

Psalm 64:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Who whet their tongue like a sword, and bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words:

Analysis

The metaphor of tongues as swords and words as arrows depicts verbal assault as warfare. The Hebrew 'shanan' (sharpen/whet) indicates deliberate preparation, not spontaneous anger. 'Bend their bows' suggests aimed, intentional harm. This anticipates James's teaching on the tongue as a deadly weapon (James 3:5-8), showing that slander requires the same spiritual vigilance as physical warfare.

Historical Context

Ancient warfare involved both swords (close combat) and arrows (distance attacks), making the metaphor comprehensive. Verbal assault in ancient courts could be as deadly as weapons, as false accusations often resulted in execution.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does recognizing verbal assault as deliberate warfare change your response to slander?
2. What spiritual armor defends against 'arrows' of destructive words?

Interlinear Text

דָּרְכֵי לְשׁוֹנָה וְאֶשְׁר

H834

Who whet

כַּתֵּב

like a sword

לְשׁוֹנָה

their tongue

וְאֶשְׁר

and bend

H8150

H2719

H3956

H1869

מִרְבָּחַ

רְבָבָה

their bows to shoot their arrows words even bitter

H2671

H1697

H4751

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 57:4 (Word): My soul is among lions: and I lie even among them that are set on fire, even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword.

Psalms 58:7 (Parallel theme): Let them melt away as waters which run continually: when he bendeth his bow to shoot his arrows, let them be as cut in pieces.

Proverbs 12:18 (Word): There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword: but the tongue of the wise is health.

Jeremiah 9:3 (Parallel theme): And they bend their tongues like their bow for lies: but they are not valiant for the truth upon the earth; for they proceed from evil to evil, and they know not me, saith the LORD.

Isaiah 54:17 (Parallel theme): No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD.

Psalms 11:2 (Parallel theme): For, lo, the wicked bend their bow, they make ready their arrow upon the string, that they may privily shoot at the upright in heart.