

Psalm 38:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

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.

Isolation (v.11) escalates to active hostility—enemies seek my life (בְּקַשׁ תִּפְשֶׁשׁ, baqash nephesh, hunt the soul), lay snares (עִזְקָשׁ תִּקְשֶׁשׁ, naqash moqesh, set traps), speak mischievous things (הַבָּזָת, havvot, calamities/ruin), and imagine deceits (מִרְמֹת, mirmot, treacheries).

David's weakness emboldens adversaries. The hunter imagery (snares, traps) depicts calculated malice. The progression: physical speech ('speak') → mental scheming ('imagine') → continual plotting ('all day long'). This echoes Absalom's conspiracy (2 Samuel 15-17) and prefigures plots against Christ (Matthew 26:4). When God's discipline weakens us, Satan's agents often attack.

Historical Context

Ancient near eastern politics were ruthless—weakness invited coup attempts. If David's illness was publicly known, rivals would exploit it. Absalom's rebellion began by undermining David's reputation (2 Samuel 15:2-6). The 'snares' and 'deceits' suggest court intrigue, not open warfare—assassination plots, false accusations, power grabs.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 – Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How do spiritual enemies exploit times when God's discipline has weakened you?
2. When facing both divine discipline AND human attack, how do you keep perspective on who is truly sovereign?
3. What 'deceits' and 'snares' are being 'imagined all day long' against Christians in your cultural context?

Interlinear Text

לְעַתִּי	וַדְרֵשׁ	נֶפֶשׁ	מִבְקָשׁ	וַיַּגְדַּל	לְעַתִּי
lay snares	They also that seek	after my life	for me and they that seek		my hurt
H5367	H1245	H5315	H1875		H7451

דָּבָר	וְ	הָוֹת	וְ	מְרַמָּה	וְ	כֵּל	וְ	יְהִי	וְ	יְהִי
speak	mischievous things		deceits		H3605	all the day		and imagine		
H1696	H1942		H4820			H3117		H1897		

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 35:20 (Parallel theme): For they speak not peace: but they devise deceitful matters against them that are quiet in the land.

Psalms 140:5 (Parallel theme): The proud have hid a snare for me, and cords; they have spread a net by the wayside; they have set gins for me. Selah.

Psalms 35:4 (Parallel theme): 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.

Psalms 141:9 (Parallel theme): Keep me from the snares which they have laid for me, and the gins of the workers of iniquity.

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