

Psalms 58:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Do ye indeed speak righteousness, O congregation? do ye judge uprightly, O ye sons of men?

Analysis

David's rhetorical question to the 'congregation' (Hebrew 'elem'—mighty ones/judges) exposes the silence of those obligated to speak justice. The parallel 'judge uprightly' reveals covenant obligation—leaders must execute God's righteous standards. Their silence in the face of injustice constitutes covenant violation, anticipating Christ's denunciation of religious leaders who 'shut up the kingdom of heaven' (Matthew 23:13).

Historical Context

This psalm likely addresses corrupt officials during Saul's reign or possibly during Absalom's rebellion. The judicial system's corruption was a recurring prophetic complaint (Isaiah 1:23, Micah 3:11), demonstrating that institutional evil requires prophetic rebuke.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. What is the responsibility of those in authority when they witness injustice?
2. How should Christians respond when institutional leaders fail to uphold justice?

Interlinear Text

ת שְׁפָט וְ מִשְׁרֵךְ יְמֵנֶךְ פְּתִיבָר אֵל אַלְמָנָה
Do ye indeed O congregation righteousness speak uprightly do ye judge
H552 H482 H6664 H1696 H4339 H8199

בְּנֵי אָדָם
O ye sons of men
H1121 H120

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 57:1 (Parallel theme): Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me: for my soul trusteth in thee: yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast.

Psalms 59:1 (Parallel theme): Deliver me from mine enemies, O my God: defend me from them that rise up against me.

Matthew 26:3 (Parallel theme): Then assembled together the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people, unto the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas,

Numbers 11:16 (Parallel theme): And the LORD said unto Moses, Gather unto me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom thou knowest to be the elders of the people, and officers over them; and bring them unto the tabernacle of the congregation, that they may stand there with thee.

2 Samuel 23:3 (Righteousness): The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God.

2 Samuel 5:3 (Parallel theme): So all the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron; and king David made a league with them in Hebron before the LORD: and they anointed David king over Israel.

Isaiah 32:1 (Righteousness): Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment.

Acts 5:21 (Parallel theme): And when they heard that, they entered into the temple early in the morning, and taught. But the high priest came, and they that were with him, and called the council together, and all the senate of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought.

Matthew 27:1 (Parallel theme): When the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death: