
Psalm 10

Psalm 10:1–18

The Afflicted One Complains About the Corrupt

Outline of Chapter 10:

vv. 1–2	Why does God not deal with the malevolent?
vv. 3–11	The actions and characteristics of the malevolent
vv. 12–15	God is called upon to break the strength of the malevolent
vv. 16–18	God has heard the desire of the grace-oriented and He will vindicate the oppressed

Charts and Maps

Introduction	Barnes Outlines Psalm 10
v. 4	The Less Literal Translations of Psalm 10:4
v. 4	Exegesis of the Septuagint Version of Psalm 10:4
v. 6	Job 21:7–21
v. 7	The Five Categories of Verbal Sins
v. 8	The Less Literal Translations of Psalm 10:8
v. 10	The Less Literal Translations of Psalm 10:10
v. 14	The Exegesis of Psalm 10:14 from the Greek
v. 14	The Less Literal Translations of Psalm 10:14
v. 15	The Less Literal Translations of Psalm 10:15
Addendum	Psalm 10:3 Addendum
Addendum	Commentary Addendum

Introduction: As I have mentioned before, I will place several of the psalms topically rather than by the time that they were written. Psalm 10 is a parallel psalm to Psalm 73 and the Job 21. You will recall that Job's friends have assumed that he is evil in some way or another, based upon the awful things which had happened to him. Several of them say that this dates way back to times of old and that this is a part of accepted wisdom. In Job 21, which would seem to be a fitting end for the discussion between Job and his associates, Job points out that their stand is just so much hooey. There are tons of people who are infidels, who are unbelievers, who lead lives apart from God and, at times, in opposition to God, and they are rich and successful. Job says that this is observable anywhere. So, if prosperity does not indicate blessing from God, then pain and suffering does not necessarily indicate deserved cursing from God.

In this particular psalm, we have the cry of a man who feels as though God stands away from him during this times of trouble. The implication is that the wicked have pursued and hurt him, although that is not directly stated. He calls upon God to not forget the poor, and then asks for God to break the strength of the wrongdoer.

In the Greek and Latin, Psalms 9 and 10 are one psalm, which is why the numbering of the psalms in the Vulgate and the Septuagint are different from those in the Hebrew and English Bibles. This is not something written in stone, however, as my Septuagint kept the English and Hebrew numbering of the psalms. A second argument for these psalms being joined as one is that the first ten strophes of Psalm 9 begin with successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet, beginning with the first letter and terminating with the tenth. Then we have v. 20, which begins with a qōwph (פ), which is not the 11th letter of the Hebrew alphabet (although it sounds the same as a kaph (כ), which is the 11th letter of the alphabet. The first verse of Psalm 10 begins with the 12th letter of the Hebrew

alphabet. Now, we would expect the next several stanzas of Psalm 10 to continue this pattern, but they do not, until we get to the beginning of v. 12, which begins with a qôwph and then continues, each stanza matching the successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Now, there are exactly enough stanzas between vv. 1 and 12 to match with the missing successive letters of the alphabet; they just aren't found there, however.¹ Does this tell us that these are one psalm? Not necessarily, although it could point to the same author composing one psalm and then the next (which is probably what this does mean).

Now, although an argument could be made for Psalms 9 and 10 as being two sides of the same coin, they are not thematically identical. Psalm 9, a psalm of David, praises God for His power in destroying the enemies of Israel. In Psalm 10, the psalmist asks God why He is standing afar off while the corrupt attack and exploit the poor. Whereas Psalm 9 deals with the nation Israel, Psalm 10 deal with individuals. Psalm 9 is a thanksgiving Psalm and Psalm 10 is a supplicatory psalm.² In other words, there are probably dozens of adjacent psalms which could be seen just as reasonably paired as these two. Furthermore, Psalm 10 seems to have its own introduction which appears out of place as a continuance of Psalm 9; and the endings of each psalm appear to be uniquely suited to that psalm. The NIV Study Bible points out a similarity of the endings of the psalms, but that does not support their being one and the same psalm; have a conclusion at the end of Psalm 9 obviously indicates that is the *end* of Psalm 9. It is less likely for Psalm 10 to continue Psalm 9, if Psalm 9 has an ending. Taking both psalms as a unified whole does damage to the theme and structure of each; even taking the psalms as *Part One* and *Part Two* makes little sense, because of their thematic differences. Therefore, I see no reason that these psalms should be joined at the hip. The explanation for why these psalms are joined in the Septuagint and the Vulgate? Psalm 10 does not have an inscription. Without the inscription, a person might run the two psalms together. Now is it possible that King David composed both psalms, one right after the other? Certainly. Would the unusual letter pattern that we find indicate this? Affirmative. However, this does not make them into one psalm.

In the first book of the Psalms, David is said to be the author of 39 of the 41 psalms.³ Only this psalm and Psalm 33 lack inscriptions (or, *superscriptions*). There are differing points of views with regards to these inscriptions; some regard them as being added sometime after the writing of the psalm itself. I believe them to generally be a part of the original text; however, caution should be noted, as there are a few differences between the inscriptions of the Massoretic text and of the Septuagint, indicating the manuscripts used by the translators of the Septuagint did not match the Hebrew manuscripts that we have today. Therefore, we approach the interpretation as we would with any passage which differs significantly in the Hebrew and the Greek.

Thematically, Psalm 10 is loosely tied to Job 21. Job in that chapter points out examples of the prosperity of the wicked and he indicates that these men, from early life to the grave, are not disciplined by God. Whereas, Job does not appear to call upon God to right these wrongs, the psalmist does.

We begin with the psalmist complaining that God is *afar off*, which indicates that God does not appear to be doing anything in his life. It is not necessarily so ego-centric as that, however. The psalmist will go into great detail as to the characteristics of the corrupt man, about whom he complains for most of the psalm (vv. 2–11). The wicked person persecutes the poor (or afflicted) (v. 2); he boasts about his own lusts (v. 3a); he curses and turns away from God (v. 3b); not only does he not seek God, he does not believe that God exists (v. 4); he is arrogant beyond belief, thinking that his opinions are like those coming from God (v. 5), believing himself to be absolutely stable in his wealth (v. 6). He curses continually (v. 7) and completely takes advantage of the poor in all ways (vv. 8–10). He believes that he is not accountable to God in any way (v. 11).

¹ This is illustrated in Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 5, pp. 97–98, 107–108. The psalms are translated, but in front of each psalm, we have the appropriate Hebrew letter. I should point out that it is fine to make such observations as these, but to make these observations apart from noting the content of the two psalms is foolish. As will be noted, both psalms have a beginning, a middle, an ending and different themes. Content is the bigger (and far more important) picture.

² Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 5, p. 108.

³ Approximately 100 of the psalms have been associated with specific authors in their inscriptions.

In the second main portion of the psalm, the psalmist asks God to intervene on behalf of the poor and the afflicted, as it is only to God that the poor and the unfortunate can turn. He asks for God to break the arm (i.e., the strength) of the reprobate (vv. 12–15). The psalmist concludes by saying the Jehovah is King forever and that He has certainly heard the cries of the grace-oriented, and that He will properly vindicate the less fortunate person (vv. 16–18).

Barnes Outlines Psalm 10

Even though I have given you a brief rundown of this psalm in the previous paragraph, Barnes offers us an outline which is apropos to this chapter.⁴ I have added to and edited the outline somewhat.

- I. The psalmist asks, “Where is God?” v. 1
- II. The characteristics of the enemy (or the reprobate). vv. 2–11
 - A. He is proud, and, for that reason, persecutes the poor (v. 2)
 - B. He was a braggart and he often boasted of his own wealth (v. 3)
 - C. He was a practical atheist; he was too proud to seek after God and too proud to acknowledge his dependence upon Him (v. 4).
 - D. His ways were always grievous and designed to produce evil. He had no correct views on moral subjects—the great principles of truth and right were far above him and out of his sight (v. 5).
 - E. He was a man who had no apprehensions about the future. He felt that the course of his life would be one of continued prosperity and that adversity would never come upon him (v. 6).
 - F. He was profane and openly fraudulent (v. 7).
 - G. He was insidious, artful and underhanded in his doings; he would stoop to any act of duplicity and treachery to accomplish his purposes (vv. 8–10)
 - H. He acted as if God had *forgotten*; i.e., as though God would simply pass over his offenses, as if He did not see them or regard them.
- III. The psalmist then appeals to God to deliver him from the machinations of this foe (vv. 12–18).
 - A. He makes a solemn appeal to God, asking Him to remember the cry of the grace-oriented and the afflicted (v. 12).
 - B. He then makes two arguments as to why God should interpose (vv. 13–15):
 1. God has observed all that this reprobate has done; he has not hidden anything from God.
 2. The poor and the afflicted had placed their trust in God with a firm confidence that He would protect those who relied upon Him.
 - C. Then the psalmist expresses a solemn and full conviction that God would therefore interfere, and save those who have put their trust in Him (vv. 16–18).

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart Index](#)

Authorship: Because of where Psalm 9 is found, we would assume Davidic authorship. Psalms 3–9, 11–32 and 34–41 are all attributed to David. In fact, of all the psalms in Book 1, only four are not attributed to David (and they are not attributed to anyone else). For this reason, most have assumed that King David wrote this psalm. There is nothing in the psalm to preclude this assumption; but there is little to affirm it as well.

There is nothing in this psalm which would tie it to a particular time or era. However, the psalmist observes that God appears to be standing afar off and that the malevolent are taking advantage of poor. The psalmist calls upon God to intervene, to vindicate the poor and the oppressed. Given this, it is unlikely that David would be author during the time that he ruled Israel, as that position of power would have allowed him to intervene directly. Therefore, we can rule that time period out. The surrounding psalms are written to the various choir directors, which could have been submitted while David was under Saul in the royal palace, and they could have been written while he was king over Israel. This psalm, however, was not written during that time period.

⁴ Taken from *Barnes' Notes; Psalms, Volume 1*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 86.

Grammatical concerns: I should warn you up front that there are some peculiarities in this psalm. First of all, many of the words are repeated throughout. Secondly, we will go from verses which are very difficult to understand and translate to those which are quite easy to translate. The vocabulary is relatively easy throughout and the sentence structure is relatively easy. What we had in Psalm 73, where we knew exactly to whom the psalmist was referring to by the gender, number and person, is not what we have here in Psalm 10. The 3rd person masculine singular in one verse could refer to the same person (or people) in the next verse where there is a 3rd person masculine plural. We might find the 3rd masculine singular twice in the same verse and it can return to two different sets of people. So, we will often get the gist of the verse, but understanding each and every nuance might be difficult. The fact that you see under *charts*, several references to *the less literal translation of...* indicates that there will be considerable problems with the original text.

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart Index](#)

Why Does God Not Deal with the Malevolent?

Unlike most of the psalms, this psalm does not have an inscription. It just starts right in. However, this is not so much of a rarity as to suspect there is a problem. There are 34 psalms which lack titles or inscriptions. Psalm 10 and Psalm 43 could reasonably carry with them the title of the preceding psalm. The Greek Septuagint apparently has 17 psalms without titles or inscriptions.

For what [reason], O Y^ehowah, do You [take a] stand in a distance?

[Why do] you conceal yourself to times of drought.

Psalm
10:1

Why do You [take a stand] at a distance, O Y^ehowah?

[Why do] You hide [Yourself] in times of destitution?

Why, Jehovah, do You stand afar off hiding Yourself in times of destitution?

There are several psalms wherein the psalmist feels estranged from God, and the reason is, is that he has put himself out of fellowship. Psalm 51 is one of those psalms. What you need to know from the very beginning is that this psalmist has not done anything wrong. He is not out of fellowship. He is not under discipline. In fact, his concern appears to be with third parties here and not with his own personal welfare (although it is possible that he sees himself as one who has been taken advantage of). Let's see what others have done with this verse:

NASB	Why dost thou stand afar off, O LORD? Why dost Thou hide <i>Thyself</i> [or, <i>Thine eyes</i>] in times of trouble?.
NLT	O LORD, why do you stand so far away? Why do you hide when I need you the most?
The Septuagint	Why do You stand far off, O Lord? [Why] do You overlook [us] in times of need, in affliction?
<i>Young's Literal Translation</i>	Why, Jehovah, dost Thou stand at a distance? Thou dost hide in times of adversity,...

We begin this verse with the interrogative *lâmâh* (לָמָה) [pronounced *law-MAW*], which means *for what reason, why, to what purpose*. The *lâmed* preposition = Strong's #none BDB #510. *Mâh* = Strong's #4100 BDB #552 (BDB #554). This is followed by the proper name for God—Y^ehowah, followed by the 2nd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of *ʿâmad* (עָמַד) [pronounced *ʿaw-MAHD*], which means *to take a stand, to stand, to remain, to endure, to withstand*. Strong's #5975 BDB #763. This is followed by the *bêyth* preposition and the adjective *râchôq* (רָחֹק) [pronounced *raw-KHOHK*], which means adjective, *distant, far*. Strong's #7350 BDB #935. This gives us: **For what reason, O Jehovah, do you [take a] stand at a distance?** In order for this to be Scripture, it has to be written by a believer. So, this believer asks, immediately, *Why do you stand afar off, O Jehovah?* It is, to some degree, a subjective feeling. It will be made clear in this psalm why this believer feels this way, but he does feel as though God is far from him. So that there is no misunderstanding, God is omnipresent.

He is everywhere. When the Bible speaks of God relative to *place*, then that is a figure of speech. In this case, it refers to the feelings of the writer. He feels as though God is afar off.

Barnes: *That is, what is the reason why You do this? The thought on which this is based is that God might be expected to interpose in a time of trouble, and that His aid might then be looked for. Yet in this case, He seemed to be an indifferent spectator of the sorrows and afflictions of the wronged and oppressed. This filled the mind of the writer with surprise, and he could not account for it, especially in view of the character of the person or persons who had wronged the author of the psalm.*⁵

In the second line, we continue with the question, even though there is not a repeat of *lâmâh*. Then we have the 2nd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect of *ʿâlam* (אָלַם) [pronounced *gaw-LAHM*] means *to veil from sight, to hide from the eyes, to turn away from*. By application, it could also mean *to conceal, to cover over*. Strong's #5956 BDB #761. We then have the *lâmed* preposition (*to, for*) and the feminine plural substantive construct *ʿêth* (אֵת) [pronounced *gayth*], which means *time, the right time, the proper time*. Strong's #6256 BDB #773. This is followed by the feminine singular noun *bâtstsârâh* (בַּצָּרָה) [pronounced *bahts-TSAW-raw*], which means *dearth, destitution, restraint, drought*. This may seem like some variant ideas, but *restraint* seems to be the predominant one, indicating a *restraint of rain*, which is a *drought*, which results in *dearth, destitution*. Strong's #1226 BDB #131. This gives us: **[Why do] You conceal [Yourself] for times of drought**. Obviously the author of this psalm feels that he is in a time of need, and God is not there for him.

The Open Bible comments: *[This] a typical complaint of the righteous sufferer. For example, Job cried out, "Why do you turn away from me?" (See Job 13:23–24). God's seeming absence in the midst of suffering always adds to our anxiety. But we must remember that the feeling of aloneness is due to our blindness, not to God's absence.*⁶

The evangelist, your Christian associates and/or your pastor might have told you to believe in Jesus and everything would be great. The author of this psalm asks God why is He standing afar off (and it will be clear in this psalm that the problem is not that he is out of fellowship). Psalm 22:1 begins with, **My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?** Although this is clearly a Messianic psalm, it had to have some previous historical value. That is, it is reasonable to assume that it had happened to David the author (obviously at a much, much lower intensity). Psalm 13:1: **How long, O Jehovah? Will You forget me forever? How long will You hide Your face from me?** Based upon these three psalms alone, you cannot expect your Christian life to be rosy smiles and happy things all the time. In fact, if you do not experience times of doubt, if God does not feel as though He is near you, if you don't suffer when you are out of fellowship, then you may want to question your own salvation. I guarantee you that when I sin, I am disciplined. I get tested and I get disciplined. They are facts of my life. You should expect the same—not because that is in the realm of my own experience, but because it is right here in front of your face in the Word of God. Psalm 10 is a psalmist who does not feel God's presence. In Psalm 13, David speaks of his feeling that God has temporarily abandoned him and that his enemy seems to be getting the upper hand. Psalm 22 describes a believer in great pain (and it certainly describes the cross of our Lord). Psalm 51 speaks of the pain and suffering that David endured when out of fellowship (as well as the several chapters in 2Sam. 11–18). The book of Job describes incredible suffering endured by a man who was the spiritual Atlas of his generation. So, right here in this one paragraph, I have rattled off 12 chapters plus the book of Job which indicate that the believer will suffer in this life. And, don't think this is only an Old Testament phenomena. The Apostle Paul endured great sufferings, which he enumerates in 2Cor. 11:23–28. He endured that famous thorn in the flesh for what appears to be the last several years of his life (2Cor. 12:7). I know what you want. You want to fly just under the radar. You want to be in the place where you get a little blessing, but God forgets to discipline you and He forgets to put any pressure on you. Sorry, that's not going to happen. You are not going to be flying under the radar. You are not going to avoid pain and suffering. Furthermore, you are going to endure injustices from both believers and unbelievers. In my life, the worst treatment I have received has been at the hands of fellow believers.

⁵ *Barnes' Notes; Psalms, Volume 1*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; pp. 86–87.

⁶ *The Open Bible*; the New Living Translation; Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, TN; ©1996, p. 721.

