

Psalm 76:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

He shall cut off the spirit of princes: he is terrible to the kings of the earth.

Analysis

He shall cut off the spirit of princes (יבצֵר רוח נְגִידִים, yivtzor ruach negidim)—Batzar means cut off, clip, curtail; ruach is spirit, breath; negidim means princes, leaders, rulers. **He is terrible to the kings of the earth** (נוֹרָא לְמַלְכֵי-אָרֶץ, nora le-malkhei-aretz)—Nora means awesome, fearful, terrible; malkhei means kings.

Psalm 76 celebrates God's victory over enemies who attacked Jerusalem (likely Sennacherib's army in 2 Kings 19). God humbled the mighty with ease. **Cut off the spirit** means deflating pride, removing courage, or ending life itself. Human rulers—no matter how powerful—are utterly subject to divine sovereignty. Daniel 4:34-35 illustrates this with Nebuchadnezzar. Revelation 19:11-16 shows Christ as ultimate King who judges earthly kings.

Historical Context

When Sennacherib surrounded Jerusalem in 701 BC, Hezekiah prayed, and God sent an angel who killed 185,000 Assyrian soldiers overnight (2 Kings 19:35). This psalm may commemorate that stunning deliverance, where the mightiest empire of the age was humiliated by YHWH.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Genesis 1:1 – Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. Which contemporary rulers seem beyond divine accountability, and how does this verse speak to that?
2. How should Christians relate to earthly authority, knowing God "cuts off" princes at will?
3. What does it mean that God is "terrible" (awesome, fearful) to kings but merciful to his people?

Interlinear Text

אֵצֶן לְמַלְכֵי נָכָר אֶתְנָגִיד יְמֵי רַעַם בָּצָר !

He shall cut off the spirit of princes he is terrible to the kings of the earth

H1219 H7307 H5057 H3372 H4428 H776

Additional Cross-References

Zephaniah 3:6 (Parallel theme): I have cut off the nations: their towers are desolate; I made their streets waste, that none passeth by: their cities are destroyed, so that there is no man, that there is none inhabitant.

Psalms 68:12 (Kingdom): Kings of armies did flee apace: and she that tarried at home divided the spoil.

2 Chronicles 32:21 (Kingdom): And the LORD sent an angel, which cut off all the mighty men of valour, and the leaders and captains in the camp of the king of Assyria. So he returned with shame of face to his own land. And when he was come into the house of his god, they that came forth of his own bowels slew him there with the sword.

Isaiah 24:21 (Kingdom): And it shall come to pass in that day, that the LORD shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth.

Psalms 47:2 (Kingdom): For the LORD most high is terrible; he is a great King over all the earth.

Psalms 2:10 (Kingdom): Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth.

Psalms 2:5 (Parallel theme): Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure.

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