

Psalms 58:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Break their teeth, O God, in their mouth: break out the great teeth of the young lions, O LORD.

Analysis

David's imprecatory prayer for God to 'break their teeth' uses predatory animal imagery—removing the lion's fangs eliminates its threat. This is not personal vengeance but appeal for divine justice to protect the vulnerable. The Hebrew 'haras' (break/tear down) appears in contexts of God dismantling evil structures, showing that prayer against wickedness aligns with God's own purposes.

Historical Context

Lions were literal threats in ancient Israel, making the metaphor immediately accessible. Samson's tearing the lion's jaw (Judges 14:6) and David's protection of sheep from lions (1 Samuel 17:34-36) made this imagery especially meaningful in David's writing.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How do imprecatory prayers function as appeals to divine justice rather than personal revenge?

2. What is the relationship between praying for God's judgment and personally forgiving enemies?

Interlinear Text

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|-----------------------------|---------------|-------------|----------------|-----------------|--------------------|------------|
| אֱלֹהִים | בָּרָס | בְּפִים | בְּפִיּוֹן | מַלְתָּעַ | וֹתָר | כְּפִירִים |
| O God | Break | their teeth | in their mouth | the great teeth | of the young lions | |
| H430 | H2040 | H8127 | H6310 | H4459 | H3715 | |
| נַתֵּן צָרָה: | | | | | | |
| break out | O LORD | | | | | |
| H5422 | H3068 | | | | | |

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 3:7 (References God): Arise, O LORD; save me, O my God: for thou hast smitten all mine enemies upon the cheek bone; thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly.

Job 29:17 (Parallel theme): And I brake the jaws of the wicked, and plucked the spoil out of his teeth.

Hosea 5:14 (Parallel theme): For I will be unto Ephraim as a lion, and as a young lion to the house of Judah: I, even I, will tear and go away; I will take away, and none shall rescue him.

Micah 5:8 (Parallel theme): And the remnant of Jacob shall be among the Gentiles in the midst of many people as a lion among the beasts of the forest, as a young lion among the flocks of sheep: who, if he go through, both treadeth down, and teareth in pieces, and none can deliver.