

Psalm 69:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

They that sit in the gate speak against me; and I was the song of the drunkards.

Analysis

They that sit in the gate speak against me; and I was the song of the drunkards. This verse depicts mockery spanning the entire social spectrum. "They that sit in the gate" (וְשָׁבְּיַי שַׁעַר/yoshvei sha'ar) refers to city elders, judges, and leaders who conducted business and rendered judgments at the city gate—the center of civic life and authority (Ruth 4:1-11, Proverbs 31:23). These respectable, powerful figures gossip and slander David, using their positions to spread contempt.

"The song of the drunkards" (תְּגִינּוֹת שֹׁׁתְּיַי שְׁקָר/teginot shotei shekhar) places David at the opposite end of society's mockery. Even those drunk on strong drink, the most degraded members of society, make David the subject of their ribald tavern songs. From city gate to beer hall, from judges to drunkards, all levels of society unite in contempt for God's anointed.

This comprehensive rejection prefigures Christ, mocked by religious leaders (Matthew 26:67-68), political authorities (Luke 23:11), soldiers (Mark 15:16-20), and common criminals (Luke 23:39). The totality of rejection—elite and derelict, religious and secular—demonstrates the depth of human enmity against God and His servants.

Historical Context

City gates in ancient Israel were centers of commerce, justice, and social interaction. To "sit in the gate" meant holding position of authority and respect. These weren't fringe critics but society's leaders—those who should have defended justice and honored God's anointed. Their slander represented official, institutional rejection.

Drunken songs represented lowest form of mockery—crude, shameless ridicule without even pretense of propriety. Ancient Near Eastern drinking songs were often satirical and vulgar. That David became subject of such songs indicates his name had become cultural punchline, repeated by those too drunk to think coherently but sober enough to mock God's servant.

Jesus experienced identical spectrum of contempt. Religious leaders mocked Him (Matthew 26:67-68), political authorities ridiculed Him (Luke 23:11), soldiers made sport of Him (John 19:2-3), and even criminals derided Him (Matthew 27:44). The totality of rejection fulfilled this psalm.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. How should believers respond when both society's elites and its dregs unite in mocking Christian faith?
2. What does universal contempt for godliness reveal about sin's comprehensive corruption of human society?
3. How does Christ's experience of total social rejection from high to low provide comfort in our own experiences of rejection?

Interlinear Text

וְנִגְיָן וְתַּשְׁבִּי בְּשַׁבְּעָה שְׁעָרׁ וְיַחֲזֹקְיָהוּ
and sing and sit in the gate against me and I was the song
H7878 H3427 H8179 H5058

שָׁכַרְתִּי שָׁוֹתָה
of the drunkards H7941
H8354

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