

# Psalms 81:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust: and they walked in their own counsels.

## Analysis

**So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust** (וַיַּעֲשֵׂלֵחּוּ בְּשִׁרְיוֹת לְבָם) describes judicial abandonment. Ashallechu ('I sent them away, released them') appears in Jeremiah 7:24 and 23:17 as covenant curse. **And they walked in their own counsels** (yelechu be-mo'atsothem)—choosing self-designed wisdom over divine instruction.

This is God's most terrifying judgment: giving rebels what they demand. Romans 1:24, 26, 28 repeats this pattern: 'God gave them up' to uncleanness, vile affections, and reprobate minds. When people persistently reject God's gracious rule, He eventually grants their request for autonomy—which leads to destruction. The path of self-will always ends in slavery, not freedom.

## Historical Context

Israel's judges period illustrates this cycle: rebellion → oppression → cry for help → deliverance → peace → rebellion (Judges 2:11-19). God's judicial abandonment appears in Israel's defeat (Judges 2:14), exile (2 Kings 17:18-23), and ultimate rejection of Messiah. Yet even judgment served redemptive purposes, preparing for the faithful remnant and new covenant.

## Related Passages

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**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

**John 15:13** — Greatest form of love

## Study Questions

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1. What does it mean for God to 'give people up' to their lusts, and how is this both justice and mercy?
2. How do you discern between God's permissive will (allowing consequences) and His directive will (commanding obedience)?
3. What warning does this verse give about persistently rejecting God's correction and counsel in favor of self-designed religion?

## Interlinear Text

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! לְכָה אֲשֶׁר לְבָם וְלִבְרִיר וְתִּשְׁלַחְתָּהוּ

So I gave them up      lust      unto their own hearts      H1980

H7971

H8307

H3820

בְּמַעַצּוֹת יְחִים:

in their own counsels

H4156

## Additional Cross-References

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**Jeremiah 7:24** (Parallel theme): But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in the counsels and in the imagination of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward.

**Romans 1:24** (Parallel theme): Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:

**Isaiah 30:1** (Parallel theme): Woe to the rebellious children, saith the LORD, that take counsel, but not of me; and that cover with a covering, but not of my spirit, that they may add sin to sin:

**Acts 7:42** (Parallel theme): Then God turned, and gave them up to worship the host of heaven; as it is written in the book of the prophets, O ye house of Israel, have ye offered to me slain beasts and sacrifices by the space of forty years in the wilderness?

**Acts 14:16** (Parallel theme): Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways.

**Job 8:4** (Parallel theme): If thy children have sinned against him, and he have cast them away for their transgression;

**Genesis 6:3** (Parallel theme): And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.