
Psalm 55

Psalm 55:1–23

David is Betrayed by Friends

These studies are designed for believers in Jesus Christ only. If you have exercised faith in Christ, then you are in the right place. If you have not, then you need to heed the words of our Lord, Who said, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten [or, uniquely-born] Son, so that every [one] believing [or, trusting] in Him shall not perish, but shall be have eternal life! For God did not send His Son into the world so that He should judge the world, but so that the world shall be saved through Him. The one believing [or, trusting] in Him is not judged, but the one not believing has already been judged, because he has not believed in the Name of the only-begotten [or, uniquely-born] Son of God.” (John 3:16–18). “I am the Way and the Truth and the Life! No one comes to the Father except through [or, by means of] Me!” (John 14:6).

Every study of the Word of God ought to be preceded by a naming of your sins to God. This restores you to fellowship with God (1John 1:8–10). If there are people around, you would name these sins silently. If there is no one around, then it does not matter if you name them silently or whether you speak aloud.

These exegetical studies are *not* designed for you to read each and every word. For instance, the Hebrew exegesis is put into greyish tables, so that if you want to skip over them, that is fine. If you question a translation, you can always refer back to the appropriate Hebrew tables to sort it all out.

The intent is to make this particular study the most complete and most accurate examination of 2Samuel 15 which is available in writing. The idea is to make every phrase, verse and passage understandable; and to make application of all that is studied.

Outline of Chapter 55:

Introduction	An Introduction to Psalm 55
Inscription	Psalm 55 Inscription
vv. 1–3	David Calls Upon God Concerning His Enemy
vv. 4–8	David is Fearful and He Wants To Get Away
vv. 9–11	David Asks God for Help Because There is Lawlessness in the Streets
vv. 12–15	David is Distressed Because His Enemy Was Once a Close Friend
vv. 16–21	David Calls Upon God to Deliver Him From His Duplicitous Enemy
vv. 22–23	David Trusts God With Every Burden and To Take Down His Enemies
Addendum	Psalm 55 Addendum

Charts, Short Doctrines and Maps:

Introduction	The Principals of Psalm 55
Introduction	The Prequel of Psalm 55
Introduction	A Synopsis of Psalm 55
Introduction	Clarke’s Alternative Outline

v.	1	Links to the Doctrine of Prayer
v.	3	The Approach to the Revolution Against David
v.	3	The Lies Spoken and False Charges Made Against Jesus Christ
v.	8	David Thinks Only About Himself
v.	8	The Davidic Covenant
v.	9	Do We Pray for Our Enemies or Against Them?
v.	15	The Abbreviated Doctrine of Sheol
v.	17	The Uses of Sîyach in the Psalms
v.	17	A Summary up to Psalm 55:17
v.	17	Disaster Testing and the Faith Rest Technique by Stan Simonton
v.	17	Fear vs. Faith by Stan Simonton
v.	18	Translating and Explaining Psalm 55:18
v.	18	A Possible Two-fold Explanation of 2Sam. 55:18
v.	21	The Abuse of Words
v.	22	Promises from God and Provisions by God
Addendum		A Complete Translation of Psalm 55
Addendum		The Parallels Found in Psalm 55

Chapter Outline		Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines
Forward	Doctrines Covered and Alluded to	Chapters of the Bible Alluded To
Psalms Appropriately Exegeted with this Chapter	Other Chapters of the Bible Appropriately Exegeted with this Chapter	Definition of Terms
Introduction	Text	Addendum
www.kukis.org		Exegetical Studies in the Psalms

Pre-Introduction Links			
Doctrines Covered and Alluded To	Chapters of the Bible Alluded To or Psalms Appropriately Exegeted with this Chapter		Definition of Terms
Doctrines Covered	Doctrines Alluded To		
Sheol		Evil	
	Imprecatory Psalms	Interlocking Systems of Arrogance	Laws of Divine Establishment
	Movement of the Ark and of the Tent of God	Revolution	Sexual Arrogance Gate
Chapters of the Bible Alluded To			
Genesis 6	2Sam. 7	Psalm 89	
Psalms Appropriately Exegeted with this Chapter			

	Psalm 41		
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Other Chapters of the Bible Appropriately Exegeted with this Chapter			
2Samuel 14	2Samuel 15		

Many who read and study this chapter are 1st or 2nd generation students of R. B. Thieme, Jr., so that much of this vocabulary is second nature. One of Bob's contributions to theology is a fresh vocabulary along with a number of concepts which are theologically new or reworked, yet still orthodox. Therefore, if you are unfamiliar with his work, the definitions below will help you to fully understand all that is being said. In addition to this, I will use a number of other more traditional technical theological terms which will be used and therefore defined as well.

Definition of Terms	
Client Nation	Client-Nation, is a national entity in which a certain number of spiritually mature Christians (the salt of the earth) have formed a pivot sufficient to sustain the nation and through which God specifically protects this nation so that believers can fulfill the divine mandates of evangelism, communication and custodianship of Bible doctrine, providing a haven for Jews, and sending missionaries abroad. The United States is a client-nation to God. A client nation must have freedom: Freedom to seek God, freedom to use one's own volition and self-determination to succeed or fail, freedom from anarchy and tyranny, freedom for evangelism, freedom for believers to hear Bible teaching without government interference and, therefore, to grow spiritually, and freedom to send missionaries to other nations.
Cycles of Discipline (Stage of National Discipline)	A national entity which is a client nation to God is under both God's protection and His discipline (much like the individual believer). As a nation moves further and further from God, God may impose disciplinary measures on that nation, which include economic disaster, illness, civil unrest, military defeat, and even invasion which may include a slavery or dispersion of the people. These cycles are found in Lev. 26. Although these warnings are designed for Israel, all client nations to God may face similar downward historical trends.
Doctrinal rationale	A doctrinal rationale is when you take doctrine that is in your soul and you come to a conclusion concerning the circumstances in your life, so that you are able to depend upon God's promised provisions instead of spending time in worry or fear.
Evil	<i>The word "Evil" has a distinct technical and categorical meaning in the Word of God. It is not simply a generic word referring to anything that is bad or sinful. The word "Evil" refers specifically to the policy of Satan as the ruler of this world. Evil is the modus operandi of Satan from the time of his fall throughout the angelic revolution and down to the point when he became the ruler of the world.¹ This definition is probably right out of R. B. Thieme, Jr.'s notes.</i>
Interlocking systems of arrogance	The interlocking systems of arrogance refers to many clusters of sins which have a tendency to interlock with one another. That is, a person may become involved in one cluster of sins, and that will interlock with another cluster of sins, so that he become vulnerable to this other cluster of sins that did not appeal to him in the first place.
Laws of Divine Establishment	These are the laws which cause any nation to prosper and to provide a maximum amount of freedom in that national entity for evangelism and Bible teaching.

¹ From http://www.gracenotes.info/documents/topics_doc/evil.pdf accessed November 13, 2012.

Pivot	Those people in a national entity who are growing spiritually or who have entered into spiritual maturity.
Rebound (Restoration to fellowship with God)	In the New Testament, this is naming your sins to God, so that you are both restored to temporal fellowship with God and are then filled with the Spirit of God. In the Old Testament, naming your sins to God would result in a restoration of fellowship and, in some cases, the empowerment of the Holy Spirit once again (the Holy Spirit was not given to all Old Testament believers).
Fifth Cycle of Discipline (the 5th Stage of National Discipline)	The fifth cycle of discipline involves complete loss of personal and national sovereignty, the destruction of the family and the nation. Offerings to God are unacceptable. Nations which have undergone this destruction have experienced slavery, cannibalism, and the assimilation of its surviving citizens into other cultures.
Sin unto death	When a believer stays out of fellowship for an extended period of time and consistently acts against the plan of God, God may remove him from this life painfully using discipline that will result in his death.

Some of these definitions are taken from

http://gracebiblechurchwichita.org/?page_id=1556

<http://www.bibledoctrinechurch.org/?subpages/GLOSSARY.shtml>

<http://rickhughesministries.org/content/Biblical-Terms.pdf>

<http://www.realtime.net/~wdoud/topics.html>

<http://www.wordoftruthministries.org/termsanddefs.htm>

<http://www.theopedia.com/>

<http://www.gbible.org/index.php?proc=d4d>

An Introduction to Psalm 55

Introduction: Psalm 55 is written by David about being betrayed by a friend. Although we place this along side Psalm 41 for the Absalom revolution, who allied himself with Ahithophel; there is actually nothing in this context which undeniable points to that period of time. However, it is the closest narrative which would seem to fit this psalm, and this is where most expositors² place it. Furthermore, the friend who has betrayed David in this psalm lives in the same city with him and the walls of a city are mentioned. Both of these things suggest that we are speaking of Jerusalem.

Others have associated this psalm with the period of time when King Saul was chasing David, which would have had to have been early on for David to have been upset by it (however, it is possible that this psalm simply takes in a long period of time of Saul's constant search and destroy missions which he ran against David). The problem with this approach is, the person of this psalm is said to be a close friend of David's who has turned against him. Saul has a rocky relationship with David from the beginning going back to 1Sam. 17. Secondly, David's friend who betrayed him is said in this psalm to go with the House of God together. That would seem like an unlikely destination for David and Saul together; and the Tabernacle was not in Jerusalem during that time period. David did move the Ark of God into Jerusalem eventually—decades after Saul died—and David built a tent of sorts for the Ark (and this could have been the place of worship). Although one could possibly answer these objections, there does not appear to be anything which closely associates Saul with this psalm.

Barnes writes: *The occasion on which the psalm was composed is not indicated in the title, nor can it be with certainty ascertained. The author of the Chaldee Paraphrase refers the psalm to the time*

² Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Psalm 55 introduction. Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *A Treasury of David*; e-Sword, Psalm 55 introduction.

of Absalom and to his rebellion, and this is also the opinion of the Jewish expositors in general. They suppose that the psalm was composed on occasion of the departure of David from Jerusalem, when he had heard of the rebellion, and that the psalm has special reference to the time when, having fled from the city, and having come to the ascent of the Mount of Olives, while all was consternation around him, he learned that Ahithophel also was among the conspirators, which was the consummation of his calamity (2Sam. 15:31). Others suppose that the psalm was composed when David was in Keilah, and when, surrounded by foes, he was apprehensive that the inhabitants of that place would deliver him into the hand of Saul (1Sam. 23:1–12). Of all the known events in the life of David, the supposition which regards the psalm as composed during the rebellion of Absalom, and at the special time when he learned that the man whom he had trusted - Ahithophel - was among the traitors, is the most probable. All the circumstances in the psalm agree with his condition at that time.³

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown: *The tone [of Psalm 55] suits David's experience, both in the times of Saul and Absalom, though perhaps neither was exclusively before his mind.*⁴ And there are verses in this psalm which do not apply to Saul whatsoever.

The NIV Study Bible gives a nice summation of this psalm: *A prayer for God's help when threatened by a powerful conspiracy in Jerusalem under the leadership of a former friend. The situation describes is like that of Absalom's conspiracy against the king (see 2Sam. 15–17). The city is in turmoil; danger is everywhere; there is uncertainty as to who can be trusted; rumors, false reports and slander are circulating freely. Under such circumstances, David longs for a quiet retreat to escape it all (vv. 6–8). That being out of the question, he casts his cares on the Lord, whom he knows he can trust. In its structure, the prayer is framed by a pleas for help (v. 1) and a simple confession of faith: "I trust in You" (v. 23).*⁵ David's escape from all of this intrigue will be casting his burdens upon the Lord, so in the midst of everything that is going on, David will have inner peace (which he clearly does not start out with).

We do not have to necessarily tie this directly to a specific set of historic incidents in order to understand the sort of thing that David is enduring in this psalm. However, since there are so many parallels to what David says and the Absalom revolution, I will proceed throughout most of this psalm as if that is the basis for this psalm.

Psalm 55 is one of David's imprecatory psalms, which is a psalm where he prays against his enemies and asks for God to defeat them. There will be an ultimate end to the enemies of God. Therefore, it is important that we speak to the **dichotomy** of praying for our enemies and praying against them as well.

Theopedia lists⁶ the imprecatory psalms as follows: Psalms 7, 35, 55, 58, 59, 69, 79, 109, 137 and 139. John Piper⁷ is more specific: Psalm 5:10 10:15 28:4 31:17-18 35:4-6 40:14-15 58:6-11 69:22-28 109:6-15 139:19-22 140:9-10.

Matthew Henry suggests that David's difficulties here are typical of Christ's sufferings.⁸ Although I did not see that on the first read-through, I will keep my eyes open for it as I examine this chapter in its revision.⁹ Certainly there is the parallel of the betrayal of a close associate (vv. 12–14) to the betrayal of Judas. However, there is the immediate problem of David being the Christ-figure type, as he prays for the defeat and destruction of his enemies

³ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 55 introduction.

⁴ Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; 1871; from e-sword, Psalm 55:1.

⁵ *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 834 (footnote).

⁶ From http://www.theopedia.com/Imprecatory_Psalms accessed November 8, 2012.

⁷ From <http://www.desiringgod.org/resource-library/taste-see-articles/do-i-not-hate-those-who-hate-you-o-lord> accessed November 8, 2012.

⁸ Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 55 introduction.

⁹ I work through this chapter 3–4 times before posting the completed version online.

in this psalm (vv. 9, 15,23), which is hardly typical of our Lord. However, in the alternative, those who reject the Lord will be under eternal discipline.

In summarizing this psalm and in going through it, it appears to be rather disjointed. However, when organized in a slightly different fashion, matching the beginning of the psalm with the end of the psalm, it seems to flow, having still a reasonable beginning and a reasonable ending. One thing which is often true of the Davidic psalms is, their **structure** can be quite complex.

We need to know who the people are who populate this chapter.

The Principals of Psalm 55

Characters	Commentary
David	David is the writer of this psalm and the man who was betrayed by his friend.
Absalom	Absalom is the son of David who has led a rebellion against David, after they had reconciled and apparently had become closer.
Ahithophel	Ahithophel is Bathsheba's grandfather who is seen by David as being a real threat to him as an ally of Absalom.
Amasa	Also a former soldier of David's, who is now with Absalom.

The latter 3 men are never mentioned specifically in this psalm nor is there irrefutable Scriptural evidence which ties any one of them to this psalm. Absalom or Ahithophel are likely the ones whom David saw as close, but then betrayed him.

Again, we do not have to necessarily associate this psalm with specific men in order for us to learn from it.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

It is important to understand what has gone before.

The Prequel of Psalm 55

A great deal of the Davidic narrative is related to his illicit relationship with Bathsheba, as are many of the psalms. We can pinpoint this psalm, but based upon some assumptions. If you will recall, King David took time while his army was at war to chase skirt in Jerusalem. He saw from his house roof a naked Bathsheba bathing and desired her, despite the fact that she turned out to be married to one of his soldiers (Uriah the Hittite). When she became pregnant and David was unable to manipulate this soldier, David had the man killed. **2Samuel 11** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)).

Nathan spoke to David and David condemned himself by means of a parable. Part of his discipline was to include unrest in his home, which began with one son, Amnon, raping his half-sister, Tamar. Since David did not punish Amnon, Absalom, Tamar's full-brother, killed Amnon, and then left the country for a few years. **2Samuel 12** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) **2Samuel 13** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)).

Joab, David's general, finally got David to bring Absalom back to Jerusalem, after several years; and David agreed to that, but he did not agree to see Absalom. Absalom then burned Joab's field, and Joab went to David, and David finally agreed to see Absalom, where they reconciled. However, it is clear that, during that time, Absalom had become a sophisticated criminal. **2Samuel 14** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

Absalom puts a plan into motion to overthrow David's kingdom. He is not going to wait any longer. Once Absalom puts this plan into motion, David is able to look back at his illness and how he was attended to, and

The Prequel of Psalm 55

he recognized that those who came to see him actually wanted him dead. **2Samuel 15** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

Furthermore, a great tactician, Ahithophel, who David considered a close friend, also went to Absalom's side.

This is nearly identical to the prequel given for **Psalm 41** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

That Absalom and Ahithophel are the men spoken of in this psalm is reasonable conjecture.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

Let's look forward and get an idea as to what we are going to be studying.

A Synopsis of Psalm 55

David begins by making this a very personal psalm, to the point of even revealing mental attitude sins which he ruminated on. He first asks God to listen to him (vv. 1–2a) and then he summarizes his complaints against those who have betrayed him (vv. 2b–3).

Then David admits to the mental attitude sins of fear and sublimation (vv. 4–6); and how he might just get away from it all (vv. 7–8).

David then asks God to destroy his enemies and also to first confuse them, much the way that those on the Tower of Babel were confused (v. 9a). His reason for such a request is the crime and lack of justice in the city of Jerusalem (vv. 9b–11) (which is, incidentally, exactly the opposite of what Absalom had promised).

David then laments that part of his problem is, the man who has turned against him was once his close friend and they even shared spiritual communion (vv. 12–14).

David then prays for their deaths (v. 15).

David then calls for God to rescue him (vv. 16–17a) and then gives assurance that God heard him and answered his prayer (vv. 17b–19a).

David then calls his enemies recalcitrant and phoney (vv. 19b–21).

In the end, David pronounces a doxology, where he knows that he can put his burdens upon the Lord and the Lord will bear them (v. 22); on the other had, God will bring down the wicked (v. 23a) while he trust in God (v. 23b).

This psalm, from the synopsis, and from the corrected translation, seems somewhat scattered to me; and it is possible that I do not recognize the organization of it. I think that we have a parallels between the beginning of the psalm and the end of the psalm (that is, this may be a psalm set up as a chiasmus).

Matching up passages of this psalm going forward with those going backward actually yields an easier psalm to follow which is less disjointed. See [The Parallels Found in Psalm 55](#) at the end of this exegetical study.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

Although this psalm appears to be break in very specific places, Clarke did divide things up differently.

Clarke's Alternative Outline

Scripture	Text/Commentary
Psalm 55:1–5	David, in great danger and distress from the implacable malice of his enemies, calls on God for mercy
Psalm 55:6–8	David wishes he had the wings of a dove, that he might flee away, and be at rest
Psalm 55:9–11	David prays against his enemies, and describes their wickedness
Psalm 55:12–14	David speaks of a false friend, who had been the principal cause of all his distresses
Psalm 55:15	David again prays against his enemies
Psalm 55:16–18	David expresses his confidence in God
Psalm 55:19–21	David gives a farther description of the deceitful friend
Psalm 55:22–23	David encourages himself in the Lord, and foretells the destruction of his foes,

From Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 55 introduction.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

Let me suggest one of the keys to this psalm: David is describing his thinking as he leaves Jerusalem and as he climbs the Mount of Olives. He is suffering from fear and other mental attitude sins. However, David prays and he thinks things through, and he comes to the understanding that God has already answered his prayers; God has already made provision for his difficulties.

Another way of putting this is, this is a **doctrinal rationale** which David develops in his thinking.¹⁰ David takes his circumstances, which are certainly dire, and he considers what he knows about God and God's plan and God's power. God even answers one of David's prayers early on, so that David has confidence in God and God's solutions for all of his problems (David prays for God to frustrate the counsel of Ahithophel, and, when David get to the top of the Mount of Olives, there is Hushai waiting for him). As 1Cor. 10:13 reads (R. B. Thieme, Jr. translation): **Testing has not caught up with you except the human kind; moreover, God is faithful, who will not permit you to be tested beyond your capabilities, but with the testing will also provide a solution.** Prov. 3:5–6 (HCSB): **Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding; think about Him in all your ways, and He will guide you on the right paths.** Prov. 34:19 **Many adversities come to the righteous one [the believer in Jesus Christ], but Y^ehowah delivers him from them all.** David's situation combined with the application of doctrine leads him to this final conclusion: **Cast your burden on the LORD, and He will support you; He will never allow the righteous to be shaken** (Psalm 55:22; HCSB).

Now, go back and understand how David got here. He sinned against God with regards to Bathsheba and her husband Uriah. God first began to discipline David, and then to put pressure on David's life, years afterwards. Now, God is not vindictive; God is not looking to simply crush David for several years. This pressure that David is under is very much of his own making. Absalom is his son and David simply did not raise him right and never took any time to explain justice and the laws of divine establishment to Absalom. So Absalom is now in rebellion against David. God uses this opportunity, these circumstances, and His Word, to mix together for David's benefit. That is, David is not simply under pressure, but God has him under pressure to make a better person out of David. Part of the problem here is the way that he raised Absalom (didn't raise Absalom). How David, instead, chased

¹⁰ Sometimes, the keys to these psalms come to me in a number of different ways. In Berachah Church, Bobby is teaching about logistical grace and using that as a doctrinal rationale. When googling, I come across some lessons put together by Stan Simonton, which are pretty much a rehash of what R. B. Thieme, Jr. taught decades ago, about doctrinal rationales; and it became clear that is what is going on in David's thinking. That is what this psalm is all about.

skirt, and got a bunch of wives and mistresses, and then put them all on welfare. You cannot do that with your children. Society will pay the piper for doing this; and Absalom is what David has unleashed on society.

So, what is going to be the end result of all of this, after David has quashed this rebellion (God helping him)? He is going to raise Solomon as his son; he is going to teach Solomon doctrine. The book of Proverbs is essentially Solomon's notebook from David teaching him. David will apparently be faithful to Bathsheba, as she will have 4 sons in all; but we do not hear of any more sons from any of David's other wives or mistresses.¹¹

So God takes this mess—Absalom out of control and revolting against his own father, taking half of the nation with him—and works this to the benefit of David, of Solomon, of Bathsheba and of the nation Israel.

Application: Have you ever landed yourself into a giant jackpot as a result of a bunch of stupid decisions that you have made? Crazy as it sounds, not only is God able to fix it, but God is able to bring great good out of the mess that you made. Rom. 8:28 (MKJV): **And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.** Now, do you love God? Do you love His Word? David is going to think his way out of this situation; he is going to learn to think like God thinks, and God will take the mess in which David finds himself and resolve it for the good of nearly everyone in Israel (except for the revolutionaries, who chose that evil path).

In this psalm, we will actually look into the mind of David. We will see his fears and apprehension; we will see how he begins by thinking about himself too much. Then we will see how his thinking is turned around by focusing on God and calling upon God to deal with the mess that he made. However, David does not say, "Okay, God, you fix it; I will be sitting over here on this park bench while you take care of everything." He says, instead, "Okay, God, I know that I have made a mess of things; I know that I did a crappy job raising Absalom and now he is leading a revolution against me. Take care of this mess and, in grace, please use me in any way that You can."

Chapter Outline

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

Psalm 55 Inscription

Slavishly literal:

To the preeminent one; a n^egîynâh; a Maskil; to David.

Psalm
55 inscription

Moderately literal:

To the Preeminent One; a song [played on a stringed instrument]; a Maskil [instructive psalm] by David.

For the choir director; for stringed instruments; an instructive psalm, written by David.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Note: I compare the Hebrew text to English translations of the Latin, Syriac and Greek texts, using the Douay-Rheims translation¹²; George Lamsa's translation, and Sir Lancelot Charles Lee Brenton's translation as revised and edited by Paul W. Esposito, respectively. I often update these texts with non-substantive changes (e.g., *you* for *thou*, etc.). I often use the text of the Complete Apostles' Bible instead of Brenton's translation, because it updates the English text.

The Septuagint was the earliest known translation of a book (circa 200 B.C.). Since this translation was made before the textual criticism had been developed into a

¹¹ He will not sleep with any of his mistresses after the Absalom rebellion, which we will find out why in 2Sam. 16.

¹² I have begun to doubt my e-sword Douay-Rheims version, so I now use www.latinvulgate.com.

science and because different books appear to be translated by different men, the Greek translation can sometimes be very uneven.

When there are serious disparities between my translation and Brenton's (or the text of the Complete Apostles' Bible), I look at the Greek text of the Septuagint (the LXX) to see if a substantive difference actually exists (and I reflect these changes in the English rendering of the Greek text). I use the Greek LXX with Strong's numbers and morphology available for e-sword. The only problem with this resource (which is a problem for similar resources) is, there is no way to further explore Greek verbs which are not found in the New Testament. Although I usually quote the Complete Apostles' Bible here, I have begun to make changes in the translation when their translation conflicts with the Greek and note what those changes are.

The Masoretic text is the Hebrew text with all of the vowels (vowel points) inserted (the original Hebrew text lacked vowels). We take the Masoretic text to be the text closest to the original. However, differences between the Masoretic text and the Greek, Latin and Syriac are worth noting and, once in a great while, represent a more accurate text possessed by those other ancient translators.

In general, the Latin text is an outstanding translation from the Hebrew text into Latin and very trustworthy (I say this as a non-Catholic). Unfortunately, I do not read Latin—apart from some very obvious words—so I am dependent upon the English translation of the Latin (principally, the Douay-Rheims translation).

Underlined words indicate differences in the text.

Bracketed portions of the Dead Sea Scrolls are words, letters and phrases lost in the scroll due to various types of damage. Underlined words or phrases are those in the Dead Sea Scrolls but not in the Masoretic text.

Aramaic text not represented in some way in the Hebrew original is signaled by italics. The absence of italics should not be construed to mean that the targum translates literally. Aramaic verbs are translated literally; that is, perfects are generally translated as past tense, imperfects as future or jussive, participles as general present.

Targum (trans. By Cook)
Latin Vulgate
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)
Septuagint (Greek)

[For praise, with the words of a hymn; good teaching composed by David.](#)
[Unto the end, in verses, understanding for David.](#)
[To the preeminent one; a n°gîynâh; a Maskil; to David.](#)
[For the end, among Hymns of instruction by David.](#)

Significant differences:

Although the first phrase in the other ancient languages is questionable, and the second is left out; most of the rest of the inscription is reasonable (as Maskil means *an instructive psalm*).

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V.
Easy English (Pocock)

[\(A special psalm by David for the music leader. Use with stringed instruments.\)](#)
Betraying a Friend
Jesus said to him, "Judas, are you **betraying the Son of man with a kiss?*" (Luke 22:48) ("**Betray**" means "**tell someone's enemies everything about them**".)
[\(This is\) for the music leader.](#)

(He must use) *musical instruments.
(It is) a *maskil for David.

The Message
New Berkeley Version A David psalm.
Prayer Because of a False Friend
For the Chief Musician, on Stringed Instruments. A Meditation of David.

New Life Bible Prayer Of A Man Hurt By A Friend

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible To the director; one of the hymns of contemplation of Asaph.
Beck's American Translation When a Friend Turns Against You
For the choir leader: to be played skillfully on string instruments; by David.

Christian Community Bible **Prayer of the persecuted.** The supremacy of money, violence, luxury, prostitution and the exploitation of people. In the midst of a perverted society, the just feel trapped and threatened. Cast your care upon the Lord..

God's Word™
NIRV For the choir director; on stringed instruments; a maskil by David.
For the director of music. A maskil of David to be played on stringed instruments.

New Simplified Bible ([Psalm of David])
Revised English Bible *For the leader: on stringed instruments: a maskil: for David.*

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear Bible in Basic English To the conductor for instruments. A lesson from David.
Ferar-Fenton Bible **To the chief music-maker, on Neginoth. Maschil. Of David.**
To his bandmaster.
A Reflective Psalm by David.

Judaica Press Complete T. For the conductor, on neginoth, a maskil of David.
New Advent Bible *Unto the end, in verses, understanding for David.*
NET Bible® **Psalm 55** The suffering and oppressed author laments that one of his friends has betrayed him, but he is confident that God will vindicate him by punishing his deceitful enemies.
For the music director, to be accompanied by stringed instruments; a well-written song [The meaning of the Hebrew term מִשְׁכֵּל (maskil) is uncertain. See the note on the phrase "well-written song" in the superscription of Psalm 52.] by David.
When it comes to making an actual material change to the text, the NET Bible® is pretty good about indicating this. Since most of these corrections will be clear in the more literal translations below and within the Hebrew exegesis itself, I will not continue to list every NET Bible® footnote.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

The Amplified Bible **To the Chief Musician; with stringed instruments. A skillful song, or a didactic or reflective poem, of David.**

Concordant Literal Version Contemplating, Davidic.
Emphasized Bible For the end, among Hymns of instruction by David.

English Standard Version **Cast Your Burden on the Lord**
To the choirmaster: with stringed instruments. A Maskil of David.

exeGesés companion Bible **To His Eminence; On Strummer; A Discerning: By David.**

LTHB *To the Chief Musician on Neginoth. A Contemplation. A Psalm of David.*
Modern KJV *To the Chief Musician. For stringed instruments. A contemplation. A Psalm of David.*
NASB **Prayer for the Destruction of the Treacherous.**

For the choir director; on stringed instruments. A Maskil [Possibly Contemplative, or Didactic, or Skillful Psalm] **of David.**
 New King James Version **Trust in God Concerning the Treachery of Friends To the Chief Musician. With stringed instruments [Hebrew neginoth]. A Contemplation [Hebrew Maschil] of David.**
 Syndein/Thieme {David's Prayer Against Revolution/Conspiracy} {Title} **To the 'chief musician'/director or music' {natsach} Machil/Maskiyl . . . a taunting song {n@giy nah} {A Psalm/mizmowr of} David.**
 A Voice in the Wilderness *Young's Literal Translation* **[To the chief Musician. Neginoth. Maschil. A Psalm of David.] To the Overseer with stringed instruments. —An instruction, by David.**

The gist of this verse: This appears to be an instructive Davidic psalm that is to be played on stringed instruments.

Psalm 55 inscription a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^o]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
nâtsach (נָצַח) [pronounced naw-TZAHKH]	<i>to oversee, to supervise to be; preeminent, to be enduring; the Preeminent One</i>	Piel participle with the definite article	Strong's #5329 BDB #663

The Piel participle of nâtsach is given a wide variety of renderings: *overseer* (Young), *the music leader* (CEV), *choir director* (NASB, NLT), *choirmaster* (Owens), *leader* (NRSV, NEB, NAB) and *chief musician* (Rotherham).

Translation: **To the Preeminent One;**... As we have seen with the numerous translations above, no one is clear as to who this person is. This psalm could be dedicated to God, which is essentially how I have translated it; however, it could be designed to be conducted by the chief musician, which is how Rotherham understands it. Most translators assume that this is given over to the choir director or the conductor or the one in charge of those who sang.

We find this word as a Piel infinitive in 1Chron. 15:21 23:4 2Chron. 34:12 Ezra 3:8–9. 1Chron. 23:4 indicates that this does not have to be a supervisory position, as it reads: **Of these [38,000 Levites], 24,000 were to oversee the work of the house of Yahweh; and 6000 were officers and judges.** Quite obviously, you cannot have 24,000 chiefs and no Indians, these were all of the Levites assigned to work on the Temple (Ezra 3:8–9 finds this word used in this same way). However, the supervisory nature of this word seems to be clear in 1Chron. 15:21 2Chron. 34:12.

Unfortunately, the exact meaning of the lâmed preposition is also hard to determine. We find several psalms which are ascribed to David written *to David*; but the idea is, the psalm *belongs to David*. The lâmed preposition is used more often when something is given *to* someone else or something is *for* someone else, the chief meanings of the lâmed preposition. Despite the use of the lâmed preposition with David throughout the book of Psalms, I have taken this to me that this psalm is written *for* whomever this Preeminent person is.

Barnes comments on this portion of the inscription: *This phrase in the title, "To the chief Musician," occurs at the beginning of 53 psalms, and at the close of the hymn in Habak. 3:19. It is uniformly rendered "to the chief Musician," and means that the psalm was intended for him, or was to be given to him, probably to regulate the manner of performing it. In no one instance does the title imply that he was the author. The word rendered "Chief Musician" is derived from [a Hebrew word] properly meaning "to shine," but not used in the Qal. In the Piel form it means to be conspicuous; to be over*

anything; to be chief; to be superintendent (2Chron. 2:2, 18 34:12) and then it means to lead in music. The meaning of the form used here, and in the other places where it occurs as a title to a psalm, is “Chief Musician,” or precentor; and the idea is, that the psalm is to be performed under his direction; or that the music is to be directed and adapted by him.¹³

Even though we have the same preposition used here as we find used with *David*, when he is the author, the many times that this phrase is found in combination with the author’s name suggests more that there is a musical organization and that this song was delivered over to the Choirmaster (or conductor) of that organization to be sung and performed at various functions.

The NIV Study Bible has its opinion on this matter: *[For the director of music is] probably a liturgical notation, indicating either that the psalm was to be added to the collection of works to be used by the director of music in Israel’s worship services, or that when the psalm was used in the temple worship, it was to be spoke [or, sung?] by the leader of the Levitical choir—or by the choir itself (see 1Chron. 23:4–5, 30 [Of the overseers over the works of the house of the Lord there were twenty-four thousand, and there were six thousand scribes and judges; and four thousand gatekeepers, and four thousand to praise the Lord with instruments which he made to praise the Lord...to stand in the morning to praise and give thanks to the Lord, and so in the evening] 25 [assignments are given to the sons of Korah, among others]). In this liturgical activity the Levites functioned as representatives of the worshiping congregation. Following their lead the people probably responded with “Amen” and “Praise the LORD” (Hallelujah); see 1Chron. 16:36 Neh. 5:13; compare 1Cor. 14:16 Rev. 5:14 7:12 19:4.*¹⁴

Psalm 55 inscription b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s Numbers
b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong’s # BDB #88
n ^e gîynâh (הַיְנִינָה) [pronounced n ^e gee- NAW]	<i>music from stringed instruments; a stringed instrument; a song or psalm [especially arranged for stringed instruments]; a song of derision</i>	feminine plural noun	Strong’s #5058 BDB #618

Translation: ...a song [played on a stringed instrument]... N^egîynâh is found in Job 30:9 in the titles of Psalms 4, 6, 54, 55, 61, 67, 76 Psalm 69:12 77:6 Isa. 38:20 Lam. 3:14 5:14 Habak. 3:19. In every case, the word is associated with a psalm or Hebrew poetry. The verb that this word is based upon—nâgan (נָגַן) [pronounced naw-GAHN]—means *to touch the strings, to play a stringed instrument*. This is a word we have already come upon in 1Sam. 16:16 18:10 19:9 Strong’s #5059 BDB #618. Since n^egîynâh is based upon nâgan, we can reasonably assume that it is related to music, and more specifically to stringed instruments.

In Job 30:8–9, n^egîynâh appears to be a song of derision, as Job tells his friends how embarrassed he is to have become the *taunt* of fools as well as a byword for them. This appears to have a similar usage in Psalm 69:12 Lam. 3:14. However, there seems to be no such connotation of derision in the inscriptions of the other psalms or in Psalm 77:6 Isa. 38:20 Lam 5:14 Habak. 3:19 (therefore, this connotation is more of the exception than the

¹³ Albert Barnes, *Barnes’ Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 4 introduction.

¹⁴ *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 782 (footnote). Text slightly edited and some of the passages were included as well.

rule).¹⁵ Our most reasonable guess is, this is a song played on a stringed instrument or arranged for a stringed instrument.

Psalm 55 inscription c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
mas ^e kîyl (מַשְׁכִּיל) [pronounced mahs ^e -KEEL]	<i>an instructive psalm; a contemplative poem; transliterated maskil</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #4905 BDB #968

Gesenius lists this as the Hiphil participle of sâkal (שָׁקַל) [pronounced saw-KAHL], which means (in the Hiphil) *to look at, to attend to, to turn the mind to; to be understanding, to become understanding, to be prudent; to be successful, to act prosperously; to make prudent, to teach*. In any case, mas^ekîyl comes from sâkal. Strong's #7919 BDB #968.

Translation: ...a Maskil [instructive psalm]... Although many good translations tend to transliterate this as *maskil*, I think that we can safely refer to this as an *instructive psalm*, given that there is no question about this words ties to the Hiphil (causal stem) of sâkal, which means *to instruct, to make prudent, to teach*. We find this used in the titles of Psalms 32, 42, 44, 45, 52–55, 74, 78, 88, 89, and 142. David is specifically mentioned in half of those psalms, with the following exceptions: no one is listed as the author for Psalms 42 44 45; Asaph is named as the writer of Psalms 74 78, Heman for Psalm 88 and Ethan for Psalm 89. After we cover a few more of these instructive psalms of David, then we will look at them as a whole.

Of this title being a Maskil, Spurgeon writes: *This is most fitly called a Maschil, for it is most instructive. No subject is more important or is so fully the key to all theology as that of the covenant. He who is taught by the Holy Spirit to be clear upon the covenant of grace will be a scribe well instructed in the things of the kingdom; he whose doctrinal theory is a mingle-mangle of works and grace is scarcely fit to be teacher of babes.*¹⁶

Psalm 55 inscription d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to; belonging to; by</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
Dâvid (דָּוִד); also Dâvîyd (דָּוִיִּד) [pronounced daw-VEED]	<i>beloved and is transliterated David</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #1732 BDB #187

Translation: ...by David. David is listed as the human author; God the Holy Spirit is the Divine Author of this psalm.

¹⁵ Also, there is another similar word, based upon the same verb, which is used in a derisive, mocking way. Strong's #4485 BDB #618.

¹⁶ Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *A Treasury of David*; e-Sword, Psalm 89 Introduction.

This is a psalm about betrayal. David's son, Absalom, is leading a revolution against him; and one-time confidant, Ahithophel, will coordinate his military.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

David Calls Upon God Concerning His Enemy

Slavishly literal:

**Give ear, Elohim, [to] my prayer,
and do not hide Yourself from my request.**

Psalm
55:1

Moderately literal:

**Listen, O Elohim, [to] my prayer
and do not hide from [or, *neglect*] my
request.**

Listen, O God, to my prayers and do not withdraw from my personal request to You.

