

# Psalms 119:157

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Many are my persecutors and mine enemies; yet do I not decline from thy testimonies.

## Analysis

**Many are my persecutors and mine enemies** (רֹבִים רֹדְפִים וְצָרִים, rabbim rodfei vetzarai)—Rodef means 'pursue, chase down, hunt'; tzar means 'narrow place, distress, adversary.' The psalmist is hunted prey in confined space. Yet: **do I not decline from thy testimonies** (מִעֲזֹזְתִּיךְ לֹא תִּנְתַּיִתִי) (me'edotekha lo natiti). Natah means 'turn aside, deviate, bend away.' Under pressure, he maintains straight-line fidelity to edot (testimonies, covenant witness).

This verse prefigures Christ's steadfastness through persecution. Acts 4:27-28 identifies Jesus's rodfeim (pursuers)—Herod, Pilate, Gentiles, Israel—yet He never deviated from the Father's testimony.

## Historical Context

The language of 'pursuers' recalls David fleeing Saul (1 Samuel), prophets persecuted by kings (1 Kings 19:2), and faithful Jews under Antiochus Epiphanes (1 Maccabees 1:52-63). The psalm likely reflects either personal persecution or the exile experience, where maintaining Torah-observance meant suffering.

## Related Passages

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

**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

## Study Questions

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1. How does persecution reveal whether your obedience to God's Word is convenient preference or covenant commitment?
2. What specific 'testimonies' (<em>edot</em>) are you most tempted to 'decline from' under social pressure?
3. How does Christ's unwavering faithfulness under persecution empower you to stand firm in yours?

## Interlinear Text

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ל א מ עֲדֹתֶךָ בְּנֵים רְצִיף אֶצְבָּע

Many are my persecutors and mine enemies from thy testimonies

H7227

H7291

H6862

H3808

H5715

תְּנִינִתִי:

yet do I not decline

H5186

## Additional Cross-References

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**Psalms 119:51** (Parallel theme): The proud have had me greatly in derision: yet have I not declined from thy law.

**1 Corinthians 15:58** (Parallel theme): Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

**Isaiah 42:4** (Parallel theme): He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law.

**Job 17:9** (Parallel theme): The righteous also shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger.

**Job 23:11** (Parallel theme): My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept, and not declined.

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