Application: Now, let's make another application of this verse. Contemporary Christianity abounds with holy rollers, most of whom expect God to play spectacular parts in their mediocre lives. They expect to see miracles, healings and all the powers of God manifested—at least a few times on Sunday, if not more often. When I tell them that God does not perform multiple miracles in the lives of believers, they tell me that they believe in a *Big God*. I must admit that when I hear this, I want to smack them in the head. I want to repeatedly pound them over the head with one of my hardcover Bibles and ask, “You ever read this before?” Here we have the psalmist David and is he writing about the great miracles which he watched God perform that day? Hell, no! He asks, **Why do You stand afar off, O Jehovah?** Doesn't David believe in a *Big God*? Doesn't David know that with enough faith, God will bring him a miracle? Well, God is not going to bring David a miracle. Is David a man of faith? Damned right he is (I seemed to be getting worked up over this topic). Does he have more faith than the average holy roller? Way more. Where's the abundance of miracles? There is no abundance of miracles. If you examined the lives of David and Solomon, you would be hard-pressed to find a miracle that either one actually observed. David's killing of Goliath? There is no reason to assume that a miracle occurred there. Was God's power involved? Absolutely; but there was no miracle. There was nothing which occurred that was outside the laws of nature (I should say, outside the realm of God's physical laws). There will be periods of time where it is not apparent that God is working. There are going to be times where injustices occur and they are not immediately righted. So, does this mean that you should expect to see miracles and healings every Sunday at your church? No, not unless you're stoopid. If you ever actually observe a real miracle—one where God's natural laws are temporarily suspended—then it should about knock your socks off. What we find here is what we should expect much more often. There will be dry spells, so to speak. In fact, there may be many dry spells in your life. It is psalms like these that tell you that this is normal. God is still in this world; He is still paying attention; He is still involved. He may not be manifesting Himself as we think that He should; He may not be righting wrongs as fast as we think He should.

Not bad—six pages and we are already on v. 2!

In pride of a wicked one, he burns a poor [one].	Psalm	In the arrogance of the corrupt, he [the corrupt man] hotly pursues the poor [man].
They have bene taken in schemes which they have thought out.	10:2	They [the poor] have been taken by the schemes which they [the rich] have devised.
In his own great arrogance, the rich man continues to persecute the poor. The poor have been taken in my schemes devised by the rich.		

In the introduction, I explained that, unlike Psalm 73, one could not simply look at the pronoun to determine about whom the author is speaking. To make this absolutely clear from the beginning, the first line will use masculine singular's to refer to both the reprobate and the poor person; and the second line will use masculine plural's to refer to each of them as well. Let's see first what others have done:

JPS (Tanakh)	The wicked in his arrogance hounds the lowly— may they be caught in the schemes they devise [or, <i>they (i.e., the lowly) are caught by the schemes they devised!</i>]
NASB	In pride the wicked hotly pursue [lit., <i>burn</i>] the afflicted; Let them be caught [or, <i>They will be caught</i>] in the plots which they have devised.
NIV	In his arrogance, the wicked man hunts down the weak, who are caught in the schemes he devises.
The Septuagint	While the ungodly one acts proudly, the poor are inflamed; they are taken in the crafty counsels which they imagine..
<i>Young's Literal Translation</i>	Through the pride of the wicked, Is the poor inflamed, They are caught in devices they have devised.

There are three interpretations which suggest themselves from a precursory reading: (1) the poor are taken in the devices which the wicked devise; (2) the wicked take themselves in their own devices; or, (3) the psalmist is asking for the wicked to be taken in his own wickedness. The gist of the psalm lets out the second interpretation. If the corrupt are capturing themselves in their own web of deceit, then the psalmist has no complaints. God is in His heaven and all is right with the world. That, however, goes against the tenor of this psalm, wherein the psalmist

asks, “Where is God? Why does he conceal Himself?” Let’s therefore pick this apart word-by-word to get a better idea how we are to take it:

We begin with the bēyth preposition and the feminine singular noun gaʿāvâh (גַּאֲוָה) [pronounced *gah-uh-VAW*], which means *majesty, pride*. It is generally used in a negative sense. Strong’s #1346 BDB #144. This is the second word in this chapter which is also found in Psalm 73, indicating a similar theme. Speaking of words from Psalm 73 (and Job 21), we then have the masculine singular adjective rāshâʿ (רָשָׁע) [pronounced *raw-SHAWĠ*], which means *malevolent, lawless, corrupt, criminal*. Strong’s #7563 BDB #957.

The main verb (which could be in the first or second line) is the 3rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of dâlaq (דָּלַק) [pronounced *daw-LAHK*], which means *to burn, to hotly pursue*. The primary meaning is *to burn, to flame*. However, it has varied meanings based upon the idea of burning. For instance, it can refer to the *glow* of love; to *burning lips* (not necessarily related to the *burning* of love, but to one’s oratory skills); and it can refer to the *heat* of pursuit. Strong’s #1814 BDB #196. The last word in this sentence is the adjective ʿânîy (עָנִי) [pronounced *ġaw-NEE*], which means *poor, afflicted, humble; those in circumstances of humiliation and poverty*. It is apparently used as a substantive as well. Strong’s #6041 BDB #776. Literally, what we have is: **In arrogance of the corrupt, he [the corrupt person] hotly pursues the poor**. In the English, we might shorten it to: **In arrogance, the corrupt hotly pursues the poor**. This may, at first, seem nonsensical to you, but those who are successful and corrupt sometimes become that way by exploiting the poor and the needy. Even when it appears as though the corrupt have stolen from the poor until they are down to their last dime, the rich want that last dime. This is the arrogance of the corrupt man. **Their pride is their necklace; a garment of violence covers them...they mock and wickedly speak of oppression** (Psalm 73:6).

Barnes: The meaning is, that the fact that the wicked persecuted the poor, in the case referred to, was to be traced to his pride, haughtiness, ambition; that is, in pursuing his own selfish and ambitious purposes, he became utterly regardless of the rights and comforts of others. He esteemed their interest and happiness as unworthy of regard in comparison with his own aims and purposes, and trampled down all their rights in prosecuting his own ends.⁷

In the second line (or the third line, if you are following Young, we begin with the 3rd person masculine plural, Niphal imperfect of tâphas (טָפַס) [pronounced *taw-FAHS*] and it means *to lay a hold of, to manipulate, to seize*. The Niphal, which is the passive stem, means *to be taken a hold of*. Strong’s #8610 BDB #1074. Unlike Psalm 73, where a change of number or person would indicate a change of the subjects; here, both the poor and the corrupt have been referred to in the masculine singular; now we have a reference to the masculine plural. Then we have the bēyth preposition and the feminine plural noun mezimmâh (מְצִמָּה) [pronounced *mezim-MAW*], which means *purpose, discretion, device*. Strong’s #4209 BDB #273. The word it comes from means *pre-meditated evil, well-thought out wickedness, pre-planned harm*. I think that we could go with *schemes, plots, evil purposes*. Then we have the relative pronoun followed by the 3rd person plural, Qal perfect of châshaʿ (חָשָׂה) [pronounced *khaw-SHAHBV*], which means *to think, to regard, to account, to count, to determine, to calculate*. Strong’s #2803 BDB #362. Now, whereas I will agree that the psalmist would have liked to have seen the corrupt taken in their own schemes, that does not appear to be what we have here. Otherwise, we would have expected the verb to be cohortative. The Niphal is simply the passive form of the verb, indicating that *they* (the poor) would be caught in the devices or plans of the wicked. Literally, we have: **They have been taken a hold of in [the] schemes which they had thought out**. Given that this psalmist is not completely clear as to who is the masculine singular and who is the masculine plural (actually, it is quite clear that they can refer to the same class of people), we will, by interpretation, apply the first masculine plural to the poor, who have been exploited, and the second to the successful infidels, who do not feel that they have fleeced their subjects enough. Therefore, we have: **They [the poor] have been taken a hold of in the schemes which they [the corrupt] have thought out**.

The meaning is easy to ascertain. The rich see the poor as easy prey and they have set up various ways to steal from them. Now, this obviously is not what the psalmist wants to see happen. What he wants to see is Psalm 7:16: **His wrongdoing will return upon his own head and his violence will descend upon his own crown**. Or,

⁷ *Barnes’ Notes; Psalms, Volume 1; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 87.*

Psalm 9:16: Jehovah has made Himself known. He has executed judgment. In the work of his own hands, the wicked is snared. Throughout the rest of this psalm, it will be clear that the wicked appears to operate unfettered by God.

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart Index](#)

The Actions and Characteristics of the Malevolent

For has celebrated, the wicked [man] beyond desires of his soul; and finishing, he blessed [or, cursed], he despised Y^ehowah.

Psalm
10:3

For the corrupt man celebrates the lusts of his soul, and, when finished, he curses [and] he despises Y^ehowah.

For you see, the corrupt man will, on the one hand, celebrate the lusts of his soul, but, when finished satiating these lusts, then curses and despises Jehovah.

First, let's see how this was translated by the others:

JPS (Tanakh)	The wicked crows about his unbridled lusts; the grasping man reviles and scorns the LORD.
NASB	For the wicked boasts of his heart's desire, And the greedy man curses <i>and</i> spurns the LORD.
NIV	He boasts of the cravings of his heart; he blesses the greedy and reviles the LORD.
NLT	For they brag about their evil desires; they praise the greedy and curse the LORD.
Owen's Translation	For boasts the wicked of the desires of his heart; and the man greedy for gain curses [and] renounces Yahweh.
The Septuagint	Because the sinner praises himself for the desires of his heart; and the unjust one blesses himself.
<i>Young's Literal Translation</i>	Because the wicked hath boasted Of the desires of his soul, And a dishonest gainer he hath blessed, He hath despised Jehovah.

With begin with the explanatory conjunction and the 3rd person masculine singular, Piel perfect of *hâlal* (לָלַל) [pronounced *haw-LAHL*], which means *to be boastful, to praise*. In the Piel, it means *to sing, to celebrate, to praise, to boast*. Strong's #1984 BDB #237. Then we have the masculine singular adjective *corrupt, wicked one* again. Then we have the hardest working preposition in the Hebrew language, *ʿal* (עַל) [pronounced *gahl*], which means *upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside*. It can also mean *on the ground of (or upon the basis)* something is done (Deut. 17:11 Psalm 94:20) or, *on account of, because of* as in Gen. 20:2 21:12). Strong's #5920, #5921 BDB #752. This is followed by the feminine singular noun *ta'ăvâh* (תַּאֲוָה) [pronounced *tah-uh-VASW*], which means *desire, lust*. This word can be used in a good way (*longing, that which is longed for*) or in a bad. Strong's #8378 BDB #16. This is followed by *of his soul*. Our first line, therefore reads: **For the corrupt man celebrates the desires of his soul;...** Let me used my often used living illustration: Hugh Hefner, founder of Playboy Magazine—he celebrates the desires of his soul. The hippie generation that I grew up with—they celebrated the desires and lusts of their soul. The lusts of the soul were not seen as something to be under our control, subject to right and wrong, but something to be satisfied at all costs. Rather than define any of this in terms of right and wrong, such notions were replaced by a celebration of one's carnal desires.

Barnes: The main idea in this verse seems to be that he is a boaster—a man who makes some proclamation about himself as being superior to others, and who, in that proportion, looks with disdain or contempt on others. He vaunts himself, or makes an ostentatious display of something on which he prides himself, as wealth, strength, beauty, talent, prowess, etc. The particular thing here, it would seem, of which he boasted, was his natural inclinations; the propensities and passions of his soul; that is, he took pride in himself, in his own passions, desires, lusts, tastes, and made a boastful display of them, as if he regarded them as something honourable, or as something fitted to excite admiration in

others. This is not a very uncommon characteristic of wicked me; at least it is found in a certain class of wicked men. They pride themselves in whatever they have in their character that is peculiar, or that is their own, for the very reason that it is theirs; and they become so shameless that they do not hesitate to publicly to boast of that which should be regarded as a disgrace.⁸

The corrupt man boasts or celebrates a great many things which he should not. **Even those who trust in their wealth and boast in the abundance of their riches** (Psalm 49:6). Almost every rich man attributes his own brilliance and hard work as the reasons for his wealth, even though there are men who are much more intelligent and men who work much harder, and do not achieve the same level of material prosperity. God allows some men to become rich and others he does not. Most believers are never rewarded with great material prosperity because they would not know how to handle it. One of the first things to go in their lives would be Bible doctrine, because they would become too involved with the making of more money. Some malevolent simply exalt themselves, as if they were something great. **They poor forth words, they speak arrogantly. All who do immoral things vaunt themselves** (Psalm 94:4). They mistakenly believe that they themselves are someone to be admired, respected, feared and emulated.

On the flip side, those who are less famous who have rejected divine authority, praise those who are successful and have also rejected divine authority. **Those who forsake the Law praise the corrupt; but those who keep the Law strive with them** (Psalm 28:4). Illustrations abound here. There are those who idolize or hold in very high regard men like Hugh Hefner or Howard Stern. If you ever attend a concert of a contemporary artist whose lyrics glorify immorality, hundreds at the concert will wear a t-shirt emblazoned with their image. The fans will memorize and sing out their lyrics, often the most horrid of them. And finally, there will be a significant number of people in the audience who will imitate their hairstyle, dress and mannerisms. Some will look like clones of the artist (I recall seeing too many people who would attempt to look like Frank Zappa at his concerts—it was sad to see someone whose entire identity and essence was wrapped up in the personage of another, particularly in the personage of one who was that immoral, who rejected authority so strongly, and who ridiculed that which was associated with God.

In any case, all these things about which the corrupt and malevolent praise will eventually perish. **The corrupt man will see righteousness and be vexed. He will gnash his teeth and become discouraged. The desire of the corrupt will perish** (Psalm 112:10). **Come now, you rich, weep and howl for your miseries which are coming upon you. Your riches have rotted and your garments have become moth-eaten. Your gold and your silver have rusted and their rust will be a witness against you and will consume your flesh like a fire** (James 5:1–3a). And, they praise themselves as well, and they will also perish (in the sense of burning forever). **And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire** (Rev. 20:15).

The second line begins with the wâw conjunction and the Qal active participle of bâtsa' (בָּצַע) [pronounced *baw-TZAHG*], rendered both *to cut off, to break off, to gain by violence* (Isa. 38:12 Ezek. 22:12 Habak. 2:9); and *to perfect, to complete, to finish* (Isa. 10:12 Lam. 2:17 Zech. 4:9). Although it appears as though we have an homonym here, the deal is that bâtsa' comes from the a word comes from a weaver, who, when *finished* with his work, *cuts* off the web between the thrum (whatever the hell that is) and the loom. Strong's #1214 BDB #130. This is followed by two more verbs: first, the 3rd person masculine singular, Piel perfect of bârak^e (בָּרַךְ) [pronounced *baw-RAHK^e*], which means *to kneel down, to bend the knees*, and therefore *to bless, to make happy, to prosper*. Now, this is a very difficult word in a handful of cases, as it appears to mean just the opposite of what it generally means. There are a couple of words in Hebrew which behave that way, which are of no little consternation to one who is translating the passage.⁹ Now, although we find this word translated, and reasonably so, *to bless, to make happy*, etc. in literally hundreds of passages, we come up to a passage like this (or, for instance, 1Kings 21:10, 13) where it appears as though the opposite meaning would be much more apropos. It is called an antiphrastic euphemism, meaning *the use of a word or phrase that usually has one meaning in common speech, but is used*

⁸ Barnes' Notes; Psalms, Volume 1; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 88.

⁹ For instance, in Job 1:11 2:5, 9, we find the same word, and various translators give it opposite translations. See the **Psalm 10:3 addendum**.

to mean the opposite.¹⁰ You might think of it as the *ironic* or the *sarcastic* use of the word. So now, you might be thinking, *well, that's just total crap*, so let me give you an English illustration. You've just had a marvelous \$30 meal, served by a wait person who was attentive, yet non-intrusive. You hand them \$30.25 and they will probably say *thank you*, but they won't mean *thank you*, but something quite the opposite. Strong's #1288 BDB #138. Our second (actually, third) verb is the 3rd person masculine singular, Piel perfect of nâ`ats (נָאֵט) [pronounced *naw-AHTZ*], which means *to abhor, to despise, to spurn, to disgust*, which may or may not have a direct object. Strong's #5006 BDB #610. The final word in this verse is the proper noun Y^ehowah. This gives us: **And breaking off, he curses, he despises Y^ehowah.** The other meaning of bâtsa` would give us: **And finishing, he curses, he despises Y^ehowah.** The interpretation would be that such a one celebrates his lusts, satiates himself, and then, after enjoying himself, both curses and despises Jehovah. He is proud of his lusts and desires; he celebrates these lusts and desires as things to be satisfied regardless. And then, upon completion of the satisfaction of these desires, which God has allowed him to do, he then turns around and curses and reviles God, despising Him. We might render this: **After finishing, he blesses, he despises Y^ehowah.** This would be the sarcastic or ironic use of the word bârak^e.

Bullinger gives an entirely different explanation for the word **ble^ss**. *Here, as well as in 1Kings xxi. 10, 13; Job i. 5, 11; ii. 5, 9, the word which was in the primitive Text was קָלַל (kalal), to curse, or גָּדַף (gadaph), to blaspheme, and to avoid having to pronounce these words in connection with God, the word בָּרַךְ (berech), to bless, was substituted, and a note to this effect was put in the margin. The meaning, however, is so transparent that the translators have rendered it **curse**, instead of the printed Hebrew Text, which is **ble^ss**; and commentators, ignorant of the real fact of the emendation, have labored to prove that בָּרַךְ (berech) means both **to bless** and **to curse**, which is not the case.*¹¹ Now, whereas this makes perfect sense, the problem is that I am not aware of any note made in the margins. Obviously, in my Hebrew Bible, there would be no notes in the margins. Since Bullinger was not certain of the word that belongs there, that means that word was not found in the margin. That is, he suspects that it is *kalal* or *gadaph*, but he doesn't know. So, if there is a note in the margin, it does not tell us what the word should actually be. Now, is such a thing reasonable and possible? Certainly. Recall that those who read the text, would not read the name Y^ehowah (which is why we can only speculate as to its pronunciation), but they would read *Lord* instead (obviously the Hebrew equivalent), because they felt the name was too holy to read aloud, even though they were in the synagogue doing a *Bible reading* (off the top of my head, I don't know when this practice began). Therefore, it would make sense that any passage which dealt with a man *cursing* the Lord would be difficult for them to read—it would go so much against the religious sensibilities, that they simply substituted in the word *to bless*. I will go into more detail on these emendations when we get to 1Sam. 3:13.

