

Psalm 22:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet.

Analysis

This verse provides one of the Old Testament's most striking prophecies of crucifixion. The Hebrew קָרְאִי (ka'ari) can be translated "like a lion" or, with slight vowel pointing, "they pierced" (קָרָו/karu). The Septuagint translated it as "pierced" (ὤρυξαν/ōryxan), supporting messianic interpretation. The piercing of hands and feet precisely describes Roman crucifixion—a execution method unknown in David's time but horrifyingly fulfilled in Christ. "Dogs" (כלבים/kelabim) was Jewish slang for Gentiles, prophetically pointing to Roman executioners. The "assembly of the wicked" (עֲדָת מְרֻעִים/adat mere'im) suggests organized opposition, fulfilled in the Sanhedrin's collaboration with Roman authority. The imagery of being "compassed" and "enclosed" depicts complete entrapment with no human escape.

Historical Context

David wrote from personal experience of enemies seeking his life, yet the details transcend his historical situation. Crucifixion was unknown to Israel until Rome introduced it centuries later. By the first century, Jews recognized Psalm 22 as messianic prophecy. The Septuagint's translation to "pierced" (likely 3rd-2nd century BC) predates Christ, showing early Jewish understanding of this as future prophecy rather than merely David's lament. Early Christians saw Jesus's crucifixion as literal fulfillment of details David couldn't have fabricated from personal experience.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does the prophetic precision of details like pierced hands and feet strengthen confidence in Scripture's divine inspiration?
2. What does the imagery of being surrounded by enemies reveal about the spiritual warfare behind Christ's crucifixion?

Interlinear Text

הָקִיף H3588	בָּנִי have compassed	בְּיַם For dogs	בְּסִבְבָּן me the assembly	בְּעִזִּים of the wicked	בְּקַבְעִים have inclosed
	H5437	H3611	H5712	H7489	H5362
וְכִלְלִין me they pierced	בְּיָדֵינוּ my hands	בְּאֶרְךָ and my feet			
H3738	H3027	H7272			

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 27:35 (Parallel theme): And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.

John 19:37 (Parallel theme): And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced.

Zechariah 12:10 (Parallel theme): And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.

John 20:25 (Parallel theme): The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.

John 19:23 (Parallel theme): Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout.

Mark 15:24 (Parallel theme): And when they had crucified him, they parted his garments, casting lots upon them, what every man should take.

John 19:34 (Parallel theme): But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.

Luke 23:33 (Parallel theme): And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left.

Isaiah 53:5 (Parallel theme): But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

Psalms 22:20 (Parallel theme): Deliver my soul from the sword; my darling from the power of the dog.