

Psalms 69:24

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Pour out thine indignation upon them, and let thy wrathful anger take hold of them.

Analysis

Pour out thine indignation upon them, and let thy wrathful anger take hold of them. This verse intensifies the imprecation, directly calling for divine wrath. "Pour out" (שְׁפֹךְ/shefokh) uses imagery of liquid being emptied from a container—sudden, complete, overwhelming. "Thine indignation" (זָמַחַת/za'mekha) is righteous anger at wickedness, not capricious rage but justified wrath against evil. God's indignation is moral response to covenant-breaking, oppression, and unrepentant sin.

"Wrathful anger" (אֲפָתָה כְּרָה/charon apekha) literally means "burning of Your nose"—ancient Hebrew idiom for fierce anger (Exodus 32:12, Deuteronomy 13:17). "Take hold of them" (יִשְׁיַגֵּם/yasiggem) suggests pursuing and overtaking fleeing prey. Together, the phrases request that God's holy wrath pursue and overtake the wicked, that justice not be delayed or avoided.

Modern readers often recoil from such language, but it expresses essential theological truth: God's holiness demands justice; sin merits wrath; evil must be judged. The question isn't whether God will judge wickedness but when. These prayers for judgment anticipate final judgment and, from Christian perspective, heighten appreciation for Christ who bore God's poured-out wrath so believers would never face it (Romans 5:9, 1 Thessalonians 1:10, 5:9).

Historical Context

Language of divine wrath being "poured out" appears throughout prophetic literature, especially regarding judgment (Jeremiah 10:25, Ezekiel 14:19, 20:8, Hosea 5:10, Zephaniah 3:8). It depicts God's justice as bottled fury that will eventually be released in full measure against unrepentant evil. This isn't divine temper tantrum but moral necessity—God's holy character cannot coexist with unpunished sin.

The plea for God to "pour out" wrath recalls covenant curses in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28, where persistent covenant-breaking results in escalating judgment culminating in exile and divine abandonment. David, as covenant mediator (anointed king), can invoke these covenant terms in prayer.

Christian theology recognizes Christ as the ultimate focus of poured-out wrath. At the cross, God's indignation against sin was poured out on Christ as substitute (Isaiah 53:10, Romans 3:25). Because wrath was exhausted there, believers will never face it (Romans 8:1).

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does understanding God's wrath as moral response to evil rather than capricious rage affect your view of divine justice?
2. What role do imprecatory prayers play in a world where evil often goes unpunished in this life?
3. How does Christ bearing God's poured-out wrath at the cross transform these imprecations from terrifying threat to occasion for worship?

Interlinear Text

שָׁפֵר	בְּלִיכָּה	בְּעֵת	וְתַּחַר	אֵפֶר
Pour out	H5921	thine indignation	upon them and let thy wrathful	anger
H8210		H2195	H2740	H639

ישִׁיגֶם:
take hold
H5381

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 79:6 (Judgment): Pour out thy wrath upon the heathen that have not known thee, and upon the kingdoms that have not called upon thy name.

Hosea 5:10 (Judgment): The princes of Judah were like them that remove the bound: therefore I will pour out my wrath upon them like water.

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