Here is how others have handled this verse:

Ancient texts:

Note: I compare the Hebrew text to English translations of the Latin, Syriac and Greek texts, using the Douay-Rheims translation¹⁷; George Lamsa's translation, and Sir Lancelot Charles Lee Brenton's translation as revised and edited by Paul W. Esposito, respectively. I often update these texts with non-substantive changes (e.g., *you* for *thou*, etc.). I often use the text of the Complete Apostles' Bible instead of Brenton's translation, because it updates the English text.

The Septuagint was the earliest known translation of a book (circa 200 B.C.). Since this translation was made before the textual criticism had been developed into a science and because different books appear to be translated by different men, the Greek translation can sometimes be very uneven.

When there are serious disparities between my translation and Brenton's (or the text of the Complete Apostles' Bible), I look at the Greek text of the Septuagint (the LXX) to see if a substantive difference actually exists (and I reflect these changes in the English rendering of the Greek text). I use the Greek LXX with Strong's numbers and morphology available for e-sword. The only problem with this resource (which is a problem for similar resources) is, there is no way to further explore Greek verbs which are not found in the New Testament.

The Masoretic text is the Hebrew text with all of the vowels (vowel points) inserted (the original Hebrew text lacked vowels). We take the Masoretic text to be the text closest to the original. However, differences between the Masoretic text and the Greek, Latin and Syriac are worth noting and, once in a great while, represent a more accurate text possessed by those other ancient translators.

In general, the Latin text is an outstanding translation from the Hebrew text into Latin and very trustworthy (I say this as a non-Catholic). Unfortunately, I do not read Latin—apart from some very obvious words—so I am dependent upon the English translation of the Latin (principally, the Douay-Rheims translation).

Underlined words indicate differences in the text.

¹⁷ I have begun to doubt my e-sword Douay-Rheims version, so I now use www.latinvulgate.com.

Bracketed portions of the Dead Sea Scrolls are words, letters and phrases lost in the scroll due to various types of damage. Underlined words or phrases are those in the Dead Sea Scrolls but not in the Masoretic text.

Aramaic text not represented in some way in the Hebrew original is signaled by italics. The absence of italics should not be construed to mean that the targum translates literally. Aramaic verbs are translated literally; that is, perfects are generally translated as past tense, imperfects as future or jussive, participles as general present.

Targum (trans. By Cook)	Hear, O God, my prayer, and do not hide yourself from my prayer.
Latin Vulgate	Hear, O God, my prayer, and <u>despise</u> not my supplication.
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	Give ear, Elohim, [to] my prayer, and do not hide Yourself from my request.
Peshitta (Syriac)	GIVE ear to my prayer, O God; and <u>reject</u> not my supplication.
Septuagint (Greek)	Hearken, O God, to my prayer; and <u>disregard</u> not my supplication.
Significant differences:	The second verb had so many different approaches in the English translation from the Latin, Syriac and Greek, that I double-checked it's meaning. BDB and Gesenius give it the sole meaning <i>to hide oneself</i> in the Hithpael.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	God, listen to my prayer; don't avoid my request!.
Contemporary English V. Easy English (Pocock)	Listen, God, to my prayer! Don't reject my request. God, listen to my *prayer. Do not turn away when I cry for *mercy.
Easy-to-Read Version	God, hear my prayer. Please don't ignore my prayer for mercy.
Good News Bible (TEV) <i>The Message</i>	Hear my prayer, O God; don't turn away from my plea! Open your ears, God, to my prayer; don't pretend you don't hear me knocking.
New Berkeley Version	Hear, O God, my prayer; hide not Thyself from my petition.
New Living Translation	Listen to my prayer, O God. Do not hide Yourself from what I ask.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Give ear, O God, to my prayer; do not overlook the things for which I beg.
Christian Community Bible	Listen to my prayer, O God, do not be deaf to my pleading;... Psalm 17:1 86:6
New American Bible	Listen, God, to my prayer; do not hide from my pleading;... Ps 5:2-3; 86:6; 130:1-2; Lam 3:56; Jon 2:3.
NIRV	God, listen to my prayer. Pay attention to my cry for help.
New Simplified Bible	Listen to my prayer, O God. Do not hide from my plea for favor.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear Bible in Basic English	Hearken to my prayer, God: Never evade my supplication! Give hearing to my prayer, O God; and let not your ear be shut against my request.
HCSB	God, listen to my prayer and do not ignore my plea for help.
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	Give ear, O God, to my prayer; do not ignore my plea;... ³ pay attention to me and answer me. A portion of the subsequent verse added for context

New Advent Bible
NET Bible®

Hear, O God, my prayer, and despise not my supplication:...
Listen, O God, to my prayer!

Do not ignore [Heb "hide yourself from."] my appeal for mercy! When it comes to making an actual material change to the text, the NET Bible® is pretty good about indicating this. Since most of these corrections will be clear in the more literal translations below and within the Hebrew exegesis itself, I will not continue to list every NET Bible® footnote.

NIV – UK

Listen to my prayer, O God,
do not ignore my plea;

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Concordant Literal Version

Do give ear, O Elohim, to my prayer, And do not obscure Yourself from my supplication.

English Standard Version
The Geneva Bible

Give ear to my prayer, O God, and hide not yourself from my plea for mercy!
Give ear to my prayer, O God; and hide not thyself from my supplication. The earnestness of his prayer declares the vehemency of his grief in so much as he is compelled to burst out into cries.

LTHB
Syndein/Thieme

Give ear to my prayer, O God; and do not hide Yourself from my cry.
Listen to my prayer, O 'Elohim/God and do not hide Yourself from my supplication. {Note: RBT says that psalms 39,41 and 55 are conspiracy psalms written by David approximately at the time of II Samuel 15:12 - the Absalom revolution.}

World English Bible
Young's Literal Translation

Listen to my prayer, God. Don't hide yourself from my supplication.
Give ear, O God, to my prayer, And hide not from my supplication.

The gist of this verse:

David calls for God to listen to his prayer.

Psalm 55:1a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
'âzan (אָזַן) [pronounced aw-ZAHN]	to broaden out the ear with the hand in order to hear; give ear and answer; to listen and obey; to listen; to weigh	2 nd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperative; with the voluntative hê	Strong's #238 BDB #24
The voluntative is alluded to in Owen's, but I can't find this terminology in any of my Hebrew grammar books, nor in ZPDB or any other Hebrew source whatsoever. This appears to be an umbrella term which includes the jussive (applied to the 3 rd person); the imperative (applied to the 2 nd person) and the cohortative (applied to the 1 st person). What we have here is the letter hê as a suffix to the verb.			
'Ēlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced el-o-HEEM]	God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43
t ^e phillâh (תְּפִלָּה) [pronounced t ^e -phil-LAWH]	prayer, intercession, supplication for any one; prayer or supplication in general; a hymn or inspired song	feminine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #8605 BDB #813

Translation: Listen, O Elohim, [to] my prayer... We are assuming that this is David, on the Mount of Olives, after having left Jerusalem, for fear of Absalom's revolt and the devastation that it would cause. David demands that God listen to his prayer, and in fellowship, we may demand the same thing, no matter how lousy our life has been

and no matter how many mistakes that we have made. We stand on the completed work of Jesus Christ; we do not stand on our own accomplishments; and that give us God's ear. We are sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:26); based upon this, our prayers will be heard.

Psalm 55:1b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
'al (אֵל) [pronounced <i>a</i>]	<i>no, not; nothing; none; neither, nor; do not, let not [with a verb]; let there not be [with an understood verb];</i>	adverb of negation; conjunction of prohibiting, dehorting, deprecating, desire that something <i>not</i> be done	Strong's #408 BDB #39
çâthar (סָתַר) [pronounced <i>saw-THAR</i>]	<i>to hide oneself</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Hithpael imperfect	Strong's #5641 BDB #711
Barnes says ¹⁸ that this means <i>to shut the eyes upon</i> , indicating neglect.			
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>mihn</i>]	<i>from, off, away from, out from, out of, from off; on account of, since, above, than, so that not, beyond, more than, greater than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
t ^e chinnâh (תְּחִינָה) [pronounced <i>t^e-khin-NAW</i>]	<i>grace, supplication for grace; an entreaty, request, petition, or appeal for grace or favor or mercy</i>	feminine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #8467 BDB #337

Translation: ...and do not hide from [or, neglect] my request. David is asking for a clear response from God to his prayer. His prayer is the content of this psalm.

Barnes writes: *[This] language is, of course, figurative, but it illustrates what often occurs when God seems to withdraw himself; when our prayers do not appear to be heard; when God is apparently unwilling to attend to us.*¹⁹

Although Matthew Henry writes²⁰ *Prayer is a salve for every sore and a relief to the spirit under every burden*; it should be noted that, if prayer is the only tool in your tool box, then your spiritual life will be miserable indeed. Without suggesting that anyone cut back on their prayer life, we must have knowledge of the plan of God in order for our prayer life to be effective. Note what David does here, while filled with the Holy Spirit: he orders God to listen to him! This totally outclasses the believer who is not sure if God is hearing him or not; and the believer who thinks that God hears every one of his prayers.

If you are a person who uses tools of any kind, and you carry these tools in a box, then, if you are even moderately adept at your craft, you have more than one tool in your toolbox. A carpenter who only has a hammer in his tool box is great to have around when something needs to be hammered; but he is not much help when crown molding

¹⁸ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 55:1.

¹⁹ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 55:1.

²⁰ Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 55:1–8.

needs to be cut. Furthermore, you need to actually know how to use the tools that you have. Prayer is no good if you do not know how to use it effectively or if you pray for the wrong things.

Prayer is presented in the same way throughout the Bible. When Abraham spoke directly to the Angel of the Lord, and bargained with him about Lot and Sodom (at the end of Gen. 18), he did this believing that (1) God would listen to him; (2) God would be reasonable; and (3) God would act. Our praying today includes these exact same principles, and David praying in 1000 B.C., the exact same principles. If we do not believe these things, then why would we pray?

Since I do not want to reinvent the wheel, this doctrine has already been covered in great detail.

Links to the Doctrine of Prayer

Source	Link
R. B. Thieme, Jr.	http://rbthieme.org/PDF/Prayer.pdf This booklet can also be order for free from R. B. Thieme, Jr. Ministries.
Bible Doctrine Resources	http://gracebiblechurchwichita.org/?page_id=433
Maranatha Church	http://www.versebyverse.org/doctrine/prayer.html
Sword of the Spirit Bible Ministries	http://www.swordofthespiritbibleministries.com/images/simplelists//NOTESMR/Prayer.pdf
Grace Notes	http://www.realtime.net/~wdoud/topics/prayer.html
Dr. Randall E. Radic	http://www.realtime.net/~wdoud/topics/prayerprin.html

A weapon does you no good unless you actually know how to use it.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

This verse reads: Listen, O Elohim, [to] my prayer and do not hide from [or, neglect] my request. Interestingly enough, David gave many intense prayers, and he was very insistent on God listening to and answer these prayers. How long, O LORD? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? (Psalm 13:1). Do not hide your face from me. Do not turn your servant away in anger, O You who have been my Help. Do not cast me aside and do not forsake me, O God of my salvation! (Psalm 27:9). See also Psalm 28:1 80:4 143:7 for a similar approach. When David prayed to God, he expected a response. Since this is the Word of God, we ought to expect a response as well.

**Attend to me and answer me.
I wander about in my concern and I make a commotion...**

Psalm
55:2

**Pay attention to me and answer me.
I wander about [restlessly] in my complaint
[or, concern]
and I make a commotion...**

**Pay attention to me, O God, and answer my prayers.
I wander about restlessly and concerned for my situation;
I am making a commotion...**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum (trans. By Cook)	Hear <i>my utterance</i> , and accept it from me; I will <i>roar out in my words</i> and be agitated.
Latin Vulgate	Be attentive to me and hear me. I am <u>grieved in my exercise</u> ; and <u>am troubled</u> ,...
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	Attend to me and answer me; I wander about in my concern and I make a commotion...
Peshitta (Syriac)	Hear me and answer me; <u>return to my cry</u> and <u>incline to me</u> ,...
Septuagint (Greek)	Attend to me, and hearken to me; I was <u>grieved in my meditation</u> , and <u>troubled</u> ;...

Significant differences: The second half of this verse in the English translation from the Latin, Syriac and Greek seem quite different from the Hebrew. In the Hebrew, the verb means *to wander about*; in the Greek, the verb means *to be grieved*. The following noun in the Hebrew means *complaint; concern, voiced concern; communication, declaration, talk; mediation, study, contemplation*; and the Greek noun appears to mean *chatty, talkative, loquacious*.

The final verb in the Hebrew means *to roar, to make a commotion; to cause a stir, to cause a disturbance*; the Greek verb is not too dramatically different; it means *to agitate, trouble (a thing, by the movement of its parts to and fro); to cause one inward commotion, take away his calmness of mind, disturb his equanimity; to disquiet, make restless; to stir up*.

Since the second to the last set of verbs are so different, this will be noted in the Hebrew exegesis.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	Pay attention! Answer me! I can't sit still while complaining. I'm beside myself...
Contemporary English V. Easy-to-Read Version	Please listen and help me. My thoughts are troubled, and I keep groaning... God, please listen to me and answer me. Let me speak to you and tell you what upsets me.
Good News Bible (TEV) <i>The Message</i>	Listen to me and answer me; I am worn out by my worries. Come close and whisper your answer. I really need you. I shudder...
New Berkeley Version	Observe me and answer me [No one to appeal to except God; fortunately He suffices]. In restlessness I groan and am distracted...
New Century Version	Pay attention to me and answer me. I am troubled and upset...
New Life Bible	Hear me and answer me. My thoughts trouble me and I have no peace,...
New Living Translation	Please listen and answer me, for I am overwhelmed by my troubles.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Please pay attention and listen! I was worried in my meditations; at the voice of my enemy I was disturbed,...
Beck's American Translation	Turn to me and answer me. I am restless and troubled.
Christian Community Bible	...give heed to me and answer me. I am greatly troubled...

God's Word™ New American Bible	Pay attention to me, and answer me. My thoughts are restless, and I am confused... ...hear me and give answer. I rock with grief; I groan...
NIRV	Hear me and answer me. My thoughts upset me. I'm very troubled.
New Jerusalem Bible	...give me a hearing, answer me, my troubles give me no peace. I shudder...
New Simplified Bible	Pay attention to me, and answer me. My thoughts are restless. I am confused and distracted.
Revised English Bible	Hear me and give me an answer, for my cares leave me no peace.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear Bible in Basic English	Listen to me and answer my meditation in my misery... Give thought to me, and let my prayer be answered: I have been made low in sorrow;...
Complete Jewish Bible	Pay attention to me, and answer me! I am panic-stricken as I make my complaint, I shudder...
Ferar-Fenton Bible	Give a hearing unto me, and reply, For I wander reflecting, and moan,...
HCSB	Pay attention to me and answer me. I am restless and in turmoil with my complaint,...
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	...pay heed to me and answer me. I am tossed about, complaining and moaning ⁴ at the clamor of the enemy,... A portion of v. 4 was added for context.
New Advent Bible NET Bible®	Be attentive to me and hear me. I am grieved in my exercise; and am troubled,... Pay attention to me and answer me! I am so upset [Or "restless" (see Gen. 27:40). The Hiphil is intransitive—exhibitive, indicating the outward display of an inner attitude.] and distressed [Heb "in my complaint."], I am beside myself [The verb is a Hiphil cohortative from מוה (hum), which means "to confuse someone" in the Qal and "to go wild" in the Niphal. An Arabic cognate means "to be out of one's senses, to wander about." With the vav (ו) conjunctive prefixed to it, the cohortative probably indicates the result or effect of the preceding main verb. Some prefer to emend the form to הַמוֹהָא (ve'ehomah), a Niphal of מוה (hum), or to הַמְהָא (ve'ehameh), a Qal imperfect from הַמָּה (hamah, "to moan"). Many also prefer to take this verb with what follows (see Psalm 55:3).],...
NIV – UK	...hear me and answer me. My thoughts trouble me and I am distraught...

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

American KJV <i>The Amplified Bible</i>	Attend to me, and hear me: I mourn in my complaint, and make a noise;... Attend to me and answer me; I am restless and distraught in my complaint and must moan...
Concordant Literal Version Darby Translation exeGesés companion Bible	Do attend to me and answer me; I am pressed down by my concern. Attend unto me, and answer me: I wander about in my plaint, and I moan aloud. ...hearken to me and answer; I ramble on in my meditation and quake...
KJV (Scofield) LTHB NASB	Attend unto me, and hear me: I mourn in my complaint, and make a noise;... Pay attention to me, and answer me; I wander and I moan in my complaint, ... Give heed to me and answer me; I am restless in my complaint and am surely distracted [Or I must moan],...
New King James Version	Attend to me, and hear me;

Syndein I am restless in my complaint, and moan noisily,...
 Hear me . . . and answer me. Attend unto me, and hear me. My thoughts trouble me and I am distracted. {Note: Once David heard of the Absalom revolution and how well organized it was, he was under great pressure.}
 A Voice in the Wilderness Give attention to me, and hear me; I am restless in my meditation, and murmur;...
 World English Bible Attend to me, and answer me. I am restless in my complaint, and moan,...
 Young's Literal Translation Attend to me, and answer me, I mourn in my meditation, and make a noise,...

The gist of this verse: David calls for God’s attention and an answer to his prayer; he is upset over what is happening.

Psalm 55:2a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s Numbers
qâshab (קָשַׁב) [pronounced kaw-SHAH ^β V]	<i>incline, attend to, give attention to, be caused to attend to</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperative with the voluntativehê	Strong’s #7181 BDB #904
The voluntative is alluded to in Owen’s, but I can’t find this terminology in any of my Hebrew grammar books, nor in ZPDB or any other Hebrew source whatsoever. This appears to be an umbrella term which includes the jussive (applied to the 3 rd person); the imperative (applied to the 2 nd person) and the cohortative (applied to the 1 st person). What we have here is the letter hê as a suffix to the verb.			
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 1 st person singular suffix	No Strong’s # BDB #510

Translation: *Pay attention to me...* David needs to determine what his next steps will be. He is in the desert with hundreds of people who depend upon him; and he must act in order to insure their safety and to share their concerns. Therefore, he calls upon God; and he asks for God’s attention right away. David sees himself as being in a very difficult circumstance.

Psalm 55:2b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong’s # BDB #251
‘ânâh (אָנָה) [pronounced gaw-NAWH]	<i>to answer, to respond; to speak loudly, to speak up [in a public forum]; to testify; to sing, to chant, to sing responsively</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperative; with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong’s #6030 BDB #772

Translation: *...and answer me.* David demands an answer from God; and this is based upon grace, not upon some great thing that David has done. You will note that David does not say, “Do you remember that whole Goliath thing, God?”

The first half of v. 2 seems to naturally affix itself to v. 1: *Listen, O Elohim, [to] my prayer and do not hide from [or, neglect] my request. Pay attention to me and answer me.* These appear to be parallel statements where David

is demanding God's attention. Furthermore, these statements either belong together in the same verse, or they should be two separate verses with v. 2c actually beginning v. 3.

In fact, in the division of verses, we have several problems. V. 2c–d should begin a new verse and not be connected to v. 2a–b; and v. 3a is actually a part of v. 2d. I realize that you did not follow this. However, the **translation** at the end will properly separate these clauses and verses.

Psalm 55:2c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
rûwd (דור) [pronounced rood]	<i>to wander [about, restlessly], to roam [ramble]; to inquire after, to seek [by running about]; to be restless, to show restlessness</i>	1 st person singular, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #7300 BDB #923
The NET Bible says: Or "restless" (see Gen. 27:40). The Hiphil is intransitive–exhibitive, indicating the outward display of an inner attitude. ²¹ I have not heard of that approach to the Hiphil before.			
According to Barnes, this verb is <i>especially applied to animals who have broken loose</i> . ²² Quite a picture of David leaving Jerusalem and wandering around on the mountain adjacent to Mount Zion.			
The Greek verb is the 1 st person singular, aorist passive indicative of <i>lupeō</i> (λυπέω) [pronounced <i>loo-PEH-oh</i>], which means <i>to make sorrowful; to affect with sadness, cause grief, to throw into sorrow; to grieve, offend; to make one uneasy, cause him a scruple</i> . Strong's #3076.			
b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
sîyach (שׂיח) [pronounced SEE-ahkh]	<i>complaint; concern, voiced concern; communication, declaration, talk; mediation, study, contemplation</i>	masculine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #7879 BDB #967

Although we could probably get away with generally rendering sîyach as a *voiced concern*, even that seems a bit too weak for the passages in Job. My thinking would be that this noun (and verb) went through a transformation over the years. In Job's day, sîyach meant *complaint*; however, this became a vocalized concern and then simply a *communication*. Since *communication* works both ways, this also has a more passive sense, where the person receives the communication; in other words, he *studies* or *meditates*.

Clarke writes: *[This is] a strong guttural sound, expressive of the natural accents of sorrow*.²³

The Greek noun here is not too far different; it **means** *talking, garrulous, chatty, loquacious*. Although that sounds different, it could have a meaning in the Koine Greek closer to our noun.

Translation: ...I wander about [restlessly] in my complaint [or, concern]... David is at the top of the Mount of Olives, looking down to Jerusalem; trying to determine his next move. He is nervous; he has willingly left the capital of Jerusalem. However, he does not have any sort of exact destination because he has no intelligence on

²¹ The Net Bible®; © 1996–2006 by Biblical Studies Press (BSP); taken from e-Sword; also found at <http://www.bible.org/netbible/index.htm>, Psalm 55:2 (footnote).

²² Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 55:2.

²³ Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 55:2.

Absalom's forces. Consequently, he cannot just continue to meander about, as he has hundreds of people depending upon him (2Sam. 15:19–20).

According to Barnes, this verb, *to wander*, is *especially applied to animals who have broken loose*.²⁴ Quite a picture of David leaving Jerusalem and wandering around on the mountain adjacent to Mount Zion. However, what is key is, this describes David's state of mind as well. His restlessness, like an animal which has broken free, is also a description of his state of mind. He was the king; and, a few hours later, his son has been declared king in Hebron. Obviously, this is going to shake up any normal person.

This phrase in the Greek is quite different; it means: *...I am grieved (or, sorrowful) in loquaciousness...* Although that does not make a great deal of sense, that final word (not found in the NT) may *concern, communication, declaration*. The problem is, these words can have slightly different definitions depending upon the type of Greek which is being looked at.

Either understanding seems reasonable to the context; David can be walking about with nervous energy (as per the Hebrew); something which people do when things have gone awry; he can also be grieving over what is going on (as per the Greek). In either case, there is an energy and a concern which is taking place in David's thought process over the situation in which he finds himself.

Psalm 55:2d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
חׁוּמ (חׁוּמ) [pronounced <i>hoom</i>]	<i>to roar, to make a commotion; to cause a stir, to cause a disturbance</i>	1 st person singular, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #1949 BDB #223

Also spelled חׁיַם (חׁיַם) [pronounced *heem*].

The NET Bible says: The verb is a Hiphil cohortative from חׁוּמ (hum), which means "to confuse someone" in the Qal and "to go wild" in the Niphal. An Arabic cognate means "to be out of one's senses, to wander about." With the vav (ו) conjunctive prefixed to it, the cohortative probably indicates the result or effect of the preceding main verb. Some prefer to emend the form to חׁוּמָה (ve'ehomah), a Niphal of חׁוּמ (hum), or to חׁוּמָה (ve'ehameh), a Qal imperfect from חׁמָה (hamah, "to moan"). Many also prefer to take this verb with what follows (see Psalm 55:3).²⁵ In any case, it sounds like there is a lot of emotion associated with this word.

Owen does not list this as a cohortative verb.

This final verb should be affixed to the next phrase in v. 3.

Translation: *...and I make a commotion...* This final phrase belongs with v. 3a; but with all of these people, David is making quite a commotion in his movement out of Jerusalem, despite it all being very organized. After all, a significant force will be moving out of Jerusalem with King David, which will cause quite an uproar. It is sort of like the rapture of the church. David, by his choices of what do to, causes (Hiphil tense) this great uproar or disturbance.

The parallel is, David wants a response from God right away, or a minute ago. So he will make a commotion on the throne of grace, as it were.

²⁴ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 55:2.

²⁵ *The Net Bible*®; © 1996-2006 by Biblical Studies Press (BSP); taken from e-Sword; also found at <http://www.bible.org/netbible/index.htm>, Psalm 55:2 (footnote).

The problem with this final line is, it appears to be connected to the next verse, so fully understanding it is somewhat difficult to do until we get to the next verse. Together, these two pieces of a verse say: **...and I make a commotion on account of the sound of the enemy.** Quite obviously, David is upset over what has happened, and he is making quite a stir over it. What is the sound that he heard? The trumpet sounds throughout the land, and the men in the town squares calling out, **"Absalom is king in Hebron!"** (2Sam. 15:10b).

Externally, he is moving those loyal to him out of Jerusalem, down into the valley and up the Mount of Olives. He does this because of the sound of his enemy, who is Absalom, his son. That sound would be trumpets and men declaring that Absalom is now king in Hebron. Internally, David is stirred up in his soul as well. Obviously, these series of events culminating in Absalom assuming the kingship would cause to dramatically stir up David's soul.

Here is something that you may not get in this final phrase: David causes this stirring up, and it occurs both externally and internally. David does not use the Hithpael stem (the reflexive) nor does he use the Hophal stem (the causative passive). It is through his own volition that his own soul is stirred up and disturbed. In the next few verses, we are going to see that David admits to the mental attitude sin *fear*, which goes hand-in-hand with being stirred up. However, his soul is not caused to be stirred up (Hophil) but he causes his soul to be stirred up (Hiphil).

**...from a voice a an enemy,
from faces of oppression of an unrighteous
[one];
for they shake upon me falsehood [or, iniquity]
and in anger they oppose me.**

Psalm
55:3

**...on account of the sound of the enemy,
[and] because of the pressure of the
malevolent;
for they have caused falsehood to move
against [possibly, to rain down upon] me,
and they oppose me in anger.**

**...from the sound of my enemy,
because of the pressure by the corrupt;
for they have caused lies and falsehoods to rain down upon me
and they oppose me with their anger and mental attitude sins.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Jerusalem targum	From the voice of the enemy, from the trouble of the wicked, for they <i>extend lies</i> against me, and in anger they will <i>hold a grudge</i> towards me.
Latin Vulgate	...at the voice of the enemy, and <u>at the tribulation of the sinner</u> . For they have cast iniquities upon me: and in wrath they were troublesome to me.
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	...from a voice a an enemy, from faces of oppression of an unrighteous [one]; for they <u>shake upon me</u> falsehood [or, iniquity] and in anger they oppose me.
Peshitta (Syriac)	Because of mine enemies, because of the oppression of the wicked; for they have devised iniquity against me, and reproached me.
Septuagint (Greek)	...because of the voice of the enemy, and because of the oppression of the sinner; for they brought iniquity against me, and were wrathfully angry with me.

Significant differences: The English translation of the Syriac does not have *voice* in the first phrase. The second phrase found in the Latin seems to very different from the MT. However, *tribulation* might be a semi-reasonable way to translate *oppression*; and *sinner* can certainly stand in for *unrighteous one*.

In the third phrase, the Hebrew verb seems odd, compared to the other verbs in the other languages.

The final phrase is roughly similar in these translations.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	I'm beside myself ³ over the enemy's noise, at the wicked person's racket, because they bring disaster on me and harass me furiously. A portion of v. 2 has been included.
Contemporary English V.	...because my loud enemies shout and attack. They treat me terribly and hold angry grudges.
Easy English	I am very *unhappy because of what my enemies say. They give me a lot of pain. And they are so angry that they *hate and make trouble for me. The first phrase is v. 2.
Easy-to-Read Version	My enemy said bad things to me. That wicked man yelled at me. My enemies were angry and attacked me. They brought troubles crashing down on top of me.
Good News Bible (TEV)	I am terrified by the threats of my enemies, crushed by the oppression of the wicked. They bring trouble on me; they are angry with me and hate me.
New Berkeley Version	In restlessness I groan and am distracted because of the enemy's noisiness; because of the threatening of the wicked. For they engulf me with their mischief and in anger they assault me. A portion of v. 2 was included for context.
New Century Version	I am troubled and upset ³ by what the enemy says and how the wicked look at me. They bring troubles down on me, and in anger they attack me. A portion of v. 2 included.
New Life Bible	My thoughts trouble me and I have no peace, ³ because of the voice of those who hate me and the power of the sinful. For they bring trouble upon me, and in anger they keep on having bad thoughts against me. A portion of v. 2 included.
New Living Translation	My enemies shout at me, making loud and wicked threats. They bring trouble on me and angrily hunt me down.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	I was worried in my meditations; at the voice of my enemy I was disturbed, ³ and by the oppression of sinners. For, lawlessly they've turned against me, and in anger they've shown their rage. A portion of v. 2 was included.
Beck's American Translation	I am restless and troubled and confused by the shouting of the enemy and the oppression of the wicked. A portion of v. 2 was included for context.
Christian Community Bible	I am greatly troubled ⁴ at the outcry of the enemy and the clamor of the wicked. I am distraught at the way they revile me and persecute me in their fury. A portion of the previous verse is included.

God's Word™	...because my enemy shouts at me and a wicked person persecutes me. They bring misery crashing down on me, and they attack me out of anger.
New American Bible	I rock with grief; I groan ⁴ at the uproar of the enemy, the clamor of the wicked. They heap trouble upon me, savagely accuse me. A portion of the previous verse is included.
NIRV	My thoughts upset me. I'm very troubled. ³ I'm troubled by what my enemies say about me. I'm upset because sinful people stare at me. They cause me all kinds of suffering. When they are angry, they attack me with their words. A portion of v. 2 is included.
New Jerusalem Bible	...at the enemy's shouts, at the outcry of the wicked; they heap up charges against me, in their anger bring hostile accusations against me.
New Simplified Bible	This is because my enemy shouts at me and a wicked person persecutes me. They bring misery crashing down on me, and they attack me out of anger.
Revised English Bible	I am panic-stricken at the hostile shouts, at the shrill clamour of the wicked, for they heap trouble on me and revile me in their fury.
Today's NIV	My thoughts trouble me and I am distraught ³ because of what my enemy is saying, because of the threats of the wicked; for they bring down suffering on me and assail me in their anger. A portion of v. 2 is included.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear	I quake from the voice of the enemy in front of me. The wicked overload me. For they move vice over me, and oppose me with their emotion.
Bible in Basic English	I am troubled because of the voice of the cruel ones, because of the loud cry of the evil-doers; for they put a weight of evil on me, and they are cruel in their hate for me.
Complete Jewish Bible	I am panic-stricken as I make my complaint, I shudder ³ at how the enemy shouts, at how the wicked oppress; for they keep heaping trouble on me and angrily tormenting me. A portion of v. 2 is included.
Ferar-Fenton Bible	At my foe's voice, before and behind, For the wicked throw terror on me; They accuse me with fury and rage,...
HCSB	...because of the enemy's voice, because of the pressure of the wicked. For they bring down disaster on me and harass me in anger.
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	I am tossed about, complaining that moaning at the clamor of the enemy, because of the oppression of the wicked; for they bring evil upon me and furiously harass me. A portion of v. 2 (the first line) is included.
New Advent Bible	I am grieved in my exercise; and am troubled, ⁴ at the voice of the enemy, and at the tribulation of the sinner. For they have cast iniquities upon me: and in wrath they were troublesome to me. A portion of v. 2 is included (which is v. 3 in the Latin).
NET Bible®	...because of what the enemy says [Heb "because of [the] voice of [the] enemy."], and because of how the wicked [The singular forms "enemy" and "wicked" are collective or representative, as the plural verb forms in the second half of the verse indicate.] pressure me [Heb "from before the pressure of the wicked." Some

suggest the meaning "screech" (note the parallel "voice"; cf. NEB "shrill clamour"; NRSV "clamor") for the rare noun הַקָּע ('aqah, "pressure").],
 for they hurl trouble [Heb "wickedness," but here the term refers to the destructive effects of their wicked acts.] down upon me [The verb form in the Masoretic Text (MT) appears to be a Hiphil imperfect from the root מוּט (mot, "to sway"), but the Hiphil occurs only here and in the Kethib (consonantal text) of Psa_140:10, where the form יַמְטֵי (yamter, "let him rain down") should probably be read. Here in Psa_55:3 it is preferable to read וַיִּמְטֵי (yamtiru, "they rain down"). It is odd for "rain down" to be used with an abstract object like "wickedness," but in Job_20:23 God "rains down" anger (unless one emends the text there; see BHS).]
 and angrily attack me.

NIV – UK

My thoughts trouble me and I am distraught

³

because of what my enemy is saying,
 because of the threats of the wicked;

for they bring down suffering on me

and assail me in their anger. A portion of v. 2 is included.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Concordant Literal Version	And I am discomfited by the voice of the enemy, Because of the pressure of the wicked. For they are slipping lawlessness upon me And are assailing me in anger.
A Conservative Version	...because of the voice of the enemy, because of the oppression of the wicked. For they cast iniquity upon me, and in anger they persecute me.
Context Group Version	Because of the voice of the enemy, Because of the oppression of the wicked; For they cast iniquity on me, And in anger they persecute me.
English Standard Version	...because of the noise of the enemy, because of the oppression of the wicked. For they drop trouble upon me, and in anger they bear a grudge against me.
exeGesés companion Bible	...- because of the voice of the enemy at the face of the oppression of the wicked: for they topple mischief on me; in wrath they oppose me.
The Geneva Bible	Because of the voice [For the threatenings of Saul and his adherents.] of the enemy, because of the oppression of the wicked: for they cast iniquity upon me [They have defamed me as a wicked person, or they have imagined my destruction.], and in wrath they hate me.
LTHB	...from the voice of the enemy, from the oppression of the wicked; for they shake trouble over me, and in anger they hate me.
NASB	Because of the voice of the enemy, Because of the pressure of the wicked; For they bring down trouble [Or wickedness] upon me And in anger they bear a grudge against me.
New RSV	I am distraught ³ by the noise of the enemy, because of the clamour of the wicked. For they bring [Cn Compare Gk: Heb they cause to totter] trouble upon me, and in anger they cherish enmity against me. A portion of v. 2 is shown.
Syndein	At the 'voice of the enemy', {this is 'Absalom reigns in Hebron' - see 2Samuel 15:10} by the depression of the lawless one . . . for they bring down suffering on me, and in anger they would trap/destroy me.
World English Bible	Because of the voice of the enemy, Because of the oppression of the wicked. For they bring suffering on me. In anger they hold a grudge against me.
Young's Literal Translation	Because of the voice of an enemy, Because of the oppression of the wicked, For they cause sorrow to move against me, And in anger they hate me.

The gist of this verse:

David's enemies are filled with mental attitude sins against him.

Psalm 55:3a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>mihn</i>]	<i>from, off, away from, out from, out of, from off; on account of, since, above, than, so that not, beyond, more than, greater than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
qôwl (קוֹל) [pronounced <i>kohl</i>]	<i>sound, voice, noise; loud noise, thundering</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #6963 BDB #876
ʾâyab (אֵיבָ) [pronounced <i>aw-YA^BV</i>]	<i>enemy, the one being at enmity with you; enmity, hostility</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #340 & #341 BDB #33

As a singular substantive, this is spelled ʾôyêb (אֵיבָ) [pronounced *oh-YAY^BV*]. As Strong's #340, this is the Qal active participle of the verb; as Strong's #341, this is the substantive. It is precisely the same word, despite the different Strong's #'s.

NET Bible note: *The singular forms "enemy" and "wicked" are collective or representative, as the plural verb forms in the second half of the verse indicate.*²⁶

Translation: ...on account of the sound of the enemy,... Let's connect this to v. 2 in order to have a better feel for what is being said. ...and I make a commotion on account of the sound of the enemy,... This speaks of David moving out, heading northeast from Jerusalem, as his enemy, Absalom, comes from the south into Jerusalem. He hears the trumpets and then he hears about his son Absalom being declared king in Hebron and responds by exiting Jerusalem and then waiting for more intelligence to determine what to do next (2Sam. 15:10, 13–14).

Psalm 55:3b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>mihn</i>]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, beyond, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
pânîym (פְּנֵיַם) [pronounced <i>paw-NEEM</i>]	<i>face, faces, countenance; presence</i>	masculine plural construct (plural acts like English singular)	Strong's #6440 BDB #815
ʾâqâh (אֶקָה) [pronounced <i>gaw-KAW</i>]	<i>oppression; pressure; packed in</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #6125 BDB #734

Together, min pânîym mean *from before the face of; out from before the face, from the presence of*. However, together, they can also be a reference to the cause, whether near or remote, and can therefore be rendered *because of, because that; by*.

²⁶ The Net Bible®; © 1996-2006 by Biblical Studies Press (BSP); taken from e-Sword; also found at <http://www.bible.org/netbible/index.htm>, Psalm 55:3.

Psalm 55:3b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Barnes: <i>The word here rendered "oppression" occurs nowhere else. The verb from which it is derived occurs twice, Amos 2:13 : "Behold, I am "pressed" under you as a cart is "pressed" that is full of sheaves." The idea is that of crushing by a heavy weight; and hence, of crushing by affliction.</i> ²⁷			
rāshā' (רָשָׁע) [pronounced raw-SHAWŶ]	unrighteous; malevolent, lawless, corrupt, wicked (hostile to God); criminal; guilty [of sin] [against God or man]; having an unrighteous cause	masculine singular adjective; can act like a substantive	Strong's #7563 BDB #957
NET Bible note: <i>The singular forms "enemy" and "wicked" are collective or representative, as the plural verb forms in the second half of the verse indicate.</i> ²⁸			

Translation: ...[and] because of the pressure of the malevolent;... Absalom would be the one who is malevolent; the one who is corrupt and wicked. He is hostile to God because he does not want to wait until God removes his man (David) from office. Absalom wants this position of rulership right now. In fact, insofar as we know, Absalom may not even believe in the God of Israel.

