אֶל-תַּפְּחֵק) intensifies the petition. Zimmah (זָמָה, "device, scheme, plot") refers to calculated evil plan. Puk (פָּוֶק) in Hiphil means "to bring forth, produce, cause to succeed." David prays God will frustrate enemies' schemes, preventing their wicked plans from succeeding. This reflects biblical principle: "There is no wisdom nor understanding nor counsel against the LORD" (Proverbs 21:30). Human schemes cannot succeed if God opposes them.

"Lest they exalt themselves" (pen yarumu, פֶּן יָרוּמוּ) states why God should act. Pen (פֶּן, "lest") introduces feared consequence. Rum (רוּם, "exalt, be high, rise up") means "to lift self up, become proud, assert superiority." If wicked succeed, they'll become arrogantly confident, attributing success to their own power rather than recognizing God's sovereignty. They'll believe their wickedness pays, encouraging continued evil. God's glory requires demonstrating that righteousness, not

wickedness, triumphs ultimately. "Selah" (שְׁלֵחַ) marks pause for reflection on this crucial principle.

Historical Context

Throughout biblical history, God demonstrated this pattern: frustrating wicked schemes while vindicating righteousness. Pharaoh's plan to enslave Israel permanently failed when God delivered them (Exodus 1-15). Haman's plot to destroy the Jews reversed, resulting in his own execution (Esther 7). Sennacherib's siege of Jerusalem collapsed when the angel destroyed his army (2 Kings 19:35). Daniel's enemies' scheme to eliminate him through the lions' den law backfired, resulting in their own destruction (Daniel 6:24). Jesus's enemies thought crucifixion would end His movement, but God raised Him, establishing the church. The principle holds: God will not allow evil to succeed permanently, lest the wicked conclude their rebellion pays. His glory requires demonstrating that "the way of the ungodly shall perish" (Psalm 1:6).

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. Why is it important to pray that God 'grant not the desires of the wicked' rather than simply accepting whatever happens as God's will?
2. How does the wicked's potential self-exaltation (pride) if their schemes succeed provide motivation for God to frustrate their plans?
3. What does it mean for believers to trust that 'there is no wisdom nor counsel against the LORD' (Proverbs 21:30) when wicked schemes seem to be succeeding?

Interlinear Text

אֶל	תֵּת	! הָהָה	מִמְּאֵי	כָּשׁ ע	זִמָּה ו	אֶל
H408	Grant	not O LORD	the desires	of the wicked	not his wicked device	H408
	H5414	H3068	H3970	H7563	H2162	
קִ	תֵּ פִ	יָר וּמוֹ	סֵלָה:			
	further	lest they exalt	themselves Selah			
	H6329	H7311	H5542			

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 27:12 (Parallel theme): Deliver me not over unto the will of mine enemies: for false witnesses are risen up against me, and such as breathe out cruelty.

2 Samuel 15:31 (References Lord): And one told David, saying, Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom. And David said, O LORD, I pray thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness.

Deuteronomy 32:27 (References Lord): Were it not that I feared the wrath of the enemy, lest their adversaries should behave themselves strangely, and lest they should say, Our hand is high, and the LORD hath not done all this.