

Psalm 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 (שָׁמַח, samach, exulting). When his foot slippeth (עָמַל, 'amal, 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

Psalm 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

בָּם	וְתַ	לִ	בָּמְ	וְתַ	לִ
בָּמְ	וְתַ	לִ	בָּמְ	וְתַ	לִ
בָּמְ	וְתַ	לִ	בָּמְ	וְתַ	לִ
בָּמְ	וְתַ	לִ	בָּמְ	וְתַ	לִ

H3588 H6435 H8055 H0 H4131

For I said Hear me lest otherwise they should rejoice slippeth

H559 H5921 H1431

over me when my foot they magnify

Additional Cross-References

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