

# Psalms 109:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For my love they are my adversaries: but I give myself unto prayer.

## Analysis

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**For my love they are my adversaries**—David gave אַהַבָּתִי (ahavati, "my love"), but received שָׂטָן (satan, adversarial opposition—the verb root that yields "Satan"). This is covenant betrayal: love repaid with enmity. **But I give myself unto prayer** (וָאֲנִי נִתְפַּלֵּה, va'ani tefillah)—literally "but I am prayer," an idiom meaning "I am devoted to prayer" or "prayer is my very being."

David models the response Christ commanded: "Pray for them which despitefully use you" (Matt 5:44). Where carnal instinct demands retaliation, David makes himself prayer—his entire being becomes intercession. Significantly, the imprecatory curses in verses 6-19 are themselves prayers, not personal vengeance. David brings his enemies to God's tribunal rather than taking justice into his own hands, fulfilling Romans 12:19: "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord."

## Historical Context

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Written during a period when David had shown extraordinary mercy—likely sparing Saul's life twice (1 Sam 24, 26) or showing kindness to Absalom despite rebellion. Ancient honor-shame cultures expected blood vengeance for lesser offenses; David's prayer-response was radically countercultural.

## Related Passages

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**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

**1 John 4:8** — God is love

## Study Questions

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1. How does "I am prayer" challenge superficial praying about problems versus embodying prayerful dependence?
2. What does it mean to bring enemies to God's court rather than the court of public opinion or personal revenge?
3. How can imprecatory prayers be holy expressions of longing for God's justice rather than sinful vindictiveness?

## Interlinear Text

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תַּחַת	אֶהְבֶּתָּ י'	יִשְׁטְנוּ וְיָי	וְאֲנִי י'	תִּפְלֶה:
H8478	<b>For my love</b>	<b>they are my adversaries</b>	H589	<b>but I give myself unto prayer</b>
	H160	H7853		H8605

## Additional Cross-References

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**Psalms 38:20** (Parallel theme): They also that render evil for good are mine adversaries; because I follow the thing that good is.

**Psalms 35:7** (Parallel theme): For without cause have they hid for me their net in a pit, which without cause they have digged for my soul.

**Luke 23:34** (Parallel theme): Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.

**Psalms 35:12** (Parallel theme): They rewarded me evil for good to the spoiling of my soul.

**John 10:32** (Parallel theme): Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me?

**2 Corinthians 12:15** (Love): And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved.

**Daniel 6:10** (Prayer): Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.

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