

Psalms 144:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Rid me, and deliver me from the hand of strange children,
whose mouth speaketh vanity, and their right hand is a right
hand of falsehood:

Analysis

Rid me, and deliver me from the hand of strange children, whose mouth speaketh vanity, and their right hand is a right hand of falsehood: This urgent petition reflects David's cry for deliverance from deceptive enemies. The Hebrew patseini (פָּצַנְךָ, "rid me") and natsileni (נָצַלְךָ, "deliver me") are intensive imperatives expressing desperate need for divine intervention. The phrase "strange children" (benei nekar, בְּנֵי נָקָר) literally means "sons of foreignness" or "foreign children," referring to those outside Israel's covenant—either literal foreigners or Israelites who had adopted pagan ways and values.

The description of their character is precise: "whose mouth speaketh vanity" (asher pihem diber shav, אֲשֶׁר פִּיהֶם דִּבֶּר שָׁוָא) indicates they speak emptiness, lies, and worthless things. "Vanity" (shav, שָׁוָא) appears in the third commandment forbidding taking God's name in vain (Exodus 20:7), connecting these enemies' speech to covenant-breaking and blasphemy. The phrase "right hand is a right hand of falsehood" (viy'minam y'min shaker, וַיִּמְנַם יְמִינָם שָׁקֵר) employs Hebrew wordplay—the right hand symbolized power, oaths, and trustworthiness, yet these enemies use it for deception.

This psalm reflects the reality that God's people face opposition not merely from military threats but from those who undermine truth through lies, manipulation, and false oaths. The emphasis on verbal deception (mouths speak vanity) and corrupted integrity (right hand of falsehood) highlights that spiritual warfare

involves truth versus lies, faithfulness versus treachery. David's appeal for deliverance anticipates Christ's conflict with religious hypocrites who used deceptive speech and false piety (Matthew 23).

Historical Context

Psalm 144 is attributed to David, likely composed during his reign as king (approximately 1010-970 BC). The historical context suggests a period when David faced both external military threats from surrounding nations and internal opposition from those who sought to undermine his kingdom through political intrigue and deception. The psalm's structure combines battle imagery (Psalm 144:1-2) with prayers for deliverance from deceptive enemies (144:7-11).

The "strange children" could refer to various groups: Philistines who continually threatened Israel (2 Samuel 5), neighboring kingdoms like Moab or Edom with whom David fought (2 Samuel 8), or internal conspirators like Absalom who used flattery and deceit to steal people's hearts (2 Samuel 15:1-6). Ancient Near Eastern political culture was characterized by treaty-making and oath-taking, where the right hand symbolized binding agreements. Enemies who raised their right hand in false oaths violated fundamental social trust.

David's experience with deceptive enemies was extensive: Saul's broken promises (1 Samuel 18-19), Doeg's betrayal (1 Samuel 22), Nabal's insults (1 Samuel 25), and Absalom's rebellion built on lies (2 Samuel 15). The psalm reflects the wisdom literature's consistent contrast between the righteous whose word is trustworthy and the wicked whose speech deceives (Proverbs 12:17-22). This theme resonates through Scripture to Revelation's condemnation of liars excluded from God's eternal city (Revelation 21:8, 22:15).

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. How should believers respond to opposition characterized by deception rather than direct confrontation?
2. What is the relationship between speaking truth and covenant faithfulness in both personal and public life?
3. How does the psalmist's dependence on God for deliverance inform our response to political or workplace deception?
4. In what ways do contemporary cultural lies parallel the "vanity" and "falsehood" David describes?
5. How does Christ's embodiment of truth (John 14:6) and His conflict with religious deceivers fulfill this psalm's themes?

Interlinear Text

אָשָׁר בְּקָרְבֵּי פָּצַד בְּנֵי מִדְבָּר וּפְאַיִלְנִי
Ashar beqarbe mi-dabar vupayilni

Rid me and deliver me from the hand children of strange H834

H6475 H5337 H3027 H1121 H5236

וְמִתְּמִימָן יְמִימָן שְׁאֵלָה דְּבָרָה פִּי יְהָם
and their right hand and their right hand vanity speaketh whose mouth

H3225 H3225 H7723 H1696 H6310

שְׁלֹשָׁה:
of falsehood

H8267

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 44:20 (Parallel theme): He feedeth on ashes: a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?

Psalms 12:2 (Parallel theme): They speak vanity every one with his neighbour: with flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak.

