

# Psalms 31:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Let the lying lips be put to silence; which speak grievous things proudly and contemptuously against the righteous.

## Analysis

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**Let the lying lips be put to silence; which speak grievous things proudly and contemptuously against the righteous.** Prayer for divine action against slanderers, targeting their speech—weapon used against God's people. This imprecatory request reveals seriousness of false witness and slander in God's moral economy.

Let the lying lips be put to silence continues verse 17's theme. Hebrew 'illem means to be dumb, speechless, unable to speak. David prays that instrument of harm—lying tongue—be removed or restrained. This isn't primarily about punishing persons but stopping damage false speech inflicts. Reformed theology recognizes ninth commandment's protection of reputation and truth.

Which speak grievous things (Hebrew 'athaq—arrogant, harsh, hard things) aren't minor exaggerations but vicious slanders, devastating lies. Content of speech matters to God. James calls tongue a fire, world of iniquity (James 3:6). Grievous words destroy reputations, communities, lives.

Proudly and contemptuously identifies attitude. Pride (ga'avah) is arrogant self-exaltation; contempt (buz) is scorn and disdain. Lying lips deliberately and arrogantly assault others. Against the righteous reveals target. These lies aim at righteous (tsaddiq), those in right relationship with God. World always resents God's people (John 15:18-19). Christ experienced this supremely—lied about, slandered by lying lips seeking His death.

## Historical Context

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Ninth commandment (Exodus 20:16) explicitly prohibits false witness. In Israel's legal system, false testimony was punished severely—false witness received punishment their lie would have brought on accused (Deuteronomy 19:16-21).

Lying lips destroyed many biblical figures. Jezebel's false witnesses murdered Naboth (1 Kings 21). False witnesses sought Jesus' death (Matthew 26:59-61). Stephen was martyred on false charges (Acts 6:13). Reformers emphasized ninth commandment's positive requirements—not merely avoiding lies but actively protecting and promoting others' reputations.

## Related Passages

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**Revelation 20:12** — Judgment according to deeds

**Romans 2:1** — Judging others

## Study Questions

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1. How does persistent slander damage individuals and communities, and why is this serious sin?
2. Is it appropriate to pray imprecatory prayers asking God to silence those who spread lies?
3. How can believers guard their tongues from becoming lying lips that speak contemptuously?
4. What is relationship between pride and lying? Why do proud particularly engage in false speech?
5. How does Christ's experience of false witness provide comfort for believers who are slandered?

## Interlinear Text

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תַּאֲלֵמָנָה	שִׁפְתֵי י	שֶׁקֶר	הַדִּבֶּר וְ	עַל	צַדִּיק
be put to silence	lips	Let the lying	which speak	H5921	against the righteous
H481	H8193	H8267	H1696		H6662
עֲתָק	בְּגָאֵה	וְבִזְיָה			
grievous	things proudly	and contemptuously			
H6277	H1346	H937			

## Additional Cross-References

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**Psalms 94:4** (Parallel theme): How long shall they utter and speak hard things? and all the workers of iniquity boast themselves?

**Jude 1:15** (Parallel theme): To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.

**1 Samuel 2:3** (Parallel theme): Talk no more so exceeding proudly; let not arrogancy come out of your mouth: for the LORD is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed.

**Revelation 21:8** (Parallel theme): But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

**Revelation 22:15** (Parallel theme): For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.

**Isaiah 54:17** (Righteousness): No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD.

**Acts 25:7** (Parallel theme): And when he was come, the Jews which came down from Jerusalem stood round about, and laid many and grievous complaints against Paul, which they could not prove.

**Matthew 12:24** (Parallel theme): But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils.

**John 8:44** (Parallel theme): Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

**John 8:48** (Parallel theme): Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?