

Psalm 75:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

I said unto the fools, Deal not foolishly: and to the wicked, Lift not up the horn:

Analysis

God warns the wicked: "I said unto the fools, Deal not foolishly: and to the wicked, Lift not up the horn" (Hebrew amarti la-holelim al-taholu v-la-r-shaim al-tarimu qaren). "Fools" (Hebrew holelim) are morally deficient, not intellectually. "Deal not foolishly" warns against arrogant boasting. "Lift not up the horn" uses animal imagery—raising horns signals aggressive pride. God commands the wicked to stop their arrogance. The verse shows divine patience: warning precedes judgment.

Historical Context

The "horn" symbolized power and pride throughout ancient Near East (Daniel 7:7-8, Revelation 13:1). Raising the horn meant asserting dominance. Proverbs repeatedly warns against pride (16:18, "Pride goes before destruction"). James 4:6 quotes Proverbs 3:34: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." God's warning here demonstrates long-suffering before judgment.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. What forms of "lifting up the horn" (pride, boasting, self-assertion) characterize modern culture and your own heart?
2. How does God's warning before judgment display both His justice and mercy?
3. How did Christ's humility (Philippians 2:5-8) reverse the pattern of "lifting up the horn," and what does this teach about Christian discipleship?

Interlinear Text

אָמַרְתִּי	לֹא תַּהֲלֹא	לֹא תַּהֲלֹא	לֹא תַּהֲלֹא	לֹא תַּהֲלֹא	לֹא תַּהֲלֹא
I said	Deal not foolishly	H408	Deal not foolishly	and to the wicked	H408
H559	H1984		H1984	H7563	

Additional Cross-References

Zechariah 1:21 (Parallel theme): Then said I, What come these to do? And he spake, saying, These are the horns which have scattered Judah, so that no man did lift up his head: but these are come to fray them, to cast out the horns of the Gentiles, which lifted up their horn over the land of Judah to scatter it.

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org