

Psalm 4¹ in the *New English Translation (The NET Bible)* (*bible.org*)

4:1 When I call out, answer me,
O God who vindicates me!²
Though I am hemmed in, you will lead me into a
wide, open place.²
Have mercy on me⁴ and respond to⁵ my prayer!
4:2 You men,⁶ how long will you try to turn my
honor into shame?⁷
How long⁸ will you love what is worthless²
and search for what is deceptive?¹⁰ (Selah)
4:3 Realize that¹¹ the Lord shows his faithful
follower special favor;¹²
the Lord responds¹³ when I cry out to him.

4:4 Tremble with fear and do not sin!¹⁴
Do some soul-searching as you lie in bed, and
repent of your ways!¹⁵ (Selah)
4:5 Offer the prescribed sacrifices¹⁶
and trust in the Lord!¹⁷
4:6 Many say, “Who can show us anything good?”
Smile upon us, Lord!¹⁸
4:7 You make me happier¹⁹
than those who have abundant grain and wine.²⁰
4:8 I will lie down and sleep peacefully,²¹
for you, Lord, make me safe and secure.²²

*“The notes are of three sorts: **sn** = study notes, suitable for laypeople; **tn** = translators’ notes that address exegetical and technical issues of translation; **tc** = text-critical notes, often including some discussion of external and internal evidence.”

¹**sn** *Psalm 4*. The psalmist asks God to hear his prayer, expresses his confidence that the Lord will intervene, and urges his enemies to change their ways and place their trust in God. He concludes with another prayer for divine intervention and again affirms his absolute confidence in God’s protection.

²**tn** *Heb* “God of my vindication.”

³**tn** *Heb* “in distress (or, “a narrow place”) you make (a place) large for me.” The function of the Hebrew perfect verbal form here is uncertain. The translation above assumes that the psalmist is expressing his certitude and confidence that God will intervene. The psalmist is so confident of God’s positive response to his prayer, he can describe God’s deliverance as if it had already happened. Such confidence is consistent with the mood of the psalm (vv. 3, 8). Another option is to take the perfects as precative, expressing a wish or request (“lead me”). See *IBHS* 494-95. However, not all grammarians are convinced that the perfect is used as a precative in biblical Hebrew.

⁴**tn** Or “show me favor.”

⁵**tn** *Heb* “hear.”

⁶**tn** *Heb* “sons of man.”

⁷**tn** *Heb* “how long my honor to shame?”

⁸**tn** The interrogative construction *עַד־מָה*, “how long?”, is understood by ellipsis in the second line.

⁹**tn** *Heb* “emptiness.”

¹⁰**tn** *Heb* “a lie.” Some see the metonymic language of v. 2b (“emptiness, lie”) as referring to idols or false gods. However, there is no solid immediate contextual evidence for such an interpretation. It is more likely that the psalmist addresses those who threaten him (see v. 1) and refers in a general way to their sinful lifestyle. (See *TDOT*, 7:121.) The two terms allude to the fact that sinful behavior is ultimately fruitless and self-destructive.

¹¹**tn** *Heb* “and know that.”

¹²**tn** *Heb* “that the Lord sets apart a faithful one for himself.”

The psalmist states a general principle, though the singular form and the parallel line indicate he has himself in mind as the representative faithful follower. A *רֵשִׁיט*, “faithful follower,” is one who does what is right in God’s eyes and remains faithful to God (see Pss 12:1; 18:25; 31:23; 37:28; 86:2; 97:10).

¹³**tn** *Heb* “hears.”

¹⁴**sn** The psalmist warns his enemies that they need to *tremble with fear* before God and repudiate their sinful ways.

¹⁵**tn** *Heb* “say in your heart(s) on your bed(s) and wail/lament.”

The verb *נָחַם* is understood as a form of *נָחַם*, “wail, lament” (see KB, 226) in sorrow and repentance. Another option is to take the verb from *נָחַם*, “be quiet” (see BDB, 198), in which case one might translate, “Do some quiet soul-searching as you lie in bed.”

¹⁶**tn** Or “proper, right.” The phrase also occurs in Deut 33:19 and Ps 51:19.

¹⁷**sn** *Trust in the Lord*. The psalmist urges his enemies to make peace with God and become his followers.

¹⁸**tn** *Heb* “lift up upon us the light of your face, Lord.” The verb *נָסָה* is apparently an alternate form of *נָשָׂא*, “lift up.” See GKC, 217, para 76b. The idiom “light of your face” probably refers to a smile (see Eccl 8:1), which in turn suggests favor and blessing (see Num 6:25; Pss 31:16; 44:3; 67:1; 80:3, 7, 19; 89:15; Dan 9:17).

sn *Smile upon us*. Though many are discouraged, the psalmist asks the Lord to intervene and transform the situation.

¹⁹**tn** *Heb* “you place joy in my heart.” Another option is to understand the perfect verbal form as indicating certitude, “you will make me happier.”

²⁰**tn** *Heb* “from (i.e., more than) the time (when) their grain and their wine are abundant.”

²¹**tn** *Heb* “in peace at the same time I will lie down and sleep.”

²²**tn** *Heb* “for you, Lord, solitarily, securely make me dwell.” The translation understands *לְבַדְךָ* as modifying the verb; the Lord keeps enemies away from the psalmist so that he is safe and secure. Another option is to take *לְבַדְךָ* with what precedes and translate, “you alone, Lord, make me secure.”