The pressure²⁹ which Absalom is exerting on the situation is, he has been declared king in Hebron; and men all over the entirety of Israel have made this war cry, if you will.

So far, this, with a portion of the previous verse, reads: ...and I make a commotion on account of the sound of the enemy, [and] because of the pressure of the malevolent;...

Psalm 55:3c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced kee]	for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
môwt (מוֹט) [pronounced mohŧ]	to cause to be shaken, to cause to be moved, dislodged, thrown into disorder or disarray	3 rd person masculine plural, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #4131 BDB #556
NET Bible note: <i>The verb form in the Masoretic Text (MT) appears to be a Hiphil imperfect from the root מוּט (mot, "to sway"), but the Hiphil occurs only here and in the Kethib (consonantal text) of Psalm 140:10, where the form יַמְטֵי (yamter, "let him rain down") should probably be read. Here in Psalm 55:3 it is preferable to read יַמְטִירוּ (yamtiru, "they rain down"). It is odd for "rain down" to be used with an abstract object like "wickedness," but in Job. 20:23 God "rains down" anger (unless one emends the text there; see BHS).</i> ³⁰			

²⁷ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 55:3.

²⁸ *The Net Bible*®; © 1996-2006 by Biblical Studies Press (BSP); taken from e-Sword; also found at <http://www.bible.org/netbible/index.htm>, Psalm 55:3.

²⁹ See the Hebrew exegesis on this noun.

³⁰ *The Net Bible*®; © 1996-2006 by Biblical Studies Press (BSP); taken from e-Sword; also found at <http://www.bible.org/netbible/index.htm>, Psalm 55:3.

Psalm 55:3c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿal (עַל) [pronounced <i>gahl</i>]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
ʾāven (אָוֵן) [pronounced <i>AW-ven</i>]	<i>iniquity, misfortune which results from iniquity, trouble, adverse circumstances; idolatry; emptiness, vanity, falsehood, fraud</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #205 BDB #19

Translation: ...for they have caused falsehood to move against [possibly, to rain down upon] me,... What Absalom has used is falsehood against David; he has misrepresented who David is to the people of Israel, in order to gain a favorable dispensation from them.

*Barnes: [David] was suffering from slanderous reproaches; from assaults which had been made on his character. He was charged with evil conduct, and the charge was made in such a manner that he could not meet it. The result was, that a series of calamities had come upon him which was quite overwhelming.*³¹

Application: I write this in 2012, after the election, and this is exactly what Barack Obama's team did to Mitt Romney; they caused falsehood and fraudulent assertions to be used against Mitt Romney. Their strategy was to **"Kill Romney,"** meaning that they would attack his character in every way possible. Romney, who had a very nearly perfect background for the presidency (he turned around businesses for a living with an 80% success rate), and a very nearly perfect character, was portrayed as a disconnected, unfeeling corporate raider, who hated dogs and wanted to take away women's access to contraception.

As an aside, the Bible has many modern-day applications. During nearly any election, we could pull out this psalm or the middle-end chapters of 2Samuel and have a great deal which could be applied to that election. I am not shilling for a candidate here, because that election is over; but it is good for an up-to-date illustration. This is exactly how Absalom undermined David's authority as king (2Sam. 15:2–4 Psalm 55:3, 20–21).

David had a less exemplary character than Romney in the realm of marriage and family; and it is very likely that Absalom used this against his father (Absalom clearly used the courts against his father, alleging that they were biased and unresponsive—2Sam. 15:2–4).

As a result, many people hated David, as we will see in 2Sam. 16:5–8. Can you imagine? The greatest ruler of Israel and possibly in world history, and David was hated by many of his subjects.

Application: We have this in the United States; Ronald Reagan was one of the greatest presidents of my generation; and there are millions of people who hate him. Quite a number of liberals have told me how Reagan raised taxes and ran up the deficit; and then they supported a president (Obama) who raised taxes and ran up the deficit. These same people hate Reagan and would destroy him by any means possible if he were alive and running for president today; and yet they spread falsehoods about him, saying that he did the things which they actually favor and vote for.

My point is, a great ruler will be hated; and lies and falsehoods about this man will be liberally spread throughout the land. This is what gives the revolutionaries a pretense against David (and against any establishment ruler).

³¹ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 55:3.

They paint him with a broad brush of lies and deceit. Negative campaigning did not start in 2012; or even in 1800 (**Adams versus Jefferson**). Here, circa 1000 B.C., Absalom is using this approach with great success.

Application: I found this out almost immediately when President Bush (43) was reelected. My inbox began to fill up with tons of anti-Bush propaganda. I recognized it as being slanted and often incorrect, even though I knew almost nothing about politics at the point in my life (except to vote for conservatives). In fact, it was a result of these emails that I began to look into politics more carefully and ended up moving far right.

Application: How do you, as a believer, know that you are voting for the correct candidate/party? If you see ad after ad which attacks the character of the opponent, then you might be better off voting for the person whose character is being assailed. If you see ads which are clearly false (and it is more difficult to determine nowadays, as “**fact check**” sites are often **shills** for this or that party; and spin the facts more artfully even than the ad does), then voting for the other candidate is probably the way to go. If you have on one side a party which sticks to the most important issues and giving their opinions on how to best deal with those issues; and a party which simply attacks its opponents, then you vote for the former, and not the latter.

Psalm 55:3d			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
b ^e (ב) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
’aph (אפ) [pronounced <i>ahf</i>]	<i>nose, nostril, but is also translated face, brow, anger, wrath</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #639 BDB #60
sâṭam (שׂטַם) [pronounced <i>saw-TAHM</i>]	<i>to hate; to oppose; to bear a grudge, to retain [or, cherish] animosity, to be against; to lay snares [for someone], to lay a trap, to follow with hostility</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect; with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #7852 BDB #966

Translation: ...and they oppose me in anger. Absalom leads a revolt against David, and that is a revolt of hatred. Absalom’s campaign is based upon mental attitude sins. He does not look at his father and see areas where David has really fallen down on the job; where David has made it clear that he cannot handle the job of being king; Absalom’s motivation has become hatred and anger. He is motivated by mental attitude sins. He spreads lies and falsehoods about his father in order to gain favor with the people. Or, as Solomon later wrote, **There is no new thing under the sun** (Eccles. 1:9).

The first portion of this psalm reads:

Listen, O Elohim, [to] my prayer
 and do not hide from [or, neglect] my request.
 Pay attention to me and answer me.
 I wander about [restlessly] in my complaint [or, concern]
 and I make a commotion on account of the sound of the enemy,
 [and] because of the pressure of the malevolent;
 for they have caused falsehood to move against [possibly, to rain down upon] me,

and they oppose me in anger.

David, as a believer in the Almighty, demands a hearing from God. This is completely legitimate from any believer under any circumstances (unless he is under the **sin unto death**; and that requires real reform in order to get out from under that).

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

The attack against David is fairly simple, in principle.

The Approach to the Revolution Against David

- 1) Those who are in the wrong put constant pressure upon David and upon his supporters.
- 2) A number of lies are told about David. What we know about is the ineffectiveness and problems with the Davidic judicial system; however, Absalom probably attacked David on several fronts.
- 3) Mental attitude sins are engendered against David. People must not just favor candidate A over candidate B; but they must be made to hate candidate B.
- 4) If possible, get the other candidate on the defensive. The defensive is not a position that moves a candidate forward; it keeps them stuck in place.

Application: I write this in 2012. When in the midst of a small group of Democrats, throw out the name Cheney and see what happens. There will be vicious hatred expressed toward him in this group.³² They will snarl, talk about Cheney and Haliburton, and act as if he has personally harmed one of them.

Application: I already gave the example of a concerted email campaign against George W. Bush in 2005 and before.

One more thing ought to be noted; Absalom's life is centered around politics and power; David's is centered around God. Absalom's supporters follow his lead in this respect; David's supporters follow his lead in this respect.

David appears to have faced similar problems in Psalm 27:11–12 (HCSB) [Because of my adversaries, show me Your way, LORD, and lead me on a level path. Do not give me over to the will of my foes, for false witnesses rise up against me, breathing violence.](#)³³

At this point of David complaining about the lies that were being spoken about him, let us note the lies which were spoken about our Lord:

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

³² A cousin of mine in California just relayed such an incident to me at a family picnic.

³³ R. B. Thieme, Jr. places Psalm 27 in 1Sam. 18.

Satan’s fundamental approach when attacking mankind is through lying. In order to facilitate the death of our Lord on the cross, many lies were told about Jesus. As Paul wrote to the Thessalonians: **You, brothers and sisters, were like the churches of God in Judea that are united with Christ Jesus. You suffered the same persecutions from the people of your own country as those churches did from the Jews who killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets and who have persecuted us severely. They are displeasing to God. They are enemies of the whole human race because they try to keep us from telling people who are not Jewish how they can be saved. The result is that those Jews always commit as many sins as possible. So at last they are receiving God's anger (1Thess. 2:14–16).**³⁴

The motivation: **Jesus later traveled throughout Galilee. He didn't want to travel in Judea because Jews there wanted to kill him (John 7:1; God's Word™). From that day on, the Jewish council planned to kill Jesus. So Jesus no longer walked openly among the Jews. Instead, he left Bethany and went to the countryside near the desert, to a city called Ephraim, where he stayed with his disciples (John 11:53–54; God's Word™). Because they were motivated to kill Jesus, they would say anything to accuse Him. The scribes and the chief priests wanted to arrest him right there, but they were afraid of the people. They knew that he had directed this illustration at them. So they watched for an opportunity to send out some spies. The spies were to act like sincere religious people. They wanted to catch him saying the wrong thing so that they could hand him over to the governor (Luke 20:10–20; God's Word™).**

Jesus said to them, **"If God were your Father, you would love Me, because I came from God and I am here. For I didn't come on My own, but He sent Me. Why don't you understand what I say? Because you cannot listen to My word. You are of your father the Devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning and has not stood in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he tells a lie, he speaks from his own nature, because he is a liar and the father of liars."** (John 8:42–44; HCSB).

The Lies Spoken and False Charges Made Against Jesus Christ

The Lies and Distortions	Text/Commentary
Jesus claimed to be king; which was true.	Although this is technically not a lie, it is a distortion. Jesus’ enemies wanted to expose Him as an enemy of the state, as someone who wanted to usurp Cæsar’s power. Luke 23:2 John 18:33–38
Jesus was possessed by Beelzebub	The scribes who had come from Jerusalem said [of Jesus], "Beelzebul is in Him," and "He forces demons out of people with the help of the ruler of demons." Jesus called them together and used this illustration: "How can Satan force out Satan? If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot last. And if a household is divided against itself, that household will not last. So if Satan rebels against himself and is divided, he cannot last. That will be the end of him." (Mark 3:22–26; God's Word™).
Jesus is called a deceiver of the public	The crowds argued about Jesus. Some people said, "He's a good man," while others said, "No He isn't. He deceives the people." (John 7:13; God's Word™). This is a logical conclusion; either Jesus is Who He says He is or He is deceiving everyone to whom He speaks.
Jesus is demon possessed; full of the devil	Many of them said, "He's possessed by a demon! He's crazy! Why do you listen to him?" Others said, "No one talks like this if he's possessed by a demon. Can a demon give sight to the blind?" (John 10:20–21; God's Word™; see also John 8:48, 52

³⁴ It should be pointed out that Paul was writing about the Jews who are negative toward the gospel. We cannot justify antisemitism because of this passage; nor would we be wise to engage in it because of God’s promise to Abraham: **“I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you.”**

The Lies Spoken and False Charges Made Against Jesus Christ

The Lies and Distortions	Text/Commentary
Jesus is crazy.	Again a division took place among the Jews because of these words. Many of them were saying, "He has a demon and He's crazy! Why do you listen to Him?" Others were saying, "These aren't the words of someone demon-possessed. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?" (John 10:19–21; HCSB).
Jesus is a Samaritan, which is a half-breed.	This is a great insult to be alleged of any Jews. John 8:48
Jesus is accused of not being a man from God, of violating the Sabbath and being sinful.	When Jewish neighbors and pharisees were face with the truth of a true healing, they came up with all kinds of excuses as to why Jesus could not be from God. John 9:1–16
Jesus was not clear with His claims as to Who He is.	Jesus was walking in the temple complex in Solomon's Colonnade. Then the Jews surrounded Him and asked, "How long are You going to keep us in suspense? If You are the Messiah, tell us plainly." "I did tell you and you don't believe," Jesus answered them. "The works that I do in My Father's name testify about Me. But you don't believe because you are not My sheep. My sheep hear My voice, I know them, and they follow Me." (John 10:23–27; HCSB).
Jesus blasphemed God.	Jesus then said, "The Father and I are one." Again the Jews picked up rocks to stone Him. Jesus replied, "I have shown you many good works from the Father. Which of these works are you stoning Me for?" "We aren't stoning You for a good work," the Jews answered, "but for blasphemy, because You--being a man--make Yourself God." (John 10:30–33).
Similar things are said of Jesus today. Most unbelievers have no idea that Jesus claimed equality with God the Father; and, therefore, when faced with the plain evidence that He does, claim that it is a bad translation, or some religious zealot must have added this verse; or words to that effect.	
Jesus was accused of being a revolutionary.	This accusation is quite humorous, as those who accused Jesus of sedition wished to throw off the authority of Rome themselves. In fact, there were a lot of Roman soldiers in Jerusalem at this time for fear of seditious activity by the Jews. Luke 23:2
Jesus was accused of speaking against Roman taxes.	This was certainly not true, as Jesus told those who asked, "Render unto Cæsar that which is Cæsar's." Luke 23:2
Pontius Pilate (and Herod) determined that the charges laid against our Lord were bogus. Luke 23:13–16	

Taken in part from:

<http://www.truthinhistory.org/jewish-hatred-against-jesus-christ.html>

<http://www.rc.net/wcc/readings/matt2711.htm>

None of these sites are necessarily recommended. I just used them for some quick references on these lies.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

David is Fearful and He Wants To Get Away

In the next 5 verses, David will talk all about himself. He will use 1st person verbs and 1st person suffixes over 10 times in these 5 verses. Remember that David is a leader and there are hundreds of people with him. He cannot spend a few days thinking about himself and how this all impacts him and what he needs to do for himself. If you are a leader, you do not put yourself first. This indicates some clear problems with David: he is out of fellowship due to fear and he is dreaming of how he could just get away from all of this to his little place in the country. This is fine for a man retiring; but it is not fine for a man who is leading several brigades and their families out of Jerusalem.

Remember Satan's strategy: he wants the believer to get his eyes on himself, on other people, and/or on things. As long as you focus on one or more of those things, Satan has you off-balance and he is able to manipulate you.

**My heart turns in a midst of me
and terrors of death have fallen upon me.**

Psalm
55:4

**My heart turns within me
and the terror of death has fallen on me.**

**My heart is conflicted
and I find myself afraid of dying.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum (trans. By Cook)	My heart will tremble within me, and the terrors of death have fallen upon me.
Latin Vulgate	My heart is troubled within me: and the fear of death is fallen upon me.
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	My heart turns in a midst of me and terrors of death have fallen upon me.
Peshitta (Syriac)	My heart is <u>greatly pained</u> within me; and the terrors of death are fallen upon me.
Septuagint (Greek)	My heart was troubled within me; and the fear of death fell upon me.

Significant differences: The first verb seems to be different in the English translation of the Syriac. *Fear* is a singular noun (in the Greek and Latin); *terrors* is in the plural.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	My heart pounds in my chest because death's terrors have reached me.
Contemporary English V. Easy English	My heart is racing fast, and I am afraid of dying. My *heart is jumping inside me. And all the fear of death is on every side of me.
Easy-to-Read Version	My heart is pounding inside me. I am scared to death.
Good News Bible (TEV) <i>The Message</i>	I am terrified, and the terrors of death crush me. My insides are turned inside out; specters of death have me down.
New Berkeley Version	My heart is distressed within me, and terrors of death come down on me.
New Century Version	I am frightened inside; the terror of death has attacked me.
New Living Translation	My heart pounds in my chest. The terror of death assaults me.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	My heart was pounding within me, and the fear of death came upon me...
Beck's American Translation	My mind is in a state of anguish as the terrors of death fall on me;...

Christian Community Bible <i>God's Word™</i>	My heart agonizes within me; the terrors of death fall upon me. Job 4:14 My heart is in turmoil. The terrors of death have seized me.
New American Bible	My heart pounds within me; death's terrors fall upon me.
NIRV	I feel great pain deep down inside me. The terrors of death are crushing me.
New Jerusalem Bible	My heart writhes within me, the terrors of death come upon me,...
New Simplified Bible	My heart is in turmoil within me. The terrors of death have seized me.
Revised English Bible	My heart is torn with anguish and the terrors of death bear down on me.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear Bible in Basic English Ferar-Fenton Bible	My heart travails in my center. The awe of death falls over me. My heart is deeply wounded, and the fear of death has come on me. My heart beating quick in my breast, Whilst the faintness of Death on me falls;...
HCSB JPS (Tanakh—1985)	My heart shudders within me; terrors of death sweep over me. My heart is convulsed within me; terrors of death assail me.
New Advent Bible NET Bible®	My heart is troubled within me: and the fear of death is fallen upon me. My heart beats violently [Heb "shakes, trembles."] within me; the horrors of death overcome me [Heb "the terrors of death have fallen on me."].
<i>The Scriptures</i> 1998	My heart is pained within me, And the frights of death have fallen upon me.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	My heart is grievously pained within me, and the terrors of death have fallen upon me.
Concordant Literal Version English Standard Version exeGesés companion Bible	My heart, it is travailing within me, And dreadings of death have fallen upon me. My heart is in anguish within me; the terrors of death have fallen upon me. My heart writhes within me and the terrors of death fall on me:...
New RSV	My heart is in anguish within me, the terrors of death have fallen upon me.
Syndein	My 'right lobe'/heart is anguished within me. And the terror of death has fallen on me. {David's life was in very grave danger}.
World English Bible <i>Young's Literal Translation</i>	My heart is severely pained within me. The terrors of death have fallen on me. My heart is pained within me, And terrors of death have fallen on me.

The gist of this verse: David is clearly upset in the situation that he is in, and is concerned even for his life.

Psalm 55:4a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lêb (לב) [pronounced lay ^b v]	<i>heart, inner man, mind, will, thinking; midst</i>	masculine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #3820 BDB #524
chûwl (חול) [pronounced khool]	<i>to turn, to turn around, to be twisted</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #2342 BDB #296

Psalm 55:4a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Barnes: <i>The word rendered is "to turn," means properly to turn round; to twist; to dance in a circle; to be whirled round; and then to twist or writhe with pain, especially applied to a woman in travail (Isa. 13:8 23:4 26:18). Here the idea is, that he was in deep distress and anguish.</i> ³⁵			
b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
qereb (בְּרֵב) [pronounced KEH-re ^b v]	<i>midst, among, from among [a group of people]; an [actual, physical] inward part; the inner person with respect to thinking and emotion; as a faculty of thinking or emotion; heart, mind, inner being; entrails [of sacrificial animals]</i>	masculine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #7130 BDB #899
With the bêyth preposition, it means <i>in the midst of, among, into the midst of</i> (after a verb of motion).			

Translation: *My heart turns within me...* This very much would describe how David felt during the Absalom rebellion. He and Absalom had completely reconciled (2Sam. 14:33), after a long period of time when they were estranged; and Absalom is very much like David. He had all of David's external characteristics including a great personality. Although we are told very little about David's interaction with Absalom after they reconciled (apart from the revolution), it is reasonable to suppose that they had developed a friendship (in David's eyes). Therefore, when facing Absalom in a civil war, David is very conflicted. As far as he is concerned, this seemed to come out of nowhere.

Barnes writes: *It is easy to see that David would be in deep distress or anguish, if this psalm refers to the revolt of Absalom. The ingratitude and rebellion of a son - the fact of being driven away from his throne - the number of his enemies - the unexpected news that Ahithophel was among them - and the entire uncertainty as to the result, justified the use of this strong language.*³⁶

David appears to have been a good judge of character—which would be required for a great leader—but he could be easily blind-sided by his own children. Much of this is David's own fault. What he should have done originally, after Amnon raped his half-sister Tamar, was to take this case to court and try it. When he did not do that, Absalom had Amnon murdered. David then should have taken that case to court for trial then. We read over and over again about this incident in various commentators who say, almost with one voice, "David needed to fully forgive Absalom." Wrong!³⁷ David needed to sort out Absalom in justice. The circumstances of the case needed to be aired publically in court—with a judge other than David—and adjudicated there. See the exegesis of **2Samuel 14** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). The key to that narrative is, when justice is called for, there is no substitute. David is on the run from Absalom because he did not deal with Absalom's transgressions in court.

Also key to this is, our God is a God of perfect justice; if our salvation was not based upon justice, then we would not be saved. That we stand justified before God on the basis of our Lord's substitutionary death on the cross, is a fundamental tenet of Christianity.

³⁵ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 55:4 (slightly edited).

³⁶ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 55:4 (slightly edited).

³⁷ David eventually did forgive Absalom fully, after Absalom burned down Joab's field. 2Sam. 14:28–33

Psalm 55:4b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
'êymâh (אִמּוֹת) [pronounced <i>ay-MAW</i>]	<i>terror, dread, horror, fear; idols</i>	feminine plural construct	Strong's #367 BDB #33
mâveth (מָוֶת) [pronounced <i>MAW-veth</i>]	<i>death, death [as opposed to life], death by violence, a state of death, a place of death</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #4194 BDB #560
nâphal (נָפַל) [pronounced <i>naw-FAHL</i>]	<i>to fall, to lie, to die a violent death, to be brought down, to settle, to sleep deeply; to desert</i>	3 rd person plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #5307 BDB #656
'al (עַל) [pronounced <i>gahl</i>]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #5921 BDB #752

Translation: ...and the terror of death has fallen on me. To David, this appeared to all come upon him suddenly, although revolution had been in the air for at least 4 years. However, because David was not able to properly evaluate the actions of his own son, Absalom, he did not see this revolution coming.

David writes: [My heart is conflicted and I find myself afraid of dying](#). David has also considered his own mortality in all of this. He believes that God may take him out under the sin unto death, and he knows that is a painful way to die. A mature believer need not be afraid of death; dying grace is a wonderful experience. Even dying as a warrior can be a great experience; but David confesses fear here. Again, this suggests that David has not yet fully recovered from his own cluster of sins.

There are two times in Scripture where David would have been in this situation. As a younger man, he left the palace because Saul wanted to kill him (1Sam. 19:11–19). At that time, David was afraid that Saul would kill him. Then again, when Absalom revolts against a much older David, David does not express fear in the narrative (2Sam. 15)³⁸, but he does retreat from Jerusalem. It is possible that, on several occasions during the Absalom revolt that David was fearful. However, we only know this based upon this psalm.

If David was fearful during the Absalom rebellion, that we know that he had not fully recovered from the **interlocking systems of arrogance** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). What must have been the case (and we are assuming that Psalm 55 parallels 2Sam. 15) is that, from time to time, David was in fear when leaving Jerusalem. What God is going to do is to deliver David from his chief weakness as a skirt-chaser but this is a difficult and painful process which took a period of perhaps 10 years. This was a weakness which David indulged in on many occasions over a period of perhaps 20 years (he married 10 women and had at least 10 mistresses, if memory serves), and yet still had affairs (2Sam. 11). He gave in to sexual lust so many times that this had warped David's soul; sexual lust overrode all of his other activities in life (R. B. Thieme, Jr. uses the interlocking systems of arrogance to explain this). So, what is happening is, David, one of the greatest soldiers of all time, is suffering from fear from time to time, because he is interlocking with the fear³⁹ cluster of sins.

³⁸ The closest that we have to an expression of fear is found in 2Sam. 15:14 [David said to all the servants with him in Jerusalem, "Get up. We have to flee, or we will not escape from Absalom! Leave quickly, or he will overtake us, heap disaster on us, and strike the city with the edge of the sword."](#) (HCSB).

³⁹ I have not yet added this to the interlocking systems of arrogance.

The best way to understand a cluster of sins within the interlocking systems of arrogance is to think about drug addiction, as most of us have known people who are addicted to drugs. This can change everything about them; their need and desire for drugs can affect nearly everything that they do in their lives and, in fact, drive them to do things that, in the past, they would have never considered before (such as crime). In this way, one cluster of sins is interlocking with another cluster of sins. As we know, drug addiction is not cured overnight; and that desire remains within the soul for a long time (although it is possible that a newly saved person has the option of more easily walking away from any addiction in their life⁴⁰). David's foray into the interlocking systems of arrogance via the **sexual arrogance gate** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)) is something which is taking a long time to cure.⁴¹ His sexual arrogance began to control his life to where he even seduced one of his soldiers' wives. **2Samuel 11** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)).

Just as David's being locked in sexual arrogance colored his entire behavior pattern in Jerusalem; fear could have immobilized him as well. However, despite what is said in vv. 4–5, David will emerge from his fear clear-headed and unafraid.

David, on many occasions, was troubled and faced sufferings (Psalm 6:3 18:4–5 69:20 88:3 102:3–5 116:3). You may ask, *why does God subject us to so much trouble and pain?* First of all, much of that is self-induced misery; and, secondly, some of us need trouble in order to turn us toward God. When people have everything they need, they tend to forget about God.

Let me give you an odd illustration: people on welfare. People on welfare today can get a house, a phone, money, and food. Nearly all of them have air conditioning, a big screen tv, and a decent car. If they can work 20-30 hours or not work at all, and still get all of this stuff; then they are fine with that. We are developing a culture of dependents; of those who take from the government and enjoy a free ride provided from everyone else. This affects their entire way of thinking. So it is with mankind and God; if life is easy and we have everything that we need, and there are no problems; then why look to God for anything? **And our hope for you is firm, because we know that as you share in the sufferings, so you will share in the comfort. For we don't want you to be unaware, brothers, of our affliction that took place in the province of Asia: we were completely overwhelmed--beyond our strength--so that we even despaired of life. However, we personally had a death sentence within ourselves so that we would not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead. He has delivered us from such a terrible death, and He will deliver us; we have placed our hope in Him that He will deliver us again** (2Cor. 1:7–10).

Thirdly, sin itself is a reason for trouble and sadness; even if we really, really want to commit these sins. Our Lord prior to His crucifixion was greatly troubled (Matt. 26:37–38 John 12:27 Heb. 5:7). This is because He would take upon Himself the penalty for all of the sins which we have committed. There is going to be pain and suffering associated with sins.

**Fear and trembling come in me;
and so covers me shuddering.**

Psalm
55:5

**Dread and fear come into me;
consequently, trembling overwhelms me.**

Because I have succumbed to dread and fear, I am overwhelmed with trembling.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

⁴⁰ This is going to require more study on my part. R. B. Thieme, Jr. and others have taught that, one of the things that we receive at salvation is a removal of scar tissue from the soul. This would suggest that a person suffering from one addiction or another can actually walk away from that addiction at salvation. I can personally attest to that, although I do not know how serious my own personal addiction was at that time. Again, I will need to study and think about this more. However, as another aside, there are drugs which are used to bring a person out of heroin addiction overnight without going through withdrawals; so if drugs can accomplish this, certain God can as well.

⁴¹ As an aside, God will do several things in David's life to move him away from his sexual addiction; and, by the end of his life, the Bible will indicate that David is cured (not as in a *Clockwork Orange* cure, but really cured).

Ancient texts:

Targum (trans. By Cook)	Fear and trembling come to me, and <u>disaster</u> has covered me.
Latin Vulgate	Fear and trembling are come upon me: and <u>darkness</u> has covered me.
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	Fear and trembling come in me; and so covers me shuddering.
Peshitta (Syriac)	Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and the <u>shadow of death</u> has overwhelmed me.
Septuagint (Greek)	Fear and trembling came upon me, and <u>darkness</u> covered me.

Significant differences: The biggest difference is what covers David or overwhelms David. Many of the English translations above have *darkness*. However, the Hebrew word here is rare and one might make a case that it means *darkness* rather than *horror*, *shuddering*, *trembling*. However, this word, although it only occurs 3 times in the Old Testament (Psalm 55:5 Isa. 21:4 Ezek. 7:18), comes from a verb which very clearly means *to shudder, to tremble* (Job 9:6). Perhaps the word *darkness* seems to be most in tune with the verb used in this passage?

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	Fear and trembling have come upon me; I'm shaking all over.
Contemporary English V. Easy English	I am trembling with fear, completely terrified. Great fear and *shaking have come to me. They are all over me.
Easy-to-Read Version	I am scared and shaking. I am terrified.
Good News Bible (TEV) New Berkeley Version	I am gripped by fear and trembling; I am overcome with horror. Fear and trembling get hold of me and horror overpowers me.
New Century Version	I am scared and shaking, and terror grips me.
New Life Bible	I have begun shaking with fear. Fear has power over me.
New Living Translation	Fear and trembling overwhelm me, and I can't stop shaking.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	I feared; I was shaking and covered by darkness.
Beck's American Translation	I fear and tremble and shudder all over.
Christian Community Bible	I tremble in fear—horror has got the better of me.
New American Bible	Fear and trembling overwhelm me; shuddering sweeps over me.
NIRV	Fear and trembling have taken hold of me. Panic has overpowered me.
New Jerusalem Bible	...fear and trembling overwhelm me, and shuddering grips me.
Revised English Bible	Fear and trembling assail me and my whole frame shudders.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear Bible in Basic English	Fear and sweating come to me, and shuddering covers me. Fear and shaking have come over me, with deep fear I am covered.
Ferar-Fenton Bible	And on me fear and shuddering comes,

JPS (Tanakh—1985) And terrors encircle me round!
Fear and trembling invade me;
I am clothed with horror.

New Advent Bible Fear and trembling have come upon me: and darkness has covered me.
NET Bible® Fear and panic overpower me [Heb "fear and trembling enter into me."];
terror overwhelms [Heb "covers." The prefixed verbal form with w^e (or v^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced *weh*] (a wâw consecutive) carries on the descriptive (present progressive) force of the preceding imperfect.] me.

NIV, ©2011 Fear and trembling have beset me;
horror has overwhelmed me.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

The Amplified Bible Fear and trembling have come upon me; horror *and* fright have overwhelmed me.
Concordant Literal Version Fear and quivering come over me, And shuddering covers me.
exeGesés companion Bible ...awe and trembling come on me
and horror covers over me.

The updated⁴² Geneva Bible Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and horror has overwhelmed me.
There was no part of him that was not astonished with extreme fear.

Syndein Fear and trembling came upon me, and horror has overwhelmed me. {it is a living nightmare for David}.

World English Bible Fearfulness and trembling have come on me. Horror has overwhelmed me.
Young's Updated LT Fear and trembling come in to me, And horror covers me.

The gist of this verse: David admits to having great fear at this point.

Psalm 55:5a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
yir ^e âh (יִרְאֵה) [pronounced <i>yir^e-AW</i>]	<i>fear, dread, terror, reverence, respect, piety</i> ; it can also be used for the object of fear	feminine singular noun	Strong's #3374 BDB #432
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ra'ad (רָעַד) [pronounced <i>RAH-ğahd</i>]	<i>fear, trembling</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #7461 BDB #944

⁴² Wherever you see the word *updated* in the lower case in reference to a translation, it simply means that I ran a WP macro which changes *thou* to *you*; *hath* to *has*; etc. No real change to the text were made except to update the anachronistic words and forms of word.

Psalm 55:5a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
bôw' (אוּב) [pronounced boh]	<i>to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter, to advance</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #935 BDB #97
b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity with the 1 st person singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #88

Translation: *Dread and fear come into me;...* David has allowed mental attitude sins to enter into him. He has fallen out of fellowship. He dreads what may happen—not only to himself, but to those who are with him. He greatly fears what may befall him.

As mentioned in the previous verse, we are privy to these emotions in this psalm; they are not clearly found in the narrative of Absalom's revolution. So, what appears to be the case is, David is naming these sins of fear to God in this psalm; and that moves him along to make the excellent decisions which he makes throughout 2Sam. 15 and following. In fact, we might say that this revolution is where David is strongly tested; and his passing the test is making decision after decision after decision which is right for the situation that he is in. His response to this revolution is very much an indication that he is coming out of the interlocking systems of arrogance. That is, he has progressed to a point where, when he sins, he can name these sins and then pick up and move on. When David sinned with Bathsheba, he has almost gotten to a point where he was not even naming his sins (Nathan had to speak to David by means of a parable to get his attention—2Sam. 12:1–7).

Psalm 55:5b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
kâçâh (כָּסָה) [pronounced kaw-SAWH]	<i>to cover, to clothe, to conceal; to spread over, to engulf; to overwhelm</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Piel imperfect; with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #3680 BDB #491
pallâtsûwth (תַּוְצִיט) [pronounced pahl-law-tooth]	<i>a trembling, a shuddering; less literally, a fright, a horror, a scare</i>	feminine singular noun:	Strong's #6427 BDB #814

This Hebrew word here is rare and only occurs 3 times in the Old Testament (Psalm 55:5 Isa. 21:4 Ezek. 7:18). It comes from a verb which very clearly means *to shudder, to tremble* (Job 9:6), so the translations above are reasonable. Barnes writes: *It refers to that state when we are deeply agitated with fear.*⁴³

Translation: *...consequently, trembling overwhelms me.* Trembling overwhelming him means that he is now controlled by fear; his mental attitude sins have take him over. He is out of fellowship and no good as a commander. Fear and trembling enter into David, and then trembling overwhelms him.

⁴³ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 55:5.

Interestingly enough, the narrative in 2Sam. 15–21 do not refer back to David being filled with fear. However, this verse clearly indicates that, at one point, David did not just fear what was going to happen, he was immobilized by it.

David writes: **My heart is conflicted** [because of the betrayal by his son, Absalom] **and I find myself afraid of dying. Because I have succumbed to dread and fear, I am overwhelmed with trembling.** When it comes to this fear, it appears that David is getting progressively better (I will explain that statement). We might even assume that David is confessing his fears right here, in this psalm, and that he will be delivered from those fears. As many citizen soldiers will confess, fear can overtake a man and render him unusable in war. David, because he is recovering from the interlocking systems of arrogance, has fallen into fear, but he has confessed it, and he will be making clear-headed decisions as a result (which will be obvious in 2Sam. 15 and following). This fear is not revealed to us in the Absalom revolution narrative, but it is clearly alluded to here. This suggests that David was able to confess this fear and then to move on. In the narrative, David makes one good decision after another. David, as king, had to recover from his fear and to lead his people. A leader cannot allow himself to be fearful for any amount of time. Therefore, there was a period of time, whether it was a few hours or a few moments, where David was overcome with fear; but he names this sin right here in the psalm, and He moves forward in his spiritual life.

And so I say, “Who gives to me a wing like the dove? I would fly away and I would tabernacle.

Psalm
55:6

So I thought, “O that one gives me wings like a dove; [then] I would fly away and I would live [elsewhere].

So I thought, “O that someone would give me the wings of a dove; then I would fly away and be at peace in another place.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum (trans. By Cook)	And I said, "Who will give to me <u>wings</u> like a dove, [that] I may fly and come to rest?"
Latin Vulgate	And I said: Who will give me <u>wings</u> like a dove, and I will fly and be at rest?
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so I say, “Who gives to me a wing like the dove? I would fly away and I would tabernacle.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And I said, Oh that I had <u>wings</u> like a dove! Then would I fly away and be at rest.
Septuagint (Greek)	And I said, O, that I had <u>wings</u> as those of a dove! Then would I fly away, and be at rest.

Significant differences: The plural of *wing*, found in the English translation from the various languages, reflects the sensibilities of the English. *To be at rest* is similar to the Hebrew verb at the very end; but not an exact match.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	I say to myself, I wish I had wings like a dove! I'd fly away and rest.
Contemporary English V. Easy English	I wish I had wings like a dove, so I could fly far away and be at peace. So I said, "I would like to fly away as a bird. Then I would find *peace.
Easy-to-Read Version	Oh, I wish I had wings like a dove. I would fly away and find a place to rest.

Good News Bible (TEV) <i>The Message</i>	I wish I had wings like a dove. I would fly away and find rest. "Who will give me wings," I ask-- "wings like a dove?" Get me out of here on dove wings;...
New Century Version	I said, "I wish I had wings like a dove. Then I would fly away and rest.
New Living Translation	Oh, that I had wings like a dove; then I would fly away and rest!