Bullinger's second possible explanation, which is less satisfying, is that they inserted the word *to bless*, and placed *to blaspheme* in the margin. However, what occurred, is both words were placed together in the text later by a scribe. Then, one would simply remove the word *to bless* in order to have the original text. This would explain both the word *to bless* and why we have two verbs right next to each other without a conjunction between them.¹² The problem with this explanation is that both changes would have to occur early, early on, and thereafter be found in every available manuscript. To make two changes like that, and then to find the result of both changes in all versions of the Massoretic text, is a bit of a stretch.

Barnes suggests an interpretation as this: **And winning (i.e., when he wins), he [verbally] blesses but despises [in his heart] Jehovah.** *In other words, he hypocritically thanks God for his success, but despises him in his heart.*¹³ I personally don't buy into this, as there is nothing to suggest that we are speaking of a man whose lusts are out of control, but who maintains some sort of spiritual facade. That kind of interpretation is completely outside the context of this Psalm. Barnes also offers a few other interpretations as well, including the idea of the reprobate blessing himself. The problem, of course, is that the word *himself* could have been inserted in the Hebrew, but was not (and there is no alternate manuscript evidence for that theory either). Barnes then settles upon, as I have, the antithetical (or, sarcastic; or, ironical) meaning of bârak^e, which is *to curse*, and believes that to be the most correct

¹⁰ *When Critics Ask*; Geisler and Howe, ©1992, Victor Books, p. 224.

¹¹ *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*; E. W. Bullinger; ©originally 1898; reprinted 1968 Baker Books; p 1021.

¹² *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*; E. W. Bullinger; ©originally 1898; reprinted 1968 Baker Books; p 118.

¹³ *Barnes' Notes; Psalms, Volume 1*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 88.

interpretation of this word and this verse.¹⁴ As you can tell by the past two verses: even though the vocabulary of the author is generally not that high-powered; this is still a difficult psalm to translate and to interpret.

**Corrupt, as a height of his nostril, does not seek;
[there is] no God [in] all his schemes.**

Psalms
10:4

**The corrupt [man], according to the pride of his anger does not seek [God],
[there is] no God, [according to] all their schemes.**

**The reprobate, according to his angry pride, does not seek God;
in fact, there is no thought of Deity in him.**

In examining what Owen has translated, as verses what I can see in the Hebrew, I can tell that this could be a difficult verse. Let's see what others have done first of all.

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	The wicked in the pride of his countenance will not seek, inquire for <i>and</i> yearn for God; all his thoughts are that there is no God [so He never punishes].
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	The lawless one <in the loftiness of his countenance> will not enquire, God is not in any of his plots [or perhaps, <i>All his thoughts (are)—There is no God!</i>];
JPS (Tanakh)	The wicked, arrogant as he is, in all his scheming [thinks], "He does not call to account; God does not care [lit., <i>there is no God</i>]."
NASB	The wicked, in the haughtiness of his countenance, does not seek <i>Him</i> . All his thoughts are, "There is no God."
NIV	In his pride, the wicked does not seek him; in all his thoughts, there is no room for God.
NKJV	The wicked in his proud countenance does not seek <i>God</i> ; <i>God is</i> in none of his thoughts [or, <i>All his thoughts are, there is no God</i>].
Owen's Translation	The wicked, in the pride of his countenance, does not seek him. There is no God, all his thoughts.
The Septuagint	The sinner has provoked the Lord, according to the abundance of his anger, he will not seek after <i>Him</i> ; the God is not before him.
<i>Young's Literal Translation</i>	The wicked, according to the height of his face, 'God is not!' <i>are</i> all his desires.

We begin with the adjective used as a substantive for *wicked, corrupt, malevolent*. There is no definite article, although, in the English, it just doesn't sound correct without one. There are two Hebrew letters, both used as single prefixed prepositions, which look alike. One is the kaph preposition (כ), which means *as, like, according to, when*; and the other is the bēyth preposition (ב), which means *in, at, by, with, against* (the latter is a bit more flexible). In the Hebrew, what we have is the kaph preposition, rendered as a bēyth preposition by the NASB, NIV and Owen. This is followed by the masculine singular construct of *gōḇvāhh* (גֹּבַחַ) [pronounced *GOH^b-VAH*], which means *height*. However, it means, more metaphorically, *majesty, magnificence* (in the positive sense) and *pride, arrogance* (in the negative sense). We certainly still uses the word in the same way, in both the positive and negative sense, as in, "Look at her, actin' so high and mighty!"¹⁵ Or, in the positive sense, "He has a high position in the firm." Strong's #1363 BDB #147. Interpreting this in the negative sense is not a big leap. This is followed by the masculine singular noun *ʾāph* (אָפַ) [pronounced *ahf*], which means *nose, nostril*, but is also translated *face, brow, anger*. Strong's #639 BDB #60. Then we have the negative and the main verb of the first line, which is the 3rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of *dārash* (דָּרַשׁ) [pronounced *dah-RAWSH*], which means *to seek, to make inquiries concerning, to consult, to investigate, to study, to follow, to inquire*. Strong's #1875 BDB #205. We would expect a direct object to follow, or, at the very least, a masculine singular suffix, but we do not have that, and must infer one from the use of *Jehovah*, at the end of the previous verse; as well as the word *God* in this verse. This gives us: **[The] corrupt [man], according to [the] pride of his anger, does not seek [God]**. Here is the concern of the psalmist. A believer with some doctrine is appreciative, to some extent, of the food that God provides, and

¹⁴ Barnes spends approximately an entire page covering this. *Barnes' Notes; Psalms, Volume 1*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; pp. 88–89.

¹⁵ Yeah, I know, I've lived in the South too long.

of the material blessings which God gives him. Even, when the believer is more spiritually advanced, he can thank God for the trauma and suffering which he went through. However, for the corrupt infidel, based upon the arrogance of his own anger, despite the fact that God has actually blessed him, or, at the very least, allowed him to pursue his own lusts, does not seek out or inquire of God. He is given a relatively easy life and he does not have any true appreciation of it.

Second line. We begin with the negative particle *ʿayin* (אֵין) [pronounced *AH-yin*], which means *naught, nothing*; or it can be used as a particle of negation; *no, not*. We often must supply a verb for this substantive and render it *there is no*. Strong's #369 BDB #34. Then we have *God* (Elohim), followed by *all his* and the feminine plural noun *mʿzimmâh*, from v. 2. *Mʿzimmâh* (מְצִמָּה) [pronounced *mʿzim-MAW*] means *purpose, discretion, device*. In the plural, it would mean *schemes, plots, evil purposes*. Strong's #4209 BDB #273. This gives us: **[There is] no God [in] all their schemes**. My guess, because *all* begins with the letter *kaph*, is that there was either a *bêyth* or a *kaph* preposition which was dropped out. **[There is] no God, [according to] all their schemes**.

Barnes: *The fact that he would not seek God, and that he had said that God had forgotten (ver. 11), shows that he had some thoughts of God. The language here is properly expressive of belief or desire; either that all his thoughts were that there is no God, i.e., that such was the result of all his meditations and reasonings on the subject; or that he wished that it might be found to be so. The language will admit of either construction, and in either sense it would express the thoughts of the wicked both as a matter of practical belief, and as a matter of desire the language of the wicked is, "no God." The wicked wish that there were none; he practically believes that there is none.*¹⁶

As you can see, there is no little difficulty in translating and understanding this verse. Therefore, let's examine:

The Less Literal Translations of Psalm 10:4

Complete Jewish Bible	Every scheme of the wicked in his arrogance [says], "There is no God, [so] it won't be held against me."
CEV	The wicked are too proud to turn to you or even think about you.
God's Word™	He turns up his nose [and says], "God doesn't care." His every thought [concludes], "There is no God."
NAB	In their insolence the wicked boast: "God doesn't care, doesn't even exist."
NEB	...arrogant as he is, he scorns the LORD and leaves no place for God in all his schemes.
NJB	The wicked in his arrogance does not look very far; 'There is no God,' is his only thought.
NLT	These wicked people are too proud to seek God. They seem to think that God is dead.
REB	The wicked in their pride do not seek God; there is no place for God in any of their schemes.
TEV	A wicked man does not care about the LORD; in his pride he thinks that God doesn't matter.

You will note that there are a couple of approaches to this verse. One, found in the more literal translations as well, is that there is a quote or possibly two from the *wicked man*. The verse ends with: *No God, all his schemes*, which could be easily taken as: **All his thinking [is], "[There is] no God!"**

In the first line, we generally agree on beginning with *the wicked man*, but then it falls apart after that. There is often a reference to *pride*, occasionally to *anger* or to *countenance*, and most of them include the verb *to seek* (or a synonym). However, in the Hebrew, there is no object of this verb. Because this literally makes little sense, we have a variety of ways that the first line is dealt with.

¹⁶ Barnes' Notes; Psalms, Volume 1; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; pp. 89–90.

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart Index](#)

Exegesis of the Septuagint Version of Psalm 10:4

Because of the difficulty experienced with v. 4, we will exegete the Greek of this. Now, recall that the Greek is not inspired by God (although many of the Apostles used this translation to make their theological points), and recall that the Septuagint translation is spotty at times, ranging from being very literal to *this is what the verse means to me*.

The verse begins with the verb *paroxunō* (παροξύνω) [pronounced *par-ox-OO-noh*], which means, literally, *to sharpen along side of* (looking at its component parts and then putting them together). However, compound words are not simply the sum of their parts. It means *to urge on, to stimulate, to provoke to wrath, to irritate*. Strong's #3947. Then we have *the Lord the sinner*, giving us: [The sinner provokes to wrath the Lord](#). Obviously, this is much different than we have in the Hebrew. This is because this is still v. 3, marked as v. 4 in my Septuagint.

What follows is v. 4 in the Hebrew, but is a continuation of the sentence above. We have *according to the* followed by *plēthos* (πλήθος) [pronounced *PLAY-thoss*], which means *a large number, a multitude of*. Strong's #4128. Then we have the feminine singular genitive of *orgē* (ὀργή) [pronounced *ohr-GAY*], which means *anger, indignation, wrath*. It is a word used both of God and of man. Strong's #3709. Then we have *of his*, giving us: [...according to a multitude of his anger](#). It is not clear whether we are speaking of the anger of the *sinner* or the anger of *God*. However, since God's anger is pretty much confined to *righteous anger*, we can assume that we are speaking of the anger of the sinner. However, I could see this meaning [...according to the quantity of His anger](#).

Then we have the negative and the verb *ekzētēō* (ἐκζητέω) [pronounced *ek-zay-TEH-oh*], which means *to seek out, to search for*. It can also mean *to desire, to seek to get, to charge with, to require of*. Strong's #1567. Again, we expect a direct object, but we do not find one, which could indicate that the translators were trying to stay very close to the Hebrew that they had to work with.

We then have the negative along with the 3rd person singular, present indicative of *eimi* (εἰμί) [pronounced *eye-ME*], which means *to be*. Strong's #1510. The noun is *the God*. Then we have the improper preposition *enōpion* (ἐνώπιον) [pronounced *en-OH-pee-on*], which means *before, in front of, in the sight of, in the presence of*. Strong's #1799. This is followed by *him*, giving us: [The sinner provokes to wrath the Lord, according to \[the\] abundance of his anger. He will not seek after \[Him\]. The God is not before him.](#)

The interpretation of the Greek is much easier. The reprobate, who is the center of this psalm, has provoked God's wrath or anger. This either comes out of the innate anger of the reprobate or it is according to the norm or standard of God's righteous anger. The reprobate does not seek after God, God is not before him (in his thoughts). Let's add one thought: [the reprobate should provoke the anger of God, according to the quantity of His anger](#). This is what the psalmist would expect. What the reprobate does should anger God and bring His wrath upon him.

The interpretation of the Hebrew is a bit trickier, and there may have been some corruption of the text. However, they (those who are corrupt and immoral) really have no reason to be upset, angry or negative about their lives, but they are. They are prideful of their anger, of their opposition to God and that which is good. They have no interest in seeking out after God, and, to their way of thinking, there is no God. In fact, according to all of their schemes (presumably to satisfy their lusts), there is no thought given to God.

Approaching this with the translation of the NKJV ([The wicked in his proud countenance does not seek God; God is in none of his thoughts \[or, All his thoughts are, there is no God\]](#)); we have the reprobate and his prideful thinking, which has no reason to seek God. God is not in his thinking; or, if he thinks about it, his thoughts are that *there is no God*. Or, he operates his life as though there is no God.

Barnes sums this verse up: *The entire verse, then, expresses the prevailing feelings of a sinner about God: (a) That he wishes there were none, and practically believes that there is none; and (b) that the reason or ground of these feelings is pride. Pride will prevent him from seeking God in the following ways: (1) It makes him unwilling to recognize his dependence on any being; (2) It makes him unwilling to confess that he is a sinner; (3) it makes him unwilling to pray; (4) it makes him unwilling to seek aid of any one even God, in the business of life, in the prosecution of his plans, or in sickness and affliction; (5) it makes him unwilling to accede to the terms of reconciliation and salvation proposed by God, unwilling to repent, to believe, to submit to His sovereignty, to acknowledge his indebtedness to mere grace for the hope of eternal life. Pride is at the root of all atheism, theoretical or practical, on the earth; at the root of all the reluctance which there is to seek the favour of God; at the root, therefore, of the misery and wretchedness of the world.*¹⁷

**Strong are his ways in all times.
High Your judgments from his sight.
All his enemies, he puffs in them.**

Psalm
10:5

**His ways are firm [and strong] [or, His ways
are twisted] at all times.
Your judicial verdicts [are] high outside of his
sight.
He puffs against [or incites] all of his enemies.**

**His thinking and ways are twisted and deviant while Your judgments are outside of his thinking.
He treats his personal enemies with contempt.**

Again, this is going to be a difficult verse, but not quite as bad as the previous verse. Some of these words mean several different things. Some of them, even when the meanings are attached, it is unclear as to what is being said, or what meaning should be evoked. First, of course, we will take a look at what others have done:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	His ways are grievous [or persist] at all times; Your judgments [Lord] are far above and on high out of his sight [so he never thinks about them]; as for all his foes, he sniffs and sneers at them.
JPS (Tanakh)	His ways prosper at all times; Your judgments are far beyond him; he snorts at all his foes.
KJV	His ways are always grievous; thy judgments are far above out of his sight. As for all his enemies, he puffeth at them.
NASB	His ways prosper [lit., are strong] at all times; Thy judgments are on high, out of his sight; As for all his adversaries, he snorts at them.
NEB	His ways are always devious; thy judgements are beyond his grasp [Heb., on high before him], and he scoffs at all restraint.
NIV	His ways are prosperous; he is haughty and your laws are far from him; he sneers at all his enemies.
NKJV	His ways are always prospering [lit., are strong]; Your judgments are far above, out of his sight; As for all his enemies, he sneers at them.
NLT	Yet they succeed in everything they do. They do not see your punishment awaiting them. They pour scorn on all their enemies.
The Septuagint	His ways are profaned at all times; Your judgments are removed from before him; he will gain the mastery over all his enemies.
<i>Young's Literal Translation</i>	Pain do his ways at all times, On high are thy judgments before him, All his adversaries he puffeth at them.

We begin this verse with the 3rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect of *chûl* (חול) [pronounced *khool*], which is a homonym. It means *to be firm, to be strong*; it also means *to wait, to stay*; it also means *to twist, to be twisted around*. However, the meanings are related—a rope consists of strands of weaker rope which are *twisted around* together in order to make the resultant rope *strong*. *Strength* or *twisting*, rather than *prosperity*, are the emphasis here. Note the rendering of the Septuagint (*profaned*) and the Latin Vulgate renders this *defiled*. Therefore, we

¹⁷ *Barnes' Notes; Psalms, Volume 1*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 90.

should take this to mean *twisted* or *deviant*. Strong's #2342 BDB #298. The subject of the verb has a masculine singular suffix, and is the masculine plural of derek^e (דֶּרֶךְ) [pronounced *DEH-rek^e*], which means *way, distance, road, journey, manner, course*. Strong's #1870 BDB #202. We then have the bêyth preposition (*in, at, with*), the masculine singular construct of *all* and the feminine singular noun 'êth (עֵת) [pronounced *gayth*], which means *time, the right time, the proper time*. Strong's #6256 BDB #773. This gives us: **His ways are strong in all of [the] time**. It could mean: **His ways are twisted around in all of [the] time**. So that you understand where Young came up with his translation, chûwl also means *to writhe or twist in pain*. I double-checked, and did not find *profane* among the meanings, however. I think that both meanings have application here. The rich and successful infidel is going to be strong and forceful. He did not become successful by sitting on a park bench, waiting for prosperity to be dropped on top of him. He went out and got it. He did whatever was necessary to obtain his wealth. It is also reasonable to suppose that his ways are twisted; he does not have to follow any sort of morality—his morality is twisted and deviant. Such an interpretation would place the thinking of the reprobate in direct contrast to the ways of God, which is what we would expect. Furthermore, the context of this verse is not the prosperity of the wicked, but his character (note the previous two verses). Therefore, *strength* and *prosperity* are not what the psalmist is speaking about here.

