



TEHILLIM TALKS

Psalm 58

To the choirmaster: according to "Do Not Destroy".

A Miktam of David.

1

Do you indeed decree what is right, **you gods**? Do you judge the children of man uprightly? (ESV)

Do you, **O chieftains**, indeed speak justice, in rightness judge humankind? (Alter)

Is it true that you are **silent**? Justice should you speak! With fairness should you judge people! (Artscroll)

2

No, in your hearts you devise wrongs; your hands deal out violence on earth. (ESV)

In your heart you work misdeeds on earth, weigh a case with outrage in your hands. (Alter)

Even in your heart you do wrongs, in the land you weigh out the violence of your hands. (Artscroll)

3

The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray from birth, speaking lies. (ESV)

The wicked backslide from the very womb, the lie-mongers go astray from birth. (Alter)

Estranged are the wicked from the womb, astray from birth go the speakers of falsehood. (Artscroll)

4-5

They have venom like the venom of a serpent, like the deaf adder that stops its ear, ⁵ so that it does not hear the voice of charmers or of the cunning enchanter. (ESV)

They have venom akin to the serpent's venom, like the deaf viper that stops up its ears, so it hears not the soothsayers voice nor the cunning caster of spells. (Alter)

They have venom like the venom of a snake, like a deaf viper that closes its ear. So as not to hearken to the voice of charmers, of the most cunning spellbinder. (Artscroll)

6

O God, break the teeth in their mouths; tear out the fangs of the young lions, O LORD! (ESV)

God, smash their teeth in their mouth. The jaws of the lions shatter, O LORD. (Alter)

O God, smash their teeth in their mouth; the molars of the young lions – shatter, *Hashem*. (Artscroll)

7

Let them vanish like water that runs away; when he aims his arrows, let them be blunted. (ESV)

Let them melt away, like water run off. Let Him pull back His arrows so they be cut down. (Alter)

Let them be despicable, as if in water, let them wade, let Him aim His arrows to cut him down. (Artscroll)

8-9

Let them be like the snail that dissolves into slime, like the stillborn child who never sees the sun. ⁹ Sooner than your pots can feel the heat of thorns, whether green or ablaze, may He sweep them away! (ESV)

Like a snail that moves in its slime, a woman's stillbirth that sees not the sun, before their thorns ripen in bramble, still alive and in wrath rushed to ruin. (Alter)

Like the snail that melts and slithers away, the stillbirth of a mole that never saw the sun. Before your tender briars develop into hardened thorns, as if with might, as if with wrath He will storm at them. (Artscroll)

10

The righteous will rejoice when he sees the vengeance; he will bathe his feet in the blood of the wicked. (ESV)

The just man rejoices when vengeance he sees, his feet he will bathe in the wicked one's blood. (Alter)

The righteous one shall rejoice when he sees vengeance, his feet shall he bathe in the blood of the wicked. (Artscroll)

11

Mankind will say, "Surely there is a reward for the righteous; surely there is a God who judges on earth." (ESV)

And man will say, "Yes, there is fruit for the just. Yes, there are gods judging the earth." (Alter)

And mankind shall say, "There is, indeed, a reward for the righteous; there is, indeed, a God judging the land." (Artscroll)

REFERENCES:

Verse 1

Robert Alter: *“The English reader should be warned that the Hebrew text of this psalm, from this verse to the end, with the sole exception of the ferocious verses 7[6] and 11[10], is badly mangled. As a result, a good deal of the translation is necessarily conjectural or must rely on emendation.”* (Robert Altar, *The Hebrew Bible: A Translation With Commentary*, Vol.3, p.145)

Verses 4-5

John 8:43-45 “Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear My word. You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father’s desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies. But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me.”

Acts 7:57 But they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears and rushed together at him.

Proverbs 27:22 Crush a fool in a mortar with a pestle along with crushed grain, yet his folly will not depart from him.

Verse 7

R’ Samson Raphael Hirsch: *“If all those who would be qualified to intervene, and whose duty it would therefore be to do so, were to use their influence to put an end to evil by both word and action, the very contempt in which evil and the wicked man would then be held by society would be sufficient to have the power of the lawless melt away like water. They would silently steal away from society, and even if one of them might still attempt to aim the arrow or arrows of his wickedness at his innocent target, it would be as if the points of their arrows had already been broken by the contempt that he is sure to incur by his evil acts.”* (The Hirsch Tehillim, p.471-2)

Verse 10

Leviticus 19:16 “You shall not go around as a slanderer among your people, and you shall not stand up against the life of [lit. “stand on the blood of”] your neighbor: I am Adonai.”

Verse 11

Exodus 4:16 “[Aaron] shall speak for you to the people, and he shall be your mouth, and you shall be as God (אלהים, *elohim*) to him.”

Exodus 7:1 And Adonai said to Moses, “See, I have made you a God (אלהים, *elohim*) to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron shall be your prophet.”

Exodus 22:8-9 If the thief is not found, the owner of the house shall come near to the judges (האלהים, *ha’elohim*) to show whether or not he has put his hand to his neighbor’s property. For every breach of trust, whether it is for an ox, for a donkey, for a sheep, for a cloak, or for any kind of lost thing, of which one says, ‘This is it,’ the case of both parties shall come before the judges (האלהים, *ha’elohim*). The one whom judges (אלהים, *elohim*) condemn shall pay double to his neighbor.