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	So I begged, '{Please] give me the wings of a dove, so I can spread them and go find some rest!'
New American Bible	I say, "If only I had wings like a dove that I might fly away and find rest. Psalm 11:1
New Simplified Bible	I said: If only I had wings like a dove. I would fly away and find rest.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear Bible in Basic English	I said, "Who will give me pinions to fly and reside as a dove? And I said, If only I had wings like a dove! for then I would go in flight from here and be at rest.
Ferar-Fenton Bible	"Who will give me Dove's wings," I exclaim, "To fly off, and seek myself rest ?
NET Bible®	I say [The prefixed verbal form with w ^e (or v ^e) (i, or i) [pronounced <i>weh</i>] (a wâw consecutive) carries on the descriptive (present progressive) force of the preceding imperfect.], "I wish I had wings like a dove! I would fly away and settle in a safe place!.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Concordant Literal Version exeGesés companion Bible	I said, O that I had pinions like a dove; I would fly away and tabernacle in serenity. And I say, Oh that they give me pinions as a dove! for then I fly and tabernacle!
The Geneva Bible	And I said, Oh that I had wings like a dove! [for then] would I fly away, and be at rest. Fear had driven him to so great distress, that he wished to be hid in some wilderness, and to be banished from that kingdom which God had promised that he should enjoy.
LTHB Syndein	And I said, Who will give to me wings like a dove? I would fly away and be at rest. And I thought/said, "Oh that I had the wings like a dove! Then would I fly away, and then I would be at rest.
World English Bible Young's Updated LT	I said, "Oh that I had wings like a dove! Then I would fly away, and be at rest. And I say, `Who gives to me a pinion as a dove? I fly away and rest,...

The gist of this verse: David calls for the wings of a dove, that he might escape the pressure that he is under.

Psalm 55:6a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i>]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	1 st person singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
mîy (מִי) [pronounced <i>mee</i>]	<i>who, whom; whose, whomever; what; occasionally rendered how, in what way</i>	pronominal interrogative; the verb <i>to be</i> may be implied	Strong's #4310 BDB #566
Under some circumstances, the mîy pronominal interrogative can express a wish or a desire, as in 2Sam. 15:4 or 23:15. ⁴⁴			
nâthan (נָתַן) [pronounced <i>naw-THAHN</i>]	<i>to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set; to make</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5414 BDB #678
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l'</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 1 st person singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
'êber (עֵבֶר) [pronounced <i>ay-BEHR</i>]	<i>wing, feather, pinion [or a bird; dove, eagle]; figuratively of a Babylonian king</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #83 BDB #7
Although this is a singular noun, it sounds more sensible to use the plural form in the English.			
kaph or k ^e (כ) [pronounced <i>k^e</i>]	<i>like, as, just as; according to, after; about, approximately</i>	preposition of comparison, resemblance or approximation	No Strong's # BDB #453
yônâh (יוֹנִי) [pronounced <i>yoh-NAW</i>]	<i>dove, pigeon</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #3123 BDB #401

Translation: So I thought, “O that one gives me wings like a dove;... David lets us in on what he was thinking through part of his escape from Jerusalem. We do not know when he thought this way, but, in this obvious fear and suffering, he took himself to a better place. He thought about, *what if I had wings? Like a dove!*

We think such things and we even act upon them. Some people move from house to house or from city to city, because they just do not feel at ease where they are. Their feelings are certainly inside of them, and those feelings will travel with them. Some people feel a dread like this.

David has all of these people depending upon him. They traveled with him. He might go to war with Absalom and lose. He might be killed. He thinks about this and fear grips his soul, and David begins to fantasize to some degree. He begins to think, *what if...* His *what if* is to have the wings of a bird. David's fears are leading him to sublimate.

David uses the illustration of the wings of a dove; a dove being a non-predatory bird. So he is looking to escape entirely and not to confront.

⁴⁴ *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*; Hendrickson Publishers; ©1996; p. 566.

Poole writes: *Like a dove; which being fearful, and pursued by birds of prey, flies away, and that very swiftly and far, and into solitary places, where it hides and secures itself in the holes of the rocks, or in some other secret and safe place; all which fitly represents David's present disposition and desire.*⁴⁵ And this also indicates David's abdication of his responsibilities.

Although there are at least two passages where David looks to make a getaway (1Sam. 27:1 2Sam. 15:14), in the Absalom revolution, David was leading a large group of people. So he could not just sprout wings and fly off.

Psalm 55:6b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿûph (עופ) [pronounced <i>g'oopf</i>]	<i>to flutter; it is translated both to fly [away, to] (Job 5:7 Isa. 11:14) and to be in a deep sleep; to be weary (Judges 4:21 1Sam. 14:25)</i>	1 st person singular, Qal imperfect with the voluntative hê	Strong's #5774 BDB #733
The hê at the end of a 1 st person verb is called a cohortative hê. We often add a word like <i>let, may, might, ought, should</i> .			
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
shâkan (שָׁכַן) [pronounced <i>shaw-KAHN</i>]	<i>to tabernacle, to pitch a tent; to dwell, to reside, to live in, to domicile at, to settle, to settle down, to encamp</i>	1 st person singular, Qal imperfect with the voluntative hê	Strong's #7931 BDB #1014
The hê at the end of a 1 st person verb is called a cohortative hê. We often add a word like <i>let, may, might, ought, should</i> .			

Translation:...[then] I would fly away and I would live [elsewhere]. Then David tells us what he would do in such a situation. He would simply fly away and live elsewhere. He does not say where he would reside, but, he, in his fantasy, thinks, "If only I had wings; I could fly away and get away from all of this."

This psalm is not saying that sublimation is the way to deal with our problems. It is not telling us that, in a difficult situation where you are filled with dread, that you should go to your happy place; that you should entertain some fantasy until it is all over. This psalm simply reports where David's thinking is when on the run from Absalom.

Application: I want you to notice something; the verbs are all in the 1st person. David is thinking only about #1. A leader is not a leader who thinks about himself all the time. Should I name names right now? We have a president who wrote 2 autobiographies before doing anything of note in his own life.

Notice, at no time does David talk about those who are with him. At no time does he mention those whom he is leading. As in the previous 3 verses, the next 2 more verses will be more about David focusing in on himself.

It is interesting to note that, even though these are human viewpoint thoughts which David is having, and they are not mentioned in any narrative, God the Holy Spirit still has David express these thoughts in this psalm.

⁴⁵ Matthew Poole, *English Annotations on the Holy Bible*; ©1685; from e-Sword, Psalm 55:7.

**Behold! I will go off to depart;
I will pass the night in the desert-wilderness.”
Selah!**

Psalm
55:7

**Listen, I will go off to depart [from here];
I will stay the night in the desert-wilderness.”
[Musical] pause.**

**Listen, I will wander away from here
and stay the night off in the desert-wilderness.”
[Musical interlude].**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum (trans. By Cook)	Behold, I would go to a far place to wander, I would lodge in the wilderness forever.
Latin Vulgate	Lo, I have gone far off flying away; and I abode in the wilderness.
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	Behold! I will go off to depart; I will pass the night in the desert-wilderness. Selah!

Peshitta (Syriac)	Lo, then I would fly far off and dwell in the wilderness.
Septuagint (Greek)	Lo! I have fled afar off, and lodged in the wilderness. Pause.

Significant differences: These seem to be quite close in message. The targum adds the word *forever*. However, the targum is a paraphrase and a short commentary all in one.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	I'd run so far away! I'd live in the desert. <i>Selah</i>
Contemporary English V.	I would go and live in some distant desert.
Easy English	Yes! I would go far away and live in a wild place. * SELAH
Easy-to-Read Version	I would go far, far away into the desert. (SELAH [This word is for the musicians. It probably means the singers should pause here or the music should be louder here.])
Good News Bible (TEV)	I would fly far away and make my home in the desert.
<i>The Message</i>	I want some peace and quiet. I want a walk in the country,...
New Berkeley Version	Yes, then I would wander far away, and lodge in the desert. <i>Selah</i>
New Life Bible	Yes, I would go far away. I would live in the deser.
New Living Translation	I would fly far away to the quiet of the wilderness. <i>Interlude</i>

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	{Look!} I was far off and driven to exile. I was forced to live in the desert,...
Beck's American Translation	Yes, I would run far away and stay in the desert. [Music] [Selah]
Christian Community Bible	I would seek a home in the desert... Jer 9:1; Rev 12:6.
<i>God's Word</i> TM	Indeed, I would run far away. I would stay in the desert. Selah
New American Bible	Far away I would flee; I would stay in the desert. Jer 9:1; Rev 12:6.
NIRV	I would escape to a place far away. I would stay out in the desert. <i>Selah</i>
New Jerusalem Bible	How far I would escape, and make a nest in the desert! Pause
New Simplified Bible	I would run far away. I would stay in the desert.
Revised English Bible	I would escape far away to a refuge in the wilderness. [Selah]

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear Bible in Basic English Ferar-Fenton Bible	I <i>will</i> retreat a distance from here, and lodge in the wilderness." <i>Selah</i> . I would go wandering far away, living in the waste land. <i>Selah</i> . For then I would fly far away, And rest in the Desert secure.
HCSB Judaica Press Complete T. New Advent Bible NET Bible®	How far away I would flee; I would stay in the wilderness. <i>Selah</i> Behold I would wander far away; I would lodge in the desert forever. Lo, I have gone far off flying away; and I abode in the wilderness. Look, I will escape to a distant place; I will stay in the wilderness. (<i>Selah</i>)
NIV – UK	I would flee far away and stay in the desert [The Hebrew has <i>Selah</i> (a word of uncertain meaning) here and in the middle of verse 19.];

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

American KJV <i>The Amplified Bible</i>	See, then would I wander far off, and remain in the wilderness. <i>Selah</i> . Yes, I would wander far away, I would lodge in the wilderness. <i>Selah</i> [pause, and calmly think of that]!
Concordant Literal Version <i>Emphasized Bible</i> English Standard Version exeGesés companion Bible	Behold, I would bolt away afar; I would lodge in the wilderness. Interlude Lo! I would take a distant flight, I would tarry in the wilderness. <i>Selah</i>yes, I would wander far away; I would lodge in the wilderness; <i>Selah</i> Behold, then I wander afar and stay overnight in the wilderness! <i>Selah</i> .
Green's Literal Translation LTHB New King James Version	I would rove far away, fleeing; I would lodge in the wilderness. <i>Selah</i> . I would rove far away, fleeing; I would lodge in the wilderness. <i>Selah</i> . Indeed, I would wander far off, <i>And</i> remain in the wilderness. <i>Selah</i>
New RSV	...truly, I would flee far away; I would lodge in the wilderness; <i>Selah</i>
Syndein	I would flee far away, and stay/remain in the desert/wilderness. {David is saying he would like to run away and avoid his responsibility to deal with Absalom}. <i>Selah</i> . { <i>Selah</i> means singers rest and instruments play on - it is a picture of you resting while the Grace of God continues on}
A Voice in the Wilderness World English Bible <i>Young's Literal Translation</i>	Lo, I would wander far off; I would abide in the wilderness. <i>Selah</i> . Behold, then I would wander far off. I would lodge in the wilderness." <i>Selah</i> . Lo, I move far off, I lodge in a wilderness. <i>Selah</i> .

The gist of this verse:

David says that he would flee his troubles and live out in the country. However, this is not the approach that a leader ought to be taking when leading hundreds of people out of Jerusalem.

Psalm 55:7a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
hinnêh (הִנֵּה) [pronounced <i>hin-NAY</i>]	<i>lo, behold, or more freely, observe, look here, look, listen, note, take note; pay attention, get this, check this out</i>	interjection, demonstrative particle	Strong's #2009 (and #518, 2006) BDB #243

Psalm 55:7a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
râchaq (רָחַק) [pronounced raw-KHAAHK]	<i>to remove, to cause to remove; to go far off, to take far off; to go away far</i>	1 st person singular, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #7368 BDB #934
nâdad (נָדַד) [pronounced naw-DAHD]	<i>to move; to move oneself, to wander about, to stray; to retreat, to flee, to depart; to fly [away], to flutter; to remove, to put away; to abominate</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #5074 BDB #622

Translation: Listen, I will go off to depart [from here];... Again, David is talking about what he will do. He is talking about what *David* would do. David is clearly out of fellowship at the time that he is thinking these things, which suggests that he writes down these words after the fact, after realizing that he is wrong to think this way.

When you assume a position of leadership, then you cannot just go off on your own and do whatever. When you get tired of the whole thing, you don't get to turn your back on your constituency. As the leader, you must be out in front leading. This does not mean, however, that one like the President of the United States does not need some down time. Such a man needs to decompress or relax; but he cannot go off on his own and just disappear.

Application: This is an area where the hoi polloi can be incredibly stupid. They want to be the president, a CEO, the man in charge, because they think they can run things better, in their ignorance. As if anyone could be president; as if anyone could be the CEO; as if anyone could be the man in charge. What they are really thinking is, "I am tired of being bossed around; I want to boss around everyone else. I like that idea." Being the man in charge is a lot more than telling everyone what to do. If you are an ass, and in charge, and you start telling people what to do, what do you do when they say, "No." Or if they quietly disobey your orders. Do you fire them? Do you fire everyone? Do you want to end up leading nobody? Leaders can lead; they can inspire; they can motivate. Not everyone is a leader because life would be messed up if everyone was a leader. If you are a leader, then you assume the responsibility that goes with it (which is not what David is doing yet); and if you are not a leader, then get behind someone who is and follow them.

Psalm 55:7b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lûwn (וּלַן) [pronounced loon]	<i>to lodge, to pass the night, to spend the night, to lodge for the night, to abide</i>	1 st person singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3885 BDB #533
b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
mid ^e bâr (מִדְּבָר) [pronounced mid ^e -BAWR]	<i>wilderness, unpopulated wilderness, desert wilderness; mouth</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4057 BDB #184

Translation: ...I will stay the night in the desert-wilderness.” Again, David thinks about only himself. He is not talking about leading the people who came with him out into the desert-wilderness, but just himself. The desert-wilderness is a place where people are not. It is a unpopulated area.

Have you ever heard of someone talking about, “I’ll just get a place out in the country; I will just get off on my own, and get away from it all.” That is what David is saying here. Now, the desert-wilderness does not mean that this is a desert. This is an unpopulated area, what we might think of as off in the middle of nowhere. Maybe a little like Texas hill country.

As an aside, when Israel took the Land of Promise, it was a land flowing with milk and honey. Here is it, 400 years later, and it has not changed very much. There is still some rain, some water and some moderate weather. The Middle East of today is much different than the middle east of David’s time period; the weather, the land, the foliage is all very different. In some ways, it was very much like the Los Angeles area today, in terms of weather and greenery. If you viewed the Land of Promise back then, you’d say to yourself, “That’s a place where I’d love to live.”

Psalm 55:7c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s Numbers
çelâh (סָלַח) [pronounced seh-LAW]	to lift up, to elevate, to exalt [with one’s voice], to gather, to cast up [into a heap]; it is transliterated <i>Selah</i>	interjection	Strong’s #5542 BDB #699

The verbal cognate is ‘âlâh (עָלָה) [pronounced gaw-LAW], which means *to lift up and toss aside*. In the Piel stem, it means *to weigh*, which involves lifting up the object and placing it upon the balance. Gesenius gives the meaning of çelâh as *rest, silence, pause*, as çelâh does not necessarily have to match the meaning of its cognates. My thinking, which is a combination of BDB and Gesenius, is that the voices build up to a crescendo here, and, very likely, they are then followed by a vocal (but not necessarily, musical) silence. This would reconcile the points made by Gesenius and still make this compatible with its cognates.⁴⁶ Another very reasonable possibility is that the instruments *are lifted up* for a musical interlude. The instruments would be held down while the singing takes place, and then lifted up so that their sound would better project when the singing stops. The NLT translation of *Interlude* is very good.

Translation: [Musical] Pause [or, musical interlude; lit., *Selah!*] As described in the exegesis, this word çelâh comes from a verb which means *to lift up*. It is reasonable to assume that those who are playing musical instruments are to lift up these instruments and play during a pause in the singing. I believe that this is called the *bridge* in modern music? Keil and Delitzsch suggest: *The music, as Sela directs, here becomes more boisterous; it gives intensity to the strong cry for the judgment of God; and the first unfolding of thought of this Michtam is here brought to a close.*⁴⁷

Here, *selah* means that David tells himself to consider what he has been thinking. Take another approach.

This is an interesting transition between human viewpoint thinking and divine viewpoint thinking. It is filled with figurative language. As you glance down, you will notice the raging wind and the storm. Is David not just escaping Jerusalem, but now he is out in the middle of a storm as well? No. The wind and rain are metaphorical for the problems which David is facing. Therefore, perhaps the shelter mentioned below is metaphorical as well.

⁴⁶ For more discussion, see H.W.F. Gesenius, *Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament*; ©1979 by Baker Books; p. 588.

⁴⁷ Keil & Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 5, p. 404.

I would haste to an escape to me,
from a wind raging,
from a tempest.

Psalm
55:8

I would hasten [to] a shelter [or, *hasten an
escape*] for me,
[a shelter] from a raging wind
[and] from a tempest-storm.

I would move quickly toward a shelter designed to protect me
from the raging wind and from a violent storm.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum (trans. By Cook)	I would make hasten to me rescue from the tempest, <i>shelter</i> [reading מלל.] from the storm. I believe the italics represented words not found in the Hebrew text? However, this is apparently found in the targum. However, several translations have the word <i>shelter</i> in them.
Latin Vulgate Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	I <u>waited</u> for him that has saved me from pusillanimity of spirit, <u>and</u> a storm. I would haste to an escape to me, from a wind raging, from a tempest.
Peshitta (Syriac) Septuagint (Greek)	I would <u>wait</u> for him that will save me from the windy storm <u>and</u> the tempest. I <u>waited</u> for Him that would deliver me from <u>my distressed spirit</u> , <u>and</u> from the tempest.

Significant differences: In the English of the Latin, Syriac and Greek, David is waiting on one to deliver him. This is quite interesting, as we do not find these words in the Hebrew or in the targum. Because the targum and the Hebrew agree, I would tend to go with the Hebrew. Although the Greek would be easy to go with and explain, I cannot simply choose the easiest to explain and go with that text.⁴⁸

In the second phrase, the Greek has *my distressed spirit*. That is more or less an acceptable translation from the Hebrew.

The English translation from the Latin, Syriac and Greek all insert the word *and* before the final phrase.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	I'd hurry to my hideout, far from the rushing wind and storm.
Contemporary English V. Easy English	I would quickly find shelter from howling winds and raging storms. I would hurry to a safe place, safe from angry wind and storm".
Easy-to-Read Version	I would run away. I would escape. I would run away from this storm of trouble.
Good News Bible (TEV) <i>The Message</i>	I would hurry and find myself a shelter from the raging wind and the storm. I want a cabin in the woods. I'm desperate for a change from rage and stormy weather.
New Berkeley Version	I would hasten to my place of refuge,

⁴⁸ I was hoping for Keil and Delitzsch to comment on the disparity of the text here, but they do not. They simply go along with the Hebrew text.

	from this raging wind and storm."
New Life Bible	I would hurry to my safe place, away from the wild wind and storm."
New Living Translation	How quickly I would escape- far from this wild storm of hatred.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	I was forced to live in the desert, ⁸ as I waited for someone to save me, from my own fears and the storm. A portion of the previous verse is included.
Christian Community Bible	I would seek a home in the desert ⁹ or hurry to find a cave for shelter from the tempest." Vv. 8–9 are included above.
God's Word™	I would hurry to find shelter from the raging wind and storm."
NIRV	I would hurry to my place of safety. It would be far away from the winds and storms I'm facing."
New Jerusalem Bible	I would soon find a refuge from the storm of abuse, from the...

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear Bible in Basic English	Hurry my rescue from the spirit-wind sandstorm and whirlwind.
Judaica Press Complete T.	I would quickly take cover from the driving storm and from the violent wind.
New Advent Bible	I would quickly find myself a refuge from a sweeping wind, from a tempest."
NET Bible®	I waited for him that has saved me from pusillanimity of spirit, and a storm. I will hurry off to a place that is safe from the strong wind [Heb "[the] wind [that] sweeps away." The verb סָוָה (sa'ah, "sweep away") occurs only here in the OT (see H. R. Cohen, <i>Biblical Hapax Legomena</i> [SBLDS], 120).] and the gale."
New Heart English Bible	"I would hurry to a shelter from the stormy wind and storm."

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Concordant Literal Version	I would hurry to a place of deliverance for me, Away from the gusting wind and from the tempest.
English Standard Version	I would hurry to find a shelter from the raging wind and tempest."
exeGesés companion Bible	I hasten my escape from the rushing wind and storm.
The Geneva Bible	I would hasten my escape from the windy storm [and] tempest. From the cruel rage and tyranny of Saul.
Updated Bible Version 2.11	I would hurry myself to a shelter From the stormy wind and tempest.
World English Bible	"I would hurry to a shelter from the stormy wind and tempest."
Young's Literal Translation	I hasten escape for myself, From a rushing wind, from a whirlwind.

The gist of this verse: David would find a shelter from the elements (which refer actually to the circumstances of his life).

We might see v. 8 as a transitional verse that moves David from his introspection to Who ought to be his actual focus.

Psalm 55:8a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
chûsh (חוש) [pronounced <i>whoosh</i>]	<i>to show haste, to act quickly [swiftly], to hasten; to come [approach] quickly [swiftly]; to enjoy; to be excited</i>	1 st person singular, Hiphil imperfect; with the voluntative hê	Strong's #2363 BDB #301
The hê at the end of a 1 st person verb is called a cohortative hê. We often add a word like <i>let, may, might, ought, should</i> .			
miph ^e lâṭ (מִפְּלֹאֵט) [pronounced <i>mihf-LAWT</i>]	<i>escape; place of escape, shelter</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #4655 BDB #812
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 1 st person singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510

Translation: I would hasten [to] a shelter [or, hasten an escape] for me,... David is still concentrating just on himself; what would he do to save his own neck? He would find a shelter or an escape in the desert-wilderness, because, in David's fantasy, he can see this little pier and beam home out in the midst of this desert-wilderness that he wants to flee to. Or, perhaps he is looking simply to escape his circumstances.

Psalm 55:8b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>mihn</i>]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, beyond, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
rûwach (רוּחַ) [pronounced <i>ROO-ahkh</i>]	<i>wind, breath, spirit, apparition</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #7307 BDB #924
ṣa'âh (רַעַשׁ) [pronounced <i>saw-ḠAW</i>]	<i>a rushing, raging [storm wind]</i>	feminine singular, Qal active participle	Strong's #5584 BDB #703
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>mihn</i>]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, beyond, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
ṣa'ar (רַעַס) [pronounced <i>SAH-ḡahr</i>]	<i>tempest, storm, storm-wind; whirlwind; tornado</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #5991 BDB #704

There are two variations on the spelling of this noun; and, as far as we know, there does not seem to be a difference between the masculine and feminine versions of it.

Translation:...[a shelter] from a raging wind [and] from a tempest-storm. This little hideaway is going to protect him from the raging wind and from storms which are brewing.

All of this is really a reference to safety from Absalom and his army. David is not all upset about global warming⁴⁹ and is now hoping to find a place to hide from it. He is concerned about Absalom's army, which he metaphorically speaks of here as a *raging wind* and a *tempest-storm*.

Barnes: *If this psalm was composed on occasion of the rebellion of Absalom, it is easy to see with what propriety tiffs language is used. The troubles connected with that unnatural rebellion had burst upon him with the fury of a sudden storm, and threatened to sweep everything away.*⁵⁰ Although most expositors connect these storms to Absalom's army, the Geneva Bible associates this with Saul, calling this wind and storm *the cruel rage and tyranny of Saul*.⁵¹

Bishop Horsley: *The consternation and distress expressed in Psalm 55:4–8, describe the king's state of mind when he fled from Jerusalem, and marched up the mount of Olives, weeping.*⁵² This is, as opposed to the psalm being about Jesus and being persecuted (which is not something which I see in this psalm).

The past 5 verses give us an intimate look into David's soul while he is out of fellowship. Again, even though this portion of the psalm is a fifth of the entire psalm, David's self-centered thinking might only last a few minutes or a few hours.

In the introduction to this section, that David, as the leader of hundreds of men and women, speaks of himself in this passage 14 or so times. He does not talk about the people he is protecting; he does not talk about God; he talks about his feelings and what he wants.

David Thinks Only About Himself

Scripture	Text/Commentary
My heart is conflicted and I find myself afraid of dying. Because I have succumbed to dread and fear, I am overwhelmed with trembling.	David is first suffering from mental attitude sins. He is in <i>fear-arrogance</i> , where he has succumbed to fear and everything that he does is colored by this fear. We do not know how long this lasted.
So I thought, "O that someone would give me the wings of a dove; then I would fly away and I would be at peace in another place.	David thinks about his situation unrealistically. His fear causes him to detach from reality. <i>What if I had wings and could just fly away?</i> What he is think is ridiculous. Furthermore, peace is in the soul; it is not in another place.
Listen, I will wander away from here and I will stay the night off in the desert-wilderness.	Here he says that he will go off to the quiet desert-wilderness. He wants to sit on a hill overlooking some small brook, sip a Coors, and watch the clouds move on by.
[Musical interlude].	Stop and think about this, David, while the music plays.
I would move quickly toward a shelter designed to protect me from the raging wind and from a violent storm.	David has one more flight of fancy here; he has this little cabin out in the mountains and if he could just get there, it would protect him from the raging wind and the storm that approaches (both of which are metaphors for David's situation)

⁴⁹ A myth devised to tax even more money from the citizens of the industrialized countries. Also, this myth has made men like Al Gore millionaires many times over.

⁵⁰ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 55:8.

⁵¹ Geneva Bible Translation Notes; courtesy of e-sword; 1599; Psalm 55:8.

⁵² Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 55:23.

David Thinks Only About Himself

Scripture

Text/Commentary

This final metaphor works in two ways. It continues David’s human viewpoint thinking of getting away from it all and enjoying life somewhere away from all of this. But, at the same time, since the raging wind and violent storm are metaphorical, then could not the *shelter* be metaphorical as well? What is the true shelter for David? Y^ehowah Elohim, the Revealed Member of the Trinity.

David thinks about this, and all that he is saying and feeling, and he realizes, his is not some physical shelter off in the desert somewhere where he will find peace; his peace and his victory are in God. Whether the final verse makes an impression on his thinking, making him then look toward God, as his true shelter; or whether David metaphorically refers to God as his shelter in this previous verse; I could not tell you. But, without a doubt, David will look to God to deal with his problems in the next section.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

At the end of this section of Psalm 55, David says to himself: “I would move quickly toward a shelter designed to protect me from the raging wind and from a violent storm.” David needs to get his head on straight. What did God promise David in the Davidic Covenant? Recall that, David was sitting around thinking, since he had some down-time, and he thought, “I should build a permanent structure for the Lord.” A completely new and original idea; so God gives David grace; God makes a covenant with David. This is the subject of **Psalm 89** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)) and of **2Sam. 7** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

We need to take a moment and look at the Davidic Covenant which God gave to David in 2Sam. 7:19–37:

The Davidic Covenant

That very night, the word of the Lord came to Nathan, saying, “Go and speak to My servant David, and tell him, ‘This is from Jehovah: you are not going to build a house for Me to live in. You see, I have not lived in a house from the day that I brought the people of Israel out of Egypt even to this day, but, instead, I continually move about within a tent or Tabernacle. In all the places where I have gone out with the sons of Israel, did I ever speak even a word to anyone from the tribes of Israel, anyone that I had commanded to shepherd My people Israel, saying, “Why have you not built Me a house made of cedar?”’

All this was predicated upon David’s idea, which he came up with on his own, of building a permanent structure for God (the Temple). God points out that He has never commanded this.

Perhaps David, when he thought of this house out in the country that he might escape to, then thought about the House he sought to build for God; and the Davidic Covenant (promise) which God made to him.

“This you will say to My servant David: ‘Thus speaks Jehovah of the Armies: I took you from out of the pasture, away from following after sheep, to be a prince over My people, over Israel. I have been with you no matter where you went. When you faced enemies, I cut them off right in front of you. I have made your name great on this earth, as notable as any famous or powerful person.

God reminds David that he was a shepherd. God brought him out of the sheepfold and placed him over Israel. When David had enemies, God killed his enemies for him. Do you see how this might be important for David to suddenly start thinking about these things?

The Davidic Covenant

I have determined in eternity past a particular place for My people Israel. I will plant them there and they will live in that area instead of the indigenous heathen. Furthermore, Israel will no longer be agitated nor will they be afflicted by men of unjust violence as in the past; and from the day that I commissioned judges over My people Israel. Also, I gave you rest from all your enemies.

God has a physical plot of ground for Israel and He determined where that would be in eternity past. There will be a time when Israel is no longer agitated by outside powers.

Further, Jehovah declares to you that Jehovah will build a dynasty for you. When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up from your loins one who will come after you, whose kingdom I will establish. He will build a house for My name and I will establish His kingdom forever. I will be to him a Father and he will be to me My son. If he goes astray, I will correct and rebuke him with the rods of men and with the welts of the sons of man. I will not take my grace from him as I had removed it from Saul, whom I removed in your presence.

David will have a dynasty, meaning that his sons and his sons' sons would be on the throne of Israel. God then speaks of two sons of David; his son Solomon, who will build the Temple. God's grace would always be with Solomon.

The eternal kingdom that will be established forever will be the throne of Jesus, Who is David's Greater Son.

Your dynasty is been made sure and stable and your kingdom will last forever. You will see that your throne will be clearly established forever." Nathan conveyed all that God said and all that he saw to David.

God promises David that his kingdom would be established forever.

David needs to take all of this into consideration. How can Absalom be his successor? Absalom has no real interest in the Lord. Absalom has no interest in building the Temple of God. Absalom used sacrifices to God as a cover for a revolutionary movement.

So, when thinking of this little house out in the wilderness where he might go and hide from the difficulties of life, perhaps David is beginning to think about what God has promised him. The next section of this psalm will show a big change in David's thinking.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

Just so that there is no confusion here, David leading these people out of Jerusalem is the right thing to do. He does not have any intelligence on Absalom's army. He has no idea as to its size, training or dedication. Nor does David want to have a civil war right in the middle of Jerusalem. Leaving Jerusalem is the smart thing for David to do.

Our verse reads: **I would move quickly toward a shelter designed to protect me from the raging wind and from a violent storm.** David's problem here, for however long this takes place, is that he is concerned only with himself. The last man a leader should think about is himself.

With this next verse, we will see a remarkable change take place.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

David Asks God for Help Because There is Lawlessness in the Streets

David appears to have gotten out of the funk of the previous 5 verses and he knows that he needs to focus upon God. His problem is not his circumstances; his problem is, he has been thinking all about himself and being afraid of his circumstances. God does not allow for that. Fear is outside of God's plan for our lives. Therefore, with this verse, David refocuses on God.

**Swallow up, my Adonai;
divide up their tongue,
for I have seen violence and strife in the city.**

Psalm
55:9

**Destroy [them], my Adonai;
confuse [lit., *divide up*] their tongues;
for I have seen violence and strife in the city.**

**Destroy them, my Lord and confuse their inner communications,
for I have seen violence and arguments in Jerusalem.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum (trans. By Cook)	Destroy, O Lord, <i>their counsel</i> , divide their tongue, for I have seen violence and strife in the city.
Latin Vulgate	<u>Cast down</u> , O Lord, and divide their tongues; for I have seen iniquity and contradiction in the city.
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	Swallow up, my Adonai; divide up their tongue, for I have seen violence and strife in the city.
Peshitta (Syriac)	Destroy, O LORD, and render useless their tongues; for I have seen violence and strife in the city.
Septuagint (Greek)	Destroy, O LORD, and divide their tongues, for I have seen iniquity and gainsaying in the city.

Significant differences: *Destroy* is a legitimate translation of the first verb; *cast down* (Latin) does not appear to be.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	Baffle them, my Lord! Confuse their language because I see violence and conflict in the city.
Contemporary English V.	Confuse my enemies, Lord! Upset their plans. Cruelty and violence are all I see in the city,...
Easy English	Lord, destroy (the *evil people)! Confuse their words! Because I see fighting and angry people in the city.
Good News Bible (TEV) <i>The Message</i>	Confuse the speech of my enemies, O Lord! I see violence and riots in the city. Come down hard, Lord--slit their tongues. I'm appalled how they've split the city into rival gangs prowling the alleys...
New Berkeley Version	Destroy, O LORD, confuse their speeches [another Babel seems required, but usually God-haters are man-haters, too, and get to quarreling.], for I have seen violence and the strife in the city.
New Life Bible	Mix them up, O Lord. Divide their tongues. For I have seen fighting and trouble in the city.
New Living Translation	Confuse them, Lord, and frustrate their plans, for I see violence and conflict in the city.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	O Jehovah, please sink them! Make them speak different tongues! For I have seen how lawless they are, and I've heard their disputes in the city.
Beck's American Translation	Destroy them, Lord! Confound their tongues, because I see violence and conflict in the city.
Christian Community Bible <i>God's Word</i> TM	O Lord, shatter their plans. In the city I see strife and violence;... Completely confuse their language, O Lord, because I see violence and conflict in the city.
NIRV	Lord, destroy the plans of sinners. Keep them from understanding one another. I see people destroying things and fighting in the city.
New Jerusalem Bible	I would soon find a refuge from the storm of abuse, from the ⁹ destructive tempest, Lord, from the flood of their tongues. For I see violence and strife in the city,... A portion of v. 8 is included.
Revised English Bible	Frustrate and divide their counsels, Lord! I have seen violence and strife in the city.
Today's NIV	Lord, confuse the wicked, confound their words, for I see violence and strife in the city.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear	Lord, devour and subdivide their tongues, for I see violence and argument in the city.
Bible in Basic English	Send destruction on them, O Lord, make a division of tongues among them: for I have seen fighting and violent acts in the town.
Complete Jewish Bible Ferar-Fenton Bible	Confuse, Adonai, confound their speech! For I see violence and fighting in the city. LORD swallow and split up their tongues, – Cruel wrong I have met in this Town.–
HCSB JPS (Tanakh—1985)	Lord, confuse and confound their speech, for I see violence and strife in the city; ... O LORD, confound their speech, confuse it! For I see lawlessness and strife in the city;...
New Advent Bible	Cast down, O Lord, and divide their tongues; for I have seen iniquity and contradiction in the city.
NET Bible®	Confuse them [Traditionally עָלַב (bala') has been taken to mean "swallow" in the sense of "devour" or "destroy" (cf. KJV), but this may be a homonym meaning "confuse" (see BDB 118 s.v. עָלַב; HALOT 135 s.v. III *עָלַב). "Their tongue" is the understood object of the verb (see the next line).], O Lord! Frustrate their plans! [Heb "split their tongue," which apparently means "confuse their speech," or, more paraphrastically, "frustrate the plans they devise with their tongues."] For I see violence and conflict in the city.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	Destroy [their schemes], O Lord, confuse their tongues, for I have seen violence and strife in the city.
Concordant Literal Version	Do away with them, O Yahweh; befuddle their tongue, For I see Violence and Contention in the city.
<i>Emphasized Bible</i>	Confuse, O My Lord, divide their speech, For I have seen violence and contention in the city...
English Standard Version The Geneva Bible	Destroy, O Lord, divide their tongues; for I see violence and strife in the city. Destroy, O Lord, [and] divide their tongues [As in the confusion of Babylon when the wicked conspired against God.]: for I have seen violence and strife in the city.
Syndein	Confuse the revolutionists, O Lord/'adonai, and divide their speech {get them to argue among themselves - this will be fulfilled} for I see violence and strife in the city {Jerusalem}.

World English Bible

Confuse them, Lord, and confound their language, For I have seen violence and strife in the city.

Young's Literal Translation

Swallow up, O Lord, divide their tongue, For I saw violence and strife in a city.

The gist of this verse:

David prays for the destruction and confusion of his enemies, and he does this on the basis of the breakdown of the laws of divine establishment within Jerusalem.

Psalm 55:9a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
bâla' (עָלַב) [pronounced baw-LAHṬ]	to engulf, to swallow up, to swallow down; to devour; to destroy, to give over to destruction, to take away altogether, to lay waste to	2 nd person masculine singular, Piel imperative	Strong's #1104 BDB #118

Barnes: *The word rendered "destroy," properly means to "swallow up;" to "devour" with the idea of greediness. Isa. 28:4 Ex. 7:12 Jon. 1:17 Jer. 51:34. Then it is used in the sense of "destroy," Job. 20:18 Prov. 1:12.*⁵³

Keil and Delitzsch: *עָלַב here, considering Isa. 19:3, denotes a swallowing up, i.e., annihilation by means of confounding and rendering utterly futile.*⁵⁴

Of this verb, the NET Bible writes: *Traditionally עָלַב (bala') has been taken to mean "swallow" in the sense of "devour" or "destroy" (cf. KJV), but this may be a homonym meaning "confuse" (see BDB 118 s.v. עָלַב; HALOT 135 s.v. III *עָלַב). "Their tongue" is the understood object of the verb (see the next line).*⁵⁵ Although BDB does make a reference to the meaning *confuse*, it is not clear that such a translation is necessary here or in other passages. However, one might make the argument that poetic language can cast a wider net for definitions.

ʾădônây (אֲדֹנָי) [pronounced uh-doh-NAY]	Lord (s), Master (s), my Lord (s), Sovereign; my lord [master]; can refer to the Trinity or to an intensification of the noun; transliterated <i>Adonai, adonai</i>	masculine plural noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #113 & #136 BDB #10
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There are actually 3 forms of this word: ʾădônây (אֲדֹנָי) [pronounced uh-doh-NAY]; ʾădônay (אֲדֹנַי) [pronounced uh-doh-NAY]; and ʾădônîy (אֲדֹנִי) [pronounced uh-doh-NEE].

This is a form of Strong's #113, where there are three explanations given for the yodh ending: (1) this is a shortened form of the plural ending, usually written -îym (יָיִם) [pronounced eem], an older form of the *pluralis excellentiæ* (the plural of excellence), where God's sovereignty and lordship are emphasized by the use of the plural; (2) this is the actual, but ancient, plural of the noun, which refers to the Trinity; or (3) this is the addition of the 1st person singular suffix, hence, *my Lord* (the long vowel point at the end would distinguish this from *my lords*).

