

Psalms 38:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For I said, Hear me, lest otherwise they should rejoice over me: when my foot slippeth, they magnify themselves against me.

Analysis

For I said, Hear me, lest otherwise they should rejoice over me: when my foot slippeth, they magnify themselves against me. David's prayer rationale: prevent enemies' rejoicing (נחַֿץ, samach, exulting). When his foot slippeth (לִגְּטִי, mot regel, foot wavers), they magnify themselves (גָּדַל, gadal, make themselves great) against him.

David's concern isn't merely personal vindication but God's glory—his enemies' triumph would dishonor YHWH. The slipping foot imagery appears throughout Psalms as metaphor for spiritual/moral failure (Psalm 121:3). David's fall has given God's enemies occasion to blaspheme (cf. 2 Samuel 12:14). His restoration would silence mockers and demonstrate YHWH's faithfulness to His anointed.

Historical Context

David's enemies likely included foreign nations watching for weakness in Israel's God-appointed king, and domestic rivals hoping to seize the throne. Their 'magnifying themselves' against David was ultimately magnifying themselves against YHWH. The honor of God's name was bound up with the honor of God's king—making David's restoration a theological necessity.

Related Passages

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does David's concern for God's reputation (not just his own) reshape motivation for seeking restoration?
2. When your 'foot slips' morally, how do you balance owning consequences while preventing God's enemies from 'rejoicing'?
3. What contemporary situations cause unbelievers to 'magnify themselves' when Christians fall into sin?

Interlinear Text

כִּי	אָמַרְתִּי	פֶּן	יִשְׁמְחוּ	לִי	בְּמַוֵּט
H3588	For I said	H6435	Hear me lest otherwise they should rejoice	H0	slippeth
	H559		H8055		H4131
	בְּגַלִּי	עַל־י	הַגְדִּילוּ:		
	over me when my foot	H5921	they magnify		
	H7272		H1431		

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 94:18 (Parallel theme): When I said, My foot slippeth; thy mercy, O LORD, held me up.