

Psalms 119:150

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

They draw nigh that follow after mischief: they are far from thy law.

Analysis

They draw nigh that follow after mischief (קָרְבוּ רְצִפִּי זִמְמָה, qarevu rodefe zimmah)—Pursuers of wickedness (zimmah, lewdness, evil schemes) are approaching. **They are far from thy law** (מַתְוָתָקָן כְּמַקָּן, mi-toratka rachaqu)—The contrast is spatial and moral: proximity to evil corresponds with distance from Torah. Those near wickedness are far from God's instruction.

This verse describes the wicked's trajectory. Psalm 1:1 warns against walking in the counsel of the ungodly—the progressive movement toward sin and away from God. Romans 1:28 speaks of those who "did not like to retain God in their knowledge," resulting in a "reprobate mind." Distance from God's law is not neutral ground—it is the path toward destruction. Conversely, drawing near to God means drawing near to His Word (James 4:8).

Historical Context

In Israel's history, periods of apostasy were marked by the rise of those who 'followed after mischief'—Baal worship, child sacrifice, injustice. The prophets confronted this pattern repeatedly (Jeremiah 2:5, 7:24).

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. What is the relationship between the company you keep ('they draw nigh') and your proximity to or distance from God's law?
2. How can you discern when you are drifting away from God's Word before reaching a crisis point?

Interlinear Text

רָקִים	רָקִים	רָקִים	מִתּוֹרְתָּבָה	רָקִים
They draw nigh	that follow	after mischief	from thy law	they are far
H7126	H7291	H2154	H8451	H7368

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 27:2 (Parallel theme): When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell.

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