Translation: Destroy [them], my Adonai;... David calls for the destruction of his enemies. Although calling for destruction here does not even have an object, here is what is going on: David is thinking about his desperate situation and how he wants to have wings and just fly away from all of his difficulties, and there has to be a reason for this. He just isn't depressed about life in general—the psalm itself indicates that. So, in David's mind, he is thinking of the man or men who have driven him out of Jerusalem; so when he says, "**Destroy [them], my Lord;**"

⁵³ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 55:9.

⁵⁴ Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Psalm 55:9–16.

⁵⁵ *The Net Bible*®; © 1996-2006 by Biblical Studies Press (BSP); taken from e-Sword; also found at <http://www.bible.org/netbible/index.htm>, Psalm 55:9.

David has to be talking about who or what is on his mind (v. 3 of this chapter—BBE: [I am troubled because of the voice of the cruel ones, because of the loud cry of the evil-doers; for they put a weight of evil on me, and they are cruel in their hate for me.](#)). The ones on his mind, which will come out in this psalm, are his enemies—actually, close associates who have turned against him.

God knows what we are thinking; and God knew this psalm from eternity past. Therefore, God knows David's prayer. David is being elliptical here (not giving a complete thought); but there is enough of the context of this psalm to allow us a complete thought.

This leads us to a rather difficult situation: do we pray against our enemies or do we pray for them? When we were fighting World War II, was it proper to drop bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, or should we have been praying for our enemies, the Japanese instead? Here is where we must properly divide the Word of Truth.

This doctrine was first placed in [Psalm 41 \(HTML\)](#) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). It is also a part of the Doctrine of [Imprecatory Psalms \(HTML\)](#) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

Do We Pray for Our Enemies or Against Them?

- 5) This psalm, along with several others, is known as an imprecatory psalm or it has imprecatory elements. That is, David prays against his enemies; David prays to defeat his enemies; David prays to pay back his enemies what they deserve.
 - i. David prays: [And You, O Y^ehowah, show grace to me, and raise me up, that I may recompense them](#) (Psalm 41:10). [Destroy \[them\], my Adonai; confuse \[lit., divide up\] their tongues; for I have seen violence and strife in the city](#) (Psalm 55:9).
 - ii. There are a number of imprecatory psalms. Here are some examples of petitions made to God in these psalms: [Let death take my enemies by surprise; let them go down alive to the grave](#) (Psalm 55:15). [O God, break the teeth in their mouths](#) (Psalm 58:6). [May they be blotted out of the book of life and not be listed with the righteous](#) (Psalm 69:28). [May his children be fatherless and his wife a widow](#) (Psalm 109:9). [How blessed will be the one who seizes your infants and dashes them against the rocks](#) (Psalm 137:9).
- 6) Yet Jesus, our Lord, said, ["You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, so that you may become sons of your Father in Heaven. For He makes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax-collectors do the same?"](#) (Matt. 5:43–46; Lev. 19:18; MKJV).
- 7) It is not simply an Old versus New Testament difference. There are Scriptures which exhort us to pray for our enemies: Matt 5:39, 44 Luke 23:34 Rom 12:14 1Cor 4:12 1Thess 5:15.
- 8) There are New Testament Scriptures where cursing is done against certain people: Matt 21:18–21 25:41 Acts 8:20 13:10–11 Gal 1:8–9 1Cor 16:22 Rev 6:10 22:18–19. What you actually say, even in a private prayer, can be quite powerful.
- 9) The short answer, without much nuance, is, David is speaking of the enemies of Israel who seek to revolt against him; and against the military enemies of Israel; while Jesus is speaking of personal enemies. Although that comes close to dealing with this problem, it does not solve it completely. "Hate your enemies" was applied by the Jews against the Romans who dominated them.
- 10) There is a place for both approaches, and here is where the nuance works in. We faced, in WWII, a dreadful and vicious coalition of enemies in the Germans and the Japanese. The Germans were constructing death camps and destroying all of their Jews, which indicates an evil attributable only to Satanic influence. Therefore, the Germans had to be defeated and their death camps made public in every way possible.
- 11) This does not mean that we should engender great hate against the Germans or the Japanese. In war, we needed to defeat them, and by any means possible. We used atomic weapons against the Japanese. What we did in WWII was righteous, and it was the hand of God destroying His enemies.
- 12) However, once we had defeated the Germans and the Japanese, it was a whole new story, one that,

Do We Pray for Our Enemies or Against Them?

insofar as I know, had never been written before in human history. We went in and administered rulership in these countries with the intention of eventually returning the sovereignty back over to these people. This was an amazing thing which the United States did, and ought to make every American beam with pride of country and patriotism.

- 13) General Douglas MacArthur ruled over Japan, **calling for missionaries and Bibles** for all of these regions in the east, saying that there was a spiritual vacuum there and it would be filled by Christianity or Communism (which has been the great struggle of my lifetime—today, Islam has become more dominant as a Satanic influence).
- 14) Therefore, we rightfully prayed to defeat our enemies in WWII, the Germans and the Japanese; but then, instead of subjecting them to a generation of American control, we guided them toward a friendship with the United States, toward freedom and self-determination; and we gave them the gospel of Jesus Christ. This is one of the greatest testimonies of human history to both the words of Jesus and the prayers of King David. We both righteously defeated our enemies and then we showed them the love of God.

Although I know that General MacArthur was the primary force in this, I would find it interesting to see what the reaction from the state department was. How did President Truman view this? Were there those who tried to stop MacArthur? It is a fascinating period of history which Satan would certain rather that we forgive about.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

Psalm 55:9b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
pālag (פָּלַג) [pronounced paw-LAHG]	<i>to divide, to split up</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Piel imperative	Strong's #6385 BDB #811
lāshōwn (לָשׁוֹן) [pronounced law-SHOHN]	<i>tongue; speech; language; lapping; tongue-shaped</i>	feminine singular noun with a 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #3956 BDB #546

Translation: ...confuse [lit., divide up] their tongues;... David is referring back to the confusion of tongues in Babylon, where men were working side-by-side, and, suddenly, they were all speaking different languages. These men split up and went their separate ways, filling up the earth as God had commanded [[Genesis 6 \(HTML\)](#)] ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#))].

Barnes writes: *There is evident allusion here to the confusion of tongues at Babel (Gen. 11:1–9); and as the language of those who undertook to build that tower was confounded so that they could not understand each other, so the psalmist prays that the counsels of those engaged against him might be confounded, or that they might be divided and distracted in their plans, so that they could not act in harmony. It is very probable that there is an allusion here to the prayer which David offered when he learned that Ahithophel was among the conspirators (2Sam. 15:31); “And David said, O Lord, I pray thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness.” This would tend to divide and distract [those in Absalom’ war room] as well as the purposes of Absalom, and secure his defeat.*⁵⁶

David is not actually calling upon God to confuse the languages of his enemies so that they all leave the *situation room* in a huff and move elsewhere, never to see one another again. This word is used metaphorically here, asking God for the same result, essentially. In the war room, there are differences of opinion. Sometimes, these

⁵⁶ Albert Barnes, *Barnes’ Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 55:9 (slightly edited).

differences can become quite heated. David is praying that God cause problems in Absalom's war room. He does not want Absalom's generals to come to a consensus and function as a coordinated force against David.

The answer to this prayer is in Hushai the Archite. David had left Jerusalem suddenly and with a small army, upon hearing that Absalom was made king in Hebron. So, while David was in movement up the Mount of Olives, he prayed to God, "[Frustrate the counsel of Ahithophel.](#)" Ahithophel was a great strategist who had allied himself with Absalom. And then, there was Hushai, the answer to David's prayers, waiting on David, at the top of the Mount of Olives. Hushai was an older man, also brilliant like Ahithophel; and someone who, because of his age, would have held David's army back. So David sends him back to Jerusalem to function as a operative within the Absalom organization. He would be the confusing tongue that would bring Absalom down. Ahithophel would propose the most intelligent way to proceed, and then it would be up to Hushai to suggest an inferior plan, and sell it as if it is a better plan. Only a genius could pull something like this off, confusing the counselors of Absalom, as if their languages had been confounded. See [2Samuel 15 \(HTML\)](#) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)) for more detail on this narrative on counterinsurgency and the answer to David's prayer.

In fact, post-Noah, we have at least 3 instances where the counsel of those who are evil crossed swords: Hushai and Ahithophel in the Absalom cabinet (2Sam. 15:31 16:23 17:14, 23); the contradictory charges put forth against Jesus before the Jewish Sanhedrin (Luke 23:51); and the council of the Jews against Paul (Acts 23:7).⁵⁷

Psalm 55:9c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kîy (כי) [pronounced <i>kee</i>]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
râ'âh (רָאָה) [pronounced <i>raw-AWH</i>]	<i>to see, to look, to look at, to view, to behold; to observe; to perceive, to understand, to learn, to know</i>	1 st person singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #7200 BDB #906
châmâç (חַמָּץ) [pronounced <i>khaw-MAWS</i>]	<i>violence, wrong, cruelty, oppression; that which is gained by violence and wrongdoing</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #2555 BDB #329
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, וְ) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
rîyb (רִיב) [pronounced <i>ree^bv</i>]	<i>strife, dispute, controversy, legal contention, forensic cause; an argument used in a public discussion or debate</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #7379 BDB #936
b ^e (ב) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
îyr (רִיעַ) [pronounced <i>geer</i>]	<i>encampment, city, town</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #5892 BDB #746

Translation: ...for I have seen violence and strife in the city. David is speaking about Jerusalem, and he is on the outskirts of Jerusalem. He is not taking trips back and forth into Jerusalem to see what is going on. However,

⁵⁷ Taken from Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 55:9.

David has a number of people coming to him from Jerusalem, and they are reporting back to him details of what is going on in the city. Through their eyes, he sees the violence and strife in his city.

Obviously, there is a division between those people who support David and those who support Absalom. Under the current president, Barack Obama,⁵⁸ I have seen the greatest strife of my lifetime between his supporters and conservatives. I do not recall a time when there has been such a sharp divide between liberals and conservatives. This is what was occurring in the city of Jerusalem. You cannot change the rulers of a nation without there being great discord. Not every person who supported David packed up his things and went with David out of the city. Many of those who loved and respected David remained in their homes. Meanwhile, people with *hope and change* signs kept **getting in their faces** and arguing for Absalom, the new ruler, and the man of hope and change to their generation (given that this was a revolution; there was probably much more than simply political arguments breaking out).

David has also observed violence in the city, and this violence would be the violence of crime and of revolution. The idea of a government is to provide law and order, so that the rights of the individual are protected; so that we may peaceably enjoy what God has given us; and so that we can gather to learn about Who God is. Violence in a city makes this impossible. In the Watts riots in Los Angeles—how many of these people simultaneous took a break from rioting and looting and went to church? How many businesses had their property protected? This is a breakdown of the **Laws of Divine Establishment** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)).

We do not know exactly when David wrote this psalm. He may have completed it after defeating Absalom. If that is the case, Absalom's public rape of David's mistresses (2Sam. 16:20–23) would have been included in the violence subsequent to Absalom coming into Jerusalem. This also set a precedent and we have no idea how many hundreds or even tens of thousands of women who were thereafter raped by Absalom supporters.

Paraphrasing John Wesley: *Strife, Injustice and fraud, oppression and contention rule over Jerusalem instead of the public justice and peace that David had established.*⁵⁹ You will recall that Absalom complained about the unfairness and corruption of the court system; and life in Jerusalem under Absalom was very nearly anarchy.

One of the essential purposes of government, clearly known by our founding fathers, but not necessarily by people today, is the establishment of law and order, both within and without (by police and by the military, respectively). Absalom's rebellion caused violence and dissension in the land.

V. 9 reads: **Destroy [them], my Adonai; confuse [lit., divide up] their tongues; for I have seen violence and strife in the city.** Throughout this psalm, it is particularly generic. That is, at no time does David particularly identify Absalom, Ahithophel, or Jerusalem. The parallels are quite obvious; and I have given examples how parallels to our current political scene can be matched to this psalm. The idea is, this psalm, although written at a particular time concerning a particular situation, has much wider application. We pray for our opposition to be confused and disjointed; for them to have unreconcilable differences. The reason we desire this is, their governance has done nothing but spark violence and strife in the city.

Spurgeon summarizes this: *Anarchy had fermented among them, and the king [David] hoped that now it might come to pass that the very lawlessness which had exiled him would create weakness among his foes. Revolution devours its own children. They who are strong through violence, will sooner or later find that their strength is their death. Absalom and Ahithophel may raise the mob, but they cannot so easily rule it.*⁶⁰

Application: What do you pray for? In the time that I write, it is legitimate to pray for the United States and for President Barack Obama and for the branches of government which check and balance his power. We may pray

⁵⁸ I write this in 2012, and this will be posted *after* the 2012 election.

⁵⁹ John Wesley; *Explanatory Notes on the Whole Bible*; courtesy of e-sword, Psalm 55:9.

⁶⁰ Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *A Treasury of David*; e-Sword, Psalm 55:9.

for his radical views to be moderated by reality and by his opposition in order for a better outcome for the United States to occur. However, it is equally legitimate to pray against President Obama, to pray for the opposition to out-maneuver him, to out-think him, and to legislate that which is righteous. Such a prayer is legitimate because Obama has caused strife throughout our nation (but not wide-spread violence as of yet).

**Day and night they [violence and strife] go
about her over her walls
and iniquity and misfortune [are] in her midst.**

Psalm
55:10

**Day and night, they [violence and strife]
envelop her, [going] over her walls;
and iniquity and misfortune [are] within her.**

**Day and night, violence and strife envelop the city, going over her walls;
and there is iniquity and misfortune within those walls.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum (trans. By Cook)	Day and night they encircle it, around her walls, and misery and lies are in her midst.
Latin Vulgate	Day and night shall iniquity surround it upon its walls: and in the midst thereof are labour,...
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	Day and night they [violence and strife] go about her over her walls and iniquity and misfortune [are] in her midst.
Peshitta (Syriac)	Day and night they go about it, around its walls; injustice and mischief are in the midst of it.
Septuagint (Greek)	Day and night he shall go round about it upon its walls; iniquity and sorrow and unrighteousness are in the midst of it;...

Significant differences: The only off-note is the final word in the Latin, *labor*; no idea how that got there.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	Day and night they make their rounds on its walls, and evil and misery live inside it.
Contemporary English V. Easy-to-Read Version	...and they are like guards on patrol day and night. The city is full of trouble, evil,... They walk on its walls in the day and at night. There are *evil (things) and trouble inside it.
Good News Bible (TEV) <i>The Message</i>	...surrounding it day and night, filling it with crime and trouble. Day and night spoiling for a fight, trash piled in the streets, ...
New Berkeley Version	Day and night they go about on the walls; damage and trouble are in its center;...
New Century Version	Day and night they are all around its walls, and evil and trouble are everywhere inside.
New Life Bible	They go around on its walls day and night. Sin and wrong-doing are within it.
New Living Translation	Its walls are patrolled day and night against invaders, but the real danger is wickedness within the city.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Day and night He'll encircle her walls, for lawlessness and misery dwell in her midst.
Christian Community Bible	In the city I see strife and violence; ¹¹ day and night they prowl about its walls, while inside, evil prevails. A portion of the previous verse is added for context.

God's Word™	Day and night they go around on top of the city walls. Trouble and misery are everywhere.
New American Bible	For I see violence and strife in the city
	11 making rounds on its walls day and night.
	Within are mischief and trouble... A portion of the previous verse is added for context.
NIRV	Day and night they prowl around on top of its walls. The city is full of crime and trouble.
New Jerusalem Bible	...day and night they make their rounds along the city walls, Inside live malice and mischief,...
New Simplified Bible	Day and night they go around on top of the city walls. Trouble and misery are everywhere.
Revised English Bible	...day and night they encircle it, all along its walls; it is filled with trouble and mischief,...

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear	For vice and slavery are in its center and surround over its ramparts daytime and night.
Bible in Basic English	By day and night they go round the town, on the walls; trouble and sorrow are in the heart of it.
Complete Jewish Bible	Day and night they go about its walls; within are malice and mischief.
Ferar-Fenton Bible	Day and night they encircle the walls,— And passion and sorrow are there.
HCSB	...day and night they make the rounds on its walls. Crime and trouble are within it;...
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	...day and night they make their rounds on its walls; evil and mischief are inside it.
New Advent Bible	Day and night shall iniquity surround it upon its walls: and in the midst thereof are labour,...
NET Bible®	Day and night they walk around on its walls [Heb "day and night they surround it, upon its walls." Personified "violence and conflict" are the likely subjects. They are compared to watchmen on the city's walls.], while wickedness and destruction [Wickedness and destruction. These terms are also closely associated in Ps 7:14.] are within it.
NIV – UK	Day and night they prowl about on its walls; malice and abuse are within it.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Concordant Literal Version	By day and night they go round about it on its walls, And Lawlessness and Misery are within it.
English Standard V. – UK	Day and night they go round it on its walls, and iniquity and trouble are within it;...
The Geneva Bible	Day and night they go about it upon the walls thereof: mischief also and sorrow [are] in the midst of it. All laws and good orders are broken and only vice and dissolution reigns under Saul.
Modern KJV	They go around her on her walls by day and night; and trouble and mischief are in her midst.
Syndein	Day and night they {the conspirators} prowl around on her walls. Trouble and misery are in her midst.
Updated Bible Version 2.11	Day and night they go about it on its walls: Iniquity also and mischief are in the midst of it.

World English Bible
Young's Updated LT

Day and night they prowl around on its walls. Malice and abuse are also within her. By day and by night they go round it, on its walls. Both iniquity and perverseness are in its midst.

The gist of this verse: Throughout the entire city, there is evil and iniquity going on.

Psalm 55:10a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
yômâm (יָוֹם) [pronounced yoh- MAWM]	substantive: <i>day, daily, daytime</i> ; adverb: <i>by day, in the daytime</i>	substantive/adverb	Strong's #3119 BDB #401
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
lay ^e lâh (לַיְלִיל) [pronounced LAY-law]	<i>night; nightly, at night, in the night, during the night</i>	masculine singular noun; this word can take on adverbial qualities	Strong's #3915 BDB #538
çâbab (בָּבַב) [pronounced saw ^b - VAH ^{BV}]	<i>to come [go] about [in a place]; to surround, to encompass; to assemble around; to march, go about; to enclose, to envelop</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Poel imperfect; with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #5437 BDB #685
'al (עַל) [pronounced çah]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
chôwmâh (חֻמוֹת) [pronounced khoh-MAW]	walls	feminine plural noun with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #2346 BDB #327

Translation: Day and night they [violence and strife] envelop her, [going] over her walls;... A whole new reality has opened up for Jerusalem. The city is referred to with the 3rd person feminine singular suffix, used 3 times in this verse.

The plural verb appears to refer back to *violence and strife* from the previous verse. Therefore, this gives us, **day and night, violence and strife envelop the city, going over her walls**. Obviously there is a great deal of violence and strife throughout the city, as described in the previous verse. The idea appears to be that, with Absalom coming into the city with his army, violence and strife also come into the city, and envelop it and come over the walls just as an invading army might do. So, this is a metaphorical invasion by violence and strife.

Barnes: *Violence and strife...are here personified, and they seem to surround the city. They are everywhere moving, even on the very walls. They are like a besieging army. Both inside and outside; in the midst of the city and on the walls, there was nothing but violence and strife - conspiracy, rebellion, and crime.*⁶¹

⁶¹ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 55:10 (edited).

Psalm 55:10b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, וַ) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
'âven (אַוֵּן) [pronounced <i>AW-ven</i>]	<i>iniquity, misfortune which results from iniquity, trouble, adverse circumstances; idolatry; emptiness, vanity, falsehood, fraud</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #205 BDB #19
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, וַ) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
'âmâl (אִמְלָא) [pronounced <i>ġaw-MAWL</i>]	<i>intense labor, exhausting toil, exhaustion, miserable work, work and toil so tiring, you just want to cry; misery, travail; production from labor</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #5999 BDB #765
b ^e (ב) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
qereb (קֶרֶב) [pronounced <i>KEH-re^{bv}</i>]	<i>midst, among, from among [a group of people]; an [actual, physical] inward part; the inner person with respect to thinking and emotion; as a faculty of thinking or emotion; heart, mind, inner being; entrails [of sacrificial animals]</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #7130 BDB #899

With the bêyth preposition, it means *in the midst of, among, into the midst of* (after a verb of motion).

Translation: ...and iniquity and misfortune [are] within her. There is great iniquity and trouble within the city; there is misery within the city. Again, this is because the laws of divine establishment are not being followed; and because all of the strife, and the government which has no idea how to govern is in charge; and so things are out of control. Those who favor the new administration are favored; and those who oppose them are treated poorly.

Barnes: *When the city was filled with conspirators and rebels, then crime and anguish seemed to prevail in every part of it.*⁶²

Clarke: *The leaders [of the insurrection] are plotting continually; going about to strengthen their party, and to sow new dissensions by misrepresentation, hypocrisy, calumny, and lies.*⁶³

Gill: *[The city] was filled with wickedness within and without. As Aben Ezra observes, was like a circle; violence and strife were as a line round about it, and mischief and sorrow were in the centre of it. Furthermore, where mischief is, sorrow always follows.*⁶⁴

⁶² Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 55:10 (edited).

⁶³ Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 55:10.

⁶⁴ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 55:10 (edited).

And the Pulpit Commentary adds: *Society is disorganized. It is not only that wickedness prevails, but throughout the city there is violence and contention.*⁶⁵

But David has already described such a situation: *Observe, such a man is pregnant with evil, conceives trouble, and gives birth to deceit. He dug a pit and prepared it for others, but then fell into the hole himself. His trouble comes back against him and his violence falls on the top of his head* (Psalm 7:14–16). Although David was describing Saul here, is it equally applicable to both Absalom and to Ahithophel.

Now let's take in the previous verse with this one:

Destroy [them], my Adonai;
 confuse [lit., *divide up*] their tongues;
 for I have seen violence and strife in the city.
 Day and night, they [violence and strife] envelop her, [going] over her walls;
 and iniquity and misfortune [are] within her.

So we have day and night coming over the city, there is violence and strife going on all over the city walls. David calls for the cause of all this—Absalom and his army and his supporters—to be destroyed, so that their plans are confused, like the men at the tower of Babel, who, losing the ability to communicate, became disjointed, and going the separate ways.

We are actually only given one example of this, and that is the rape by Absalom of David's mistresses (2Sam. 16:20–23). This reveals many things: the contempt of Ahithophel for David and therefore, for his mistresses; and Absalom's complete willingness to do that which is completely wrong. As already mentioned, this probably set off a chain reaction of rapes and harsh treatment of those who believed in David's leadership. However, we may further extrapolate a great many types of sin, only suggested by the words *violence and strife*; and *iniquity and misfortune*.

What is reasonable is, regular reports were filed with the sons of the high priests, and these included the lawlessness which prevailed throughout the city, as if it had climbed the walls and infested the entire city.

People, from time to time, complain about God (both believers and unbelievers) and say, "Well, God should not allow this or that to occur." God allows, to whatever extent is possible, the function of our free will; and when law and order is removed from a city, suddenly things change dramatically. This is why law and order are so important in the laws of divine establishment. Those who watched Absalom could see great personal immorality; and, Absalom, by his actions, set the stage for great personal immorality throughout nation Israel. It is possible that God removed many of these people in the Absalom revolution for the betterment of Israel.

Application: Like it or not, when a nation is under discipline, God is going to remove groups of people in that nation. He might use flooding, rain, fire, hailstorms, snowstorms, tornados or hurricanes. Or God may use war or crime.

Application: This does not mean that we personally ought to withhold aid from this or that city due to some great natural disaster. God uses this grace action in His plan as well. Let's say that San Francisco, famous now for its gays and degeneracy, suffered a great catastrophe. Believers with the proper spiritual gifts should go to San Francisco and help them, gay or straight, regardless of political affiliation. You supply whatever help is needed; and, whenever possible, share the gospel. Being able to act during a geographical calamity is a spiritual gift; and the more doctrine that person knows, they better they are able to utilize that gift. You may be powerfully led to help, which may involve renting a U-Haul and carrying all the bottled water that you can afford to buy to this or that disaster site. If that is what God is moving you to do, then that is what you do. Just make certain that you know the gospel and can easily share it, without legalism.

⁶⁵ *The Pulpit Commentary*; 1880-1919; by Joseph S. Exell, Henry Donald Maurice Spence-Jones, courtesy of e-sword, Psalm 55:10.

Back to Jerusalem. Israel is obviously facing some limited discipline from God. Somehow, this incompetent Absalom, who looks good and has this great personality, pushes himself on Israel as their new king, and a lot of people are seduced by him. This shows a tremendous lack of personal discernment. Their rejection of David reveals a great deal of self-righteousness. As a result, God, in this revolution, will discipline Israel.

Listen, if the people of Israel were doctrinally squared away, interested in God's Word and God's will, then when this little pipsqueak nobody Absalom comes along, with hundreds crying out "Absalom is king in Hebron;" most discerning believers would be unable to hold back their laughter. Because that discernment is not nation-wide, God will allow this revolution to discipline Israel and to remove some undesirables.

Application: Louisiana, as a state, was, for a very long time, very corrupt and very mixed up. Hurricane Katrina came along and changed everything. Their city was cleansed of a great deal of their welfare population; and those who survived worked hard to build the city back up again. That hard work is what any geographical area needs. What has happened since then is a reduction of political corruption, a marked improvement in the schools, and a new more lawful New Orleans.

Destruction [is] in her midst and does not depart from her plaza fraud and deceit.

Psalm
55:11

[There is] destruction in her [the city's] midst and fraud and deceit is not departing from her plaza.

There is destruction and ruin in the city's midst and fraud and deceit continue operating in the city plaza.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum (trans. By Cook)	Tumult is in her midst, and lies and deceit do not depart from her square.
Latin Vulgate	And injustice. And usury and deceit have not departed from its streets.
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	Destruction [is] in her midst and does not depart from her plaza fraud and deceit.
Peshitta (Syriac)	Wickedness is in the midst of it; deceit and guile depart not from its streets.
Septuagint (Greek)	...and usury and craft have not failed from its streets.

Significant differences: The Greek appears to be missing the first phrase; the Latin is missed about half of that phrase. In the second phrase, the Hebrew word I translated as *plaza* could also be translated *street (s)*.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	Disaster lives inside it; oppression and fraud never leave the town square.
Contemporary English V. Easy English	...and corruption. Troublemakers and liars freely roam the streets. Cruel men that destroy people are in the city. People that tell *lies never leave her streets.
Easy-to-Read Version	There is too much crime in the streets. People are lying and cheating everywhere.
Good News Bible (TEV) <i>The Message</i>	There is destruction everywhere; the streets are full of oppression and fraud. Even shopkeepers gouging and cheating in broad daylight.
New Berkeley Version	...violence is within her, and from her market place oppression and deceit are never absent [Without God earth becomes hell. It all sounds like a period of rebellion.].
New Century Version	Destruction is everywhere in the city;

	trouble and lying never leave its streets.
New Life Bible	Destroying powers are in the city. Trouble and lies never leave its streets.
New Living Translation	Everything is falling apart; threats and cheating are rampant in the streets.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	There's always injustice within her squares, as well as treachery and high-interest loans.
Beck's American Translation	...and destruction is also there, oppression and cheating remain in its streets.
Christian Community Bible	Forces of tyranny and treachery are at work undermining the city.
<i>God's Word</i> TM	Destruction is everywhere. Oppression and fraud never leave the streets.
New American Bible	...treachery is in its midst; oppression and fraud never leave its streets. Jer 5:1; 6:6; Ez 22:2; Heb 1:3; Zep. 3:1.
NIRV	Forces that destroy are at work inside it. Its streets are full of people who cheat others and take advantage of them.
New Jerusalem Bible	...inside lives destruction, tyranny and treachery never absent from its central square.
Revised English Bible	...destruction is rife within it; its public square is never free from oppression and deceit.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear Bible in Basic English	Mischief is in its center: Intrigue and deceit never depart from her streets. Evil is there; cruel rule and deceit are ever in the streets.
Complete Jewish Bible	Ruin is rife within it, oppression and fraud never leave its streets.
Ferar-Fenton Bible	There, mischief that will not depart; With arrogance, malice, and fraud.
HCSB	...destruction is inside it; oppression and deceit never leave its marketplace.
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	Malic is within it; fraud and deceit never leave its square.
Judaica Press Complete T. NET Bible®	Destruction is within it, and blows and deceit do not move out of its square. Disaster is within it; violence [Or "injury, harm."] and deceit do not depart from its public square.
New Heart English Bible	Destructive forces are within her. Threats and lies do not depart from her streets.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

<i>he Amplified Bible</i>	Violence <i>and</i> ruin are within it; fraud and guile do not depart from its streets <i>and</i> marketplaces.
Concordant Literal Version	Woes are within it, And Fraud and Deceit do not remove from its square.
Darby Translation	Perversities are in the midst thereof; and oppression and deceit depart not from its streets.
English Standard Version	Day and night they go round it on its walls, and iniquity and trouble are within it; ruin is in its midst; oppression and fraud do not depart from its marketplace. Previous verse added for context.
exeGesés companion Bible	...calamity is in the midst: fraud and deceit depart not from her broadways.
Hebrew Names Version	Destructive forces are within her. Threats and lies don't depart from her streets.

LTHB NASB New RSV
 Covetings are in her midst; oppression and guile will not depart from her streets.
 Destruction is in her midst;
 Oppression and deceit do not depart from her streets [Or plaza].
¹⁰ Day and night they go around it
 on its walls,
 and iniquity and trouble are within it;
¹¹ ruin is in its midst;
 oppression and fraud
 do not depart from its market-place. Both verses are included here for context.

Syndein
 A Voice in the Wilderness
 Webster's Bible Translation
 Young's Literal Translation
 Destructive forces are at work in the city. Threats and lies never leave her streets.
 Lust is in its midst; oppression and guile do not depart from its streets.
 Destructive forces are within her. Threats and lies don't depart from her streets.
 Mischiefs are in its midst. Fraud and deceit depart not from its street.

The gist of this verse: David further describes the city as having calamity in its midst. The marketplace is filled with fraud and deceit.

Psalm 55:11a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
hāvâh (הַוָּאָה) [pronounced <i>hahv-VAW</i>]	<i>desire; ruin, fall, calamity, destruction; injury, mischief; chasm, deep pit, hell, gulf</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #1942 BDB #217
The verbal cognate is onomatopoetic hâvâh (הַוָּאָה) [pronounced <i>haw-VAW</i>], which properly means <i>to breathe</i> . Our noun is taken from the Piel or intensive stem, which would mean <i>to breathe heavily</i> , as if you are running after something. When you chase after something, it is because you desire it or lust after it. This can also mean that you rush headlong into something, which could mean your <i>fall, ruin, calamity, injury</i> , or even <i>deep pit</i> .			
b ^e (ב) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
qereb (קֶרֶב) [pronounced <i>KEH-re^bv</i>]	<i>midst, among, from among [a group of people]; an [actual, physical] inward part; the inner person with respect to thinking and emotion; as a faculty of thinking or emotion; heart, mind, inner being; entrails [of sacrificial animals]</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #7130 BDB #899

With the bēyth preposition, it means *in the midst of, among, into the midst of* (after a verb of motion).

Translation: [There is] destruction in her [the city's] midst... We continue with more 3rd person feminine singular suffixes, referring back to the city (which would be Jerusalem). We have a repeat of the phrase *in her midst*, so a similar sentence structure is called for.

Again, what is the order of the day is lawlessness and a lack of the laws of divine establishment. Recall that what Absalom promised to fix was the unfairness of the courts, and he has instead increased injustice in the land.

Application: It is not unusual for a political candidate to promise *A* in the election and deliver *not A* instead after being elected. Candidate Obama made all kinds of promises as a young, unknown candidate, and many of these promises went by the wayside when he became president, despite his party's control over Congress.

Psalm 55:11b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
lô' (לֹא or לוֹל) [pronounced <i>low</i>]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
mûwsh (שׁוּמ) [pronounced <i>moosh</i>]	<i>to remove, to depart; to let remove; to let prey go; to give way [to]; to withdraw [from]</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #4185 BDB #559
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>mihn</i>]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, beyond, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
r ^e chôwb (בּוֹרָחַ) [pronounced <i>r^ekh-OH^BV</i>]	<i>broad open place, plaza, open square</i>	feminine singular noun with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #7339 BDB #932
Jamieson, Fausset and Brown: " <i>wide places</i> " [can refer to] <i>markets, courts of justice, and any public place.</i> ⁶⁶			
tôk ^e (תּוֹכַ) [pronounced <i>tohk^e</i>]	<i>injury, oppression oppressor; fraud, deceit; deceitful</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #8496 BDB #1067
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
mir ^e mâh (הַמְרָמָה) [pronounced <i>mir^e-MAW</i>]	<i>deceit, deception, duplicity, evil cunning, treachery</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #4820 BDB #941

Translation: ...and fraud and deceit is not departing from her plaza. Then David describes what this destruction is: fraud and deceit in the market place (which is the plaza). People went there to sell their produce and their production and to trade. Because there is no true justice in the land, many would then cheat in these business deals.

Barnes writes: *Deceit and guile...are everywhere. They are found in every street and alley. They pervade all classes of the people. The word rendered "deceit" means rather "oppression." This was connected with "guile," or with "deceit." That is, wrong would be everywhere committed, and the perpetration of those wrongs would be connected with false representations, and false pretenses - a state of things that might be expected in the unnatural rebellion under Absalom.*⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; 1871; from e-sword, Psalm 55:11.

⁶⁷ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 55:11 (slightly edited).

You may ask, *David is off on the Mount of Olives leading his followers toward eastern Israel; how the heck does he know what is happening in Jerusalem?* David set up a spy network in Jerusalem, (2Sam. 15:25–37) and all that happens on the ground is reported to him.⁶⁸

Now let's look at the previous 3 verses together:

Destroy [them], my Adonai;
confuse [lit., *divide up*] their tongues;
for I have seen violence and strife in the city.
Day and night, they [violence and strife] envelop her, [going] over her walls;
and iniquity and misfortune [are] within her.
[There is] destruction in her [the city's] midst
and fraud and deceit is not departing from her plaza.

There is violence and there is crime throughout the city. They have invaded this city as if a foreign army which has stormed the walls. This has completely destroyed the concept of law and order as well as personal integrity within the city. In the marketplace, fraud and deceit are the order of the day.

Application: There are rabble rousers who have many promises for the simple, and they encourage you to riot or to revolt; but what they promise is not even close to what you will experience. Revolution results in lawlessness, anarchy and widespread bloodshed. It does not result in equality and fairness.

People, especially those on the left, are often drawn into revolution. Revolution is always wrong. See the **Doctrine of Revolution** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). We get the government that we deserve. We have seen a dozen or so middle eastern countries descend into revolution in the past couple of years. At the point of writing, most of these countries have not come to an end of this revolution, but those that appear near, are persecuting Christians like there is no tomorrow.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

David is Distressed Because His Enemy Was Once a Close Friend

For not my enemy defying me
and I am bearing [him];
not one hating me,
upon me he has caused to magnify,
and I am hidden from him.

Psalm
55:12

For [it is] not my enemy [who] defies me,
then I can bear [him];
not one who hates me
[who] makes [himself] great against me,
then I could conceal [myself] from him;...

I could put up with an enemy who defies me;
or one who hates me who treats me with scorn—I could easily avoid him;...

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum (trans. By Cook) For an enemy will not belittle me, else I would bear it; my foe has not vaunted himself against me, else I would hide from *his presence*.

⁶⁸ It is remarkable that the Bible spends so much time on the spy network that David organizes.

Latin Vulgate	For if my enemy had reviled me, I would verily have borne with it. And if he that hated me had spoken great things against me, I would perhaps have hidden my self from him.
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	For not my enemy defying me and I am bearing [him]; not one hating me, upon me he has caused to magnify, and I am hidden from him;...
Peshitta (Syriac)	For it was not mine enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it; neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him.
Septuagint (Greek)	For if an enemy had reproached me, I would have endured it; and if one who hated me had spoken vauntingly against me, I would have hid myself from him.

