

Psalm 55:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Let death seize upon them, and let them go down quick into hell: for wickedness is in their dwellings, and among them.

Analysis

This imprecatory verse must be understood through Christ's teaching to pray for enemies (Matthew 5:44) while recognizing God's just wrath against unrepentant wickedness. David's prayer aligns with divine justice, not personal vengeance. 'Let death seize upon them' reflects Hebrew poetry's vivid language for God's righteous judgment, fulfilled in the fate of Absalom and Ahithophel.

Historical Context

The Hebrew 'Sheol' (the grave/realm of the dead) here represents divine judgment. Ahithophel's suicide and Absalom's death in battle fulfilled this prayer, demonstrating God's justice on those who oppose His anointed king.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How do you reconcile Old Testament imprecatory prayers with New Testament commands to love enemies?
2. What is the proper role of praying for God's justice in the present age?

Interlinear Text

עַל יָמָן וְשָׁמֶן תִּתְּנַחַם	ירַד וְ	שָׁא וְ	כִּי
seize	H5921	upon them and let them go down	into hell
H5377		H3381	H7585
בְּמִגְוָבָה מִ	בְּקָרְבָּם:		
for wickedness	H4033	and among	
H7451		H7130	

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 59:13 (Parallel theme): Consume them in wrath, consume them, that they may not be: and let them know that God ruleth in Jacob unto the ends of the earth. Selah.

Psalms 64:7 (Parallel theme): But God shall shoot at them with an arrow; suddenly shall they be wounded.

Acts 1:25 (Parallel theme): That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.

Psalms 9:17 (Evil): The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.

Matthew 26:24 (Parallel theme): The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born.

Matthew 27:5 (Parallel theme): And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.

2 Samuel 18:9 (Parallel theme): And Absalom met the servants of David. And Absalom rode upon a mule, and the mule went under the thick boughs of a great oak, and his head caught hold of the oak, and he was taken up between the heaven and the earth; and the mule that was under him went away.

2 Samuel 18:14 (Parallel theme): Then said Joab, I may not tarry thus with thee. And he took three darts in his hand, and thrust them through the heart of Absalom, while he was yet alive in the midst of the oak.

