

# Psalms 58:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Their poison is like the poison of a serpent: they are like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear;

## Analysis

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The serpent imagery evokes the Eden temptation, identifying wicked leaders with Satan's character. The 'deaf adder' (cobra) that refuses to hear the charmer represents judicial hardening—those who persistently resist truth become incapable of responding. This anticipates Jesus's quotation of Isaiah 6:9-10 regarding those who have eyes but cannot see (Matthew 13:13-15).

## Historical Context

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Snake charming was practiced in ancient Egypt and Palestine. The image of an adder refusing to respond to the charmer's music despite normally being susceptible illustrates willful rebellion—not ignorance but hardened resistance to known truth.

## Related Passages

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**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

**John 15:13** — Greatest form of love

## Study Questions

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1. What does judicial hardening teach about the consequences of persistent sin?

2. How can you discern between those who are ignorant and those who are judicially hardened?

## Interlinear Text

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שְׁמַת	לְמַזְמָת	כַּדְמָת וְתַ	שְׁמַת	נַחַת ש	כְּמֹת	פְּתַנְתָּ
<b>Their poison</b>	H0	<b>is like</b>	<b>Their poison</b>	<b>of a serpent</b>	H3644	<b>adder</b>
H2534		H1823	H2534	H5175		H6620
שְׁמַת	לְמַזְמָת	כַּדְמָת וְתַ	שְׁמַת	נַחַת ש	כְּמֹת	פְּתַנְתָּ
they are like the deaf	that stoppeth	her ear				
H2795	H331	H241				

## Additional Cross-References

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**Psalms 140:3** (Parallel theme): They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent; adders' poison is under their lips. Selah.

**Ecclesiastes 10:11** (Parallel theme): Surely the serpent will bite without enchantment; and a babbler is no better.

**James 3:8** (Parallel theme): But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.