

# Psalm 119:85

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The proud have digged pits for me, which are not after thy law.

## Analysis

**Enemies of the Righteous:** The Hebrew word זָדִים (zedim, "proud") appears frequently in Psalm 119 (verses 21, 51, 69, 78, 85, 122), referring to those who arrogantly reject God's law. These are not merely self-confident people but those who presumptuously oppose God and His faithful followers. **Hunting Metaphor:** The phrase "have digged pits for me" (Hebrew, קָרְעָלִי שִׁיחֹת, karu-li shichot) uses imagery of hunters digging concealed traps for animals, suggesting premeditated malice and deception.

The contrast "which are not after thy law" (Hebrew, אֲשֶׁר לֹא כִּתְוָתָךְ, asher lo khetoratekha) indicates these enemies operate outside God's moral order. **Psalm 119 Context:** This verse is part of the eleventh stanza (verses 81-88), which emphasizes the psalmist's faithfulness despite severe persecution. **Theological Theme:** The psalmist's confidence rests not in his own ability to avoid traps but in God's law as protection and guidance.

## Historical Context

**Psalm 119 Composition:** While authorship and date are debated, many scholars attribute this psalm to David or place it in the post-exilic period. The elaborate acrostic structure (each eight-verse stanza begins with successive Hebrew letters) suggests careful composition during a time when meditation on Torah was central to Jewish piety.

**Ancient Hunting Practices:** Pit traps were common hunting methods in the ancient Near East. Hunters would dig deep holes, cover them with branches and leaves, and wait for unsuspecting prey to fall in. This imagery would have been immediately understood by ancient readers as depicting deadly, concealed danger. The metaphor appears elsewhere in Scripture (Psalms 7:15, 9:15, 57:6, Proverbs 26:27), always depicting the wicked's schemes against the righteous.

## Related Passages

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

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

## Study Questions

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1. Who are "the proud" in Psalm 119, and what characterizes their opposition to God's law and God's people?
2. What does the metaphor of digging pits reveal about the nature of opposition faced by faithful believers?
3. How does the psalmist's focus on God's law provide protection against the schemes of the proud?
4. What is the significance of the contrast between the proud's methods (not after thy law) and the psalmist's commitment to God's word?
5. How can modern believers apply this psalm's wisdom about facing opposition from those who reject God's standards?

## Interlinear Text

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ל א אֲשֶׁר שִׁיחַ וְתִזְעַד יְמֵנָה כְּרוֹת  
have digged The proud pits  
H3738 H2086 H7882 H834 H3808

כַּתְבָּה:

for me which are not after thy law

H8451

## Additional Cross-References

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**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.

**Proverbs 16:27** (Parallel theme): An ungodly man diggeth up evil: and in his lips there is as a burning fire.

**Jeremiah 18:20** (Parallel theme): Shall evil be recompensed for good? for they have digged a pit for my soul. Remember that I stood before thee to speak good for them, and to turn away thy wrath from them.

**Psalms 7:15** (Parallel theme): He made a pit, and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch which he made.

**Psalms 119:78** (Parallel theme): Let the proud be ashamed; for they dealt perversely with me without a cause: but I will meditate in thy precepts.

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