

Psalms 37:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The wicked have drawn out the sword, and have bent their bow, to cast down the poor and needy, and to slay such as be of upright conversation.

Analysis

The weapons—sword and bow—represent both close combat and distance attack, indicating comprehensive assault. The targets—'poor and needy' and 'upright'—are vulnerable and righteous, those most deserving protection yet most often victimized. 'Cast down' and 'slay' reveal murderous intent. This verse exposes the wicked's cowardice: rather than confronting equals, they attack the defenseless. Yet verse 15 will reverse this, showing divine justice ensures the oppressor's weapons become instruments of self-destruction.

Historical Context

Swords and bows were primary ancient weapons. The poor and needy lacked resources for defense, making them easy targets for exploitation and violence by the powerful.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How are you called to defend the 'poor and needy' against those who would exploit them?
2. When has your uprightness made you a target for the wicked?

Interlinear Text

חֶרֶב רַבָּן	פָּתַח וְ	רָשָׁעִים	וְדָרְכָּו	קִשְׁתָּם	לְהַפִּיל
the sword	have drawn out	The wicked	and have bent	their bow	to cast down
H2719	H6605	H7563	H1869	H7198	H5307
עֲנִי	וְאֶבְיֹן	לְטַבּ וְ	יֹשְׁרֵי	דִּבְרֵי	
the poor	and needy	and to slay	such as be of upright	conversation	
H6041	H34	H2873	H3477	H1870	

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 29:27 (Evil): An unjust man is an abomination to the just: and he that is upright in the way is abomination to the wicked.

Psalms 11:2 (Evil): For, lo, the wicked bend their bow, they make ready their arrow upon the string, that they may privily shoot at the upright in heart.

1 John 3:12 (Evil): Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.