

Psalms 80:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thou makest us a strife unto our neighbours: and our enemies laugh among themselves.

Analysis

Thou makest us a strife unto our neighbours: and our enemies laugh among themselves. This verse describes Israel's international humiliation. "Thou makest us a strife" (tesimenu madon l'shakeneinu, תְּשִׁמְנוּ מַדּוֹן לְשַׁקְנֵינוּ) indicates God has positioned Israel as object of contention—neighboring nations dispute over and mock them. Madon (מַדּוֹן) means strife, contention, object of quarreling. Israel has become what nations argue about, likely mocking their weakness and debating territorial claims over conquered land.

"Our enemies laugh among themselves" (ve'oyvenu yil'agu lamo, וְאֹבֵינוּ יַלְעַגּוּ לָמוּ) uses la'ag (לְעַגּוּ), meaning to mock, deride, scorn. The phrase "among themselves" suggests private mockery—enemies don't even bother confronting Israel directly but ridicule them in internal discussions. This compounds humiliation: Israel isn't even worthy of direct engagement, only behind-the-back derision. This echoes Psalm 79:4 and anticipates ongoing biblical theme of God's people as objects of international mockery during judgment periods.

The verse's theology is stark: God Himself has made Israel contemptible. This isn't external attack against God's will but divine positioning of Israel for humiliation as covenant discipline. Yet the lament's continuation demonstrates that even God-ordained judgment invites prayer for restoration. The psalmist doesn't resign to permanent disgrace but appeals for renewed blessing that will silence mockery by demonstrating renewed divine favor.

Historical Context

This description fits multiple historical contexts when Israel faced international derision: the Assyrian conquest of Northern Kingdom (722 BC), Babylonian exile of Judah (586 BC), or periods of Aramean or Philistine oppression during the judges and monarchy. Surrounding nations—Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre, Egypt—regularly mocked Israel during weak periods. The prophets frequently addressed this theme (Ezekiel 36:3-7; Zephaniah 2:8-10), promising eventual vindication when God would restore Israel's honor and judge the mockers.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How should believers respond when their faith makes them objects of public ridicule and mockery?
2. What is the relationship between accepting God's discipline (acknowledging He has made us objects of scorn) and praying for restoration?
3. How can Christians maintain witness and dignity when cultural contempt makes them strife and laughter to surrounding society?

Interlinear Text

לְמַן	לְלַעֲגֹת	וְאֵיבָרִים	כֵּן	תַּשְׁפִּים	כֵּן	מִדְּבָרִים	לְשִׁכְנָה	יכֵן	לְשִׁכְנָה	יכֵן	מִדְּבָרִים	לְמַן	
Thou makest	us a strife	unto our neighbours		and our enemies			laugh						H0
H7760	H4066			H7934			H341						H3932

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 79:4 (Parallel theme): We are become a reproach to our neighbours, a scorn and derision to them that are round about us.