Significant differences: I don't think the first verb in the targum is quite right.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	It's not an enemy that is insulting me- I could handle that. It's not someone who hates me who is exalted over me- I could hide from them.
Contemporary English V.	My enemies are not the ones who sneer and make fun. I could put up with that or even hide from them.
Easy English	For it was not an enemy that laughed at me. That would not have hurt me. It was not someone that fought against me and said bad things (to me). I could have hidden from him!
Easy-to-Read Version	If it were an enemy insulting me, I could bear it. If it were my enemies attacking me, I could hide.
Good News Bible (TEV)	If it were an enemy making fun of me, I could endure it; if it were an opponent boasting over me, I could hide myself from him.
<i>The Message</i>	This isn't the neighborhood bully mocking me--I could take that. This isn't a foreign devil spitting invective--I could tune that out.
New Berkeley Version	For it is not an enemy who reproaches me; that I could bear; it is not a hater, who vaunts himself against me; then I could hide myself from him;...
New Century Version	It was not an enemy insulting me. I could stand that. It was not someone who hated me. I could hide from him.
New Life Bible	I would be able to take it if one who hates me were putting me to shame. I could hide from him. It is not one who hates me who has put himself up against me.
New Living Translation	It is not an enemy who taunts me- I could bear that. It is not my foes who so arrogantly insult me- I could have hidden from them.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Had I been slandered by my enemy, I would just have endured it. And if someone who detests me had spoken great words, I would have just hidden from him.
Beck's American Translation	If it were the enemy who insulted me— that I could bear; if it were one that hated me who attacked me— I could hide from him.
Christian Community Bible	If it were a rival insulting me, I could bear with him; if it were a foe in pursuit of me, I could hide from him.
New American Bible	For it is not an enemy that reviled me - that I could bear - Not a foe who viewed me with contempt, from that I could hide.
NIRV	If an enemy were making fun of me, I could stand it. If he were looking down on me, I could hide from him.
New Simplified Bible	If an enemy had insulted me, then I could tolerate it. If someone who hated me had attacked me, then I could hide from him.
Revised English Bible	It was no enemy that taunted me, or I should have avoided him; no foe that treated me with scorn, or I should have kept out of his way.
Today's NIV	If an enemy were insulting me, I could endure it; if a foe were rising against me, I could hide.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear	No enemy insults me. I <i>could</i> lift <i>that!</i> If my haters never grew toward me, I <i>could</i> hide from him.
Bible in Basic English	For it was not my hater who said evil of me; that would have been no grief to me; it was not one outside the number of my friends who made himself strong against me, or I would have kept myself from him in a secret place;...
Complete Jewish Bible	For it was not an enemy who insulted me; if it had been, I could have borne it. It was not my adversary who treated me with scorn; if it had been, I could have hidden myself.
Ferar-Fenton Bible	I could have borne, if a foe had reviled, Or against me an enemy rose,— For I could have hidden from them.
HCSB	Now, it is not an enemy who insults me--otherwise I could bear it; it is not a foe who rises up against me--otherwise I could hide from him.
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	It is not an enemy who reviles me —I could bear that; it is not my foe who vaunts himself against me —I could hide from him;...
Judaica Press Complete T.	For no enemy reviled me that I should bear it; my enemy did not open his mouth wide against me, that I should hide from him.
NET Bible®	Indeed [Or "for."], it is not an enemy who insults me, or else I could bear it; it is not one who hates me who arrogantly taunts me [Heb "[who] magnifies against me." See Pss 35:26; 38:16.], or else I could hide from him.
NIV – UK	If an enemy were insulting me,

I could endure it;
if a foe were rising against me,
I could hide.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Concordant Literal Version	For it is not an enemy who is reproaching me; Then I could bear it; It is not one hating me who magnifies himself against me; Then I could conceal myself from him;...
English Standard Version	For it is not an enemy who taunts me-- then I could bear it; it is not an adversary who deals insolently with me-- then I could hide from him.
The Geneva Bible	For [it was] not an enemy [that] reproached me; then I could have borne [it]: neither [was it] he that hated me [that] did magnify [himself] against me; then I would have hid myself from him. If my open enemy had sought by hurt, I could better have avoided him.
LTHB	For it is not an enemy reproaching me, or I could bear it; it is not one who hates me who is magnifying himself against me; or I would hide myself from him.
New RSV	It is not enemies who taunt me-- I could bear that; it is not adversaries who deal insolently with me-- I could hide from them.
Webster's Bible Translation	For [it was] not an enemy [that] reproached me; then I could have borne [it]: neither [was it] he that hated me [that] magnified [himself] against me; then I would have hid myself from him:...
World English Bible	For it was not an enemy who insulted me, Then I could have endured it. Neither was it he who hated me who raised himself up against me, Then I would have hid myself from him.
Young's Updated LT	For an enemy reproaches me not, or I bear it , He who is hating me Has not magnified himself against me, Or I hide from him.

The gist of this verse: The problem that David has is, he is not dealing with a long-time enemy, where his hatred could be understood and easily dealt with; nor is this someone who is arrogant; David could easily avoid someone like that.

Although this is a long verse, it really should have been combined with v. 13 to get the whole picture.

Psalm 55:12a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced <i>kee</i>]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
lô' (לֹא or לוֹא) [pronounced <i>low</i>]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
'âyab (אֵיבָב) [pronounced <i>aw-YA^BV</i>]	<i>enemy, the one being at enmity with you; enmity, hostility</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #340 & #341 BDB #33

As a singular substantive, this is spelled 'ôyêb (אֵיבָב) [pronounced *oh-YAY^BV*]. As Strong's #340, this is the Qal active participle of the verb; as Strong's #341, this is the substantive. It is precisely the same word, despite the different Strong's #'s.

Psalm 55:12a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
châraph (חָרַף) [pronounced khah-RAHF]	<i>to defy, to reproach, to scorn, to reproach, to scornfully defy; to discredit [taunt, shame, rebuke]</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Piel imperfect with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #2778 BDB #357 & #358

Translation: For [it is] not my enemy [who] defies me,... This verse tells us who is not a problem for David; he is not facing a person enemy who defies him or taunts him. So, this would even let out Saul, I would think, whose animosity was unmistakable after awhile (although, at first, it seemed to catch David off guard). In any case, David knew just how difficult that Saul could be, going back to when David played music for him.

Again, this seems to have application to both Absalom and Ahithophel.

Psalm 55:12b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
nâsâ' (נָסָא) [pronounced naw-SAW]	<i>to lift up, to bear, to carry</i>	1 st person singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5375 (and #4984) BDB #669

Nâsâ' actually has a variety of Qal meanings: It means ❶ *to take up, to lift up, to bear up*; ❷ *to lift up someone's head* (this is used in a favorable way; i.e., it is mused to mean *to make one cheerful or merry*); ❸ *to lift up one's own countenance, i.e., to be cheerful, full of confidence*, ❹ *to bear, to carry*, ❺ *to lift up in a balance, i.e., to weigh carefully*; ❻ *to bear one's sin or punishment*, ❼ *to lift up the voice* (this can be used in the sense of bemoaning, crying, crying out, rejoicing, *to lift up any with the voice* (a song, an instrument); ❽ *to lift up the soul* (i.e., *to wish for, to desire*); ❾ *to have the heart lifted up* (i.e., they are ready and willing to do something); ❿ *to bear one's sin* (in such a way to expiate the sin, to make atonement for the sin, to pardon the sin). This list does not exhaust the various connotations for nâsâ'. BDB adds the following: *to support, to sustain, to endure; to take, to take away, to carry off, to forgive*.

Translation: ...then I can bear [him];... If this was an enemy of David's, then he could bear that problem; he could understand it and put up with it. Life is fairly easy when dealing with people who are clearly your enemies.

Barnes writes: *When he says that it is not an enemy that did this, the meaning is that it was not one who had been an avowed and open foe. The severest part of the trial did not arise from the fact that it was done by such an one, for that he could have borne. That which overwhelmed him was the fact that the reproach came from one who had been his friend; or, the reproach which he felt most keenly came from one whom he had regarded as a personal confidant. It is not to be supposed that the psalmist means to say that he was not reproached by his enemies, for the whole structure of the psalm implies that this was so; but his anguish was made complete and unbearable by the discovery that one especially who had been his friend was found among those who reproached and calumniated him.*⁶⁹

⁶⁹ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 55:12.

Psalm 55:12c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
לֹא (לֹא or לוֹל) [pronounced low]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
שֹׂנֵא (שֹׂנֵא) [pronounced saw-NAY]	<i>hating, having animosity; the one hating, the hater; an enemy</i>	Piel participle with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #8130 BDB #971

Translation: ...not one who hates me... David's problem is not a person who hates him. Or, David's problem is not someone who has had a clear disdain for David over a period of several years.

Barnes writes: *Reproaches from an enemy, being known to be an enemy, is something that we expect. We attribute them to the very fact that such an one is an enemy, and that he feels it necessary to sustain himself by reproaching and calumniating us. We trust also that the world will understand them in this same way. In such a case there is only the testimony against us of one who is avowedly our foe, and who has every inducement to utter malicious words against us in order to sustain his own cause. But the case is different when the accuser and slanderer is one who has been our intimate friend. He is supposed to know all about us. He has been admitted to our counsels. He has known our purposes and plans. He can speak not "slanderosly" but "knowingly." It is supposed that he could have no motive to speak ill of us except his own conviction of truth, and that it could be only the strongest conviction of truth - the existence of facts to which not even a friend could close his eyes - that could induce him to abandon us, and hold us up to reprech and scorn. So Ahithophel - the confidential counselor and friend of David - would be supposed to be acquainted with his secret plans and his true character; and hence, reproaches from such a one became unendurable.*⁷⁰

Psalm 55:12d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
עַל (עַל) [pronounced gahl]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
גָּדַל (גָּדַל) [pronounced gaw-DAHL]	<i>to make great, to cause to be lifted high, to magnify, to do great things (in a good or bad sense)</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Hiphil perfect	Strong's #1431 BDB #152

Translation: ...[who] makes [himself] great against me,... David is not dealing with a man who simply exalts himself next to David; he acts as if he is the end all be all when he is with David. That is not the kind of person that David was dealing with.

The idea here is, someone who needs to put you down in order to build themselves up.

Application: This 2012 presidential campaign has been perfect to illustrate these things. If President Obama did not have time to vaunt himself next to Mitt Romney, then he would have almost nothing to say. He has run on the platform, "No matter what you think of me, have you seen this other guy? He is the absolute worst!" In our

⁷⁰ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 55:12 (edited).

political system, when an incumbent cannot run on his own record, then he has to point at his challenger and make his challenger seem far worse.

Psalm 55:12e			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
çâthar (סתר) [pronounced saw-THAR]	<i>to be hidden, to lie hid; to be covered over; to hide oneself</i>	1 st person singular, Niphal imperfect	Strong's #5641 BDB #711
min (מִן) [pronounced mihn]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of; from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, beyond, more than</i>	preposition of separation with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #4480 BDB #577

Translation: ...then I could conceal [myself] from him;... In a situation like this, David could avoid such a man. David does not have to spend time with a man like this. Such a man can only make himself look good when putting down the people he is with. Therefore, the solution is, David could simply avoid someone like this.

And you, a [mortal] man, as my evaluation, my prince and my acquaintance.

Psalm 55:13

...but [it is] you, O man, as my evaluator, my prince [or, friend, intimate] and my acquaintance.

...but, instead, the personal traitor is you, O man, who evaluates and assesses situations for me; my high-ranking prince as well as my acquaintance.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum (trans. By Cook)	<i>But you, O Achitophel, a man[85] who is like me; a leader who taught me, and who tells me wisdom.</i>
Latin Vulgate	<i>But you a man of one mind, my guide, and my familiar,...</i>
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	<i>And you, a [mortal] man, as my evaluation, my prince and my acquaintance.</i>
Peshitta (Syriac)	<i>But it was you, a man mine equal, my kinsman, and my friend.</i>
Septuagint (Greek)	<i>But you, O like-minded man, my guide, and my acquaintance,...</i>

Significant differences: After, "You, a man..." David says something about this friend, but it is quite unclear (see the **Hebrew exegesis**), so it is not out of the question for each of the ancient languages to give their best interpretation and then this is filtered through the English language as well.

These ancient languages seemed to struggle with the next word that is applied to David's friend, and they appear to offer up something different than is in the Hebrew.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V. Easy-to-Read Version	But it was my closest friend, the one I trusted most. But it is you, my companion, my colleague, my friend. {You are giving me troubles.}
Good News Bible (TEV) <i>The Message</i> New Berkeley Version	But it is you, my companion, my colleague and close friend. It's you! We grew up together! You! My best friend! ...but you, a man regarded as an equal with me [In rank none was equal with King David; but in counsel Ahithophel was not below him (2Sam. 15:12), but sided with Absalom against him.], my companion and my familiar friend,...
New Century Version	But it was you, a man just *like me! We did things together, you were my best friend!
New Life Bible	But it is you, a man like myself, one who has gone with me, my close friend.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible Beck's American Translation	But it's you, O man, someone like me. a leader of mine and a Seer! But it's you, a man of my own number, my friend and one I knew so well!
Christian Community Bible <i>God's Word™</i> New American Bible	But it is you, an equal of mine, my bosom friend, my companion... But it is you, my equal, my best friend, one I knew so well! But it was you, my other self, my comrade and friend,... Ps 41:10; Jer 9:3; Mt 26:21-24 par.
NIRV	But it's you, someone like myself. It's my companion, my close friend.
New Jerusalem Bible Revised English Bible	But you, a person of my own rank, a comrade and dear friend,... It was you, a man of my own sort, a comrade, my own dear friend,...

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear Bible in Basic English Ferar-Fenton Bible	But you, a mortal of my household, know me and my assessment! But it was you, my equal, my guide, my well-loved friend. But you, man, were close by my side,– You were my companion and friend!–
HCSB Judaica Press Complete T. NET Bible®	But it is you, a man who is my peer, my companion and good friend! And you are a man of my equal, my prince and my esteemed one. But it is you [It is you. The psalmist addresses the apparent ringleader of the opposition, an individual who was once his friend.], a man like me [Heb "a man according to my value," i.e., "a person such as I."], my close friend in whom I confided [Heb "my close friend, one known by me."].

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Concordant Literal Version Context Group Version	But it is you, a mortal of my own rank, My mentor and my close acquaintance. But it was you, [a] common man like me, My companion, and my familiar confidant.
<i>Emphasized Bible</i>	But it is, thou, a man esteemed as mine equal, mine associate, and mine acquaintance;...
exeGesés companion Bible	...but you - a man my equal, my chiliarch whom I know.
LTHB NASB	But <i>it is</i> you, a man of my rank, my friend and my associate. But it is you, a man my equal [Lit according to my valuation], My companion and my familiar friend [Or acquaintance];...

Syndein But it is you . . . a man who is my equal . . . my associate . . .my close friend.
 {reference to Ahithophel, Absalom, and Amasa (see 2Samuel 17:25) (the 3 A's)}
 World English Bible But it was you, a man like me, My companion, and my familiar friend.
 Young's Updated LT But you, a man—as my equal, My familiar friend, and my acquaintance.

The gist of this verse: David finds himself betrayed by an equal, by a close friend.

Vv. 12–13 belong together; and they will be joined at the end of this verse and then this context.

Psalm 55:13a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
'attâh (אַתָּה) [pronounced <i>aht-TAW</i>]	<i>you</i> (often, the verb <i>to be</i> is implied)	2 nd person masculine singular, personal pronoun	Strong's #859 BDB #61
The targum inserts <i>Ahithophel</i> here. The Chaldee paraphrase also names Ahithophel as the person who is meant here. ⁷¹			
'ĕnôwsh (אֲנוּשׁ) [pronounced <i>en-OHSH</i>]	<i>mortal, mortal man, mankind; fallen man, depraved man, feeble man [liable to disease and calamity]; peons, hoi polloi, the great unwashed, rabble</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #582 BDB #60
kaph or k ^e (כּ) [pronounced <i>k</i>]	<i>like, as, just as; according to, after; about, approximately</i>	preposition of comparison, resemblance or approximation	No Strong's # BDB #453
'êrek ^e (עֵרֶךְ) [pronounced <i>Ā-rek^e</i>]	<i>order, row, estimate, arrangement; estimation, evaluation, determination of a value, price; assessment, taxation</i>	masculine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #6187 BDB #789
I believe the idea is, Ahithophel could take a look at the big picture. David could tell Ahithophel what he was going to do, and give him the details; and then Ahithophel could consider these pieces on the chessboard and offer some modification, as a result of his own personal evaluation.			

⁷¹ According to Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 55:9–15.

Psalm 55:13a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
<p>Barnes gives a different view of this word: <i>But it was you, a man mine equal</i> – Margin, “a man according to my rank.” Septuagint, <i>isopsuche</i>(ἰσόψυχε), which means, equal-souled, like-souled, “second self” (Thompson); Vulgate, “unanimus,” of the same mind; Luther, “Geselle,” companion. The Hebrew word used here –êrek^e (ערק) – means, properly: a row or pile, as of the showbread piled one loaf on another (Ex. 40:23); then it would naturally mean one of the same row or pile; of the same rank or condition. The word also means price, estimation, or value (Job. 28:13 Lev. 5:15, 5:18 6:6). Here the expression may mean a man “according to my estimation, value, or price;” that is, of the same value as myself (Gesenius, Lexicon); or more probably it means a man of my own rank; according to my condition; that is, a man whom I esteemed as my equal, or whom I regarded and treated as a friend.⁷² I think my approach is more accurate, but I do respect the opinion of Barnes. Suffice to say, given the view of the Greek, the Latin and then of Barnes, this is a difficult term in this context.</p>			
<p>Many commentators have weighed in on this word in particular. Gill writes: <i>The word יכרעק may be rendered "according to my appointment" (w), ordination, or constitution; Judas being a man appointed and ordained to be an apostle of Christ with the rest: or, "according to my esteem" (x); being had in great esteem and familiarity with Christ: or, "according to my order" (y), rank and class; being taken into his family, admitted to his table, where he sat down and ate with him, as if he was his equal.</i>⁷³</p>			
<p>The Pulpit Commentary: <i>Literally, a man according to my valuing; i.e. one of my social rank, with whom I was on familiar terms.</i>⁷⁴</p>			

Translation: ...but [it is] you, O man, as my evaluator,... In the Hebrew, this is a sudden, great dramatic turn. Abruptly, in this psalm, David is so struck by the emotion of this betrayal, that he speaks directly to Ahithophel, as if he were standing before him. “But you, O man!” He inserts *man* so that we know David is not speaking once again to God (v. 9).

Spurgeon pointed this out, which no other expositor seemed to catch: “*But it was you.*” He sees him. The poetic fury is on him, he sees the traitor as though he stood before him in flesh and blood. He singles him out, he points his finger at him, he challenges him to his face. “But you!” Et tu, Brute? And you, Ahithophel, are you here? Judas, do you betray the Son of Man?⁷⁵

Instead of an enemy who has treated David with contempt, it is his main man, Ahithophel, a man who is renown for his military genius, the one area where Absalom is lacking. Here, although the final word of this phrase means *order, row, estimate, arrangement; estimation, evaluation, determination of a value, price; assessment;* I am going to assume here that this stands for the man who makes assessments of the circumstances that David is in. He evaluates the circumstances and then gives David brilliant advice. There is no one closer than a war buddy.

The idea here is, Ahithophel was the big picture guy. He could see 10 moves ahead on the chessboard; and he could visualize 20 major moving parts interacting, and see how this proceeds out into the future. David might lay out his plans going forward, and Ahithophel listens, thinks about it, evaluates what David is thinking, and offers some modifications, which David recognizes as being brilliant.

⁷² Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 55:13 (edited).

⁷³ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 55:13 (slightly edited). Gill's references, as taken from e-sword: (w) "Secundum dispositionem, sc. ordinationem et constitutionem meam", Calvinus in Michaelis. (x) "Juxta estimationem meam", Vatablus, Gejerus, Michaelis; "qui par mihi estimatus est", Piscator. (y) "Secundum ordinem meum", Mollerus.

⁷⁴ *The Pulpit Commentary*; 1880-1919; by Joseph S. Exell, Henry Donald Maurice Spence-Jones, courtesy of e-sword, Psalm 55:13.

⁷⁵ Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *A Treasury of David*; e-Sword, Psalm 55:12–14.

In this is a great part of the problem for David. Due to his close association with Ahithophel, Ahithophel knows David; Ahithophel knows how David thinks and plans. For a long time, Ahithophel was with David, guiding his moves on the chessboard, and suddenly, Ahithophel has gone over to sit opposite David.

Application: (And I take this as much from Clint Eastwood as I do from the context of this verse) “A man’s gotta know his limitations.” David knows his own strategic abilities and he knows Ahithophel’s. He knows that Ahithophel can out-think him on the battlefield. So, this is not just a betrayal, which digs deep into David’s emotions; but this is also a possible game-changer when it comes to Absalom’s revolution. Upon hearing that Ahithophel had sided with the enemy, David said, “[O Jehovah, frustrate the counsel of Ahithophel!](#)” (2Sam. 15:31b). David was no match for Ahithophel, in terms of strategy and tactics, and he knew this. He knew his limitations and therefore prayed to God with regards to this matter.

Application: There is a balance between the function of our free will on this earth and enjoining the Lord to help us. Much of this comes down to a knowledge of Bible doctrine as well as self-knowledge of our own limitations. Let’s say we need \$20,000 and there seems to be no way to get this. We pray to God. But, that does not mean that we simply go over to a park bench and sit there and wait for God to rain down \$20,000 from the sky. Assuming that this is a legitimate request, and God says, “Yes,” we may have to take a second job; we may need to begin to work a second shift. We know what we can do and we know what God can do; and part of our faith in Him in the interplay between these things. David recognizes that he would be outmatched by Ahithophel when it comes to strategy on the battlefield. Therefore, he prays to God. But then, God’s response is to send David Hushai, an old friend. David picks it up from there. Do you see the interplay? Circumstances necessitate prayer, God answers the prayer, but then David needs to act on God’s answer. David does not meander over to a park bench and wait for God to take Ahithophel out of the picture. God then uses Hushai as a deep cover mole; and it is Hushai’s function as a mole in the Absalom organization which turns the tide of this revolution. David has to set this all up. So when Hushai meets David at the top of the Mount of Olives, David has to decide how to properly employ Hushai. See [2Samuel 15 \(HTML\)](#) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)) for the full story on this.

Application: It is clear in our country (I write this in 2012), that our nation needs our prayers and lots of them. But that does not mean that we simply pray and then go sit on a park bench. Nor does this mean that we politically active to the detriment of the intake of doctrine. As believers, we need to understand the laws of divine establishment; we need to understand God’s plan for a national entity. Then we need to act accordingly, which could include several things. First of all, our nation is made better by our own personal integrity in business practices and in personal interaction. Secondly, since we live in a democracy, voting is not just a right or a privilege, it is a responsibility. Just because we were raised Democrat or Republican, does not mean that we ought to just simply vote that way; nor should we vote on vague impressions of a candidate. And if we are taken in by the charisma of a candidate, then we need to step back and be doubly careful of our thinking of this candidate, as that charisma can be blinding. And, all the time that we spend evaluating the issues, we must be careful not to neglect Bible doctrine. If we retrogress as a believer, but vote for the right candidate, then we screwed up. Our spiritual lives and spiritual service are paramount; but we also have a responsibility to our country.

Application: Do not neglect personal integrity in your life. Jer. 9:2–9 [If only I had a traveler's lodging place in the wilderness, I would abandon my people and depart from them, for they are all adulterers, a solemn assembly of treacherous people. They bent their tongues like their bows; lies and not faithfulness prevail in the land, for they proceed from one evil to another, and they do not take Me into account. This is the LORD's declaration. Everyone has to be on guard against his friend. Don't trust any brother, for every brother will certainly deceive, and every friend spread slander. Each one betrays his friend; no one tells the truth. They have taught their tongues to speak lies; they wear themselves out doing wrong. You live in a world of deception. In their deception they refuse to know Me. This is the LORD's declaration. Therefore, this is what the LORD of Hosts says: “I am about to refine them and test them, for what else can I do because of My dear people? Their tongues are deadly arrows—they speak deception. With his mouth a man speaks peaceably with his friend, but inwardly he sets up an ambush. Should I not punish them for these things? This is the LORD's declaration. ‘Should I not take My revenge against a nation such as this?’ ”](#) (HCSB, mostly) When the people of a nation lose their personal integrity, God turns against that nation. Micah 7:2–9 [Godly people have vanished from the land; there is no one upright among the](#)

people. All of them wait in ambush to shed blood; they hunt each other with a net. Both hands are good at accomplishing evil: the official and the judge demand a bribe; when the powerful man communicates his evil desire, they plot it together. The best of them is like a brier; the most upright is worse than a hedge of thorns. The day of your watchmen, the day of your punishment, is coming; at this time their panic is here. Do not rely on a friend; don't trust in a close companion. Seal your mouth from the woman who lies in your arms. For a son considers his father a fool, a daughter opposes her mother, and a daughter-in-law is against her mother-in-law; a person's enemies are the people in his own home. But as for me, I will look to the LORD; I will wait for the God of my salvation. My God will hear me. Do not rejoice over me, my enemy! Though I have fallen, I will stand up; though I sit in darkness, the LORD will be my light. Because I have sinned against Him, I must endure the LORD's rage until He argues my case and establishes justice for me. He will bring me into the light; I will see His salvation. As the personal integrity of nation Israel disintegrated, God turned against them.

Psalm 55:13b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
'allûph (אֱלִיפֶן) [pronounced <i>ahl-LOOF</i>]	<i>tame, docile; friend, intimate; leader, ruler, prince, chief; clans</i>	masculine singular adjective (used as a substantive) with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #441 BDB #48
<p>Barnes: <i>The word used here properly denotes one who is familiar - a friend - from the verb âlaph (אָלַף), which means, to be associated with; to be familiar; to be accustomed to. The noun is frequently used to denote a military leader - the head of a tribe - a chieftain; and is, in this sense, several times employed in Gen. 36 to denote the leaders or princes of the Edomites, where it is rendered duke. But here it seems to be used, not in the sense of a leader or a guide, but of a familiar friend.</i>⁷⁶ However, there is no reason why this cannot refer to a man of high military ranking. David had a close relationship with such men. If this refers to Ahithophel, he may have been David's guide or mentor when David was a younger man in the military.</p>			
w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ, וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
yâda' (יָדָעַ) [pronounced <i>yaw-DAHĠ</i>]	<i>known; one who is known; an acquaintance</i>	Pual participle with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #3045 BDB #393

This time, I think that Barnes has a more accurate view of the word: *The word used here is derived from the verb to know - yâda' (יָדָעַ) - and the proper idea is that of "one well known" by us; that is, one who keeps no secrets from us, but who permits us to understand him thoroughly. The phrase "mine acquaintance" is a feeble expression, and does not convey the full force of the original, which denotes a more intimate friend than would be suggested by the word "acquaintance." It is language applied to one whom we thoroughly "know," and who "knows us;" and this exists only in the case of very intimate friends. All the expressions used in this verse would probably be applicable to Ahithophel, and to the intimacy between him and David.*⁷⁷

Translation: ...my prince [or, friend, intimate] and my acquaintance. He is called a friend, an intimate or a leader here. Ahithophel would have been all three of these things to David. The word *acquaintance* does not quite convey what David is saying here; Ahithophel is well-known to David; David knows him like he knows himself.

Gill, of the first word 'allûph (אֱלִיפֶן) [pronounced *ahl-LOOF*]: *Ahithophel was not governor over David; but was made a governor by him: he was one of his dukes or nobles, as the word is rendered in Gen. 36:15, was raised to great dignity by him; perhaps was chief minister of state. It is certain he*

⁷⁶ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 55:13 (edited).

⁷⁷ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 55:13 (edited).

was his counsellor, and his counsel was with him as the oracle of God (1Chron. 27:33). Ahithophel was David's guide in civil affairs; he was directed by his advice, and it may be was president of his privy council. Judas was not only the guide of them to Christ who took him (Acts 1:16); but when the apostles were sent out two by two before the face of Christ, to preach where he himself should come, Judas was sent also (Mark 6:7).⁷⁸

Matthew Henry: Nothing in that plot seems to have discouraged David so much as to hear that Ahithophel was among the conspirators with Absalom (2Sam. 15:31), for he was the king's counsellor, (1Chron. 27:33).⁷⁹

Therefore, to have Ahithophel turn against David was really difficult for him to face.

Application: Many of us have had such a betrayal, or, at least a rejection. I had a very close friend in high school who had to move to another state after going to my high school. We met one more time perhaps 20 years later, where I was able to become acquainted with his family; and then I lost track of him. He called me out of the blue maybe 20 years after that, but then cut off the relationship because we were on opposite sides of the political divide. That was a sad rejection for me; and David is clearly pained here by Ahithophel turning against him.

From a known enemy, we expect for him to speak poorly of us, and to twist our words and deeds to mean differently than they were intended. However, when it is a close confidant—someone that even others see as our friend—when he speaks ill of us, there is little reply that can be given.

Let's now apply this to Jesus the Christ:⁸⁰ the scribes and the pharisees—those who knew the Bible, those who were thought to be experts in the Law of Moses—they rejected Jesus as their Messiah and urged others to do likewise. So, it is understandable if some cult or some anti-Bible group rejects our Lord; but those who know the Law say, "This man is not the Messiah! This Man is not Who He claims to be!" What is someone who is less learned in the Scripture to think?

And then there is Judas who betrayed the Lord. Judas was with Jesus for most of his public ministry, so Judas would have been able to take the measure of this man. Unlike the pharisees who had a few impressions of Jesus, and had almost from the beginning, an enmity between them, Judas did not have this with our Lord. In fact, we know very little about what Judas thought or said or did during most of our Lord's ministry. We can reasonably assume that he pretended to go along with all that Jesus did and acted like the other disciples; and that sometimes he pulled a holier than thou move, such as when the expensive oil used to moisten Jesus' feet could have been sold and the money given to the poor (Judas was the treasurer, so he had some controls over this money—Matt. 26:6–11).

The point is, that Judas knew our Lord intimately and knew the measure of this man. He may not have believed in Him; but Judas knew what sort of man Jesus was. If he were being honest, Judas may have said, "I don't know about this Messiah business; but Jesus is clearly a good and kind man." But Judas betrayed Jesus for money (John 13:27–30) and then clearly regretted his decision (Matt. 27:3–5).

Now, even though there are some parallels between the Lord and the betrayals that He faced, that does not mean that this is what this psalm was all about. That is simply what this context relates to.

⁷⁸ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 55:13 (edited).

⁷⁹ Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 55:9–15 (slightly edited).

⁸⁰ This same sort of reasoning was suggested by Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 55:12, 13.

**Who together we gave a sweet taste
an assembly in a House of Elohim, we walk in
a crowd.**

Psalm
55:14

**When we have a pleasant [time] together;
we would walk with the crowd [to] the
assembly in the House of Elohim.**

**We had very pleasant times together,
walking along with the crowd to the assembling of the House of God.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum (trans. By Cook)	For together we <u>will explain mysteries</u> in the sanctuary of God, we will walk in <u>haste</u> .
Latin Vulgate	Who <u>did take sweetmeats</u> together with me: in the house of God we walked with <u>consent</u> .
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	Who together we gave a sweet taste an assembly in a House of Elohim, we walk in a crowd.
Peshitta (Syriac)	We <u>ate a meal together</u> in the house of God, and we walked in harmony.
Septuagint (Greek)	...who in companionship with me <u>sweetened our food</u> ; we walked in the house of God in <u>concord</u> .

Significant differences: Clearly, what David speaks of in the first phrase is confusing. How exactly they walked to the House of God is also to be questioned, given the different English translations that we see here. The English translations here all appear to be similar to *together*.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V. Easy English	We enjoyed being together, and we went with others to your house, our God. We had good times together!
Easy-to-Read Version	We used to go with a crowd (of people) to the house of God! We used to share our secrets with one another, as we walked through the crowds together in God's temple [The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.].
Good News Bible (TEV) <i>The Message</i>	We had intimate talks with each other and worshiped together in the Temple. Those long hours of leisure as we walked arm in arm, God a third party to our conversation.
New Century Version	We had a good friendship and walked together to God's Temple.
New Living Translation	What good fellowship we once enjoyed as we walked together to the house of God.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible <i>God's Word™</i>	It was you who once sweetened our food, and we lived in one house altogether! We used to talk to each other in complete confidence and walk into God's house with the festival crowds.
New American Bible	You, whose company I enjoyed, at whose side I walked in the house of God.
New Jerusalem Bible	...to whom I was bound by intimate friendship in the house of God! May they recoil in disorder,...
New Simplified Bible Revised English Bible	We took sweet fellowship together and walked into God's house with the crowds. ...we held pleasant converse together walking with the throng in the house of God.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear Bible in Basic English Complete Jewish Bible	We <i>had</i> sweet secrets together in the house of God. The mobs go to death,... We had loving talk together, and went to the house of God in company. We used to share our hearts with each other; in the house of God we walked with the crowd.
Ferar-Fenton Bible	How sweetly we chatted together, As we walked to GOD’S HOUSE with the crowd.
HCSB JPS (Tanakh—1985)	We used to have close fellowship; we walked with the crowd into the house of God. ...sweet was our fellowship, we walked together in God’s house.
New Advent Bible	...who took sweetmeats together with me: in the house of God we walked with consent.
NET Bible®	We would share personal thoughts with each other [Heb "who together we would make counsel sweet." The imperfect verbal forms here and in the next line draw attention to the ongoing nature of the actions (the so-called customary use of the imperfect). Their relationship was characterized by such intimacy and friendship. See IBHS 502-3 §31.2b.]; in God's temple we would walk together among the crowd.
NIV, ©2011	...with whom I once enjoyed sweet fellowship at the house of God, as we walked about among the worshipers.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Concordant Literal Version	We who together made sweet deliberation, We walked with the foregathering crowd in the House of Elohim.
Darby Translation	We who held sweet intercourse together. To the house of God we walked amid the throng.
exeGesés companion Bible	We sweetened private counsel together - walked to the house of Elohim in conspiracy.
LTHB	We sweetened counsel together; we marched into the house of God with the throng.
New RSV	...with whom I kept pleasant company; we walked in the house of God with the throng.
Syndein	With whom I once enjoyed sweet fellowship, as we walked to the house of 'Elohim/Godhead with the festive crowd. {David is describing his relationship with the 3 leaders of the revolution against him}.
World English Bible Young's Literal Translation	We took sweet fellowship together. We walked in God's house with company. When together we sweeten counsel, Into the house of God we walk in company.

The gist of this verse: David and the person in this psalm had a close relationship and attended the Jewish equivalent of church together.

Psalm 55:14a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced uh-SHER]	that, which, when, who, whom	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81

Psalm 55:14a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
yachad (יַחַד) [pronounced YAHKH-ahd]	<i>together, alike, all together; union, junction, mutually, with one another; equally</i>	adverb	Strong's #3162 BDB #403
There are several slightly different spellings of this adverb.			
mâthaq (מִתְחַק) [pronounced maw-THANK]	<i>to give a sweet taste to, to makes sweet or pleasant; to be sweet</i>	1 st person plural, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #4985 & #4988 BDB #608
Placing the following word here or in v. 14b is a difficult choice.			
çôwd (סוּד) [pronounced soh]	<i>a sitting together, an assembly [of friends, judges, of the wicked, of the Godhead]; a deliberation, a council</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #5475 BDB #691
This noun properly means <i>a couch, a cushion</i> . In general, it is used to mean <i>a council, counsel</i> , because it refers to people sitting around in a group for conversation (Jer. 6:11 15:17). More specifically, its meanings are ❶ <i>a sitting together, an assembly [of friends, judges, of the wicked, of the Godhead]</i> ; ❷ <i>A deliberation, a counsel</i> ; ❸ <i>familiar conversation, familiar acquaintance</i> (Job 19:19 Prov. 55:15); ❹ <i>a secret</i> (Prov. 11:13 20:19 25:9 Amos 3:7).			

Translation: *When we have a pleasant [time] together;...* Although many of the meanings of the verb included the word *sweet*, and, hell, maybe that did describe their relationship. However, I prefer to think of them as having a very pleasant relationship.

As you might be able to tell from the Hebrew in the exegesis, it is difficult to put together a normal sentence with these 4 words. Viewing how the verb is used elsewhere is not much help either (see Ex. 15:25 Job. 20:12 21:33 Psalm 55:14 Prov. 9:17). Here are some examples of how this first clause is translated by the most literal translations:

Concordant Literal Version	<i>We who together made sweet deliberation,...</i>
A Conservative Version	<i>We took sweet counsel together.</i>
English Standard Version	<i>We used to take sweet counsel together;...</i>
exeGesés companion Bible	<i>We sweetened private counsel together...</i>
Hebrew Names Version	<i>We took sweet fellowship together.</i>
LTHB	<i>We sweetened counsel together;...</i>
World English Bible	<i>We took sweet fellowship together.</i>
Young's Literal Translation	<i>When together we sweeten counsel,...</i>

You will note in these various translations, only Young makes an attempt to incorporate the relative pronoun.

What seems to be the case is, these men enjoyed a sweet friendship together associated with the teaching of the Word of God.

Barnes gives his opinion: *Literally, "We sweetened counsel together;" that is, We consulted together; we opened our minds and plans to each other; in other words, We found that happiness in each other which those do who freely and confidentially communicate their plans and wishes - who have that*

*mutual satisfaction which results from the approval of each other's plans.*⁸¹ This seems to be a reasonable explanation for what David is saying.

What David and Ahithophel shared was a regular trip to Bible class (as it was held in those days).

Psalm 55:14b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
bayith (בַּיִת) [pronounced BAH-yith]	<i>house, residence; household, habitation as well as inward</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1004 BDB #108
ʿĒlōhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced el-o-HEEM]	<i>God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43
hâlak ^e (הָלַךְ) [pronounced haw-LAHK ^e]	<i>to go, to walk; to live, to follow some manner of life; to depart, to go away, to vanish; to fall upon [as a robber]; a vagrant?</i>	1 st person plural, Piel imperfect	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229
b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
regesh (רֶגֶשׁ) [pronounced REH-ghesh]	<i>a crowd, in company; a throng</i>	masculine singular noun; pausal form	Strong's #7285 BDB #921

Translation: ...we would walk with the crowd [to] the assembly in the House of Elohim. The second half of this verse is easier to translate. David and Ahithophel would travel to the assembly in the House of God. This gives us a little detail on what went on in Jerusalem.

There are several passages which speak of going to the House of the Lord: Psalm 42:4 (*These things I remember, as I pour out my soul: how I would go with the throng and lead them in procession to the house of God with glad shouts and songs of praise, a multitude keeping festival.*); Psalm 122:1 (*I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the LORD!"*). See also Isa. 2:3 Ezek. 33:31

The Pulpit Commentator: *When David went up to the house of God, who is more likely to have accompanied him than his chief "counselor"?*⁸²

Bishop Horsley: *The equal, the guide, and the familiar friend, we find in Ahithophel, the confidential counsellor, first of David, afterwards of his son Absalom.*⁸³

⁸¹ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 55:14.