The second line appears to begin with the masculine singular noun mârôm (מָרוֹם) [pronounced *maw-ROHM*], which means *height, that which is high, a high fortified place, loftiness of mind, pride*. Strong's #4791 BDB #928. You will note that the NIV placed this with the previous line and added *he is*. This is followed by the masculine plural of mish^epâṭ (מִשְׁפָּט) [pronounced *mish-PAWT*], which means *judgement, a verdict rendered by a judge, a judicial decision, a judicial sentence, a verdict, the judgement of the court; as well as the act of deciding a case, the place where a judgement is rendered*. It can also mean *manner, custom, fashion*. Strong's #4941 BDB #1048. Then we have the mîn preposition and the substantive neged (נֶגַד) [pronounced *NEH-ged*], which means *what is conspicuous, that which is in front of, what is in the sight of*. With mîn, this means *in front of, from before*. Strong's #5048 BDB #617. Affixed to this is the masculine singular suffix. This seems to be pretty much the second line, and you will note that there is no verb. This gives us: **High [are] Your judgments from his sight**. I believe we could take this to mean that the judgments and judicial verdicts of God are so high above the infidel as to be out of his sight. Referring to the reprobate, Barnes writes: *His thoughts grovel on the earth, and he is never elevated in his views so as to see the great principles of truth*.¹⁸

The separation of the lines of this verse is difficult as we have no wâw conjunctions, no completely obvious breaks and no pausal forms. The third line begins with *all of* followed by masculine plural, Qal active participle (with a 3rd person masculine singular suffix) of tsârar (צָרַר) [pronounced *tsaw-RAHR*], which means *to show hostility toward, to persecute, to vex*. In this form, it is not used as a verb, but it refers to the activity of the people who are referred to. It means *his enemies*. Strong's #6887 BDB #865. Then we have the 3rd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect of pûwach (פּוּחַח) [pronounced *poo-AHKH*], which means *to breathe, to blow*. Its secondary meanings include *to breathe* (the subject is *day*, and the *day breathes*—i.e., it grows cold); *to exhale* (the subject is *garden* and the *garden exhales* its odors); *to blow against* (in terms of the fire of God's wrath to be blown against someone); *to excite, to inflame* (as would occur when one blows upon a fire); *to breathe out, to puff out, to utter*. Here, BDB says it means *to blow against, to snort against*. This is very close to the word *nûwach*, which means *to breathe* and also refers to one's spirit. Strong's #6315 BDB #806. This is followed by the bêyth preposition which is affixed to the 3rd person masculine plural suffix. **All of his enemies—he puffs against them**. I think that we could reasonably guess that the meaning of pûwach here is to *blow against* with the idea *to incite, to fan a flame*. When a person is out for himself and himself alone, then he tends to irritate all those who are not him. Many become his enemies (apart from those he can use as friends), and those enemies he tends to inflame with his behavior and attitude.

Barnes interprets that last line: *He [the reprobate] treats them [his enemies] with contempt and scorn, as if he had no fear of them, or as if he were entirely confident of his own ability to overcome them. This is an illustration of his pride and self-confidence; for it is the characteristic of the proud and self-*

¹⁸ Barnes' Notes; Psalms, Volume 1; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 90.

confident to boast in this manner. The [verb]...means to breathe, to blow; and the idea here is, that he acted as though he could sweep them away with a breath.¹⁹

He says in his heart, “I will not be moved to generation and generation, which [is] not in adversity.”

Psalm
10:6

He says to his heart, “I will not be thrown into disorder; from generation to generation, in which no evil [will befall me].”

He assumes, “I will not be thrown into disarray. No evil will befall me or my fortune for generations to come.”

This appears to be another difficult verse to unravel. It will be difficult to determine at what point do we end the quotation and at what point do we move from the first line to the second. Be prepared. The other translations:

NASB	He says to himself, “I shall not be moved; Throughout [lit., to] all generations I shall not be in adversity.”
NIV	He says to himself, “Nothing will shake me; I’ll always be happy and never have trouble.”
NLT	They say to themselves, “Nothing bad will ever happen to us! We will be free of trouble forever!”
Owen's Translation	He thinks in his heart, “I shall not be moved throughout all generations. I shall not meet adversity.” [The way that Owen translates this is obviously at odds with the original Hebrew. There is no 1 st person anything in that second line, nor are there any verbs in that second line.]
The Septuagint	For he has said in his heart, “I will not be moved, [continuing] without evil from generation to generation.”
Young's Literal Translation	Heath said in his heart, ‘I am not moved,’ To generation and generation not in evil.

First of all, we can handle what is obvious, which will be most of this verse. This is the successful infidel and he is thinking to himself. He believes that his position of wealth is enduring and unshakable through many generations. Furthermore, there appears to be something about not suffering evil or misfortune at the end. In order to understand this verse, it is possible that this is all we need to know.

We begin this verse with the masculine singular, Qal perfect of *to say* followed by *in his heart*. Literally, it is, *he says in his heart*, but we would reasonably take it to mean, *he thinks to himself*. Barnes: *This was his deliberate and settle character. What is here described was no sudden thing. It was not the freak of passion; it was a deliberately formed purpose...he...aid this to himself in a spirit of self-granulation and confidence.*²⁰

What follows is the content of what he is thinking. We begin with the negative and the 1st person, Niphal imperfect of *mōwṭ* (מֹוֹט) [pronounced *mohf*], which means *to be shaken, moved, dislodged, thrown into disorder or disarray*. The Niphal is the passive voice and indicates that the subject receives the action of the verb. Strong's #4131 BDB #556. Then we have, literally, *to a generation and a generation* is rendered *from generation to generation* (Rotherham); *throughout all generations* (NASB, Owen); *to generation and generation* (Young); *throughout all generations* (NRSV). Others combined this with the negative for *never* (KJV, NJB, REB). Strong's #1755 BDB #189. Insofar as man is concerned, this means *for a long damn time*. This gives us: **He says in his heart, “I will not be dislodged [or, thrown into disarray] for generation [to] generation...”** In any case, he was certain of his place in life, as well as of its permanence.

Barnes: *He was confident in his present condition, and he apprehended no changes. He had formed his plans so wisely, that he believed he had nothing to apprehend; he feared neither sickness nor*

¹⁹ Barnes' Notes; Psalms, Volume 1; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 91.

²⁰ Barnes' Notes; Psalms, Volume 1; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 91.

*adversity; he dreaded not the power of his enemies; he feared nothing even from the providence of God; he supposed that he had laid the foundation for permanent prosperity.*²¹

Occasionally in Scripture, we have the reprobate who makes certain arrogant assumptions. Their inner thought is, their houses are forever and their dwelling places to all generations; the have called their lands after their own names (Psalm 49:11). Or Isa. 28:15: Because you have said, “We have made a covenant with death, and we have made a pact with Sheol, [therefore] the overwhelming scourge will not reach us when it passes by.” And Job describes such a one in Job 21:7–24, which is why we found a parallel here to explore:

Job 21:7–21

Why do the lawless [continue to] live?
 They advance [in years]; moreover, they have strengthened [themselves] in power.
 Their dynasty is firmly established in their presence with them
 and their offspring [are established] before their eyes.
 Their homes [are] [secure and] safe from fear
 and [there is] no rod of God upon them.
 His bull impregnates and it does not cause [the cows] to reject [him].
 His cow does not escape and she does not miscarry.
 They send out their little ones like the flock and their children dance.
 They lift up [their voices in singing] as a tambourine or lyre;
 and they rejoice with reference to the sound of an pipe.
 They complete their days in prosperity and in a moment they descend into the grave.
 Furthermore, they say to God, ‘Depart from us; we do not [even] desire knowledge of Your ways.
 What [is] the Almighty that we [should] serve Him?
 And what profit [is it] that we should make entreaty to Him?’
 Listen, their prosperity is not in their hand (the thinking of the lawless is far from me).
 [Just] how often is the lamp of the corrupt extinguished?
 And [just how often] does their misfortune come upon them?
 [and just how often] does He apportion [intense] pain in His anger?
 [How often] are they [the infidels] as straw before the wind?
 and [how often are they] like chaff—a storm steals it away.
 [You might suggest] ‘God stores up his iniquity for his sons!
 He will recompense him and he will know it.
 His eyes see his destruction and he will drink from the wrath of the Almighty.
 For what is his pleasure in his house after he and a number of his months are separated?’

As you may recall, Job’s associates had accused him of some incredibly horrible sin, and their reasoning was his suffering. Job reasoned that if there are obviously wicked men who not only survive in this world, but prosper, then this means that God does not simply bless the godly and punish the wicked, which was the simplistic point of view presented by his associates.

Therefore, we have just studied two psalms (Psalm 10 and 73) and Job 21, all of which propose that not every man is rewarded here on earth for exactly everything that he does. The wicked are not accordingly punished and the moral are not necessarily rewarded. The conclusion, which is one that we assume today, but one which was new revelation to those in the book of Job—that, in order for God to be just, there must be some settling of accounts after death. Furthermore, these chapters intimate a grand settling of accounts, which is our Lord on the cross paying for our transgressions.

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart Index](#)

²¹ Barnes’ Notes; Psalms, Volume 1; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 91.

Then we have the relative pronoun, the negative, the bēyth preposition and the masculine singular pausal form of ra' (רע) [pronounced *rahg*] and it means *evil, bad, harm*. Strong's #7451 BDB #948. This gives us: *...which [is] not in evil*. The rendering of the NASB, the NIV and the Septuagint I believe convey the proper meaning here. I think we can reasonably assume that this should all be one line which reads: *He says in his heart [or, he thinks to himself], "I will not be thrown into disorder from generation to generation, in which no evil [will befall me]."* The idea is that he sees his life and prosperity as stable. He does not perceive an ending to it. He sees his empire as something which continues for a long time. If you were to tell Bill Gates that his empire and his riches would come to naught within some reasonable period of time—say, two years—he would laugh in your face. He certainly thinks to himself that his fortune will not be thrown into disarray; it will be stable for several generations. No evil will befall him.

Barnes: *The idea of the wicked...is that they and their families would continue to be prosperous; that a permanent foundation was laid for honour and success, and for transmitting accumulated wealth and honours down to far distant time. It is a common feeling among wicked men that they can make permanent their titles, and possessions, and rank, and that nothing will occur to reduce them to the humble conditions of others. Nothing more clearly shows the pride and atheism of the heart than this; and in nothing are the anticipations and plans of men more signally disappointed.*²²

**[With] cursing his mouth has been filled
and deceptions and injury;
under his tongue [is] exhausting toil and
iniquity.**

Psalm
10:7

**His mouth is full of cursing and deceptions
and injury [or, threats];
[and] under his tongue [is] misery and iniquity.**

**He curses and deceives and threatens injury to others;
his speech pattern is filled with iniquity and that which would cause misery to others.**

What we have here is a person who is full of verbal sins or sins of the tongue. Let's see what others have done with this verse:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	His mouth is full of cursing, deceit, oppression (fraud); under his tongue are trouble and sin (mischief and iniquity).
JPS (Tanakh)	His mouth is full of oaths, deceit, and fraud; mischief and evil are under his tongue.
NASB	His mouth is full of curses and deceit and oppression; Under his tongue is mischief and wickedness.
NIV	His mouth is full of curses and lies and threats; trouble and evil are under his tongue.
Owen's Translation	With cursing, his mouth is filled, and deceit and oppression; under his tongues, mischief and iniquity.
The Septuagint	Whose mouth is full of cursing, and bitterness, and fraud; under his tongue are trouble and pain.
<i>Young's Literal Translation</i>	Of oaths his mouth I full, And deceits, and fraud; Under his tongue is perverseness and iniquity.

We begin this verse with the feminine singular noun `âlâh (הָלָא) [pronounced *aw-LAW*], which means *oath, curse, or execration, attestation, solemn oath, statement under oath, vow, guarantee, pledge, judicial oath, solemn declaration, solemn promise*. Strong's #423 BDB #46. This is followed by *his mouth* and then the 3rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect of mâlê' (מָלֵא) [pronounced *maw-LAY*], which means *to fill, to make full, to be full*. Strong's #4390 BDB #569. Then we have the wâw conjunction and the feminine plural noun mir^emâh (מִרְמָה) [pronounced *mir^e-MAW*], which means *deceit, deception, duplicity, [evil] cunning, treachery*. Strong's #4820 BDB #941. Next is another wâw conjunction and the masculine singular noun tôk^e (תֹּכֵה) [pronounced *tohk^e*], which means *injury, oppression*. The NIV renders this *threats*, which is apropos to the context. Strong's #8496 BDB #1067. This gives us: *His mouth has been filled with cursing and deceptions and injury*. The psalmist is

²² Barnes' Notes; Psalms, Volume 1; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 91.

making it clear that we are talking about a man who is filled with various sins. Here, he concentrates on the verbal ones.

In the next line we have the preposition tachath (תַּחַת) [pronounced *TAH-khahth*], which means *underneath, below, under, beneath*. Strong's #8478 BDB #1065. Then we have *his tongue*. The picture is that of a snake whose poison is concealed in the root of the fang, which is therefore *under his tongue*.²³ Then we have the masculine singular noun ʿâmâl (אִמְלָא) [pronounced *aw-MAWL*], which means *intense labor, exhausting toil, exhaustion, miserable work, work and toil so tiring, you just want to cry*. It is also incorrectly rendered *misery, wickedness, trouble, mischief, perverseness, sorrow, travail, grievousness, grievances*. However, in this verse, such a rendering would appear to be more apropos. Strong's #5999 (and #5998) BDB #765. Finally, we have the wâw conjunction and the masculine singular noun ʿâven (אָוֶן) [pronounced *AW-ven*], which means *iniquity, misfortune which results from iniquity*. Strong's #205 BDB #19. Barnes: *Whatever he says is evil and is fitted to produce trouble and sorrow, as the concealed poison in the mouth of the serpent causes pain and death*.²⁴ The second line reads: **Under his tongue [is] exhausting toil and iniquity.**

Paul paraphrased this verse (along with several others) when affirming the fact that all men are sinners. Actually, his point was both Jews and Gentiles were equally condemned before the Law and that the Jews had no superiority over Gentiles when it came to their indictment before the Law. **To what conclusion are we forced? Are we better than they? Not at all, for we have already determined both Jews and Greeks are all under sin; as it stands written: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness** (Rom. 3:9–10a, 14). This would be the ideal time to examine the [short] **Doctrine of the Sins of the Tongue**.

You will note that there are five categories of verbal sins enumerated in this passage:

The Five Categories of Verbal Sins

1. **Cursing:** This would include profanity (using God's name in a trivial manner) and obscenity (toilet/sexual language). This is not the same as using expletives, which use, on certain occasions, is apropos (e.g., using the words *hell* and *damn*). Although Barnes interprets this as blasphemy against God, the NIV Study Bible suggests instead that this would be the cursing that one would do against another person (i.e., pronouncing a curse upon someone invoking the gods to make his life miserable). Apparently, they had a great many such curses that they would pronounce against others. While the interpretation of the NIV Study Bible is probably more valid, both types of cursing are a category of sins of the tongue.
2. **Deceptions:** This is where you deceive others concerning your own actions and thoughts. You either make yourself out to be something that you are not; or you deny that which you have done. We have an example of perjury given in 1Kings 21:7–15, which resulted in the execution of Naboth. The incident was engineered by Jezebel (who was guilty of the verbal sin of conspiracy) so that her husband could steal Naboth's land from him. Her husband, of course, was guilty of complicity.
3. **Injury or threats:** This appears to be more than the verbal sin of gossip; this is likely threatening and bullying.
4. **Exhausting toil:** Here, whatever you have said about others or to others has caused them great inconvenience and additional wasted work.
5. **Iniquity:** This is a catch-all category of verbal sins which picks up whatever else is sinful that comes out of your mouth.

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart Index](#)

²³ Imagery suggested by *Barnes' Notes; Psalms, Volume 1*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 92.

²⁴ *Barnes' Notes; Psalms, Volume 1*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 92.

There are several parallels between this psalm and Psalm 73 (and Job 21). The verbal sins of the reprobate are given in Psalm 73:8–9: **They mock and speak [vociferously] with malice; they threaten oppression [and exploitation] from [their] high [position]. They have set their tongue against the heavens and their tongue struts throughout the earth.** David prays for deliverance from men like these: **Rescue me, O Jehovah, from evil men and preserve me from violent men who devise evil things in their hearts. The continually stir up wars; they sharpen their tongues as a serpent; poison of a viper is behind their lips** (Psalm 140:1–3).

**He sits in ambush in villages;
in hiding, he murders an innocent [one].
His eyes for a hapless [one] they lurk;**

Psalm
10:8

**He sits in villages in an enclosure;
in a hiding place, he murders the innocent.
His eyes lurk for the unfortunate;**

**He hides out to ambush; from his hiding place, he murders innocent victim.
His eyes are always pealed for another helpless victim;**

Like the previous verses, the writer does not stay with a particular number; masculine singular or masculine plural can refer to the same person. In this verse, we have a switch from one to the other in mid-verse. Here's what others have done with this verse:

CEV	They hide outside villages, waiting to strike and murder some innocent victim.
JPS (Tanakh)	He lurks in outlying places; from a covert he slays the innocent; his eyes spy out the hapless.
NASB	He sits in the lurking places of the villages; In the hiding places he kills the innocent; His eyes stealthily watch [or, <i>lie in wait</i>] for the unfortunate [or, <i>poor</i>].
NEB	He lies in ambush in the villages and murders innocent men by stealth. He is watching intently for some poor wretch;...
NIV	He lies in wait near the villages; from ambush he murders the innocent, watching in secret for his victims.
NLT	They lurk in dark alleys, murdering the innocent who pass by. They are always searching for some helpless victim.
The Septuagint	He lies in wait with rich [men] in secret places in order to kill the innocent. His eyes are set against the poor.
<i>Young's Literal Translation</i>	He doth sit in an ambush of the villages, In secret places he doth slay the innocent. His eyes for the afflicted watch secretly.

In this verse, it is clear that we are not examining simply a person whose life is mired in sin, but this is a person who intentionally goes out of his way to plunder others. When I read this, a particular lawyer of my acquaintance comes to mind. We begin with the 3rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of *yāsha*^{bv} (יָשָׁא) [pronounced *yaw-SHAH^{bv}*] and it means *to remain, to inhabit, to sit, to dwell*. Strong's #3427 BDB #442. This is followed by the *bêyth* preposition and the masculine singular construct of *ma'ārā*^{bv} (מַאֲרָא) [pronounced *mah-uh-RAW^{bv}*], which means *place of ambush, ambushment, enclosure*; we could use the terms *concealment, hiding place, hideaway*, as long as we understood that we were referring the *place from where they would ambush*. Strong's #3993 BDB #70. This is followed by the masculine plural noun *châtsêr* (חַטְּסֵר) [pronounced *khaw-TZahr*], which means *settled abodes, settlements, villages*. Strong's #2691 & #2699 BDB #347. This gives us: **He remains in a hiding place of [the] villages**. I must admit that I would have expected the singular and the plural to be just the opposite (i.e., *he remains in the hiding places of the village*). These various hiding places might be thickets, bushes or ravines. The villages which the psalmist speaks of is an open space which have a wall erected around it. Inside the wall is the village.

Now, what is important here is that his approach is one of clear forethought. He plans this out. He does not find himself in a sticky business situation morally speaking, and then simply fails to do the right thing. He intentionally looks to do that which is wrong in order to prosper.

In the second line, we begin with the *bêyth* preposition, the definite article and the masculine plural noun *çêther* (חֵתֵר) [pronounced *SAY-ther*], which means *coverings, hiding places*. Strong's #5643 BDB #712. The main verb in the

second line is the 3rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of *hârag* (אָרַג) [pronounced *haw-RAHG*] means *to kill, to slay*. Strong's #2026 BDB #246. This is followed by the masculine singular adjective (used as a substantive) of *nâqîy* (נָקִי) [pronounced *naw-KEE*] and it means *acquitted, clean, cleared, free from, unpunished, innocent*. Strong's #5355 BDB #667. **In hiding places, he kills [the] innocent.** The *innocent* does not mean that they prey simply upon men indwelt with divine righteousness, but relative to themselves, are innocent. That is, there victims have done nothing to them; their victims have done nothing to warrant their vicious attack.

There is no misplaced righteousness here. This is not a man who thinks that he is doing right, although he is doing wrong. This is a person who exploits the innocent for his own profit. This is the homicidal, grown-up version of the bully on the school playground. Psalm 94:6 provides us with a parallel verse: **They slay the widow and the stranger, an murder the orphans.** Or Psalm 37:32: **The wicked spies upon the righteous and seeks to kill him.** Hosea 6:8–10 provides us with parallel times: **Gilead is a city of wrongdoers, tracked with bloody footprints. And as raiders wait for a man, so a band of priests murder on the way to Shechem; surely they have committed crime. In the house of Israel, I have seen a horrible thing; Ephraim's prostitution and immorality is there; Israel has defiled itself.**

Now, we may be discussing thieves here, and they would conceal themselves around villages and pounce upon those who came by and rob them. However, this does not have to be confined to those who live outside the law—this can be also applied to those who live inside the law, whose living is made by plundering others legally.

Finally, in the third line, we begin with the 3rd person masculine singular suffix affixed to the feminine plural noun *eyes*. This is followed by the lamed preposition (*to, for*) followed by the adjective *chêl'kâh* (חֵלְקָה) [pronounced *khayl-KAW*], which means *hapless, unfortunate*. These are *the defenseless, the poor, the wretched, the afflicted*. Strong's #2489 BDB #319. The final word in this verse is the main verb for the third line, the 3rd person masculine plural (notice the change of number), Qal imperfect of *tsâphan* (צָפַן) [pronounced *tsaw-FAHM*], and it means *to hide, to conceal, to lay up (in storage), to store (as treasure), to treasure up*. Strong's #6845 BDB #860. This gives us: **His eyes hide for [the] hapless.** You will note that the problem here is that *eyes* are in the feminine plural and the verb is in the masculine plural. An alternate translation, **They hide his eyes for the hapless**, is hard to interpret, given the masculine plural verb, but the masculine singular suffix for *eyes*. Apart from some problems with the text, the idea is that these rich infidels lie in wait, they hide out, in order to plunder those who are less fortunate than themselves.

Barnes: *The meaning is, that instead of being a helper of the poor and wretched, he is disposed to take every advantage of them, and deprive them of all their rights and comforts.*²⁵

The general idea behind this verse is simple enough; the reprobate lies in wait, in hiding, to ambush his innocent victims. However, there were problems with the translation, particularly the final line. Therefore, we will look at...

The Less Literal Translations of Psalm 10:8

Complete Jewish Bible	He waits near settlements in ambush and kills an innocent man in secret; his eyes are on the hunt for the helpless.
CEV	They hide outside villages, waiting to strike and murder some innocent victim.
God's Word™	He waits in ambush in the villages. From his hiding places he kills innocent people. His eyes are on the lookout for victims.
NAB	They wait in ambush near towns; their eyes watch for the helpless, to murder the innocent in secret.
NEB	He lies in ambush in the villages and murders innocent men by stealth. He is watching intently for some poor wretch;...
NJB	In the undergrowth he lies in ambush, in his hiding-place he murders the innocent. He watches intently for the downtrodden,...
NLT	They lurk in dark alleys, murdering the innocent who pass by. They are always

²⁵ Barnes' Notes; *Psalms, Volume 1*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 92.

The Less Literal Translations of Psalm 10:8

TEV

searching for some helpless victim.
He hides himself in the villages, waiting to murder innocent people. He spies on his helpless victims;...

In order to get a general idea of what is occurring, we must ignore that we go from two masculine singular verbs to a masculine plural verb; we must also ignore that the verb in the last line is a masculine plural, while what appears to be the subject is a feminine plural. That aside, what appears to be the case, as we see in the NEB and TEV is that the third line in this verse should be paired with the first line in the following verse.

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart Index](#)

The meaning appears to be clear, as long as we don't look too closely at this verse. The reprobate hides out waiting for his victims, who are poor and innocent. He is not rich enough at this point, in his own mind—he must take more from those who are poorer than he is in order to eke out a living. The idea is that these reprobates, of whom the psalmist spoke, were no better than robbers who hid out to rob those who went by. There are personal injury lawyers who are this way. He is not a criminal; he probably even sees himself as a savior of some sort; however, he is no different than the bully on the playground; he is no different from the kid who takes a gun and robs a convenience store. The chief difference is that he operates within the law. There is a lot of stealing and plundering which occurs within the law.

**he lays in wait in the covering as a lion.
In his covered lair, he lies in wait to seize [the]
poor;
he seizes the poor in his drawing out into his
net.**

Psalm 10:9

**he lurks in his covered place like a lion.
In his covered lair, he lurks to seize the poor;
he seizes the poor in his drawing out [of them]
into his net.**

**he lurks in his lair like a lion;
From his covered hiding place, he lies in wait to seize the next helpless victim.
He easily draws the poor into his trap.**

For this verse, we won't have the same problems as we have faced in previous verses. Here is what others have done:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	He lurks in secret places like a lion in his thicket; he lies in wait that he may seize the poor (the helpless and the unfortunate); he seizes the poor when he draws him into his net.
Keil and Delitzsch (updated)	He lies in wait in the secret corner as a lion in his lair, He lies in wait to carry off the afflicted, He carries off the afflicted, drawing him away in his net.
NASB	He lurks in a hiding place as a lion in his lair; He lurks to catch the afflicted; He catches the afflicted when he draws him into his net.
NIV	He lies in wait like a lion in cover; he lies in wait to catch the helpless; he catches the helpless and drags them off in his net.
The Septuagint	He lies in wait in secret as a lion in his den; he lies in wait to ravish the poor, to ravish the poor when he draws him; he will bring him down in his snare.
<i>Young's Literal Translation</i>	He lieth in wait in a secret place, as a lion in a covert, He lieth in wait to catch the poor, He catcheth the poor, drawing him into his net.

The psalmist continues with the premeditation of the evil man. We begin with the 3rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of אָרַב (אַרַב) [pronounced *aw-RA^BV*], which means *to ambush, to lay in wait, to hide*. We had the noun cognate for this verb in the previous verse. Strong's #693 BDB #70. This is followed by the *bêyth* preposition, the definite article and the masculine singular noun צֶהְתֵּר (צֶהְתֵּר) [pronounced *SAY-ther*], again (also

from the previous verse). It means *a covering, a hiding place, secrecy, privately*. Strong's #5643 BDB #712. Then we have the kaph preposition and the masculine singular noun *lion*, giving us: **He lays in wait in the covering as a lion**. There were apparently a great many more lions in the Mid East then than there are now. **He is like a lion that is eager to tear and as a young lion lurking in hiding places** (Psalm 17:12; see also Psalm 7:2 22:13, 21). When we put this and the previous line together, we get: **His eyes lurk for the unfortunate; he lurks in his covered place like a lion**.

In the second line, we begin with the bēyth preposition and the masculine singular noun (with a masculine singular suffix) צֹהֵר (צֹהַר) [pronounced *sohk*], which means *thicket, covered lair*. Strong's #5520 BDB #696. We repeat the verb in this verse with the same morphology. We then have the lamed preposition and the Qal infinitive construct of chāṭaph (חָטַף) [pronounced *khaw-TAHF*], which means *to catch, to seize*. Strong's #2414 BDB #310. Then we have the adjective אֲנִי (אֲנִי) [pronounced *gaw-NEE*] again, which means *poor, afflicted, humble*. Strong's #6041 BDB #776. This gives us: **In his covered lair, he lays in wait to seize [the] poor...**

Barnes: *As a lion crouches down in his den, ready to spring upon his prey...the lion is concealed, but is on the look out, and when his prey passes near his den, he suddenly springs upon it and secures it. So it is with the wicked man. He carefully lays his plans. He conceals his purposes. He is himself hidden, or his plans are all hidden. Suddenly he springs upon his victim, who is taken by surprise and has not power of defense or escape. The purpose here is not so much to describe the wicked man as a literal robber, as to compare the conduct of the wicked with that of a robber—one who, like a lion or a hunter, lies concealed until his victim is seen. This will describe the conduct of a large class of men—men who secretly lay plans of seduction, villainy, and fraud, and who spring suddenly upon their victims when there is no hope of escape.*²⁶

in the third line, we begin with the 3rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of chāṭaph again (*to seize*), and אֲנִי again (*the poor*), followed by the bēyth preposition and the Qal infinitive construct (with a 3rd person masculine singular suffix of māshak^e (מָשַׁךְ) [pronounced *maw-SHAK^e*], which means *to draw out, to drag, to continue with something, to proceed to, to march to*. Strong's #4900 BDB #604. Then we have the bēyth preposition again, the 3rd person masculine singular suffix affixed to the feminine singular noun resheth (רֶשֶׁת) [pronounced *REH-sheth*], which means *net*. Strong's #7568 BDB #440. This gives us: **He seizes [the] poor in his drawing out into his net**.

Barnes: *Here the same thought is presented under a new image—that of a hunter. He lays his snare, gin or pit-fall, and when the animal is allured into it, he springs the net suddenly on him, or the animal sinks into the pit, and is secured.*²⁷

The whole idea that the psalmist is conveying is that the actions committed by the person in question (who represents a category of man) were predetermined by that man. He has not committed these acts out of accident or from making a wrong decision under pressure. He has consciously determined to plot against and plunder the poor. He is material superior to them, yet has sought to take what little they have to increase his own wealth.

**He crushed (or, he is crushed), he bows down
and he falls in his mighty [ones], the hapless
ones.**

Psalm
10:10

**He has been crushed—
he is bowed down and the helpless fall by his
mighty ones.**

**The helpless one is crushed and bowed down;
he falls because of the strong.**

Depending upon the translation that you have, it may appear that vv. 9–10 are one unit. In v. 9, we speak of a lion, and in this verse, the lion is crouching down. However, there is no *crouching down* in this verse. Let's see what others have done:

²⁶ Barnes' Notes; Psalms, Volume 1; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 93.

²⁷ Barnes' Notes; Psalms, Volume 1; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 93.

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	[The prey] is crushed, sinks down, and the helpless falls by his mighty [claws].
JPS (Tanakh)	He stoops, he crouches, and the hapless fall prey to his might.
Keil and Delitzsch (updated)	He crouches, he cowers and there falls into his claws—the weak.
Luther	He slays, and thrusts down, and presses to the earth the poor with power.
NASB	He crouches [or, <i>is crushed</i>], he bows down [or, <i>is bowed down</i>], And the unfortunate [or, <i>poor</i>] fall by his mighty ones [or, <i>into his claws</i>].
NIV	His victims are crushed, they collapse; they fall under his strength.
NKJV	So he crouches, he lies low [or, <i>he is crushed, is bowed</i>], That the helpless may fall by his strength [or, <i>mighty ones</i>].
The Septuagint	He will bow down and fall when he has mastered the poor.
<i>Young's Literal Translation</i>	He is crushed—he boweth down, Fallen by his mighty ones hath the afflicted.

To look at the NIV translation, you would think that this verse is a simple translation. Like most of the less literal translation, the NIV hides a myriad of problems. In other words, I am warning you up front that this verse is kind of a mess. There are places where you would expect a Hiphil verb, but do not get it (that is assuming that the first verb is a Qal perfect). You would also expect the final noun to be singular and act as the subject, but it is not; it is a plural, and therefore does not properly match any of the three verbs. In fact, this verse begins with three masculine singular verbs and then ends with two masculine plural adjectives. Recognizing that it is somewhat of a mess, we will proceed. We have, first of all, three successive 3rd person masculine singular verbs with no accompanying subject, indicating that the subject is *he* and would refer back to the nearest masculine singular subject, which could be the successful, exploitive infidel of the previous verse; the *he* could just as well refer back to the exploited poor man of the previous verse. We begin with the Qal perfect of *dākāh* (דָּכָה) [pronounced *daw-KAW*], which means *to be crushed, to crouch, to be broken, to be contrite, to crush to pieces*. Strong's #1794 BDB #194. Some believe that this should be a Niphal imperfect instead, which would give us: *he is crushed, he is crushed [to pieces]*.²⁸ One reason for the alternate reading is that we would otherwise have one verb with one subject, and the second two verbs with another subject. That is, the first verb would belong to the reprobate and the second two to the exploited. This would make the interpretation and understanding of this verse even more difficult. Secondly, the Qal perfect is what we have in the Hebrew text, but the Niphal imperfect is what we have in the margin. In other words, at some point in time, someone wrote the Niphal imperfect in the margin, to say, *I am certain that this is the way it should be, but the text I am copying is the Qal perfect*. In either case, it does not mean *to crouch*.²⁹ Barnes suggests that the first verb acts more like a noun, which would yield, *And the crushed one sinks down* (see the next verb).

The second verb is the Qal imperfect of *shāchah* (שָׁחָה) [pronounced *shaw-KHAH*], which means *to bow down, to prostrate oneself, to do obeisance to*. Strong's #7812 BDB #1005. The final verb in this verse is the Qal perfect of *nāphal* (נָפַל) [pronounced *naw-FAHL*], which means *to fall, to lie, to die a violent death, to be brought down, to settle, to sleep deeply*. Strong's #5307 BDB #656. This verb is preceded by a *wāw* conjunction. This gives us: **He is crushed, he bows down and he falls...** Now, you will note, Keil and Delitzsch, who are usually outstanding in their interpretations, mistranslate much of this verse, and therefore, misinterpret it. You don't get to arbitrarily translate a few verbs, and then base your interpretation upon a faulty translation. This is not good textual criticism, which means it is not good exegesis. Now, I don't mean to be harsh with Keil and Delitzsch, as usually, their analysis is insightful and correct. When writing their commentary, they certainly did not have the references which I possess, nor the ability to easily go back and revise an interpretation here or there. Their skill in other languages is far beyond my own. They just simply screwed up this verse (and given the difficulty of this entire psalm, it is more than understandable).

²⁸ The Qal perfect is דָּכָה and the Niphal imperfect is דִּכָּה; you note that the difference is a couple of vowel points and the first letter (which could easily be explained as a misreading or a physically corrupted manuscript).

²⁹ Keil and Delitzsch, who admit that there is no evidence that this word means *to crouch* in the Qal, they still translate it that way (Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 5, p. 112). It makes little sense to me to adopt the translation which is probably wrong and interpret the verse with that idea. You go with the translation which is accurate, and interpret that. If there are problems with that, you admit that there are problems. The end result is that, in general, we can confidently interpret and apply about 95% of what we find.

The verse continues with the *bêyth* preposition, the masculine singular suffix and the masculine plural adjective *ʿâtsûwm* (אֲצֻמ) [pronounced *gaw-TZOOM*], which means *mighty, numerous, great*. In the masculine plural form, it would mean *mighty men, numerous ones*. Strong's #6099 BDB #783. The *bêyth* preposition acts as an instrumental—it is by means of these mighty ones that these things happen. I do not know from where the NASB got *into his claws*. We learn an important lesson here. When someone has become powerful, they do not carry out their own will. They do not act out individually and they do not act in concert. They have their minions do the dirty work. No successful, powerful reprobate can reach that position of power apart from the work of those beneath him. His morality, or lack thereof, is often mirrored by these minions. Bill Gates, who, as a business man, was brilliant (and less so as a software developer); did not gain his position of prominence alone. Microsoft did not simply become the most powerful and successful software company because they built a better mousetrap. Early on, OS2 and Macintosh developed the best operating systems; Novell, and later Corel, developed the better word processing software. Lotus developed the best spreadsheet software. However, Microsoft prevailed in all of these areas because Gates was a better and much more aggressive businessman. Furthermore, he did not do it alone. His software developers took the best of what other operating systems had and added to them; but he primarily reached his place of prominence due to his aggressive marketing and business practices. Even as I write this, Corel still makes the better word processing software, but is absolutely dominated in the market by MS Word; and it is not that Microsoft builds the better mousetrap, but that Microsoft's minions and their business practices have caused their business software to dominate the market. The myriad of computer magazines are published by Ziff Davis and will not give MS Office a weak review; and will certainly never subordinate it to Corel's office suite. These writers and software reviewers are a part of the minions. Powerful men cannot act alone; they cannot even act in concert with a couple of others. Their strength is from those under them and this is why we have the masculine singular verbs, but then follow this with the masculine plural adjective *mighty ones*. Under the direction of the reprobate, the weak one is crushed; he bows down and he falls. However, those who effect this action are the minions of the reprobate. Furthermore, they do not prey on one man, but upon a large number of them; therefore, the verse ends with the masculine plural adjective *chêl'kâh* (חַלְקָה) [pronounced *khayl-KAW*] again (we had this back in v. 8 in the singular). It means *hapless [ones], unfortunate [ones]*. Strong's #2489 BDB #319. In Psalm 73, we kept track of who everyone was by number, gender and person; here, it is by the words used. These are the exploited poor. Before I give you a proper rendering of this verse, let me give you a contemporary example. There are those who either set up companies, buy and sell companies or who purchase huge positions in the stocks of certain companies, and, for all intents and purposes, manipulate the stock in order to make money for themselves. The common investor may suffer; the company may suffer; however, those with the large positions in the companies prosper greatly—but they do so at the expense of the small investor or of the company. Apart from trading on inside information, it is all perfectly legal, and the end result is that many small, individual investors—relatively poor by comparison—are fleeced by the larger investor. When a stock moves up and down apart from its actual value, merits or lack thereof, then someone is gaining and someone is losing. What happens most of the time is that the big investor gains and the small investor loses, as the large investor manipulates the market and the stock value of the company. This is what the psalmist is talking about. Now, for the translation: **He has crushed [or, is crushed]; he bows down; and he falls in [or, by] his mighty [ones]—[the] hapless ones.** The final masculine plural adjective describes who this has happened to, although the subject of the verb is a masculine singular in each case.

One of the ways to determine whether your English translation attempts to be a literal, word-for-word translation or opts to be more of a *thought-for-thought* translation is by comparing it to a verse like this. You will note that there is an attempt to match the three singular verbs with a masculine singular noun (or, actually, pronoun); and that there is some attempt to place a couple of masculine plural nouns at the end of the verse (for instance, Young, the NASB and the NKJV). However, these are not concerns of the less literal translations (which, of course, are going to be the easier ones to follow and understand).

The Less Literal Translations of Psalm 10:10

CEV	They crouch down and wait to grab a victim.
God's Word™	[His] victims are crushed. They collapse, and they fall under [the weight of] his power.
NAB	The helpless are crushed, laid low; they fall into the power of the wicked,...

NJB	He keeps watch, crouching down low, the poor wretch falls into his clutches;...
NLT	The helpless are overwhelmed and collapse; they fall beneath the strength of the wicked.
TEV	The helpless victims lie crushed; brute strength has defeated them.

You will note that these less literal translations are unencumbered by most of the concerns of the language which I have brought up. However, there is really little difference when it comes to the interpretation of this verse. There is certainly some disagreement when it comes to the subject of the first verb—whether it is the victim (who is crushed) or his attacker (who is crouching). Most agree that the second two verbs apply to the victim.

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart Index](#)

In any case, what we have is the victim of these attacks—a victim who is poor and helpless—finds himself crushed by the attacks, and he is humbled and he falls down. Almost all translations ignore the fact that we have two masculine plural adjectives at the end of the verse and generally render them as singular nouns. However, the meaning attributed is fairly similar from translation to translation. It is the weak and the helpless who are the victims and it is the strength (or minions) of the reprobate which beats them down.

**He has said in his heart;
“Has forgotten, God;
He has hidden His faces;
He will not see for ever.**

Psalm
10:11

**He thinks in his heart, “God has forgotten
[me]; He has hidden His face [from me]; He will
not see [this] ever.”**

He has said to himself, “God has forgotten about the world that He created. He has hidden His presence from this world. He will not ever observe what we do.”

Just as the previous verse appeared to be one line, this one also appears to be one line in length, although it expresses three separate but related thoughts. Here is what others have done with it:

JPS (Tanakh)	He thinks, “God is not mindful, He hides His face, He never looks.”
NASB	He says to himself, “God has forgotten; He has hidden His face; He will never see it.”
NIV	He says to himself, “God has forgotten; he covers his face and never sees.”
Owen's Translation	He thinks in his heart, “Has forgotten, God. He has hidden His face. He will not see it ever.”
The Septuagint	For he has said in his heart, “God has forgotten; He has turned away His face so as never to look.”
Young's Literal Translation	He said in his heart, ‘God hath forgotten, He hath hid His face, He hath never seen.’

This begins with, *he has said in his heart* (exactly as we have in v. 6), followed by the 3rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect of *shâkach* (שָׁכַח) [pronounced *shaw-KAHKH*], which means *to forget; to forget and leave*. Strong's #7911 BDB #1013. The likely subject of the verb is the masculine singular noun *ʾêl* (אֵל) [pronounced *ALE*], and it means *god, God, mighty one, strong, hero*. Strong's #410 BDB #42. This gives us: **He has said in his heart, “God has forgotten.”** As I have mentioned before, this is the same deism as was believed by many of our founding fathers.

We continue with what the infidel says in his heart (or, *thinks to himself*. We have the 3rd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect of *çâthar* (חָתַר) [pronounced *saw-THAHR*] and it means *to hide, to conceal*. Strong's #5641 BDB #711. This is followed by *his face* (literally, *his faces*, as the Hebrews thought of the *face* as being a number of things put together. **He [God] has caused His face to be hidden.**

The third part of the quote begins with a negative and the 3rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect of *to see* followed by the lamed preposition and the masculine singular noun *nêtsach* (נֶצַח) [pronounced *NAY-tsahkh*], which means *eminence, enduring, everlastingness, perpetuity*; and it is generally rendered *forever*. Strong's #5331

BDB #664. [He \[God\] will not see forever](#). The force of the negative and the word *forever* is, [He \[God\] will not ever see](#). The idea is that, God has forgotten about the world that He has made; He has caused his presence to be hidden from man; and He will never see what is going on, on this earth.

The NIV Study Bible remarks on the arrogance of the corrupt and how easily they dismiss God from their mind, and His lack of knowledge of the corrupt person's malicious deeds. This is often noted in the psalms: ["With our tongue, we will prevail; our lips are our own; who is lord over us?"](#) (Psalm 12:4b). [They say, "How does God know? And is there knowledge with the Most High?"](#) (Psalm 73:11; see also Psalm 59:7 64:5 71:11 94:7 115:2 Isa. 29:15 Ezek. 8:12).³⁰ The reprobate simply acts as though God has forgotten this earth; or as if, God has no interest in this earth and the activities that take place within its parameters. He acts as though God's eye is not upon him; he is not restrained by any sense of the Divine Presence.³¹

A second interpretation is that this is the poor and helpless man who is speaking, but this psalm is not really about that man. The thrust of the psalm is about the man of wickedness, the reprobate. He is the one most often personified in this psalm, therefore, it is most reasonable that it is his thoughts we examine.

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart Index](#)

God Is Called upon the Break the Strength of the Malevolent

[Stand up, O Y^ehowah!](#)
[O God, lift up Your hand!](#)
[Do not forget \[the\] afflicted!](#)

Psalm
 10:12

[Arise, O Yehowah God!](#)
[Lift up Your hand!](#)
[Do not forget the afflicted.](#)

[Arise, O Jehovah! O God, lift up Your hand against the evil!](#)
[Do not forget the afflicted!](#)

In this, the second major portion of the psalm, the psalmist herein calls upon God to make Himself known—to act opposite what the infidel expects. Furthermore, the Hebrew and the syntax is relatively easy. Here is what others have done:

NASB	Arise, O LORD; O God, lift up Thy hand. Do not forget the afflicted.
NIV	Arise, LORD! Lift up your hand, O God. Do not forget the helpless.
The Septuagint	Arise, O Lord God; let Your hand be lifted up; do not forget the poor.
<i>Young's Literal Translation</i>	Arise, O Jehovah O God, lift up Thy hand! Forget not the humble.

With this verse, the psalmist implores God to become involved and to reward the innocent and to punish the guilty. We begin this verse with the 2nd person masculine singular, Qal imperative (with a voluntative *hê*) of *qûwm* (קום) [pronounced *koom*], which means *to stand, to rise up*. I do not know exactly how to take into account the voluntative *hê*, but this simply means *stand up, take a stand, rise up, arise*. Strong's #6965 BDB #877. This is followed by the proper noun *Y^ehowah*. It is possible that the voluntative *hê* here signifies some respect and indicates that this is not a command, but an earnest request made by the psalmist. This gives us: [Rise up, O Y^ehowah](#).

Whereas, we could take this as, *Arise, O Lord God; God* is on the next line. It is the masculine singular noun, which is then followed by the 2nd person masculine singular, Qal imperative of *nâsâ* (נשא) [pronounced *naw-SAW*], which means *to lift up, to bear, to carry*. Strong's #5375 (and Strong's #4984) BDB #669. What the psalmist commands or asks God to do is to lift up *Your hand*, giving us: [O God, lift up Your hand](#).

³⁰ Paraphrased from *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 789.

³¹ Paraphrased from *Barnes' Notes; Psalms, Volume 1*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 94.

Line three begins with the 2nd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of *shâkach* (שָׁכַח) [pronounced *shaw-KAHKH*] again, which means *to forget; to forget and leave*. Strong's #7911 BDB #1013. With this is the negative. Who God is asked not to forget is the masculine plural adjective *ʿânîy* (עָנִי) [pronounced *gaw-NEE*] again, which means *poor, afflicted, humble*. Strong's #6041 BDB #776. [Do not forget \[the\] afflicted.](#)

The psalmist seems to be on the outside of this. He does not appear to be the person under attack. He calls upon God to respond to the actions of the corrupt and to protect the helpless. David often called upon God to deliver him: [Wondrously show Your grace, O Savior of those who take refuge at Your right hand](#) (Psalm 17:7; see also Psalm 3:7). [Now I know that Jehovah saves His anointed; He will answer him from His holy heaven, with the saving strength of His right hand](#) (Psalm 20:6). And psalmist call upon God to pay back the arrogant: [Rise up, O Judge of the earth, and render recompense to the proud](#) (Psalm 94:2). David also recognizes that God *will* call to mind the helpless and the trodden upon: [For He Who requires blood remembers them. He does not forget the cry of the afflicted](#) (Psalm 9:7).

**Why abhorred the wicked God
and has said in his heart, “You will not seek
[me].”**

Psalm
10:13

**Why has the wicked [man] abhorred God
and has said in his heart, “You will not
investigate [me].”**

**For what reason does the wicked man despise God?
Why has he said to himself, “You will not call me into account for my actions”?**

Let's first see what others have done:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	Why does the wicked condemn (spurn and renounce) God? Why has he thought in his heart, You will not call to account?
JPS (Tanakh)	Why should the wicked man scorn God, thinking You do not call to account?
NASB	Why has the wicked spurned God? He has said to himself, “Thou wilt not require it.”
NIV	Why does the wicked man revile God? Why does he say to himself, “He won't call me to account”?
NLT	Why do the wicked get away with cursing God? How can they think, “God will never call us to account”?
The Septuagint	Wherefore has the wicked provoked God? For he has said in his heart, “He will not require [it].”
<i>Young's Literal Translation</i>	Wherefore hath the wicked despised God? He hath said in his heart, 'It is not required.'

We begin this verse with *ʿal mâh*. *Mâh* (מַה) [pronounced *maw*] means *what, how, why*. When *mâh* is preceded by the preposition *ʿal* (עַל) [pronounced *gal*], it means *upon what, upon what ground, wherefore, why, for what reason?* *Mâh* = Strong's #4100 BDB #552. *ʿAl* = Strong's #5920, #5921 BDB #752. The main verb is the 3rd person masculine singular, Piel perfect of *nâʿats* (נָאַס) [pronounced *naw-AHTZ*], which means *to abhor, to despise, to spurn, to disgust*. Strong's #5006 BDB #610. If you will recall, we had this same verb back in v. 3 as a description of what the evil infidel did. The subject of the verb follows, which is the masculine singular adjective *râshâʿ* (רָשָׁע) [pronounced *raw-SHAWG*], an adjective which we found innumerable times in Job 21 and Psalm 73. It means *malevolent, lawless, corrupt, criminal*. Strong's #7563 BDB #957. Then we have the masculine plural noun *Elohim*, which is distinguished from the subject by its number. This gives us: [For what reason does the criminal abhor God?](#) It is a reasonable question. We are referring to someone that God has not disciplined or caused pain to. The psalmist has already noted that the reprobate despises God in v. 3b: [He has cursed \[and\] has despised Y^ehowah.](#)

The psalmist asks, “Why does the reprobate abhor and despise God? Why does he treat God with contempt? For what reason does he do this? On what ground does he base this resentment?” The reprobate *pays no respect to His commands, to His presence, or to His character; he violates all divine laws as if they were not worth regarding; he spurns all his counsels and entreaties; he goes forward to meet Him as if His wrath were not to be apprehended or dreaded...[it is] so strange a fact,*

*to psalmist says, [which] ought to be accounted for. There must be some reason why it occurs; and what that reason is, is worth an earnest inquiry. It could not be possible to believe that man—the creature of God, and a creature so weak and feeble—could do it, unless the fact were so plain that it could not be denied. It is, then, worth inquiry to learn how so strange a fact can be accounted for; and the solution—the thing which will explain this, and which must be assumed to be true in order to explain it—is stated in the concluded part of the verse.*³²

I believe that the second half of this verse continues the question of the first half; however, in continuing the question, the psalmist cleverly states why it is foolish for the wicked to abhor God. In the second line, we have the oft-used phrase of this psalm, *he has said in his heart*. Then we have the negative and the 2nd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of *dâraš* (דָּרַשׁ) [pronounced *dah-RASH*] again (have you noticed that this psalmist either has a very limited vocabulary or has chosen to repeat several words for whatever reason?). It means *to seek, to make inquiries concerning, to consult, to investigate, to study, to follow, to inquire*. Strong's #1875 BDB #205. We found this same verb back in v. 4 where the infidel did not investigate God. He has determined here that God will not investigate him. *He has said in his heart, "You will not investigate [me]."* Actually, we have a fairly clever bit of reasoning here; the unbeliever has no real reason to abhor God, not if he has already determined that God is not going to look that carefully at him. In other words, the wicked man has not really thought this through. He abhors and despises God on the one hand, whereas God has never called him into account for his past sins, and the wicked has assumed that God will not ever do so. So, if God has allowed him to get away with all of that wickedness, why abhor God? However, the truth of the matter is that no one gets away with anything; God will call him into account and he will pay for what he has done.

Application: Okay, I know what you are thinking—what if this is someone who has wronged you? For instance, we had a young lady on death row in Texas who had believed in Christ Jesus and was executed. Given the horror of the murders that she helped commit, there was little that could have happened to her which would have caused her the equivalent pain that she caused. Even her execution would not equal the vicious impact of her crimes. And now, she is face to face with the Lord, in a place of no more sorrow, no more tears; the former things have passed away. So, you may ask, where is the justice in the reprobate who is saved near the end of their lives? Will God call them into account for this evil and wrongdoing? I personally have had people in my life do some very evil and truly awful things to me. If they are later saved, then will they receive what they truly deserve for what they did to me? As Job observed in Job 21, there are wicked men who thrive their entire lives and then die a death of relative calm. What if they believe in our Lord at the end? Where is our justice? Our justice is this—the Lord Jesus Christ died for *their* sins, just as He died for ours. Every bit of wrongdoing and evil that they have done was poured out on our Lord. He paid the penalty in full for each and every vicious evil that they perpetrated. There was a penalty paid and it was paid for in full. The suffering was beyond our imagination. Their sins and iniquity were paid for in full just as our sins and iniquities were paid for in full. You may have led a life of relative morality, but I did not. I have a myriad of wrongdoings in my background that I will never pay the full penalty for; I have to therefore be willing to accept that there are those who have wronged me in my life who might believe in Christ and then not receive the beating that I believe they so richly deserve. The other side of that coin is that I have not received the beating which I so richly deserve. Now, do I want to watch the downfall and torture of those who have wronged me? Damned right I do. I'd buy tickets to a front row seat and bring pizza because I'd like to stay awhile. Alas, that may not come to pass. But I guarantee you that out of the other side of my mouth, I will beg for God's mercy concerning those whom I have hurt. You don't get to have it both ways. You don't get to be merciless and still expect mercy. Therefore, realize that there will be those who have wronged you—and have done so with maliciousness and glee. Nevertheless, you still pray for their salvation and, if there is a proper time, then you give them the gospel as well. Don't be hypocritical and clamor for their death, when there is a chance they can enjoy life everlasting. Taking that approach is a double-edged sword. God has shown us great mercy and graciousness; we ought to show the same to our own personal enemies. The debt for their wrongdoing has been paid in full, just as the debt for our wrongdoing has been paid in full as well. Two things I know in this life: (1) you don't deserve the grace that God has shown you; and, (2) I don't deserve the grace that God has shown me. Christ paid the full penalty for your sins, my sins and the sins of our respective enemies. When God chooses grace someone out—including our enemies—then that is a time for rejoicing, as He has also graced us out. **I say to you, love your enemies and pray**

³² Quoted and paraphrased from *Barnes' Notes; Psalms, Volume 1*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 95.

for those who persecute you...for if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Don't even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet your brothers only, what do you do more than anyone else? Don't even the Gentiles do the same? You are, therefore, to be perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect (Matt. 5:44, 46–48).

This all having been said, let yourself rest assured that there will be people who will wrong you that God will personally stomp. There will be those who do you harm, and God will not only avenge you, but even allow you to be cognizant of His dealings with them. Now, this is not discipline if they are unbelievers, but it is vengeance—however, and listen to me carefully now, it is God, not you, who takes vengeance out on your enemies. He chooses the time and the place to deal with your personal enemies. You **never** get to help; and, often, you don't get to watch.

**You have seen
for You, misery [from exhaustion] and taunting
provocation, You do carefully examine to take
in Your hand;
upon You he forsakes [the] hapless;
[to the] fatherless, You [even] You have been
a helper.**

Psalm
10:14

**You have observed [mankind]
because You have carefully examined the
misery of exhaustion and taunting provocation
to place [them] in Your hand;
he forsakes the hapless against You [or,
against Your (principles)];
You [even] You are the helper [of] the orphan.**

**You see what is going on, because You carefully examine the misery and pain of some men;
You place them in Your own hands; the reprobate abandons the poor (once he has taken advantage
of them; and You are the only helper of the orphan.**

From a precursory glance at Owen, this looks like it could be some rough sledding. Here are what others have done:

The Amplified Bible

You have seen it; yes, You note trouble and grief (vexation), to requite with Your hand. The unfortunate commits himself to You; You are helper of the fatherless.

God's Word™

You have seen [it]; yes, you have taken note of trouble and grief and placed them under your control. The victim entrusts himself to you. You alone have been the helper of orphans.

NASB

Thou hast seen *it*, for Thou hast behold mischief and vexation to take [lit., *put*] it into Thy hand. The unfortunate [or, *poor*] commits *himself* to Thee; Thou hast been the helper of the orphan.

NIV

But you, O God, do see trouble and grief; you consider it to take it in hand. The victim commits himself to you; you are the helper of the fatherless.

NKJV

But You have seen, for You observe trouble and grief, to repay *it* by Your hand. The helpless commits [lit., *leaves, entrusts*] himself to You; You are the helper of the fatherless.

Owen's Trans. (updated)

You see; Yea, You, trouble and vexation, do note that You may take it into Your hands; to You commits himself. The hapless of the fatherless, You have been the helper.

The Septuagint

You see. For You [even] You contemplate suffering and wrath, to deliver them into Your hands. The poor have been left to You. You were a helper to the orphan.

Young's Literal Translation

Thou has seen, For Thou perverseness and anger beholdest; By giving into Thy hand, On Thee doth the afflicted leave *it*, Of the fatherless Thou hast been an helper.

Obviously, the first problem is the length of this verse. Why it was not originally cut into two verses at first was a mystery to me. However, in retrospect, it is easy to see how the break in the verse might elude many a scribe, as there are two pausal forms but no conjunctions which clearly separate the lines. In the first half of this verse, the psalmist answer the last phrase of the previous verse. The psalmist has noted that the reprobate believes that God will not hold him responsible for what he has done; that God overlooks his evil. In this verse, the psalmist tells us that is incorrect. God does apprehend what is being done. He has carefully observed all of the actions of the

reprobate. We begin with the 2nd person masculine singular, Qal perfect of *to see*. What is going on is that the infidel of the previous verse claims that God does not see, He does not pay any attention, He does not take into account what occurs here on earth. The psalmist says, **You have seen**.

*Barnes: Though men act as if their conduct was not observed, yet You are intimately acquainted with all that they do. The workers of iniquity cannot hide themselves. The idea here is, that although God seemed not to notice the conduct of the wicked, and though the wicked acted as if he did not, yet that all this was seen by God, and that He would deal with men according to justice and to truth.*³³

This is followed by the conjunction *kîy*, which means *that, when, for, because*. Strong's #3588 BDB #471. Then we have the 2nd person masculine singular pronoun, which is used more for emphasis than anything else. Sometimes, it is implied that there is the verb *to be*. Then we have the masculine singular noun *ʿâmâl* (אָמַל) [pronounced *aw-MAWL*], which means *intense labor, exhausting toil, exhaustion, miserable work, work and toil so tiring, you just want to cry*. Strong's #5999 (and #5998) BDB #765. This is yet another word which has already been used in this psalm. Specifically, we are referring to what the psalmist observed which inspired him to write this psalm. However, in general, this conveys the idea that God observes all that occurs on this earth.

Then we have the *wâw* conjunction and the masculine singular noun *ka ʿaç* (כָּאֵץ) [pronounced *KAH-ğahs*], which means *provoked anger, highly emotional state which has been provoked, taunting provocation*. Strong's #3708 BDB #495. Then we have the 2nd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect of *nâbaṭ* (נָבַט) [pronounced *naw^b-VAHT*] and it means *to look intently at, to examine carefully*. The verb generally occurs in the Hiphil. Strong's #5027 BDB #613. This gives us: **You have seen, for You carefully examine misery [from exhaustion] and taunting provocation**.

Then we have the *lâmed* preposition and the Qal infinitive construct of *nâthan* (נָתַן) [pronounced *naw-THAHN*], which means *to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set*. Strong's #5414 BDB #678. This is followed by the pausal form of *in Your hand*. It is difficult to determine where does one line end and another begin. What we have so far is: **...for You carefully examine misery [from exhaustion] and taunting provocation to give [or, place] into Your hand**. The psalmist concludes here that God has examined carefully both misery and provoked anger, and He has placed these things into His own hands, indicating that they are under His control. The *hand* refers to God's power, His control, and His direct action in a given matter. It does not matter that the reprobate thinks that he will not be called into account; it does not matter if the psalmist has so far observed no appropriate action being taken against the reprobate. God still observes all that he has done; God still takes into account every action and every evil committed by the reprobate. **Jehovah is in His holy temple; Jehovah's throne is in heaven; His eyes behold, His eyelids test the sons of men** (Psalm 11:4). And, finally, God will deal with the situation according to His justice and righteousness.

Then we have the preposition *ʿal* (עַל) [pronounced *ğahl*], which means *upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside*. Strong's #5920, #5921 BDB #752. Affixed to the preposition is the 2nd person masculine singular suffix. This is followed by the 3rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of *ʿâzaḅ* (אַזַּב) [pronounced *aw-ZA^{BV}*], which means *to leave, to forsake*. Strong's #5800 BDB #736. Then we have the adjective (in pausal form) of *chêl^ekâh* (חַלְקָה) [pronounced *khayl-KAW*], which means *hapless, unfortunate*. Strong's #2489 BDB #319. This gives us: **Against You, he forsakes the unfortunate**. *Against You* refers to against God's principles and directives. The evil infidel, once he has exploited the poor and the unfortunate, abandons them. Take a personal claims lawyer, as a for instance. Most of the times, once the claim has been settled and he has gotten his piece, he does not spend his time with those from whom he took money or those who got part of that money. Once the exploited have been exploited, then they have been used up, and the exploiter moves on to another mark. The NKJV puts an uncharacteristic spin on this portion verse which may be reasonable. They downplay the *leaving* or *forsaking* of the poor, and interpret it rather as **The helpless commits [lit., leaves, entrusts] himself to You;...** In a sense, when the helpless have been abandoned by those who exploit them, they then have no other place to turn but God. As David wrote in Psalm 22:11: **Be not far from me, for trouble is near; for there is none [other] to help**.

³³ Updated paraphrase from *Barnes' Notes; Psalms, Volume 1*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 95.

The third line begins with the masculine singular noun *yâthôwm* (יָתוֹם) [pronounced *yaw-THOHM*], which means *orphan*. Strong's #3490 BDB #450. This is followed by *You [even] you are* which is followed by the Qal active participle of *ʿâzar* (עָזַר) [pronounced *gaw-ZAHR*], which means *to help*. Strong's #5826 BDB #740. This gives us: *You [even] you are [the] helper [of] the orphan*. As opposed to those who look to the poor merely to take what little they have, the psalmist recognizes that God is the helper of the poor and the helpless. Throughout the Word of God, He is so designated. *A father of the fatherless and a judge for the widows* (Psalm 68:5a). *For in You, the orphan finds mercy* (Hosea 14:3b).

Because this was a difficult verse, we will exegete it in the Greek as well, bearing in mind that (1) the Greek has changed over the years; (2) the Greek Septuagint is not the inspired Word of God—that is, it is not inspired word-for-word; and, (3) there are some words which I won't be able to locate in my Greek lexicon.

The Exegesis of Psalm 10:14 from the Greek

We begin with *You see* followed by the preposition *hóti* (ὅτι) [pronounced *HOH-tee*], which means *that, because*. The intention is to give an explanation for what is occurring. Strong's #3754. Then we have *You* followed by the accusative of *ponos*. *Ponos* (πόνος) [pronounced *POHN-oss*] means *labor, anguish, pain*. In the ancient world, work was not nearly as fulfilling as it can be today; and those in slavery closely associated their work with suffering. Strong's #4192. Then we have *and thumon*, which is the accusative of *thumos* (θυμός) [pronounced *thoo-MOSS*], which means *passion, anger, wrath, rage*. Strong's #2372. Then we have the verb, which is *katanoëô* (κατανοέω) [pronounced *kat-an-oh-EH-oh*], which means *to notice, to observe carefully, to look at (and reflect upon), to consider, to contemplate*. Strong's #2657. As in the Hebrew, the *you* is used for emphasis, not because it is grammatically required. This gives us: *You see; You [even] You contemplate suffering and anger,...*

We continue with what appears to be the infinitive of *to give over, to deliver over* (it does not match the Koine Greek completely, but it is close). Then we have accusative masculine plural *them* (which is not found in the Hebrew) followed by *into hands of yours*. This gives us: *You see; You [even] You contemplate suffering and anger to deliver them over into Your hands*. The only thing which makes this more clear than the Hebrew is the direct object *them*. God thinks about the suffering endured by the helpless, along with the anger displayed by the reprobates, and delivers over the reprobates into His own hands—at least, this appears to be the meaning of the Greek.

In the second line, we have *to You is left* (the word *left, abandoned, forsaken* is close to the Koine form) followed by *the ptôchos*, which is, in the Greek, *πτωκός* [pronounced *ptoh-KHOSS*], which means *poor, miserable, beggarly, impotent*. Strong's #4434. Then we have one of the Greek words that you can memorize today and add to your vocabulary: the dative/locative/instrumental of *orphanos* (ὀρφανός) [pronounced *or-fan-oss*], which means *orphan*. Strong's #3737. Then we have *You were* followed by the *boëthos* (βοηθός) [pronounced *boh-ā-THOSS*], which means *helper*. Strong's #998. This gives us: *To You is left the poor; You were a helper of orphan*. The last hope of the poor and the orphan is God; these are the categories of those who are being taken advantage of by the reprobate. The psalmist calls to God to look out for those who depend upon Him.

This verse is obviously a semi-convoluted mess in the English, but the ideas presented are fairly easy to unearth. The psalmist knows that God sees what is going on. He knows that God contemplates the suffering and misery endured by the helpless and the poor; He examines the anger of the wealthy reprobate. Once the successful infidel has used the poor, they are abandoned over to God. God is the helper of the orphan as well.

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart Index](#)

One of the best ways to get the feel for the meaning of a verse (although this does not always work), is to examine the less literal translations of that verse. Therefore, we will end with:

The Less Literal Translations of Psalm 10:14

Complete Jewish Bible	You have seen; for you look at mischief and grief, so that you can take the matter in hand. The helpless commits himself to you; you help the fatherless.
CEV	But you see the trouble and the distress, and you will do something. The poor can count on you, and so can orphans.
NAB	But you do see; you do observe this misery and sorrow; you take the matter in hand.
NJB	You have seen for yourself the trouble and vexation, you watch so as to take it in hand. The oppressed relies on you; you are the only recourse of the orphan.
NLT	But you do see the trouble and grief they cause. You take note of it and punish them. The helpless put their trust in you. You are the defender of orphans.
REB	You see that mischief and grief are their companions, you take the matter into your own hands. The hapless victim commits himself to you; in you the fatherless finds a helper.
TEV	But you do see; you take notice of trouble and suffering and are always ready to help. The helpless man commits himself to you; you have always helped the needy.

This is one of those verses where we find the best translations among those which are the least literal.

<p>Break [the] arm [or, <i>strength</i>] of the wicked and [the] evil [one]; You seek out his evil—You do not find [it] [or, <i>You find none</i>].</p>	<p>Psalm 10:15</p>	<p>Break [into pieces] the strength of the corrupt one and the evil one; You seek out his evil—You do not find [it].</p>
--	------------------------	---

**Smash the strength of the corrupt and evil into pieces;
seek out and destroy his evil until You can find no more.**

Let's first see what others have done with this verse:

JPS (Tanakh)	O break the power of the wicked and evilman, so that when You look for [this is a play on <i>darash</i> , which in vv. 4 and 13 means "to call to account."] his wickedness You will find it no more.
Keil and Delitzsch (updated)	Break the arm of the evil-doer; and the wicked man—punish his evil doing, that it may vanish before You!
NASB	Break the arm of the wicked and the evildoer, Seek out his wickedness until Thou dost find none.
NIV	Break the arm of the wicked and evil man; call him to account for his wickedness that would not be found out.
The Septuagint	Break the arm of the sinner and wicked man; his sin will be sought for and you will not find [it].
<i>Young's Literal Translation</i>	Break the arm of the wicked and the evil, Seek out his wickedness, find none;...

We begin this verse with the 2nd person masculine singular, Qal imperative of *shâ'var* (שׁוּבַר) [pronounced *shaw^b-VAR*], which means *to break, to break into pieces*. Strong's #7665 BDB #990. This is followed by the feminine singular construct of *z'ôrwa'* (ז'וֹרְוָא) [pronounced *z'ROH-ahg'*], which means *arm, shoulder* and figuratively, it means *strength*. Strong's #2220 BDB #283. *Arm* is closely associated with the masculine singular adjective *râshâ'* (רָשָׁע) [pronounced *raw-SHAWG'*] again (*malevolent, lawless, corrupt, criminal*). Strong's #7563 BDB #957. Then we have the *wâw* conjunction and the pausal form of the adjective *ra'* (רָע) [pronounced *rahg'*], which means *evil, bad*. Strong's #7451 BDB #948. This gives us: **Break [the] arm [or, *strength*] of [the] corrupt one and [the] evil one**. We have a parallel passage in Psalm 37:17: **For the arms [or, *power*] of the wicked will be shattered, but Jehovah will sustain the righteous**. As Barnes reasoned, when you break the arm, the victim becomes powerless. The psalmist implores God to make powerless the reprobate.

In the second line, we have the 2nd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of *dârash* (דָּרַשׁ) [pronounced *dah-RASH*] again (*to seek, to make inquiries concerning, to consult, to investigate, to study, to follow, to inquire*).

Strong's #1875 BDB #205. With this is the masculine singular noun (with a 3rd person masculine singular suffix of resha' (רֶשַׁע) [pronounced *REH-shahg'*], which means *malevolent, corrupt, maleficent, wickedness, evil, malfeasance*. Strong's #7562 BDB #957. Then we have the negative and the 2nd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of mâtsâ' (מָצָא) [pronounced *maw-TSAW*] and it means *to attain to, to find, to detect, to happen upon, to come upon, to find unexpectedly, to discover*. In the Niphal, Gesenius gives the meanings as *to acquire, to be found, to be present, to exist*. Obviously, the meanings given by many translators aren't quite on target. Strong's #4672 BDB #592. This gives us, very literally: [You seek his evil \[and\] You do not find \[it\]](#). Or, [You seek out his evil \[and\] You find none](#). Obviously, the interpretation of this is going to be rather difficult. The 2nd person masculine singular has, throughout all of this psalm, referred to *God*. Therefore, let's turn to the less literal translations:

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart Index](#)

The Less Literal Translations of Psalm 10:15

Complete Jewish Bible	Break the arm of the wicked! As for the evil man, search out his wickedness until there is none left.
CEV	Now break the arms of all merciless people. Punish them for doing wrong and make them stop.
God's Word™	Break the arm of the wicked and evil person. Punish his wickedness until you find no more.
NAB	Break the arms of the wicked and depraved; make them account for their crimes; let none of them survive.
NLT	Break the arms of these wicked, evil people! Go after them until the last one is destroyed!
REB	Break the power of the wicked and evil person, hunt out his wickedness until you can find no more.

The meaning is clear: the psalmist calls upon God to act. He calls upon God to avenge the helpless by breaking the power of those who have exploited them. The meaning of the second line appears to be that the psalmist implores God to continue to root out the evil of the reprobate until none remains.

Barnes adds: *Till it is all punished; till there has been full recompense. This is a wish that no wicked act of his should be forgotten; that exact justice should be rendered...the sinner may rest assured that eh will not be punished merely for a part of his sins. If God punishes the wicked at all, there will be nothing left unpunished.*³⁴ To Barnes, the meaning is that each and every sin of the wicked would be punished (which it was in Christ); however, I believe the idea is more that God is implored to ferret out and punish all of this person's sins, until there is no more to be found; i.e., all of his sins have been paid for. A third interpretation, which seems to be apt, is that the psalmist is asking God to ferret out and *remove* all evil, so that no more can be found. He is asking for more than vengeance—he is asking for removal of all evil, a Millennial concept.

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart Index](#)

God Has Heard the Desire of the Grace-oriented and He Will Vindicate the Oppressed

³⁴ *Barnes' Notes; Psalms, Volume 1*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 96.

**Y^ehowah [is] King a long duration and [to] perpetuity;
have perished, nations, from His land.**

Psalm
10:16

**Y^ehowah [is] King for a long duration unto perpetuity;
nations have perished from His land.**

**Jehovah is King forever;
He has caused nations to perish from His land.**

This seems like an easier verse to translate and interpret (actually, the previous verse was easy to translate; just more difficult to interpret). The interpretation of the second line of this verse will also help us to understand the previous verse. Let's first see what others have done:

NASB	The LORD is King forever and ever; Nations have perished from His land.
NIV	The LORD is King for ever and ever; the nations will perish from his land.
The Septuagint	The Lord will reign forever, even forever and ever; you Gentiles will perish out of his land.
Young's Literal Translation	Jehovah is king to the age, and for ever, The nations have perished out of His land!

