

Psalms 83:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Let them be confounded and troubled for ever; yea, let them be put to shame, and perish:

Analysis

Let them be confounded and troubled for ever; yea, let them be put to shame, and perish. This climactic petition seeks enemies' permanent defeat through comprehensive judgment. Yevoshu v-yibahalu adei-ad (יִבְשׁוּ וַיִּבְהָלוּ עַד־עַד, "let them be ashamed and dismayed forever") combines bosh (בוֹשׁ, "be ashamed, confounded, disappointed") with bahal (בָּהַל, "be troubled, dismayed, terrified"). The phrase adei-ad (עַד־עַד, "forever, perpetually") indicates permanent condition, not temporary setback.

V-yachperu v-yovedu (וַיַּחֲפְרוּ וַיֹּוֹדוּ, "and let them be ashamed and perish") escalates from shame to destruction. Chafer (חָפַר) means to be ashamed, humiliated, disappointed—their confident conspiracy ending in disgrace. Avad (אָבַד) means to perish, be destroyed, vanish—total elimination. The prayer seeks not merely military defeat but comprehensive destruction ensuring the threat never resurfaces.

This severe language must be understood covenantally. Enemies conspired to annihilate Israel (v. 4) and seize God's inheritance (v. 12)—attacking God's covenant purposes. The prayer asks God to defend His own name and promises by destroying those who oppose them. Yet verse 16 reveals redemptive purpose: "that they may seek thy name, O LORD." Even judgment serves evangelical ends—demonstrating God's reality and inviting submission. Only those who persist in rebellion to the end face final destruction.

Historical Context

Biblical judgment often exhibits progressive intensity: warning, discipline, severe judgment, destruction. God repeatedly called enemies to repentance before bringing final judgment—Nineveh repented at Jonah's preaching and was spared (Jonah 3); Pharaoh had ten plagues to relent before final judgment (Exodus 7-12); Canaan received 400 years warning before conquest (Genesis 15:16). Permanent destruction came only after persistent rejection of grace. This pattern continues eschatologically: Christ's return brings judgment on those who "know not God, and that obey not the gospel" (2 Thessalonians 1:8), yet even then "the Lord is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9).

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How do you reconcile prayers for enemies' destruction with commands to love enemies and pray for persecutors?
2. What distinguishes righteous desire for God's justice from sinful desire for personal revenge?
3. How does verse 16's evangelistic purpose transform understanding of this verse's severe judgment language?

Interlinear Text

יֵבְשׁוּ	וַיִּבְהֹל וְ	עַד	וַיִּחְפֹּר וְ
Let them be confounded	and troubled	for ever	yea let them be put to shame
H954	H926	H5703	H2659
וַיִּאָּבֶדוּ:			
and perish			
H6			

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 35:4 (Parallel theme): Let them be confounded and put to shame that seek after my soul: let them be turned back and brought to confusion that devise my hurt.