

Psalms 44:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thou makest us a byword among the heathen, a shaking of the head among the people.

Analysis

Israel becomes 'a byword among the heathen, a shaking of the head among the people.' A 'byword' (mashal) means their name becomes a proverb of misfortune--when people want to describe disaster, they say 'like Israel.' The head-shaking gesture expresses contempt and ridicule. Their fall becomes an object lesson in failed faith.

Historical Context

Deuteronomy 28:37 warned that covenant unfaithfulness would result in becoming a 'byword among all nations.' The psalmist may be experiencing this covenant curse while questioning whether it's deserved.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. What is worse: suffering itself or becoming an object lesson in failure to others?

2. How should believers respond when their faith makes them targets of derision?

Interlinear Text

תַּשִּׁימֵנוּ	לְךָ שֵׁל	בְּגוֹיִם	מִנְדֹּד	רֹאשׁ אִשׁ
Thou makest	us a byword	among the heathen	a shaking	of the head
H7760	H4912	H1471	H4493	H7218

בְּלִאֲמֵימִם:

among the people

H3816

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 24:9 (Kingdom): And I will deliver them to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth for their hurt, to be a reproach and a proverb, a taunt and a curse, in all places whither I shall drive them.

Job 16:4 (Word): I also could speak as ye do: if your soul were in my soul's stead, I could heap up words against you, and shake mine head at you.

2 Kings 19:21 (Word): This is the word that the LORD hath spoken concerning him; The virgin the daughter of Zion hath despised thee, and laughed thee to scorn; the daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee.