

# Psalms 109:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Let there be none to extend mercy unto him: neither let there be any to favour his fatherless children.

## Analysis

**Let there be none to extend mercy unto him** (אַל־יְהִי־לוֹ מִשְׁכָּח מְשַׁח, al-yehi-lo moshech chased)—literally "let there be no one drawing out chesed to him." The verb מִשְׁכָּח (mashach, "extend, draw out") with מְשַׁח (chesed, "covenant loyalty, steadfast love") depicts someone reaching out with loyal love. David prays this be withheld. **Neither let there be any to favour his fatherless children** (וְאֵל־יְהִי לִיתוֹמָיו חֲנוּן, ve'al-yehi chonen liyetomav)—חֲנוּן (chanan, "show favor, be gracious") is denied even to orphans.

This seems harsh until we grasp covenant theology: the persecutor showed no רָחֻם (rachum, "mercy") to those who showed him chesed (v. 5). He violated the fundamental covenant principle—therefore covenant privileges are forfeited. Yet God's character transcends this: He remains "the father of the fatherless" (Ps 68:5) even for children of the wicked. David's prayer reflects temporal judgment and social isolation, not eternal damnation for the innocent. The prayer highlights the persecutor's legacy: he creates a family no one wants to help.

## Historical Context

Israelite society depended on kinsman-redeemer systems (גֹּאֵל, go'el) and covenant community support for widows and orphans. To have "none to extend mercy" meant complete social ostracism—the community withdrawing from one who betrayed community bonds.

## Related Passages

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**Revelation 20:12** — Judgment according to deeds

**Romans 2:1** — Judging others

## Study Questions

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1. How does the withdrawal of chesed (covenant loyalty) illustrate the relational consequences of betraying trust?
2. What tension exists between praying for an enemy's isolation and God's character as defender of the fatherless?
3. How does our treatment of the vulnerable reveal whether we truly understand chesed?

## Interlinear Text

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אֵל	יְהוָה	לֹא	מִשְׁכָּח	יְהוָה	וְאֵל	יְהוָה
H408	H1961	H0	H4900	H2617	H408	H1961
<b>Let there be none to extend</b>			<b>mercy</b>			
חַ וְיָ			לִיתוֹמָיו:			
<b>unto him neither let there be any to favour</b>			<b>his fatherless children</b>			
H2603			H3490			

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