

Psalm 74:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thine enemies roar in the midst of thy congregations; they set up their ensigns for signs.

Analysis

The psalmist describes enemy desecration: "Thine enemies roar in the midst of thy congregations; they set up their ensigns for signs" (Hebrew sha-agu tzorereycha b-qerev mo-adekha shamu ototam otot). "Roar" (Hebrew shaag) describes beasts or warriors—barbaric conquest. "Congregations" (Hebrew mo-adim) are appointed meeting places with God. The enemies plant their military standards where worship should occur. This verse captures the horror of sacred space profaned, divine appointments violated. God's dwelling becomes enemy territory.

Historical Context

The Babylonians didn't merely conquer Jerusalem politically but desecrated the temple religiously, setting up their idols and standards in God's house. This fulfilled warnings in Deuteronomy 28:49-52 and Leviticus 26:31. Similar desecration occurred under Antiochus IV Epiphanes (167 BC) when pagan altars were erected in the temple. Jesus prophesied this pattern would repeat (Matthew 24:15, "abomination of desolation").

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How do you respond when sacred things—worship, Scripture, God's name—are profaned in culture?
2. In what ways might subtle forms of idolatry profane the "temple" of your heart (1 Corinthians 6:19)?
3. How does Christ's cleansing of the temple picture His ultimate victory over all that defiles worship?

Interlinear Text

רֹאשׁ	רְאֵבֶן	בְּרִיבָה	בְּקָרְבָּן	מָזְעֵךְ	שְׁמֹעֵן	אַתְּזָהָן
roar	Thine enemies	in the midst	of thy congregations	they set up	for signs	
H7580	H6887	H7130	H4150	H7760	H226	

אתזות:

for signs
H226

Additional Cross-References

Lamentations 2:7 (Parallel theme): The Lord hath cast off his altar, he hath abhorred his sanctuary, he hath given up into the hand of the enemy the walls of her palaces; they have made a noise in the house of the LORD, as in the day of a solemn feast.

Matthew 24:15 (Parallel theme): When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)

Numbers 2:2 (Parallel theme): Every man of the children of Israel shall pitch by his own standard, with the ensign of their father's house: far off about the tabernacle of the congregation shall they pitch.

Revelation 13:6 (Parallel theme): And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.

Luke 13:1 (Parallel theme): There were present at that season some that told him of the Galilaeans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.

Luke 21:20 (Parallel theme): And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh.

2 Chronicles 36:17 (Parallel theme): Therefore he brought upon them the king of the Chaldees, who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man, or him that stooped for age: he gave them all into his hand.

Daniel 6:27 (Parallel theme): He delivereth and rescueth, and he worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.