

Psalms 86:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

O God, the proud are risen against me, and the assemblies of violent men have sought after my soul; and have not set thee before them.

Analysis

O God, the proud are risen against me (אֱלֹהִים זְדִים קָמוּ-עָלַי, Elohim zedim kamu-alai)—Zedim means proud, arrogant, insolent ones; kamu means they have risen up. **And the assemblies of violent men have sought after my soul** (וַעֲדַת עָרִיצִים בִּקְשׁוּ נַפְשִׁי, va-adat aritzim bikshu nafshi)—Adat means assembly, group, company; aritzim means violent, ruthless, terrifying ones. **And have not set thee before them** (וְלֹא שָׁמוּךְ לְנֶגְדָם, ve-lo samukha le-negdam)—They haven't placed God before their eyes; they act as if God doesn't exist or matter.

After praising God's mercy (vv. 12-13), David returns to describing his enemies. The problem isn't just their violence but their godlessness—they **have not set thee before them**. This is practical atheism: living as if God won't judge. Psalm 10:4, 14:1, and 36:1 describe similar attitudes. Their very godlessness emboldens their violence.

Historical Context

Throughout David's life, enemies conspired—Saul and his court, Absalom and his followers, surrounding nations. Many operated without fear of God. The "assemblies" suggests organized opposition, not random attacks. This pattern continues wherever the church faces organized persecution.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How do you respond when opponents act as if God doesn't exist or won't hold them accountable?
2. What does it mean to "set God before you" in practical, daily terms?
3. How does recognizing your enemies' godlessness help you pray for them rather than merely condemn them?

Interlinear Text

אֱלֹהֵי יִם	יִדְּ יִם	קָמוּ	עַל י	וְעַד ת	עַרְיָצִים
O God	the proud	are risen	against me	and the assemblies	of violent
H430	H2086	H6965	H5921	H5712	H6184
בְּקִשׁוּ	נַפְשִׁי	וְלֹא	שָׁמַ וְכִי	לִנְגִּדָּם:	
men have sought	after my soul	and have not set	God before them:		
H1245	H5315	H3808	H7760	H5048	

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 54:3 (Resurrection): For strangers are risen up against me, and oppressors seek after my soul: they have not set God before them. Selah.