

Psalms 28:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Give them according to their deeds, and according to the wickedness of their endeavours: give them after the work of their hands; render to them their desert.

Analysis

The imprecatory prayer 'Give them according to their deeds, and according to the wickedness of their endeavours: give them after the work of their hands; render to them their desert' asks for just retribution. Reformed theology defends imprecatory psalms as prayers for justice, not personal vengeance. These prayers align with God's justice—evil must be punished. They anticipate final judgment when God will render to each according to their deeds (Rom. 2:6). The repetition emphasizes just recompense.

Historical Context

Israel's law established *lex talionis* (eye for eye)—proportional justice. These prayers invoke that principle, asking God to judge wickedness appropriately. They trust divine justice rather than seeking personal revenge.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. How do imprecatory psalms balance with Jesus' command to love enemies?
2. What role does trust in God's justice play in relinquishing personal vengeance?

Interlinear Text

| | | | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------|---------------|
| וְתִתְּנֵם | כְּפִעֲלָם | וְכִרְעֵם | | |
| Give | them according to their deeds | and according to the wickedness | | |
| H5414 | H1992 | H6467 | H7455 | |
| מִמַּעֲלֵל יָהּ | כְּמַעֲשֵׂהָ | ! דִּיהֶם | וְתִתְּנֵם | הַשֵּׁב לָהֶם |
| of their endeavours | them after the work | of their hands | Give | render |
| H4611 | H4639 | H3027 | H5414 | H7725 |
| גְּמוּלָם | לָהֶם: | | | |
| to them their desert | | | | |
| H1576 | H1992 | | | |

Additional Cross-References

Revelation 22:12 (Parallel theme): And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

2 Timothy 4:14 (Evil): Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works:

Revelation 18:6 (Parallel theme): Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double.

Psalms 5:10 (Parallel theme): Destroy thou them, O God; let them fall by their own counsels; cast them out in the multitude of their transgressions; for they have rebelled against thee.

Psalms 62:12 (Parallel theme): Also unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy: for thou renderest to every man according to his work.

Psalms 103:10 (Parallel theme): He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.

Romans 11:22 (Parallel theme): Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.

Ezekiel 38:10 (Evil): Thus saith the Lord GOD; It shall also come to pass, that at the same time shall things come into thy mind, and thou shalt think an evil thought:

Ezra 9:13 (Evil): And after all that is come upon us for our evil deeds, and for our great trespass, seeing that thou our God hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve, and hast given us such deliverance as this;