⁸² *The Pulpit Commentary*; 1880-1919; by Joseph S. Exell, Henry Donald Maurice Spence-Jones, courtesy of e-sword, Psalm 55:12-14.

⁸³ Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 55:23.

Barnes interprets this: *The idea here is not that which would seem to be conveyed by our translation - that they went up to the house of God in company "with each other," but that both went with the great company - the crowd - the multitude - that assembled to worship God. They were engaged in the same service, they united in the worship of the same God; associated with those that loved their Maker; belonged to the companionship of those who sought his favor. There is nothing that constitutes a stronger bond of friendship and affection than being united in the worship of God, or belonging to his people. Connection with a church in acts of worship, ought always to constitute a strong bond of love, confidence, esteem, and affection; the consciousness of having been redeemed by the same blood of the atonement should be a stronger tie than any tie of natural friendship; and the expectation and hope of spending an eternity together in heaven should unite heart to heart in a bond which nothing - not even death - can sever.*⁸⁴

However, let us caveat Barnes' remarks. This is not necessarily the Tabernacle, as it seems to be in a different place throughout the reign of David. See the **Movement of the Ark and of the Tent of God (HTML) (PDF)**.

However, David did bring the Ark of God into Jerusalem, bringing it out of retirement, as it were. It was being kept separate from the Tabernacle in those days. Therefore, those in Jerusalem would attend worship services there, where the Ark was.

Recall that there were two priesthoods at the time of David. Zadok apparently served in Jerusalem overseeing the care of the Ark; and Abiathar officiated at the Tabernacle in Gibeon. The two priesthoods were not developed for this reason, but seemed to occur as a result of the attack of Saul on Nob, destroying all of the priests except for Abiathar.

Now, we may think it weird that the Ark and the Tabernacle are never put together during David's time, but these two things were never in the same place while David was a boy or while David was king. So this is what David was used to. This may help to explain in part why David never made any attempts to unite these objects. I don't know if we should draw any meaning from this or not. It is not something which is clear in the Bible and has to be determined with a few hours of study.

Interestingly enough, we do not have a lot of information on the gatherings of believers in those days. We know about the sacrifices that were offered up, and how they entered into the picture. We know about the High Priest entering into the Holy of Holies, but we are not told what happened after the Ark and the Tabernacle were separated. Did Zadok perform these sorts of duties? Did David design a Tabernacle for Jerusalem? All we are told is, he built a tent for the Ark, but we do not know how elaborate it was—although it is reasonable to assume that there were worship services held there—and therefore, this worship would have been well attended, according to this psalm; and that Ahithophel and David apparently went together to these services.

We can guess that these services would have included animal sacrifices, the singing of psalms, readings from the Holy Scriptures as they existed and were recognized at that time, and possibly some teaching from God's Word as well. These guesses are based upon what took place in the synagogues 1000 years later; upon what was prescribed in Leviticus; and the fact that David wrote so many psalms, several of which were sung when the Ark was brought into Jerusalem (1Chron. 16:7–36). There were also several prophets alive at that time—Nathan and Gad notably—so that they probably had a part in the teaching of Scripture. Given the nature of David's psalms, there was probably prayer which included thanksgiving and petition (as we find in this psalm). It is somewhat fascinating to me that although such activities are implied by various portions of Scripture, I don't think that there is any time in the Bible where God lays out a program where you must do X, Y and Z (except for the sacrifices and meal offerings, and some of the Feast Days activities, which were very specific).

Anyway, it appears that both Ahithophel and David had a close relationship and attended Bible class together regularly, whatever that worship service seem to entail. This does not mean that Ahithophel was an unbeliever. It simply means that he turned his back on David.

⁸⁴ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 55:14.

Gill makes this observation: *So Christ and Judas often went to the temple together, with the rest of the disciples, who heard many an excellent sermon from our Lord's mouth: all which are further aggravations of sin and guilt. And so such persons, who have walked together to the house of God and in it, have attended together on public worship, and walked together in holy fellowship; when any of these forsake the assembling of themselves together, scoff at religion, speak evil of ordinances, reproach the saints, or persecute them, it is very shocking, cutting, and grieving indeed.*⁸⁵

**Death beguiles upon them [alternate reading:
(Let) desolation (be) upon them]
they descend [into] Sheol being alive;
for evil [is] in their dwelling-place
in their midst.**

Psalm
55:15

**Let death beguile [and seduce] them [alternate
reading: (Let) desolation (or destruction) (be)
upon them]
[and] they will descend [into] Sheol alive;
because evil is in their dwelling-place
[and evil is] in their midst.**

**Let death beguile and seduce them so that they descend down into Sheol alive,
because evil permeates their existence.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum (trans. By Cook)	He will <u>condemn</u> them to <i>the judgement of death, and he will decree for them evil things, for Doeg and Achitophel</i> ; they will descend to Sheol while alive, for evil things are in their dwellings, in their <i>bodies</i> .
Latin Vulgate	Let death <u>come</u> upon them, and let them go down alive into hell. For there is wickedness in their dwellings: in the midst of them.
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	Death beguiles upon them [alternate reading: (Let) desolation (be) upon them] they descend [into] Sheol being alive; for evil [is] in their dwelling-place in their midst.
Peshitta (Syriac)	<u>Bring</u> death upon them; <u>bury</u> them alive in the grave, because there is evil among them.
Septuagint (Greek)	Let death <u>come</u> upon them, and let them go down alive into Hades, for iniquity is in their dwellings, in the midst of them.

Significant differences: There are 3 verses in this psalm which are at least partially difficult to translate and this is one of them. The Latin, Greek and Syriac all appear to begin as cohortative statements; Owen did not indicate that however. In any case, none of the verbs in those 3 languages match the Hebrew verb; and what is considered to be the inferior reading in the Hebrew actually gives us a smoother, more reasonable reading. If you will note all of the additional words in the targum; that is an indication that translating and explaining this verse is not easy.

We again have the sense of the cohortative in the second phrase in the Latin and Greek, and the additional verb *bury* found in the Syriac. The remainder of this verse seems to be in agreement (*in their midst* is reasonably equivalent to *in the midst of them*).

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	Let death devastate my enemies; let them go to the grave [Heb Sheol] alive
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⁸⁵ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 55:14.

because evil lives with them-
even inside them!.

Contemporary English V.	All who hate me are controlled by the power of evil. Sentence them to death and send them down alive to the world of the dead.
Easy English	I want death to take (my enemies) by surprise! I want them to go down to *Sheol alive! Because *evil has made its home in them.
Easy-to-Read Version	I wish death would take my enemies by surprise! I wish the earth would open up and swallow them alive! [Literally, "I wish death would surprise them. I wish they would go down into Sheol alive." This would be like the time Moses' enemy Korah was punished by God. See Num. 16:31–33.] Why? Because they plan such terrible things together.
Good News Bible (TEV)	May my enemies die before their time; may they go down alive into the world of the dead! Evil is in their homes and in their hearts.
<i>The Message</i>	Haul my betrayers off alive to hell--let them experience the horror, let them feel every desolate detail of a damned life.
New Berkeley Version	Let destruction seize them; let them go down alive to Sheol; for wickedness is in their dwelling, in their heart.
New Century Version	Let death take away my enemies. Let them die while they are still young because evil lives with them.
New Life Bible	Let death take them by surprise. Let them go down alive to the grave. For sin is with them where they live.
New Living Translation	Let death stalk my enemies; let the grave [Hebrew let Sheol.] swallow them alive, for evil makes its home within them.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	May death come to them all, and may they go alive into their graves. For, wickedness travels among them, and it lives in their midst.
Beck's American Translation	May death take them suddenly; may they go down alive to the grave because wickedness is in their hearts.
Christian Community Bible	Let death come upon them suddenly, let them go down to the grave alive, for within them evil and mischief thrive.
<i>God's Word™</i>	Let death suddenly take wicked people! Let them go into the grave while they are still alive, because evil lives in their homes as well as in their hearts.
New American Bible	Let death take them; let them go down alive to Sheol [Ps 49:15; Nm 16:33; Prv 1:2; Is 5:14.], for evil is in their homes and bellies.
NIRV	Let death take my enemies by surprise. Let them be buried alive, because their hearts and homes are full of evil.
New Jerusalem Bible	...may death descend on them, may they go down alive to Sheol, since evil shares their home with them.
New Simplified Bible	Let death suddenly take them! Let them go into the grave while they are still alive, for evil lives in their homes and within them.
Revised English Bible	May death strike them, may they go down alive into Sheol; for their homes are haunts of evil!

Today's NIV Let death take my enemies by surprise;
 let them go down alive to the realm of the dead,
 for evil finds lodging among them.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear Ps 55:15	The mobs go to death, as the pilgrims descend to Sheol defrauded by the evil living in their center. A portion of the previous verse was added for context.
Bible in Basic English	Let the hand of death come on them suddenly, and let them go down living into the underworld; because evil is in their houses and in their hearts.
Complete Jewish Bible	May he put death on them; let them go down alive to Sh'ol; for evil is in their homes and also in their hearts.
Ferar-Fenton Bible	O! Fling sudden ruin on him,— Let him go while alive to the grave!— For malice was deep in his breast!
HCSB	Let death take them by surprise; let them go down to Sheol alive, because evil is in their homes and within them.
JPS (Tanakh—1917)	May He incite death against them, let them go down alive into the nether-world; for evil is in their dwelling, and within them.
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	Let Him incite death against them; may they go down alive into Sheol! For where they dwell, there evil is.
Judaica Press Complete T.	May He incite Death upon them; may they descend to the grave alive, for there are evils in their dwelling, in their midst.
New Advent Bible	Let death come upon them, and let them go down alive into hell. For there is wickedness in their dwellings: in the midst of them.
NET Bible®	May death destroy them! [The meaning of the MT is unclear. The Kethib (consonantal text) reads וּמִלֵּעַ תְּוֹמֵי־שֵׁי (yashimavet 'alemo, "May devastation [be] upon them!"). The proposed noun תְּוֹמֵי־שֵׁי occurs only here and perhaps in the place name Beth-Jeshimoth in Num 33:49. The Qere (marginal text) has וּמִלֵּעַ תְּוֹמֵי־שֵׁי (yashi mavet 'alemo). The verbal form שֵׁי is apparently an alternate form of אִשִּׁי (yashi'), a Hiphil imperfect from אָשַׁן (nasha', "deceive"). In this case one might read "death will come deceptively upon them." This reading has the advantage of reading תְּוֹמֵי־שֵׁי (mavet, "death") which forms a natural parallel with "Sheol" in the next line. The present translation is based on the following reconstruction of the text: תְּוֹמֵי־שֵׁי (yeshimmem mavet). The verb assumed in the reconstruction is a Hiphil jussive third masculine singular from שָׁמַם (shamam, "be desolate") with a third masculine plural pronominal suffix attached. This reconstruction assumes that (1) haplography has occurred in the traditional text (the original sequence of three mems [מ] was lost with only one mem remaining), resulting in the fusion of originally distinct forms in the Kethib, and (2) that וּמִלֵּעַ ('alemo, "upon them") is a later scribal addition attempting to make sense of a garbled and corrupt text. The preposition לַע ('al) does occur with the verb שָׁמַם (shamam), but in such cases the expression means "be appalled at/because of" (see Jer 49:20; 50:45). If one were to retain the prepositional phrase here, one would have to read the text as follows: וּמִלֵּעַ תְּוֹמֵי־שֵׁי (yashim mavet 'alemo, "Death will be appalled at them"). The idea seems odd, to say the least. Death is not collocated with this verb elsewhere.] May they go down alive into Sheol [Go down alive. This curse imagines a swift and sudden death for the psalmist's enemies.!] For evil is in their dwelling place and in their midst. Let death take my enemies by surprise; let them go down alive to the realm of the dead,
NIV – UK	Let death take my enemies by surprise; let them go down alive to the realm of the dead,

for evil finds lodging among them.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

American KJV	Let death seize on them, and let them go down quick into hell: for wickedness is in their dwellings, and among them..
<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	Let desolations and death come suddenly upon them; let them go down alive to Sheol (the place of the dead), for evils are in their habitations, in their hearts, and their inmost part.
Concordant Literal Version	May death lure them away; May they descend to the unseen alive, For evils are among them in their sojourning.
Context Group Version	Let death come suddenly on them, Let them go down alive into the place of death { or grave, Heb. "Sheol" }; For wickedness is in their dwelling, in the midst of them.
English Standard V. – UK	Let death steal over them; let them go down to Sheol alive; for evil is in their dwelling place and in their heart.
Evidence Bible	Let death seize upon them, and let them go down quick into hell: for wickedness is in their dwellings, and among them.
exeGesés companion Bible	Desolations deceive them; they descend alive into sheol; evil is in their sojournings among them.
The Geneva Bible	Let death seize upon them, [and] let them go down quick into hell [As Korah, Dathan and Abiram.]: for wickedness [is] in their dwellings, [and] among them.
LTHB	Desolation be upon them! They go down into Sheol alive, for evils are among them in their dwelling.
Modern KJV	Let desolation take hold on them, and let them go down alive into hell; for evils are among them in their dwellings.
NASB	Let death come deceitfully upon them [Another reading is desolations be upon them]; Let them go down alive to Sheol [i.e. the nether world], For evil is in their dwelling, in their midst.
Syndein	{David's Prayer - Knows is God's Will - But this is His Desire} Let death surprise them. Let them go down alive into the grave/sh ^{er} owl. {also means Hades/Hell - idiom for slow painful death}
World English Bible	For evil is at home within them. {as revolutionists, evil is in their very souls}. Let death come suddenly on them. Let them go down alive into Sheol. For wickedness is in their dwelling, in the midst of them.
<i>Young's Literal Translation</i>	Desolations are upon them, They go down to Sheol--alive, For wickedness is in their dwelling, in their midst.

The gist of this verse: David calls for death to take his enemies.

Psalm 55:15a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
nâshâ' (נִשְׂאָה) [pronounced naw-SHAW]	to beguile, to deceive, to mislead; to lead into error, to cause to go astray; to seduce, to corrupt	3 rd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #5377 BDB #674

Psalm 55:15a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Followed by <i>לָע</i> in a pregnant sense; “let death deceive (and rush) on them.” ⁸⁶			
Strong's, which does not differentiate according to the stem, gives the meanings <i>to lead astray, that is, (mentally) to delude, or (morally) to seduce.</i>			
<i>mâveth</i> (תּוֹמ) [pronounced MAW-vehth]	<i>death, death [as opposed to life], death by violence, a state of death, a place of death</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #4194 BDB #560
An alternate reading is:			
<i>y^oshîymâh</i> (הַיְשִׁי) [pronounced yesh-ee-MAW]	<i>desolation, destruction</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #3451 BDB #445
This is known as the kethiv reading. Scribes would not alter the text even if they were certain that it was inaccurate, so they would make a marginal note of what they believed was the accurate text (the qere reading). The KJV follows the qere readings, as these notes were believed to accurately reflect the text.			
As an additional note, Strong's #3451 BDB #445 above is only found in this passage.			
The NET Bible has a long footnote here: The meaning of the MT is unclear. The Kethib (consonantal text) reads <i>וּמִלֵּעַ תּוֹמֵי־שִׁי</i> (yashimavet 'alemo, “May devastation [be] upon them!”). The proposed noun <i>תּוֹמֵי־שִׁי</i> occurs only here and perhaps in the place name Beth-Jeshimoth in Num 33:49. The Qere (marginal text) has <i>וּמִלֵּעַ תּוֹמֵי־שִׁי</i> (yashi mavet 'alemo). The verbal form <i>שִׁי</i> is apparently an alternate form of <i>אִשִּׁי</i> (yashi'), a Hiphil imperfect from <i>אָשַׁן</i> (nasha', “deceive”). In this case one might read “death will come deceptively upon them.” This reading has the advantage of reading <i>תּוֹמֵי</i> (mavet, “death”) which forms a natural parallel with “Sheol” in the next line. The present translation is based on the following reconstruction of the text: <i>שִׁי תּוֹמֵי מַמְשִׁי</i> (yeshimmem mavet). The verb assumed in the reconstruction is a Hiphil jussive third masculine singular from <i>מָשַׁם</i> (shamam, “be desolate”) with a third masculine plural pronominal suffix attached. This reconstruction assumes that (1) haplography has occurred in the traditional text (the original sequence of three mems [מ] was lost with only one mem remaining), resulting in the fusion of originally distinct forms in the Kethib, and (2) that <i>וּמִלֵּעַ</i> ('alemo, “upon them”) is a later scribal addition attempting to make sense of a garbled and corrupt text. The preposition <i>לָע</i> ('al) does occur with the verb <i>מָשַׁם</i> (shamam), but in such cases the expression means “be appalled at/because of” (see Jer 49:20; 50:45). If one were to retain the prepositional phrase here, one would have to read the text as follows: <i>שִׁי תּוֹמֵי מַמְשִׁי לָע</i> (yashim mavet 'alemo, “Death will be appalled at them”). The idea seems odd, to say the least. Death is not collocated with this verb elsewhere. ⁸⁷			
<i>'al</i> (לָע) [pronounced <i>gah!</i>]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity with the 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #5921 BDB #752

Translation: *Let death beguile* [and seduce] *them* [alternate reading: *(Let) desolation (or destruction) (be) upon them*]... The sense of what David is saying is this: “Absalom is beguiling and seducing the people of Israel; let death beguile and seduce Absalom and his followers.”

⁸⁶ From H. W. F. Gesenius, *Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament*; ©1979 by Baker Books; p. 570.

⁸⁷ *The Net Bible*®; © 1996-2006 by Biblical Studies Press (BSP); taken from e-Sword; also found at <http://www.bible.org/netbible/index.htm>, Psalm 55:15.

Barnes comments on the translation of this portion of v. 15: *This would be more correctly rendered, “Desolations (are) upon them!” That is, Desolation, or destruction will certainly come upon them. There is in the original no necessary expression of a wish or prayer that this might be, but it is rather the language of certain assurance - the expression of a fact - that such base conduct - such wickedness - would make their destruction certain; that as God is just, they must be overwhelmed with ruin. Injury is sometimes done in the translation of the Scriptures by the insertion of a wish or prayer, where all that is necessarily implied in the original is the statement of a fact. This has been caused here by the somewhat uncertain meaning of the word which is used in the original. That phrase is תוֹמִיָּאֵם yāsīmā` veth. It occurs nowhere else. Our translators understood it (as the Septuagint, the Vulgate, and Luther do) as made up of two words. More correctly, however, it is to be regarded as one word, meaning “desolations,” or “destructions.” So Gesenius (Lexicon), Rosenmuller, and Prof. Alexander understand it.⁸⁸ So Barnes prefers the reading which we have been told is not the preferred reading. However, both readings get us to roughly the same place. The qere reading is a bit more clever.*

Again, David launches into an Imprecatory psalm, meaning that he is praying for evil to befall his enemies. David is legitimately praying for his enemies to be seduced by death. This means, for them to get into a tactical situation which results in their death in battle. The concept of imprecatory prayers and Jesus saying, “**Love your enemies**” has already been covered in **Do We Pray for Our Enemies or Against Them?**

There are some people who never think these things through—Christians, in fact. A Christian needs to know about and understand the concept of war. If you are a soldier in Iraq facing an Islamist who, if he could, slit your throat and the throats of all your family member—then, you do not pray for him to be victorious over you. That would be goofy. It is certainly legitimate to pray that these people hear the gospel of Jesus Christ and understand why their countries are plunged into such great evil; but, in war, the Christian seeks to destroy his enemy. Therefore, David’s prayer here is legitimate.

Psalm 55:15b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s Numbers
yârad (יָרַד) [pronounced yaw-RAHD]	<i>to descend, to go down</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong’s #3381 BDB #432
Sh ^e ôl (שְׁאוֹל) [pronounced Sh ^e o]	<i>Hades, hell; underworld, grave; [properly] a hollowed out place; transliterated Sheol;</i>	proper singular feminine noun	Strong’s #7585 BDB #982
Sheol is the underworld, for the unseen world of souls which have passed away and it is a reference to the underworld for both believers and unbelievers			
chayyîym (חַיִּים) [pronounced khay-YEEM]	<i>life, lives, living, being alive, having life, immortality, a long life, sustenance, sustaining life; refreshment; being vigorous; prosperity, welfare, happiness, living prosperously</i>	masculine plural substantive; masculine plural adjective	Strong’s #2416 BDB #313

Translation:...[and] they will descend [into] Sheol alive;... This appears to be idiomatic for them to die quickly in battle. David is praying that his enemies be seduced by death and then go to an early grave (Sheol). *Sheol* can either mean *the grave*, or the *abode of departed spirits*.

⁸⁸ Albert Barnes, *Barnes’ Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 55:15.

Barnes: *The meaning here, however, is not that they would be consigned to wrath, but that they would be cut off from the land of the living. The idea is that their destruction might be as sudden as if the earth were to open, and they were to descend alive into the chasm.*⁸⁹

Here are a few points on the Doctrine of Sheol.

The Abbreviated Doctrine of Sheol

- 1) There are two compartments to Sheol; at Abraham's side and in torments.¹ This is where all the believers from the Old Testament and all unbelievers can be found.
- 2) Hades is the Greek word for Sheol and it refers to this temporary holding cell. According to the story of Lazarus and the rich man, Lazarus was comforted in Hades and the rich man was in misery.
- 3) Now, we are certain of the two compartments of Hades. It appears that there is a third compartment, the Abyss, where certain fallen angels are kept. This is also known as Tartaros.
- 4) There is never any suggestion to the idea that the body and soul just burn up into nothingness or that any sort of soul sleep occurs (our soul, by the way, never sleeps). When Scripture is specific, we have phrases like where the worm does not die and the fire is not quenched (Mark 9:48) and Isa 66:24: "**As they leave, they will see the dead bodies of the men who have rebelled against Me; for their maggots will never die, their fire will never go out, and they will be a horror to all mankind.**" Recall in the story of the rich man and Lazarus, the rich man spoke of being in agony (Luke 16:23–24, 28). See also Rev. 19:20. The devil, the beast and the false prophet are tormented each and every day forever and ever in the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:10).² Furthermore, recall that we have Hades, which is a holding place for all of the departed souls until the great judgment, both believers and unbelievers. The story of Lazarus and the rich man indicates that the rich man was in great suffering; bear in mind that this suffering continues until the final judgment, when death and Hades are thrown into the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:14).
- 5) Believers since the beginning of the Church Age can be found face to face with Jesus Christ in an interim body.³ Although it is not completely clear to me where that is, from a physical standpoint; we will be bodily resurrected from there. It is not clear to me where we are at death, apart from being face to face with the Lord. And, to Paul, who was there, and came back to tell us about it, it was not clear to him whether he was even in his body or not.
- 6) Jesus Christ associates the final judgment with Gehenna fire, or *hell fire*, if you will.
- 7) The final judgment occurs at the end of the Millennium, after Satan is released for a short time.
- 8) The final judgment is the Lake of Fire, and we do not know exactly how this differs from Hades in terms of a personal misery. However, Satan will be loosed from Hades for a time after the Millennium and then he will be thrown into the Lake of Fire, along with the beast and the false prophet and anyone else whose name is not found written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

The Complete **Doctrine of Sheol** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

¹ By the way, the word *torments* is only found in Matt. 4:24 Luke 16:23, 28. The Matthew passage s related to a person with a disease or affliction.

² Although I have quoted all of these passages already, this is one sticking point for some apostate organizations; therefore, these passages bear repetition.

³ To be honest, I have not personally studied this interim body situation. I am basing this on the ministries of R.B. Thieme Jr. and III. Recall that in 2Cor. 12:2, Paul was caught up into the 3rd heaven, and was unsure whether he was in his body or not while there.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

Commentary from the Evidence Bible: *Sinners like to picture hell as a fun, hedonistic, pleasure-filled place where they can engage in all the sensual sins that are forbidden here. But Jesus said that it is a place of torment, where the worm never dies and the fire is never quenched...Imagine how terrible it would be if God merely withdrew all the things we hold so dear—friendship, love, color, light, peace,*

⁸⁹ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 55:15.

*joy, laughter, and security. Hell isn't just a place with an absence of God's blessings, it is punishment for sin. It is literal torment, forever (Matt. 9:45–47).*⁹⁰

The first half of v. 15 reads: **Let death beguile [and seduce] them [and] they will descend [into] Sheol alive;**... Sheol seems to be used here in a more generic sense of the place where all of the dead go. David is not writing here, "Go to hell, Absalom; go to hell, Ahithophel." He seems to be asking for their deaths, which would occur suddenly in battle. That is David's prayer. In a revolution, you simply cut off the head of the leader of the revolution; the one who wants power when the current ruler is defeated.

Interestingly enough, the language used here seems to recall the Korah revolution against Moses; which revolution include Dathan and Abiram. For them, the ground opened up and swallowed them. **And Korah gathered all the congregation against them, to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And the glory of Jehovah appeared to all the congregation. And Jehovah spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, Separate yourselves from among this congregation, so that I may devour them in a moment. And they fell upon their faces and said, O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, shall one man sin and will You be angry with all the congregation? And Jehovah spoke to Moses saying, Speak to the congregation saying, Get away from the tent of Korah and Dathan and Abiram. And Moses rose up and went to Dathan and Abiram. And the elders of Israel followed him. And he spoke to the congregation, saying, I pray you, get away from the tents of these wicked men. And touch nothing of theirs lest you be destroyed in all their sins. So they got away from the tent of Korah, Dathan and Abiram, on every side. And Dathan and Abiram came out and stood in the door of their tents, and their wives, and their sons, and their infants. And Moses said, By this you shall know that Jehovah has sent me to do all these works, and that not from my own heart. If these men die the common death of all men, or if they are visited according to the examination of all men, Jehovah has not sent me. But if Jehovah makes a new thing, and the earth opens her mouth and swallows them up with all that they have, and they go down alive into the pit, then you shall understand that these men have provoked Jehovah. And it happened, as he had made an end of speaking all these words, the ground under them split apart. And the earth opened her mouth and swallowed them up, and their households, and all the men who were for Korah, and all their goods. They and all that they had went down alive into Sheol, and the earth closed upon them. And they perished from among the congregation.** (Num. 16:19–33; MKJV). This is clearly an apt parallel, where Korah, Dathan and Abiram revolted against God's authority, Moses, and led a revolution against Moses and Aaron. God opened up Sheol and let the ground swallow them alive. This allusion tells us that David is up on his Bible study. Also, recall, he made a statement which looked back to the Tower of Babel; so David appears to have been studying the Word.

Psalm 55:15c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kîy (כי) [pronounced <i>kee</i>]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
râ'âh (רָעָה) [pronounced <i>raw-GAW</i>]	<i>evil, misery, distress, disaster, injury, iniquity, aberration, that which is morally reprehensible</i>	feminine plural noun	Strong's #7451 BDB #949
The plural appears to have a close relationship to the thought and will of a person. ⁹¹			
b ^e (ב) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88

⁹⁰ Ray Comfort, Commentary from *The Evidence Bible*; from e-Sword; Psalm 55:15.

⁹¹ H. W. F. Gesenius, *Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament*; ©1979 by Baker Books; p. 772.

Psalm 55:15c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
mâgûwr (מגור) [pronounced <i>maw-GOOR</i>]	<i>sojourning, sojourning-place; residing, residence, dwelling-place, dwelling, abode; possibly travels, traveling</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #4033 BDB #158

Translation: ...because evil is in their dwelling-place... This is why David calls for the death of his enemies: evil is all around them; evil permeates their lives. Evil is where they live.

Evil is just as often a way of thinking as it is any set of activities. Evil can be taken as meaning two things here: (1) turning against God's plan and God's man to be king over Israel, who is David. (2) Turning against the laws of divine establishment. David has described the chaos in Jerusalem and in the land of Israel (vv. 9–11). Their revolution has turned Israel into a lawless state. Absalom, who promised his followers a better judicial system, has delivered them into a state of chaos and lawlessness.

Application: The believer is to back law and order. Right now, while I write this, the United States has the worse president in my lifetime, Barack Obama. However, even if he turns our nation on a far left turn, with socialized medicine and redistributed wealth, this is not to be our ultimate concern as believers in Jesus Christ. We do not say, "Okay, Barry, that's enough; we are going to now refresh the tree of freedom with some blood." (Or however that saying goes.) Obama, despite all of his faults and shortcomings, along with the local and state governments, is providing us with law and order and the freedom to evangelize and to teach the Word of God. That is our concern. Certainly, Obama's vision of America is not my vision of America, but he is our president and we must obey the laws in this land. In other words, what I am saying is, no matter how lousy Barack Obama is as our president, we have no legitimate reason to revolt against him or to carry out some nefarious plot against him. That is outside of the plan of God. We have had many misguided presidents in our past—Woodrow Wilson is a prime example of one of our worst presidents ever—yet, our country, with its checks and balances, has a tendency to correct itself. "But he is driving us off a financial cliff," you might say; and I could not disagree. However, we get the government which we deserve. When I was a teacher, the last few years (maybe 1997 to 2001?) I noticed a growing problem with students, student discipline and worthless parents. I recall seeing *60 Minutes* do an excellent show on the snotty millennials who seem to think that as they employees, they should get everything handed to them. The concept of personal integrity and merit was completely lost on many of them. So, first we have the crash in the stock market and a series of storms and floods. My point is, we are obviously facing divine discipline; God is obviously dealing with us as a nation, and President Obama is a part of this. We do not help this nation through revolution, evil plotting or increased political involvement; we help this nation by growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Our first and foremost allegiance is to the plan of God; not to a political party or movement, despite its correctness.

David represents divine establishment; and Absalom is a revolutionary. Therefore, it is legitimate for David to pray for his death and to kill him in battle. Absalom does not have those same rights.

Psalm 55:15d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
b ^e (ב) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88

Psalm 55:15d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
qereb (קֶרֶב) [pronounced KEH-re ^b v]	<i>midst, among, from among [a group of people]; an [actual, physical] inward part; the inner person with respect to thinking and emotion; as a faculty of thinking or emotion; heart, mind, inner being; entrails [of sacrificial animals]</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #7130 BDB #899

With the bêyth preposition, it means *in the midst of, among, into the midst of* (after a verb of motion).

Translation:...[and evil is] in their midst. *Their* refers to all of David's enemies. R. B. Thieme, Jr. **identifies** these men principally as Ahithophel, Absalom, and Amasa. They are saturated with evil. They think evil and what they do is evil. They are acting against the best interests of their own country. As noted above, revolution is evil, which is covered in greater detail in the narrative of **2Samuel 15** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

The entire verse reads: **Let death beguile** [and seduce] **them** [alternate reading: *(Let) desolation (or destruction) (be) upon them*] **[and] they will descend [into] Sheol alive; because evil is in their dwelling-place [and evil is] in their midst.** David prays an Imprecatory prayer for the destruction of his enemies, and they die quickly, because evil is their modus operandi; evil is what they believe in and evil is the focus of their lives.

From Grace Notes: *The word "Evil" has a distinct technical and categorical meaning in the Word of God. It is not simply a generic word referring to anything that is bad or sinful. The word "Evil" refers specifically to the policy of Satan as the ruler of this world. Evil is the modus operandi of Satan from the time of his fall throughout the angelic revolution and down to the point when he became the ruler of the world.*⁹² Further down, we read: *Evil results in the destruction of society, the malfunction of society. Evil causes the removal of legitimate authority and its function under the laws of divine establishment. Just as grace and doctrine represent the genius of God in relationship to the human race, so Evil represents the genius of Satan in relationship to the human race.*⁹³

I highly recommend your viewing the **Doctrine of Evil** ([PDF](#)) ([DOC](#)).

The entire verse reads: **Let death beguile** [and seduce] **them** [alternate reading: *(Let) desolation (or destruction) (be) upon them*] **[and] they will descend [into] Sheol alive; because evil is in their dwelling-place [and evil is] in their midst.** It should be noted that David is not filled with mental attitude sins now. He has not thought how much he misses his palace and the comforts and duties of his reign and is now angry with those who have forced him out. David is simply making this legitimate prayer to God. In the second part of this psalm, David described for us his mental attitude sins of fear and sublimation; but here he is making a simple prayer, and he indicates that this prayer is legitimate because of the close association of Absalom and Ahithophel and evil. Because they are involved in revolution, they are saturated in evil.

In the end, God will answer this prayer of David's, so that Absalom on a mule will run from Joab, and his hair will get caught in some tree branches, and Joab will kill Absalom (2Sam. 18:9, 14–15). Prior to this, Ahithophel will offer up excellent advice to Absalom, but Hushai will give an alternate approach, which is inferior, but which

⁹² From http://www.gracenotes.info/documents/topics_doc/evil.pdf accessed November 13, 2012.

⁹³ From http://www.gracenotes.info/documents/topics_doc/evil.pdf accessed November 13, 2012.

appeals to Absalom's arrogance; and therefore, Absalom will choose the "bad advice" of Hushai. As a result, Ahithophel will go out and hang himself (2Sam. 17:23).⁹⁴

Chapter Outline

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

David Calls Upon God to Deliver Him From His Duplicitous Enemy

**I, unto Elohim, I call
and Y^ehowah delivers me.**

Psalm
55:16

**I, [even] I, call unto Elohim,
and Y^ehowah delivers me.**

I especially call to God and Jehovah hears and delivers me.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Jerusalem targum	I will <i>pray in the presence of</i> God, and the word of the Lord will redeem me.
Latin Vulgate	But I have cried to God: and the Lord will save me.
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	I, unto Elohim, I call and Y ^e howah delivers me.
Peshitta (Syriac)	As for me, I will call upon God; and God shall save me.
Septuagint (Greek)	I cried to God, and the Lord <u>hearkened</u> to me.

Significant differences: Although *hearken* (the English translation of the Greek) often refers to hearing and obeying; the verb ought to be *to save, to deliver*.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V.	I ask for your help, LORD God, and you will keep me safe.
Easy English	But I will cry to God for help and the *LORD will make me safe.
Easy-to-Read Version	I will call to God for help. And the Lord will answer me.
Good News Bible (TEV)	But I call to the LORD God for help, and he will save me.
New Berkeley Version	As for me, I will call on God and the LORD will save me.
New Century Version	But I will call to God for help, and the Lord will save me.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	I cried out to God, and He heard me.
Christian Community Bible	But in God I seek refuge; the Lord will rescue me.
<i>God's Word</i> TM	But I call on God, and the LORD saves me.
New Jerusalem Bible	For my part, I appeal to God, and Yahweh saves me;...

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English	As for me, I will make my prayer to God, and he will be my saviour.
Ferar-Fenton Bible	I will cry myself to my GOD,

⁹⁴ Note the parallel to Judas after he betrayed the Lord. Matt. 27:5 Acts 1:18–20

NET Bible® To the LORD who is able to save.
As for me, I will call out to God,
and the LORD will deliver me.

New Heart English Bible But I have cried to God: and the Lord will save me.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Concordant Literal Version As for me, I am calling to Elohim, And Yahweh, He is saving me.
Context Group Version As for me, I will call on God; And YHWH will rescue me.
English Standard Version But I call to God, and the LORD will save me.
Syndein But I called to 'Elohim/Godhead and Jehovah/God delivered me. {National Rebound Prayer}.

A Voice in the Wilderness As for me, I will call upon God, and Jehovah will deliver me.
World English Bible As for me, I will call on God. Yahweh will save me.
Young's Updated LT I--to God I call, and Jehovah saves me.

The gist of this verse: David continues his prayer, calling out to God in this circumstance.

Psalm 55:16a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
'ânîy (אֲנִי) [pronounced aw-NEE]	<i>I, me;</i> in answer to a question, it means <i>I am, it is I</i>	1 st person singular, personal pronoun	Strong's #589 BDB #58
'el (אֶל) [pronounced eh]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
'Ēlōhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced el-o-HEEM]	<i>God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43
qâra' (קָרָא) [pronounced kaw-RAW]	<i>to call, to proclaim, to read, to call to, to call out to, to assemble, to summon; to call, to name [when followed by a lâmed]</i>	1 st person singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7121 BDB #894

Translation: I, [even] I, call unto Elohim,... In order for God to hear a prayer, it must be offered up by a believer who is in fellowship; and if this person knows Bible doctrine and is maturing, his prayer is even more powerful. David believers in Jehovah Elohim, the Second Person of the Trinity, the Revealed Member of the Godhead. He can therefore pray to God the Father. The emphasis upon *I* indicates that he can make a prayer here which will be far more effective than the prayers of his enemies.

Psalm 55:16b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251

Psalm 55:16b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly <i>yhoh-WAH</i>]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
yâsha ^c (עָשָׂה) [pronounced <i>yaw-SHAHG</i>]	<i>to deliver, to save; to set free, to preserve; to aid, to give relief, to give help to</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #3467 BDB #446

Translation: ...and Y^ehowah delivers me. We have a two-fold understanding of this prayer. In context, this is David, the human author, calling out to God in battle (actually, before battle), and asking for deliverance. God answers this prayer by giving him aid; by delivering him.

However, there is the God-ward side of this, where God the Holy Spirit is conveying to us broader truths than are found only in David's life. If we believe in Jesus Christ and call upon God, God will deliver us. We will be saved. Here, it speaks of calling upon God, but, as the Bible tells us in Heb. 11:6 **And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must [first] believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him** (NASB).