We obviously begin with the proper name for one of the members of the Godhead. This is followed immediately by the masculine singular noun *melek*^o (מֶלֶךְ) [pronounced *MEH-lek*], which means *king, prince*. This refers either to the ultimate ruler of the land, or one in line for that position. Strong's #4428 BDB #572. Then we have the masculine singular noun *ôwlâm* (עוֹלָם) [pronounced *ô-LAWM*], a word indicating *long duration, perpetuity, antiquity, futurity*. Strong's #5769 (& #5865) BDB #761. Then we have the *wâw* conjunction and the masculine singular noun *ad* (אֲדָ) [pronounced *âhd*] which is used in four entirely different ways: (1) it can be a noun which means *perpetuity*, [Strong's #5703] [also see Strong's #5769]; (2) a noun which means *booty, prey*, [Strong's #5706]; (3) a preposition that means **as far as, even to, up to, until, while**, and (4) a conjunction that means *until, until that, to the point that, so that even* [conjunction = Strong's #5704 BDB #724]. We tend to simply use *forever and ever*, but the Hebrew offers a myriad of different combinations of these words and various prepositions to express this thought. BDB #723. This gives us: **Y^ehowah [is] King [for] a long duration and [to] perpetuity**. Psalm 29:10b parallels this with: **Yes, Jehovah sits as King forever**. And Ex. 15:18 reads: **"Jehovah will reign forever and ever."**

The second line begins with the 3rd person plural, Qal perfect of *âvâd* (אָוָד) [pronounced *aw^o-VAHD*], which means *to perish*. Strong's #6 BDB #1. The subject of the verb is the masculine plural noun *gôwy* (גוֹיִם) [pronounced *GOH-ee*], which you recognize as *goy*. This word means *people, nation*; in the plural it is used predominantly (if not exclusively) for Gentile nations (Gen. 10:5 Lev. 20:38 Deut. 28:65). Strong's #1471 BDB #156. Then we have *from His land*. This gives us: **Nations have perished from His land**. Recall that the perfect tense represents completed action—this is not the same as a past tense. It means that the psalmist views this as a completed act. Israel, during the time of Joshua, will be in a continual state of removing Gentiles from the land. If we were speaking of that time, then we would use the imperfect tense. However, the psalmist views this as a completed event, one done at the hand of God. What is in view are the last days of the Tribulation and the removal of the Gentile nations from the land of Israel. This will be a permanent and total removal, the results of which last into the Millennium.

This helps us to understand the previous verse. At some point in time, the Gentile nations (a reference to groups of unbelievers who have rejected God) will perish from this earth; Jehovah has broken their strength. They vanish from His land, Israel. Therefore, when He looks for their evil, He will not find it because they have been removed from the land. However, Israel is not placed into the land and protected because she is racially Israel. **"Like the nations that Jehovah makes to perish before you, so you [Israel] will perish, because you would not listen to the voice of Jehovah your God."** (Deut. 8:20). It will be regenerate Israel who will finally be in the land—the 144,000 Jewish evangelists and their converts (Rev. 7:4 14:1, 3).

In general in this verse, the psalmist looks forward to the day when God would reign over the earth. Gentile unbelievers would be removed from the land; men of evil and their evil would be removed from the land, so that one might look for it and not find it; and God would reign forever. This is obviously a Millennial passage or a passage

which looks forward to that time. Now, was King David a dispensationalist? Did he know the ages? God has given His Word and has reveal his plan bit by bit. This is called progressive revelation. Although the book of Genesis has the seeds of every major doctrine in it, that does not mean that Old Testament could study this book and fully apprehend all those doctrines. At the time of David, believers understood that there was a time prior to Israel and there was the time of Israel, and that things were different during those two time periods. In fact, the way God dealt with man in the time of Abraham, the father of all the Jews, is different than what God did in the time of Moses, the father of the nation Israel. During the time this psalm was written, the Church Age would have been completely unknown. Only inklings of the Tribulation were known (if that) and of the Millennium. One must realize that these things were written by men who did not have a full and complete understanding of these doctrines—in fact, they have had no understanding of these doctrines. However, God the Holy Spirit understood these things from the beginning. Therefore, as these men wrote, inspired by the Holy Spirit, they could write about things that they did not fully apprehend, yet what they wrote would not be in conflict with the complete and correct understanding of the appropriate doctrine. In other words, David (or, whoever the author was) did not have to understand or even know about the Millennium in order to write a few true statements about the Millennium.

[The] desire of [the] afflicted [and humble ones] You have heard, O Y^ehowah; You cause to establish their heart; You will incline Your ear...

Psalm
10:17

You, O Y^ehowah, have heard the longings of the afflicted [and humble ones]. You cause their hearts to become stabilized; You will incline Your ear...

You, O Jehovah, have heard the desires of the afflicted.

You will help them to stabilize their thinking and their emotions; You will listen to their cry for help.

First we will see what others have done:

Keil and Delitzsch (updated)	The desire of the sufferers You have heard, Jahve, You established their heart, caused Your ear to hear,...
NASB	O LORD, Thou hast heard the desire of the humble; Thou wilt strengthen their heart, Thou wilt incline Thine ear.
NIV	You hear, O LORD, the desire of the afflicted; you encourage them, and you listen to their cry,...
The Septuagint	The Lord has heard the desire of the poor; Your ear has inclined to the preparation of their heart...
Young's Literal Translation	The desire of the humble Thou hast heard, O Jehovah. Thou prepares their heart; Thou causes thine ear to attend.

We begin this verse with the feminine singular construct of ta^ʾāvâh (תַּאֲוָה) [pronounced *tah-uh-VASW*], which means *desire, lust*. This word can be used in a good way (*longing, that which is longed for*) or in a bad. We also saw this noun in v. 3. Strong's #8378 BDB #16. This is closely associated with the masculine plural adjective ʿânîy (עֲנִי) [pronounced *gaw-NEE*] again (*poor, afflicted, humble*). Strong's #6041 BDB #776. Then we have the main verb, the 2nd person masculine singular, Qal perfect of shâma^ʿ (שָׁמַעַ) [pronounced *shaw-MAHG*], which means *to listen, listen intently, to listen and obey, to listen and act upon, to listen and give heed to, to hearken to, to be attentive to, listen and take heed to, listen and take note of, listen and be cognizant of*. Strong's #8085 BDB #1033. This is followed by the proper noun Y^ehowah, which Keil and Delitzsch transliterate *Jahve*. They change the Hebrew *y* into a *j* (which is common for English speakers), insert two vowels, and drop the *h* at the end. This is from whence they get *Jahve*. This gives us: **You, O Y^ehowah, have heard the longing of the afflicted [and humble]**. This simply means that God, even from eternity past, has heard all of the desires and longings of the poor and humble. He has not ignored their cries for deliverance.

in the second line, we have the 2nd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect of kûwn (כּוּן) [pronounced *koon*], which means *to erect (to stand up perpendicular), to establish, to prepare, to be stabilized*. The Hiphil is the causal stem—*He causes to stand, He sets up, He erects, He appoints, He prepares, He makes ready*. Strong's #3559 BDB #465. This is followed by *their heart*, giving us: **He causes to stabilize their heart**. The poor, the humble and

the afflicted cry out to God for justice and for grace; God has heard them from eternity past and He has caused their thinking to become stabilized.

Barnes concludes this verse with: *He [God] would settle or confirm their heart; that is, that He would dispel their fears and allay their apprehensions by the assurance of his favour, and by His gracious interposition. They had been full of apprehension and alarm, but the assurances of the Divine favour would establish their hearts and give them peace.*³⁵

In the third line we have the 2nd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect of qâsha^{bv} (קָשָׁה) [pronounced *kaw-SHAH^{bv}*], which means *incline, attend to, give attention to, be caused to attend to*. Strong's #7181 BDB #904. This is followed by the pausal form of *Your ear*, which gives us: **You cause to incline Your ear**. This third line parallels and repeats the thought of the previous verse. There is actually a word for this, *synonymia* [pronounced *sin-o-nim-EE-a*], which is a figure of speech that stands for a repetition of words which are different in sound and origin, but with similar shades of meaning. The result is, generally, for emphasis (although this is not the only purpose of using a synonymia).³⁶

On the basis of God's very own character, He causes Himself to incline His ear toward the cries of the helpless and grace-oriented. We know that God will hear the cries of the grace-oriented, as Psalm 9:18 reads: **For the needy will not always be forgotten, nor will the hope of the afflicted perish forever**. And Psalm 9:12b: **He does not forget the cry of the afflicted**. There will come a time when God will balance all accounts. For, **the eyes of Jehovah are toward the righteous, and His ears are inclined to hear their cry** (Psalm 34:15). Allow me to append these thoughts by saying that this does not only apply to Israel. God is the God of all mankind. Even though it will appear as though He will be God over Israel, His power and kingdom certainly stretch beyond that. **"If you afflict the immigrant at all, and if he cries out to Me, I will certainly hear his cry and My anger will be kindled, and I will kill you [Israel] with the sword."** (Ex. 22:22–23a). Israel's special relationship to God did not mean that Israel could afflict the helpless.

**...to judge of [the] orphan and oppressed;
will not add anymore to terrify, a man from the
land.**

Psalm
10:18

**...to govern the fatherless and the oppressed;
[so that] the man from the earth will not
continue to terrify anymore.**

**You will righteously judge the orphan and the oppressed
so that they will not be terrified by the man of the earth anymore.**

Because of God's inclining of His ear to the troubles of man, and because of the eventual restoration of all things, there is no longer any terror to those who remain on this earth. First, let's see what others have done with this verse:

JPS (Tanakh)	...to champion the orphan and the downtrodden, that men who are of the earth tyrannize no more.
NASB	To vindicate [lit., <i>judge</i>] the orphan and the oppressed, That man who is of the earth may cause terror no more.
NIV	...defending the fatherless and the oppressed, in order that man, who is of the earth, may terrify no more.
NKJV	To do justice to [or, <i>to vindicate</i>] the fatherless and the oppressed, That the man of the earth may oppress [or, <i>terrify</i>] no more.
The Septuagint	...to plead for the orphan and afflicted, that man may no more boast upon the earth.
<i>Young's Literal Translation</i>	To judge the fatherless and bruised; He addeth no more to oppress—man of the earth!

³⁵ *Barnes' Notes; Psalms, Volume 1*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 97.

³⁶ *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*; E. W. Bullinger; ©originally 1898; reprinted 1968 Baker Books; p 324.

We begin this final verse with the lamed preposition and the Qal infinitive construct of *shâphaṭ* (שָׁפַט) [pronounced *shaw-FAHT*], which means *to judge, to govern*. Strong's #8199 BDB #1047. The very nature of the syntax seems to indicate that this is continued from the previous verse (which ended in with a pausal form). Then we have the masculine singular noun *yâthôm* (יָתוֹם) [pronounced *yaw-THOHM*], which means *orphan*. Strong's #3490 BDB #450. Then we have the wâw conjunction and the adjective (in the pausal form) of *dak*^e (דָּכַךְ) [pronounced *dahk*], which means *crushed, oppressed*. This adjective is only found in Psalm 9:9 10:18 74:21 Prov. 26:28, but it has ample cognates to confirm its meaning. Strong's #1790 BDB #194. This gives us: [...to judge \[or, govern\] \[the\] orphan and \[the\] oppressed](#). The idea is that God has heard from eternity past the cries of the humble and the powerless, and He will return to govern them. God has always been a champion of the poor and helpless: [Jehovah protects the strangers; He supports the fatherless and the widow; but He thwarts the way of the wicked](#) (Psalm 146:9). [Jehovah is a stronghold for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble](#) (Psalm 9:9). [Let not the oppressed return dishonored; let the afflicted and needy praise Your name](#) (Psalm 74:21). The Law was filled with warnings that the Israelites should not take advantage of the poor and the helpless; and that such should be looked out for (Deut. 24:14–15, 17–21).

In the second line, we begin with the negative and the 3rd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect of *yâçaph* (יָצַח) [pronounced *yaw-SAHPH*], which means *to add, to augment, to continue to do a thing*. It is very often followed by an infinitive to indicate what activity would be continued (or, in this case, discontinued). There appears to be no real difference between the Qal and the Hiphil. Strong's #3254 BDB #414. Then we have the adverb *ôwd* (עוֹד) [pronounced *ôde*] (it is also written עוֹדָה), which means *still, yet, again, besides, in addition to, even yet*. It is a word which acts as both an adverb and as a substantive. In both cases, it carries the idea of continuation. Strong's #5750 BDB #728. Then we have the lamed preposition and the Qal infinitive construct of *ârats* (אַרַּץ) [pronounced *âw-RAHTS*], and it means *to cause to tremble, to tremble, to terrify*. Strong's #6206 BDB #791. Then we have *ênôwsh* (אֲנוּשׁ) [pronounced *en-OHSH*], which means *mortal, mortal man, mankind*. It is a word found generally in poetry and it appears to refer to *man liable to disease and calamity, fallen man, depraved man*. Strong's #582 BDB #60. This psalm ends with *from the land*, which gives us: [\[The\] man from the earth will no longer continue to cause \[them\] to tremble](#). *The man from the earth* refers to the man which has continued to oppress the poor and the helpless; in eternity future, because God has listened to His people, this man will no longer continue to oppress and terrify the grace oriented.

One of the things that we miss in the English is the play on words which we find in the Hebrew. *To terrify* is *ârats* (אַרַּץ) [pronounced *âw-RAHTS*] in the Hebrew, and *earth* is *erets* (אֶרֶץ) [pronounced *EH-rets*]. So, we actually have this whole rhyming thing going on (which is not generally a part of Hebrew poetry). This helps to explain why these words are used. *The man from the earth* is essentially *the man of terror*. One of the words describes his origins, and the other, his character.

Although I do not recall *man of the earth* being used elsewhere in Scripture, throughout, we have the continual theme that man ought to trust in God and not in his fellow man, as man is weak; he is here today, but gone tomorrow, making his promises and guarantees temporary at best. [It is better to take refuge in Jehovah than to trust in man](#). [It is better to take refuge in Jehovah than to trust in princes](#) (Psalm 118:8–9). In Jer. 17:3, it is much stronger: [Thus speaks Jehovah: "Cursed is the man who trust in man and makes flesh his strength; and who heart turns away from Jehovah."](#) (see also Psalm 49:12, 20 56:4, 11 62:9 78:39 103:14–16 144:4 Isa. 31:3).³⁷

God also promises His help to the helpless directly: [The afflicted will also increase their gladness in Jehovah, and the needy of mankind will rejoice in the Holy One of Israel, for the ruthless will come to an end, and the scorner will be finished, Indeed all who are intent on doing evil will be cut off; who caused a person to be indicted by a word, and ensnare him who adjudicates at the gate, and defraud the one in the right with meaningless arguments.](#)" (Isa. 29:10–21).

[Return to Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart Index](#)

[Site Map](#)

[Return to the Psalms Homepage](#)

³⁷ Scriptural references and point made by *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 789.

Return to Beginning of this Chapter

Psalm 10:3 Addendum

I mentioned that there several passages where there was a common word which is generally translated one way, but, in select passages, are often mean just the opposite and are so translated. Let me give you an example and what some have done by way of translation for Job 1:11:

NASB	“Put forth Thy hand now and touch all that he has; he will surely curse Thee to Thy face.”
NRSV	“But stretch out your hand now, and touch all that he has, and he will curse you to your face.”
REB	‘But just stretch out your hand and touch all that he has, and see if he will not curse you to your face.’
<i>Young's Literal Translation</i>	‘...put forth, I pray Thee, Thy hand, and strike against anything that he hath—if not: to Thy face he doth bless thee!’

Now one could certainly explain this passage on the basis of a literary sarcasm. “Take away all of his possessions, and he will certainly **bless** you!” Furthermore, we have this negative floating around in that verse, which would further allow some manipulation of the translation (although it appears as though the REB has about the best sense of this translation with the negative). We have exactly the same thing in Job 2:5. Now, in Job 2:9, we have the same word, but there is no negative. Here is how Owen renders Job 2:9: **Then said to him, his wife, “Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse (bless) God and die.”**

Commentary Addendum: We have spend a great many pages examining this psalm, pretty much word-by-word. If you had simply sat down and read a less than literal translation, you probably would have come away with the notion that you understood the psalm, and, certainly, you would have had a general idea as to what the psalm had to say. However, my intention is to both give a correct interpretation, after first applying a reasonable amount of textual criticism along with a great deal of exegesis. Should every pastor-teacher approach the Bible this way? Not necessarily. However, almost every pastor teacher should approach Scripture with more depth than they do. In any case, our end result is that we (1) better understand this psalm; (2) recognize how difficult this particular psalm is to translate and understand; and, (3) this psalm has afforded us many opportunities for application. Most of these applications would have been lost had we taken this psalm superficially.

You may wonder why I do this. My web site receives relatively few hits; 90% of what I have written is not even found on the web. At this point in time, there is no teaching job for me on the horizon. None of that matters. I have the ability to, albeit dryly, examine, exegete and interpret Scripture; and I have all the necessary tools for this endeavor. In God’s plan, we do not have to know why everything happens; nor do we always need to know what will be the end result of applying our spiritual gift(s). Our confidence should be in God and His plan. Just as the psalmist here called for the breaking of the strength of the evil man; this means that there was a significant period of time—perhaps the entire life of the corrupt man—where his evil went unpunished. So we lead our own lives, looking to God, not always understanding why He does this or why He does not do that. We look to Him and we look to His Word to determine how to conduct our lives; sometimes God will make it clear why He has chosen to take this action or to abstain from that; however, there will be a significant number of times where God will call upon us to simply trust Him and His judgments.