

Psalm 35:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Let them be confounded and put to shame that seek after my soul: let them be turned back and brought to confusion that devise my hurt.

Analysis

These imprecatory elements reflect judicial language where the psalmist appeals to God as righteous judge rather than taking personal vengeance. The Hebrew 'bosh' (confounded) and 'chapher' (put to shame) indicate divine justice exposing and overturning evil schemes. This aligns with Romans 12:19's command to leave vengeance to God, showing that imprecatory psalms model godly restraint—bringing grievances to the divine court rather than executing personal retribution.

Historical Context

Ancient Israelite culture understood shame as a public consequence of sin and defeat. David, as anointed king under covenant, could legitimately pray for God's judgment on those opposing God's chosen ruler and therefore God Himself.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How can you bring your anger over injustice to God without taking sinful revenge?
2. What's the difference between praying for justice and harboring bitterness?

Interlinear Text

יבָּשׂוּ יְכַלְמֹוּ נִפְשָׁא מִבְּקַשׁ אֵלֶיךָ
Let them be confounded and put to shame that seek after my soul
H954 H3637 H1245 H5315

כָּעַתִּים חַשְׁבָּא יְחִפְרָא אַחֲרָא יְבַשְׂבֵּא
let them be turned back and brought to confusion that devise my hurt
H5472 H268 H2659 H2803 H7451

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 46:5 (Parallel theme): Wherefore have I seen them dismayed and turned away back? and their mighty ones are beaten down, and are fled apace, and look not back: for fear was round about, saith the LORD.

Psalms 38:12 (Parallel theme): They also that seek after my life lay snares for me: and they that seek my hurt speak mischievous things, and imagine deceits all the day long.

Psalms 35:26 (Parallel theme): Let them be ashamed and brought to confusion together that rejoice at mine hurt: let them be clothed with shame and dishonour that magnify themselves against me.

Psalms 129:5 (Parallel theme): Let them all be confounded and turned back that hate Zion.

Psalms 71:24 (Parallel theme): My tongue also shall talk of thy righteousness all the day long: for they are confounded, for they are brought unto shame, that seek my hurt.

1 Samuel 23:23 (Parallel theme): See therefore, and take knowledge of all the lurking places where he hideth himself, and come ye again to me with the certainty, and I will go with you: and it shall come to pass, if he be in the land, that I will search him out throughout all the thousands of Judah.

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