

# Psalms 37:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The wicked plotteth against the just, and gnasheth upon him with his teeth.

## Analysis

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The wicked 'plotteth' (Hebrew 'zamam,' devises, purposes) reveals premeditated hostility toward the just. Gnashing teeth (also in Psalm 35:16, 37:12) expresses rage and violent intent—teeth bared in fury. This image appears when religious authorities opposed Jesus (Acts 7:54) and describes hell's occupants (Matthew 8:12). The contrast between plotting schemes and gnashing teeth shows both calculated malice and passionate hatred. Yet the verse presents this factually, not alarmingly—the subsequent verse reveals God's response.

## Historical Context

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Ancient Near Eastern imagery used animals gnashing teeth to depict ferocious attack. David applies this to human enemies whose hatred resembles predatory animals stalking prey.

## Related Passages

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**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

**Romans 2:1** — Judging others

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

## Study Questions

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1. How do you respond when you discern others plotting against you?
2. What does enemies' intense hatred reveal about the spiritual battle underlying physical opposition?

## Interlinear Text

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זַמּוּ	כָּשַׁע	לְצַדִּיק	וְחָרָה קֶ	עַל יוֹ
plotteth	The wicked	against the just	and gnasheth	H5921
H2161	H7563	H6662	H2786	

שָׁנָיו:  
upon him with his teeth  
H8127

## Additional Cross-References

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**Psalms 35:16** (Parallel theme): With hypocritical mockers in feasts, they gnashed upon me with their teeth.

**Micah 2:1** (Evil): Woe to them that devise iniquity, and work evil upon their beds! when the morning is light, they practise it, because it is in the power of their hand.

**Daniel 8:12** (Parallel theme): And an host was given him against the daily sacrifice by reason of transgression, and it cast down the truth to the ground; and it practised, and prospered.

**Psalms 31:13** (Parallel theme): For I have heard the slander of many: fear was on every side: while they took counsel together against me, they devised to take away my life.