

Psalm 4:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

O ye sons of men, how long will ye turn my glory into shame?
how long will ye love vanity, and seek after leasing? Selah.

Analysis

David addresses the 'sons of men' (Hebrew 'benei ish' - mankind) who persist in dishonoring God and pursuing worthless idols. The rhetorical 'how long?' expresses both grief and urgency. 'Vanity' (Hebrew 'riq') means emptiness or futility, while 'leasing' (Hebrew 'kazab') means falsehood or lies. This verse exposes humanity's tragic exchange: trading God's glory for shame, truth for lies, substance for emptiness. Paul echoes this in Romans 1:23, describing how humanity exchanged the glory of God for idols.

Historical Context

Written as an evening prayer, possibly during Absalom's rebellion when David's glory as king was challenged. The psalm reflects David's pain at seeing people reject God's anointed for a usurper. It captures the perennial problem of humanity preferring lies over truth, temporary pleasure over eternal glory.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. What 'vanities' are you tempted to pursue instead of seeking God's glory?
2. How can you help others see the futility of life apart from God?

Interlinear Text

וְאֵת	בָּנִים	אֵשׁ	עַד	מֵה	כִּבְדֵּךְ	לְכַלְמָה
O ye sons	of men	how long		H4100	will ye turn my glory	into shame
H1121	H376	H5704			H3519	H3639
וְאֵת	בָּנִים	אֵשׁ	עַד	מֵה	כִּבְדֵּךְ	לְכַלְמָה
how long	will ye love	vanity	and seek	after leasing	Selah	
H157		H7385	H1245	H3577		H5542

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 1:22 (Love): How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge?

Hosea 4:7 (Glory): As they were increased, so they sinned against me: therefore will I change their glory into shame.

Psalms 3:3 (Glory): But thou, O LORD, art a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of mine head.

Psalms 5:6 (Sin): Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing: the LORD will abhor the bloody and deceitful man.

Psalms 106:20 (Glory): Thus they changed their glory into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass.

Jeremiah 2:11 (Glory): Hath a nation changed their gods, which are yet no gods? but my people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit.

Ephesians 4:25 (Parallel theme): Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.

Ecclesiastes 8:11 (Parallel theme): Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.

1 Samuel 12:21 (Parallel theme): And turn ye not aside: for then should ye go after vain things, which cannot profit nor deliver; for they are vain.

Isaiah 45:17 (Parallel theme): But Israel shall be saved in the LORD with an everlasting salvation: ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end.

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org