*Barnes: [David's words here express] strong confidence. On the supposition that the psalm refers to the rebellion of Absalom, David was driven from his home, and his throne, and from the house of God - a poor exile, forsaken by nearly all. But his faith did not fail. He confided in God, and believed that He was able to effect his deliverance, and that He would do it.*⁹⁵

*Clarke: [David] foresaw his deliverance, and the defeat of his enemies and therefore speaks confidently.*⁹⁶

With this verse, we begin to see David turning this situation completely around. We have gone from his great problem, his fears; and now David has turned to God, and that will solve the problems which he is facing.

**Evening and morning and middays I should
meditate [or, communicate]
and I am [emotionally] stirred up;
and so He hears my voice.**

Psalm
55:17

**I would speak [or, meditate] morning, noon
and night;
and I am [emotionally] stirred up;
therefore, He hears my voice.**

**Every morning, noon and night, I should be meditating and communicating [with God],
because I am emotionally stirred up;
consequently, God hears me.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

⁹⁵ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 55:16.

⁹⁶ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 55:16.

Targum (trans. By Cook)	In the evening, and in the morning, and at noon I will <i>pray</i> , and I will tremble; and he heard my voice.
Latin Vulgate	Evening and morning, and at noon I will speak and <u>declare</u> : and he shall hear my voice.
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	Evening and morning and middays I should meditate [or, <i>communicate</i>] and I am [emotionally] stirred up; and so He hears my voice.
Peshitta (Syriac)	At evening and in the morning and at noon will I pray and cry aloud; and he shall hear my voice.
Septuagint (Greek)	Evening and morning and at noon I will declare and <u>make known my needs</u> ; and He shall hear my voice.

Significant differences: The second verb seems to have several different interpretations in the other ancient languages. Many times this is because a verb is rare in the Hebrew; however, this verb is reasonably common. It appears that the Greek and the Latin, the older ancient languages, are in agreement; and that the Masoretic text and the Syriac are in agreement, which can be a result of a faulty text, as the manuscripts which we use come along later. This allows for the possibility that the Hebrew is off.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	At evening, morning, and midday I complain and moan so that God will hear my voice.
Contemporary English V. Easy English	Morning, noon, and night you hear my concerns and my complaints. I will tell (God) that something is wrong, and cry (to him) in the evening, in the morning and at noon. He will listen to my voice.
Easy-to-Read Version	I speak to God evening, morning, and noon. I tell him what upsets me, and he listens to me!
Good News Bible (TEV)	Morning, noon, and night my complaints and groans go up to him, and he will hear my voice.
<i>The Message</i>	At dusk, dawn, and noon I sigh deep sighs--he hears, he rescues.
New Berkeley Version	Evening, morning and noon I will lament and sigh [Hebrew prayer periods, Dan. 6:10 9:4]; and He will hear my voice.
New Century Version	Morning, noon, and night I am troubled and upset, but he will listen to me.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	So at morning, noon, and at night, I'll tell Him the things that I want, and He'll listen to the things I request.
Christian Community Bible	Morning, evening, and even at noon, I cry out my grievance and moan; surely he will hear my voice.
<i>God's Word</i> ™	Morning, noon, and night I complain and groan, and he listens to my voice.
New American Bible	At dusk, dawn, and noon I will grieve and complain, and my prayer will be heard. Dan 6:11.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear	Evening, morning, and midday, I meditate. He hears my voice rumble.
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Bible in Basic English	In the evening and in the morning and in the middle of the day I will make my prayer with sounds of grief; and my voice will come to his ears.
Ferar-Fenton Bible	At evening, and morning, and noon As I cry He hears my moaning voice.—
New Advent Bible	Evening and morning, and at noon I will speak and declare: and he shall hear my voice.
NET Bible®	During the evening, morning, and noontime I will lament and moan [The first verb is clearly a cohortative form, expressing the psalmist's resolve. The second verb, while formally ambiguous, should also be understood as cohortative here.], and he will hear [The prefixed verb with vav (ו) consecutive normally appears in narrational contexts to indicate past action, but here it continues the anticipatory (future) perspective of the preceding line. In Ps 77:6 one finds the same sequence of cohortative + prefixed verbal form with vav (ו) consecutive. In this case as well, both forms refer to future actions.] me [Heb "my voice."].

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	Evening and morning and at noon will I utter my complaint and moan <i>and</i> sigh, and He will hear my voice.
Concordant Literal Version Updated <i>Emphasized Bible</i>	Evening, morning and noon I importune and clamor, And He hears my voice. At evening and morning and high noon, have I been wont to lament and complain, And He has heard my voice!
English Standard Version	Evening and morning and at noon I utter my complaint and moan, and he hears my voice.
exeGesés companion Bible	...evening and morning and noon I meditate and roar; and he hears my voice.
The Geneva Bible	Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray [Which signifies a servants mind and sure trust to obtain his portion, which made him earnest at all times in prayer.], and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice.
Hebrew Names Version LTHB	Evening, morning, and at noon, I will cry out in distress. He will hear my voice. Evening and morning and at noon I will complain and cry aloud; and He will hear my voice.
Syndein	{National Rebound Prayer} At evening, morning, and at noon . . . I cry under pressure. {Note: See Psalms 80:3 for the format of the National Rebound Prayer - Pray this 3 times a day if out under 5th cycle of Discipline. Daniel prays 3 times a day also like in Daniel 6:10.} And He hears my voice. {Describes David when being Attacked by Saul after the Ziphites Betrayed Him - Also Is Applicable still to II Samuel 15 and the Absalom Revolution}.
A Voice in the Wilderness	Evening and morning and at noon I meditate and am in a stir; and He will hear my voice.
World English Bible Young's Updated LT	Evening, morning, and at noon, I will cry out in distress. He will hear my voice. Evening, and morning, and noon, I meditate, and make a noise, and He hears my voice.
The gist of this verse:	David both studies and prays to God, thrice daily; and God listens to him.

Psalm 55:17a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
‘ereb (עֶרֶב) [pronounced GEH-re ^b v]	<i>evening, sunset</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #6153 BDB #787
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
bôqer (בֹּקֶר) [pronounced BOH-ker]	<i>morning, daybreak, dawn; the next morning</i>	masculine singular noun with a definite article	Strong's #1242 BDB #133
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
tsâh ^o rayim (צַהֲרָיִם) [pronounced TZAW-ho-rah-YIHM]	<i>midday, noon, noonday; metaphorically for very great happiness (Job 11:17 Psalm 37:6)</i>	masculine dual noun	Strong's #6672 BDB #843
sîyach (שִׁיחַ) [pronounced SEE-ahkh]	<i>to communicate, to declare, to speak of, to talk about; to meditate, to study</i>	1 st person singular, Qal imperfect; with the voluntative hê	Strong's #7878 BDB #967

Although we could probably get away with generally rendering sîyach as *to voice a concern*, that seems too weak for this verb's cognate in Job. My thinking would be that this verb (and noun) went through a transformation over the years. In Job's day, sîyach meant *to complain*; however, this became *to vocalize a concern* and then simply *to communicate*. Since *communication* works both ways, this also has a more passive sense, where the person receives the communication; in other words, he *studies* or *meditates*.

The hê at the end of a 1st person verb is called a cohortative hê. We often add a word like *let, may, might, ought, should*.

Translation: I would speak [or, meditate] morning, noon and night;... This is a difficult call: is David communicating morning, noon and night; or is he meditating and studying morning, noon and night? Both interpretations of this word seem apropos. He is listening to God, but he is also communicating with God; this means there is a give and take. This does not mean that David hears the audible voice of God—I don't know that David ever spoke directly with God—but that he was still able to communicate with God, much in the same way that we do: through God's Word. He probably carried some of the books of the Bible with him to study (scrolls, in his era—Deut. 17:18 tell us that the king was to make his own copies of the Law); and he communicates with God, thinking as he studies; obviously expecting insight into his next move. In looking at examples of the word usage, this verb seems to be used as often to meditate as it is to communicate. In fact, in the psalms, this word is more often used to mean *meditate, study*.

This portion of the verse reads: I should meditate [or, communicate] morning, noon and night;... So, which does this mean? Is David *studying* or is he *communicating*? The Literal Translation of the Holy Bible is used below. Also, although we have one concept of mediation, that is not what is meant here; medication here means *to study*. The word we are examining is the verb from above, sîyach (שִׁיחַ) [pronounced SEE-ahkh].

The Uses of Sîyach in the Psalms

Psalm 55:17 Evening and morning and at noon I will **complain** and cry aloud; and He will hear my voice.

Psalm 69:12 They who sit in the gate **spoke** of me; and I was the song of drunkards.

Psalm 77:3 I remember God and am troubled; I **meditate** and my spirit faints. Selah.

The Uses of Sîyach in the Psalms

Psalm 77:5 I **thought** upon the days of old, the years of bygone ages.

Psalm 77:6 I will remember my song in the night; I will **speak** with my own heart, and my spirit carefully searches.

Psalm 77:12 I will also **meditate** on all Your works and muse of Your doings.

Psalm 105:2 Sing to Him; sing praises to Him; **tell** of all His wonders.

Psalm 119:15 I will **meditate** in Your Precepts and I will regard Your paths.

Psalm 119:23 Princes also sat, speaking against me; but Your servant **meditates** on Your laws.

Psalm 119:27 Make me understand the way of Your Precepts, and I will **meditate** on Your wonders.

Psalm 119:48 And I will lift up my hands to Your Commandments that I love; and I will **meditate** on Your Statutes.

Psalm 119:78 Let the proud be ashamed, for with lies they perverted me; I will **muse** on Your Precepts.

Psalm 119:148 My eyes go before the night watches, to **meditate** on Your Word.

Psalm 143:5 I remember the days of old. I **meditate** on all Your works; I muse on the work of Your hands.

Psalm 145:5 I will **muse** on the glorious honor of Your majesty, and the things of Your wonderful works.

This word is used almost exclusively in poetry; but it does make an occasional appearance in narrative (Judges 5:10 1Chron. 16:9); and there are times when it clearly means *to communicate* (Isa. 58:3). It appears to usually mean *to meditate*, *to study* when there is an inanimate object, but not always (Psalm 77:3). When followed by the lâmed preposition, it generally means *to speak [to someone]*; but when followed by the bêyth preposition, its meaning is more dependent upon the object. Given all this information, none of it really ties down the use of sîyach (שׂיַח) [pronounced *SEE-ahkh*] in this context. We do not have an object, which is often the determining factor; we do not have a preposition which follows, which often helps us to determine the meaning.

Given all of this, let's look at the context (ESV is used): **But I call to God, and the LORD will save me. Evening and morning and at noon I utter my complaint and moan, and he hears my voice. He redeems my soul in safety from the battle that I wage, for many are arrayed against me** (Psalm 55:16–18). Given the context, I would lean toward this being David communicating to God. "It's a Long Way to Tipperary."

Chapter Outline

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

Unlike before, when David was on the run from Saul, David does not have a High Priest traveling with him. He has asked the two high priests to remain in Jerusalem and act as agents for him there. David's guidance, therefore, is based upon what is in his soul.

So far, we have: **I would speak [or, meditate] morning, noon and night;...** The psalmist of Psalm 119 said that he prays 7 times a day (Psalm 119:164) and Daniel said that he prays 3x a day (Dan. 6:10). Here, David says, *morning, noon and night*. Some Jewish commentators seemed to fixate on praying thrice daily.⁹⁷ There is not a magic number of times that we pray that, BINGO, we suddenly get God's attention. We do not pray 6x without any response, but, magically, when we pray that 7th time, God listens and answers the prayer. That is silly. Back in 2Sam. 15, how many times did David pray for God to frustrate the counsel of Ahithophel? Once. It seemed like a prayer that David just threw out there, and continued going up the Mount of Olives. However, God had answered that prayer even before he uttered it. Hushai the Archite, the answer to that prayer, was up there at the top of the Mount of Olives waiting on David. **Before they call, I will answer. While they're still speaking, I will hear** (Isa. 65:24; God's Word™). We are told in 1Thess. 5:17 **Pray without ceasing**. The idea is, to remain in a state of being where the lines of communication remain open all the time. Put God speaker-phone, as it were. In other words, be in fellowship for as long a time as possible; name your sins when necessary to be restored to fellowship; and then, whenever you have something to say to God, you just say it and God hears it and often answers that

⁹⁷ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 55:17. He references Yalkut Simeoni. His explanation, apparently, is based upon the 3 patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

prayer. So, it is not a magic number of times, even though you may personally have a set number of times that you pray (with each meal, and in the morning and at night) or whether you are more erratic than that. We pray, God listens; and we keep the lines of communication open.

Gill, after seeming to try to justify prayer 3x a day, then writes: *And now, though we are not tied down to these exact and precise times of prayer, yet this teaches us that we ought to pray frequently and constantly, and that a day should not pass without it; and the morning and evening seem to be very proper seasons for it, seeing the mercies of the Lord are new every morning; and we should be thankful for them and the mercies of the night past, and implore divine protection and grace for the day following; and at evening we should express our thankfulness for the mercies of the day, and commit ourselves and families into the hands of God, who is Israel's Keeper, that neither slumbers nor sleeps.*⁹⁸

So, we may keep to a schedule of prayer (Psalm 55:17⁹⁹) or we may pray at a variety of unusual times (Psalm 119:62, 147–148 Mark 1:35 Eph. 6:18); but we are to remain in a state of prayer (i.e., in fellowship) for as long as possible (Eph. 6:18 1Thess. 5:17).

Psalm 55:17b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
hâmâh (המָה) [pronounced <i>haw-MAW</i>]	<i>to murmur, to growl, to roar; to be boisterous or turbulent; to be stirred up or in a commotion</i>	1 st person singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1993 BDB #242

This verb is used for the sound of bees, the growl of a bear (Isa. 59:11), the snarl of a dog (Psalm 59:7, 15), the cooing of a turtle dove (Ezek. 7:15); for the sound of a harp (Isa. 14:11 16:11). Of other instruments of music (Jer. 48:36); the noise made by a shower (1Kings 18:41); the noise made by the sound of waves (Psalm 46:4 Isa. 51:15 Jer. 5:22 31:35) and the noise made by a disturbed and tumultuous people (Psalm 46:7 59:7 83:3 Isa. 17:12). This verb is also used for internal emotion (e.g., a disquieting of the mind arising from cares, solicitude, or pity) and this can be compared to the sound of certain musical instruments (Isa. 16:11 Jer. 48:36). Finally, this can be used of a person who is wandering about because of unresolved or difficult issues in his or her mind (Prov. 7:11 9:13).

The Latin and the Greek both have, *to make known*; much less emotional verbs.

Translation: ...and I am [emotionally] stirred up;... David is obviously very stirred up, and it is possible that we are not even speaking of a specifically audible prayer where David says, "I thank You for this, O Lord; and I ask you for this." He may have, during his Bible study, mouthed words or muttered things (which is much in keeping with the meaning of this word). He is moved by his situation; by the betrayal of those who were close to him, and by the Word of God (assuming that he is studying that).

Now, it is not the emotion that is key. There is an emotional element here, as we are emotional beings, but that is simply David responding to the situation that he is in. It is worth noting that the Latin and the Greek both have non-emotional verbs here.

⁹⁸ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 55:17.

⁹⁹ Again, this is an expression; David obviously did not hold to this schedule only.

Psalm 55:17c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
shâma ^c (שמע) [pronounced <i>shaw-MAHÇ</i>]	<i>to listen [intently], to hear, to listen and obey, [or, and act upon, give heed to, take note of], to hearken to, to be attentive to, to listen and be cognizant of</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #8085 BDB #1033
qôwl (קול) [pronounced <i>kohl</i>]	<i>sound, voice, noise; loud noise, thundering</i>	masculine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #6963 BDB #876

Translation: ...therefore, He hears my voice. David concludes that God is listening to him and paying attention to what David is saying or thinking. He is a child of God and he is in fellowship; therefore, God must be listening to him.

The entire verse reads: I would speak [or, meditate] morning, noon and night; and I am [emotionally] stirred up; therefore, He hears my voice.

A Summary up to Psalm 55:17

- 1) We have assumed that David wrote this psalm about his escape from Jerusalem and the betrayal that he felt from his son Absalom and his close associate, Ahithophel. Therefore, we will continue with that interpretation.
- 2) David does not have a priest with him with the ephod, and God does not appear to ever speak directly to David (as best as is in my own memory).
- 3) However, David communicates with God often. Here, he is speaking to God morning, noon and night; which is likely a way of saying, he spoke to God quite often, given his circumstances.
- 4) David is sorting through much of his circumstance in his mind.
- 5) His enemies are friends who have betrayed him. He is still alive. He is with an army of dedicated soldiers. The priests are doing undercover work for him.
- 6) Taking all of this together with his doctrinal background, David is figuring out that God will listen to him and God will deliver him.
- 7) The second part of this psalm indicates that David was too self-involved at first when exiting Jerusalem; but that he does come around to thinking doctrinally.
- 8) When David weighs all of the information in his soul and lays that down along side the doctrine which he knows, he gains great confidence. He goes from being unsure of his fate to knowing that God will deliver him.
- 9) So, what we are doing in this psalm, essentially, is looking inside of David's mind and watching the progression of his thinking.
- 10) David is putting together a **doctrinal rationale**; why he should not fear, but why he should be confident in his assessment of the situation.

Many of the psalms allow us to look into David's soul, to understand what he is thinking and how he puts down the circumstances that he is in along side the truth (doctrine) in his soul, and comes up with some doctrinal conclusions.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

And following the principle that there is no need to re-invent the wheel:

This describes what David is facing:

Disaster Testing and the Faith Rest Technique by Stan Simonton

Both disaster and prosperity can test the faith and resolve of the advancing believer. It is not difficult to imagine how a disaster can distract you from living your spiritual life, but it may a little more difficult to imagine prosperity doing the same.

Focusing on self and your problem to the exclusion of spiritual objectivity can be caused by both disaster and prosperity. The key to remaining stabilized and spiritually strong is proper thinking. Proper thinking means Divine Viewpoint Thinking and proper orientation to life by residing in God's divine power system. Reminding yourself of God's character and promises is a key element in passing both disaster testing and prosperity testing. The result of passing these tests is further advancement toward spiritual maturity.

In disaster testing there is no place for self-pity or fear. Utilization of the Problem-Solving Devices is imperative in this situation. Specifically, the Faith-Rest Drill should be used in disaster situations. Claiming Bible promises refocuses attention on God, and off circumstances or self. Remember that self-pity and fear are mental attitude sins even in disaster situations. The stronger you are spiritually the more likely you are to pass the test.

Mechanics means that you have made a resolve - a decision as to future action. This means that you have predetermined in your mind what course of action you will take when a problem arises. The Faith-Rest Technique is a versatile technique for overcoming any difficult situation, any problem or any disaster. By faith the believer applies doctrine logically while resting in the promises of God. By reaching a doctrinal rationale the believer is re-explaining to himself the basic concepts of doctrine that pertain to his relationship with God. This will be necessary in a crisis because emotion will normally take over and suppress proper thinking. You must take deliberate steps to reestablish the control of the Holy Spirit in your soul.

Here is how the Faith-Rest Technique works:

- 1) The believer claims a promise. A promise is a guarantee from God that expresses His essence (sovereignty, righteousness, justice, love, eternal life, omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence, immutability and veracity). When you lay hold of one of these promises you are able to bring emotion under control, which allows you to think. Before, you were in a state of panic, but now you have peace. This, however, is only the beginning of the drill. Now you must begin to think. (Romans 8:28 - God is working all things together for my good, if I am an advancing believer.)
- 2) The believer applies doctrinal rationale. The application of Bible doctrine requires the believer to recall certain doctrines that have been stored in his soul. A rationale is the rational basis for something or an explanation of reasons or principles. It is at this time that the believer explains again to himself the doctrine which is pertinent to the situation. (Romans 8:29-30 - God has a pre-designed plan for my life.)
- 3) The believer reaches a doctrinal conclusion. This means that the believer is able to take control of the situation. By asking and answering certain questions pertaining to his spiritual life, the believer takes control and evaluates the circumstances. He can now make good decisions from a position of strength and take action using the good judgment and the wisdom from Bible doctrine stored in his soul. (Romans 8:31-35 - If God is for me, who can be against me or separate me from the love of Christ? Therefore, I can take control using the power of the Holy Spirit to enable me.)

Taken directly from **Lesson 34** of Disaster and Prosperity Testing from Stan Simonton's website; accessed November 16, 2012. Ultimately, this teaching came from R. B. Thieme, Jr.; and it is likely that this principle above is very close to Bob's teaching.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

What David is going through is described almost precisely below.

Everyone is susceptible to fear, even a mature believer. Fear is a mental attitude sin that shuts down thinking and makes application of Bible doctrine impossible. When fear catches us off guard, it is important to know the correct recovery procedure. This is where we put the Faith-Rest Technique into action.

Fear vs. Faith by Stan Simonton

This technique involves claiming a Bible promise, applying a doctrinal rationale and reaching a doctrinal conclusion. This is the reason that it is so important that we all learn theology. The nice stories and "Christian principles" will not sustain us in times of extreme difficulty or disaster. We need Bible Doctrine!

We cannot apply what we do not know. Therefore, we need to be consistent in our intake of God's Word for the purpose of growth. Growth means learning to use the Word of God resident in our souls to combat and to control our sin nature and the influences of the world system. Since fear is a sin, the first step to recovery from fear is the utilization of 1John 1:9. By naming "fear" as our sin, we are forgiven and under the control of the Holy Spirit. Now we are in a position to use the Faith-Rest Technique.

The best illustration of the Faith-Rest Technique is Romans 8:28-32. We can easily follow the progression from claiming a promise, to application, to reaching a conclusion. Romans 8:28 says, "We know that God works all things together for good for those who love Him, for those who are the called ones according to a predetermined plan." This is the Biblical promise to those who are maturing in their faith (executing God's plan for their life). This promise is guaranteed by God. When a believer claims this promise, it can reduce a very complicated situation into a very simple one. When we claim this promise, that God is working all things for our good, fear is brought under control because we are now thinking, not emoting.

Once thinking is resumed, we can move on to step two, application. A doctrinal rationale can be any doctrinal truth that you have learned and stored in your memory. In our passage the doctrinal rationale is a series of five related doctrines.

1. **Foreknowledge** - God's awareness of all the assets that He prepared for the believer in eternity-past. This assures us that God was thinking about each of us in eternity -past.
2. **Predestination** - God predesigned a plan for us in eternity-past. That plan calls for us to be set apart unto God in time and in eternity.
3. **Election** - God chose each Church Age believer to be spiritual royalty. Since Jesus Christ was elected, we share in His election because of our union with Him.
4. **Justification** - God declares the believer to be righteous. God actually imputes His righteousness to each believer, setting up the potential for divine blessing in time and in eternity.
5. **Glorification** - God will give each believer a glorified body and eternal rewards based on execution of His plan in time.

These five doctrines in Romans 8:29-30 outline God's plan for every believer of this age. By recalling these doctrines, the believer can remember his place in God's overall plan, which is another step in driving out fear.

Finally, in Romans 8:31-32, the believer is able to reach a doctrinal conclusion. This passage says, **"To what conclusion are we forced? If God be for us, who shall be against us? He Who spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up in behalf of us all, how shall He not with Him freely give us all things?"**

Reaching the doctrinal conclusion **"that God is for us,"** allows us to retake control of our situation and restores confidence in God and in our ability to make good decisions. If the problem is too overwhelming, beyond our ability to solve, we are still able to cope by placing ourselves in the mighty hand of God and trusting Him for the

Fear vs. Faith by Stan Simonton

solution. (Exodus 14:13)

Utilization of this technique restores the most important ability God has given us: thinking. This technique does not need to be a mechanical, "step one, two, three," but can be if the situation demands it. The key is to stop fear in its tracks and restore the thinking process by using the Faith-Rest Technique.

Taken directly from **Lesson 3** of Faith-Rest from Stan Simonton's website (slightly edited); accessed November 16, 2012. Ultimately, this teaching came from R. B. Thieme, Jr.; and it is likely that this principle above is very close to Bob's teaching.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

He has redeemed in peace my soul from a drawing near [or, a battle] to me; for in many have been against me.

Psalm
55:18

He has rescued [or, purchased] my soul in [or, by means of] peace from [those] drawing near to me; for with many, they were against [with?] me.

He has redeemed my soul by means of peace, separating me from those who draw near me in battle, although there were many who were against me.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Jerusalem targum	He redeemed my soul in peace, so that <i>no evil</i> came near to me, <i>for His word was my help</i> in many troubles.
Latin Vulgate	He shall redeem my soul in peace from them that draw near to me: for among many they were with me.
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	He has redeemed in peace my soul from drawing near [or, a battle] to me; for in many have been against me.
Peshitta (Syriac)	<u>Deliver</u> my soul from those who <u>have been too wise</u> for me, from those who have opposed me continuously.
Septuagint (Greek)	He shall <u>deliver</u> my soul in peace from them that draw near to me; for they were with me in many cases.

Significant differences:

To deliver is not the same as *to redeem*; but it is not too far different in the meaning than the original Hebrew word (which can mean *to redeem*; *to rescue*). The Syriac had trouble with the second phrase, as I did in the English. You will note all of the additions in the targum above; that indicates that there was a lot of difficulty in understanding this.

Gill says of the ancient translations: *The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, render the last clause, "from them that draw near to you"; and the Syriac version renders it, by way of petition, "deliver my soul from them that know me"; and the Targum, "lest evil should come unto me".*¹⁰⁰

¹⁰⁰ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 55:18.

These extensive notes may give you a clue that we are going to struggle with this verse.¹⁰¹ I should also warn you that there is going to be a lot of discussion in this verse about the translation and the meaning, but without necessarily coming to a comfortable explanation. This will be despite many of the simple-sounding translations which follow.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	He saves me [Or my life or soul], unharmed, from my struggle, though there are many who are out to get me.
Contemporary English V. Easy English	I am attacked from all sides, but you will rescue me unharmed by the battle. He will make me safe and well after the many times that I have fought against people (that are my enemies).
Easy-to-Read Version	I have fought in many battles. But God has always rescued me and brought me back safely.
Good News Bible (TEV) <i>The Message</i>	He will bring me safely back from the battles that I fight against so many enemies. My life is well and whole, secure in the middle of danger Even while thousands are lined up against me.
New Berkeley Version	He will rescue my soul to have peace from those who war against me; for they who oppose me number many.
New Century Version	Many are against me, but he keeps me safe in battle.
New Life Bible	He will save my soul in peace from those who make war against me. For there are many who fight me.
New Living Translation	He ransoms me and keeps me safe from the battle waged against me, though many still oppose me.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	For peaceful things He will ransom my life. from those who were once on my side, but who now come and attack me.
Beck's American Translation	He will ransom me by His peace, from the war waged against me, for my adversaries are beside me.
Christian Community Bible <i>God's Word</i> TM	He will deliver me in safety from my opponents, for they are many. With his peace, he will rescue my soul from the war waged against me, because there are many soldiers fighting against me.
NIRV	Even though many enemies are fighting against me, he brings me safely back from the battle.
New Jerusalem Bible	...he ransoms me and gives me peace from the feud against me, for they are taking me to law.
New Simplified Bible	In peace he will rescue me from the war waged against me. There are many against me.
Revised English Bible	He will hear my cry and deliver me and give me security so that none may attack me, for many are hostile to me. Is this even the correct verse here?
Today's NIV	He rescues me unharmed from the battle waged against me, even though many oppose me.

¹⁰¹ My guess is, I have spend about 4 hours on it overall.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear Bible in Basic English	He ransoms my soul in peace from my battles, for many were with me. He has taken my soul away from the attack which was made against me, and given it peace; for great numbers were against me.
Complete Jewish Bible	He redeems me and gives me peace, so that no one can come near me. For there were many who fought me.
Ferar-Fenton Bible	He will give my soul peace in my breast, From the many who stand against me.
HCSB	Though many are against me, He will redeem me from my battle unharmed.
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	He redeems me unharmed from the battle against me; it is as though many are on my side [Meaning of Hebrew uncertain].
Judaica Press Complete T.	He redeemed my soul with peace from the battle that came upon me, because of the many <i>people who</i> were with me.
New Advent Bible	He shall redeem my soul in peace from them that draw near to me: for among many they were with me.
NET Bible®	He will rescue [The perfect verbal form is here used rhetorically to indicate that the action is certain to take place (the so-called perfect of certitude).] me and protect me from those who attack me [Heb "he will redeem in peace my life from [those who] draw near to me."], even though [Or "for."] they greatly outnumber me [Heb "among many they are against me." For other examples of the preposition <i>מִמֶּנִּי</i> ('immad) used in the sense of "at, against," see HALOT 842 s.v.; BDB 767 s.v.; IBHS 219 §11.2.14b.].
NIV – UK	He rescues me unharmed from the battle waged against me, even though many oppose me.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	He has redeemed my life in peace from the battle that was against me [so that none came near me], for they were many who strove with me.
Concordant Literal Version	He ransoms my soul in peace from the attack against me, Though many have come to be against me.
Context Group Version	He has ransomed my life { soul } in peace from the battle that was against me; For they were many [that strove] with me.
English Standard Version	He redeems my soul in safety from the battle that I wage, for many are arrayed against me.
exeGesés companion Bible	He redeems my soul in shalom from the battle against me; for many are with me:...
The updated Geneva Bible	He hath delivered my soul in peace from the battle [that was] against me: for there were many with me [Even the angels of God fought on my side against my enemies, (2 Kings 6:16).].
LTHB	He redeems my soul in peace from the war <i>being waged</i> against me; for they were many with me.
NASB	He will redeem my soul in peace from the battle which is against me [Or so that none may approach me], For they are many <i>who strive</i> with me.
New RSV	He will redeem me unharmed from the battle that I wage, for many are arrayed against me.
Syndein	{Describes David when being Attacked by Saul after the Ziphites Betrayed Him - Also Is Applicable still to 2Samuel 15 and the Absalom Revolution}

He {God} has preserved/delivered my {David's} soul . . . in tranquility/prosperity/peace {shalom} from the attack that was against me. Even though there are multitudes opposed to me. {Note: RBT says verses 18:23 demonstrate what David was thinking in the caves of Engedi - see 1Samuel 24. Saul had David trapped. God arranged for David's escape from the treachery of the Ziphites in 1Samuel 23. Now Saul is again after David and David has the opportunity to kill Saul but does not. If God does not promote you, you are not promoted - it was not for David to kill God's anointed king.} {Note: RBT also says that this entire Psalm describes David's thinking concerning revolution and the results of revolution in conjunction with the Study of 2Samuel 15.}

Updated Bible Version 2.11

He has redeemed my soul in peace from the battle that was against me; For they were many [who strove] with me.

World English Bible

He has redeemed my soul in peace from the battle that was against me, Although there are many who oppose me.

Young's Updated LT

He has ransomed in peace my soul From him who is near to me, For with the multitude they were with me.

The gist of this verse:

God has answered the prayers of David and has rescued him from Absalom and Ahithophel.

An advanced warning: this is a very difficult verse to translate, even though most of the words are well-known.

I had a great deal of trouble putting together a good translation for this verse to begin with. Without a reasonable translation, it is very difficult to understand the what David is saying. This is essentially my thought process laid out.

Translating and Explaining Psalm 55:18

First approach—look at several translations which are usually quite literal which include the verses on both sides of this.

Net Bible

During the evening, morning, and noontime
 I will lament and moan [First verb is cohortative; second ought to be],
 and he will hear me.
 He will rescue [Perfect tense to suggest certitude] me and protect me from those
 who attack me [Hebrew, *draw near to me*],
 even though [or, *for*] they greatly outnumber me [Heb "among many they are
 against me."].
 God, the one who has reigned as king from long ago,
 will hear and humiliate them [Heb "God will hear and answer them, even [the] one
 who sits [from] ancient times."]. (Selah)
 They refuse to change,
 and do not fear God [Heb "[the ones] for whom there are no changes, and they
 do not fear God."].

Concordant Literal Version:

Evening, morning and noon I importune and clamor, And He hears my voice."
 He ransoms my soul in peace from the attack against me, Though many have
 come to be against me." El shall hear, and He shall answer them, The Dweller
 from aforetime, Interlude He in Whom there are no changes; Yet they do not fear
 Elohim."

English Standard Version

Evening and morning and at noon I utter my complaint and moan, and he hears
 my voice. He redeems my soul in safety from the battle that I wage, for many are
 arrayed against me. God will give ear and humble them, he who is enthroned

Translating and Explaining Psalm 55:18

from of old, Selah because they do not change and do not fear God.

Judaic Press Complete T	Evening, morning, and noontime, I speak and moan, and He hearkened to my voice. He redeemed my soul with peace from the battle that came upon me, because of the many people who were with me. May God hear and answer them, and the One who dwells from time immemorial forever, for there is no passing for them, and they did not fear God.
The Scriptures 1998	Evening and morning and at noon I complain and moan, And He hears my voice. He has redeemed my life in peace From the battle against me, For there were many against me. Ēl, even He who sits enthroned from of old, Does hear and afflict them – Selah – Those with whom there are no changes, Those who do not fear Elohim.
Young’s updated translation	Evening, and morning, and noon, I meditate, and make a noise, and He hears my voice, He has ransomed in peace my soul From him who is near to me, For with the multitude they were with me. God does hear and afflict them, And He sits of old. Selah. Because they have no changes, and fear not God,...

The idea here is to look at several good translations and try to make some sense of them in context, because there are so many ways to translate the final phrase in v. 18.

Some general impressions:

In v. 17, there is a prayer to God; in vv. 18–19, this prayer is responded to by God.

In v. 18, David is either looking back and saying how his prayers were answered, or he is looking forward and is assured that God will hear and answer his prayers.

V. 19: God hears David’s prayers and He afflicts the enemies of David.

V. 18b is very difficult to translate and to explain, even though, in the Scriptures 1998, it appears simple: **For there were many against me.**

These thoughts were gathered actually after I had translated this verse and everything around it. My commentary was originally quite sparse because I was struggling with the translation. Therefore, I went back and did this table. Also, in the Hebrew exegesis, there are going to be several comments of different things which were considered and different opinions which I entertained.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

Psalm 55:18a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
pādâh (פָּדָה) [pronounced paw-DAWH]	<i>to ransom, to purchase, to redeem; to let go [set free]; to preserve, to deliver [from danger]</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #6299 BDB #804
b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
shâlôwm (שָׁלוֹם) or shâlôm (שְׁלֹמ) [pronounced shaw-LOHM]	<i>completeness, soundness, health and welfare, peace, prosperity, safe, secure, tranquil, undisturbed, unagitated</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #7965 BDB #1022
nephesh (נֶפֶשׁ) [pronounced NEH-fesh]	<i>soul, life, living being, desire, volition; will</i>	feminine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #5315 BDB #659
We would have either the 1 st person masculine singular suffix added to the verb above; or <i>my soul</i> as we have here.			
min (מִן) [pronounced mihn]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, beyond, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
qerâb (קִרְבָּה) [pronounced ker-AW ^B V]	<i>battle, war, hostile approach</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #7128 BDB #898
Owen has the verb below; the KJV+ in e-sword has the masculine singular noun above (which is based upon the verb below).			
qârab (קָרַב) [pronounced kaw-RA ^B V]	<i>to come near, to approach, to draw near</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong #7126 BDB #897
The min preposition is often affixed to an infinitive construct particularly after verbs that denote the idea of withholding, restraining, or refusing to grant a privilege. It is also used occasionally to express the comparative. Sometimes, it may simply mean <i>from</i> . ¹⁰²			
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to; belonging to; by</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 1 st person singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510

¹⁰² *Biblical Hebrew*; by Page Kelley; William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., ©1992, p. 182.

Psalm 55:18a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
<p>The meanings of the lâmed preposition broken down into groups: ❶ <i>to, towards, unto</i>; it is used both to turn one's heart <i>toward</i> someone as well as to sin <i>against</i> someone; ❷ <i>to, even to</i>; in this sense, it can be used with a number to indicate the upper limit which a multitude might approach (<i>nearly</i>). ❸ Lâmed can be equivalent to the Greek preposition eis (εις), meaning <i>into</i>, as in transforming <i>into</i> something else, changing <i>into</i> something else (Gen. 2:7). This use of lâmed after the verb hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i>] (Strong's #1961 BDB #224) is one thing <i>becoming</i> another (Gen. 2:7). ❹ Its fourth use is the mark of a dative, after verbs of giving, granting, delivering, pardoning, consulting, sending, etc. This type of dative is broken down into several categories, but one includes the translation <i>by</i>, which would be apropos here. ❺ <i>With regards to, as to</i>. Similar to the Greek preposition eis (εις) plus the dative. [Numbering from Gesenius]. ❻ <i>On account of, because, propter</i>, used of cause and reason (<i>propter</i> means <i>because</i>; Gesenius used it). ❼ <i>Concerning, about</i>, used of a person or thing made the object of discourse, after verbs of saying. ❽ <i>On behalf of anyone, for anyone</i>. ❾ <i>As applied to a rule or standard, according to, according as, as though, as if</i>. ❿ When associated with time, it refers to <i>the point of time at which</i> or <i>in which</i> anything is done; or it can refer to <i>the space of time during which</i> something is done (or occurs); <i>at the time of</i>.</p>			

Translation: He has rescued [or, purchased] my soul in [or, by means of] peace from [those] drawing near to me;... We would assume that the One purchasing a soul will be God. The purchase of our souls is done *in peace* or *by means of peace*; that is, we have peace with God through the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

David probably means this in a temporal fashion; that is, he has been saved from being destroyed, and he attributes this to God. We do not know from what perspective David writes this; did he write it after the fact? Did he look forward and determine that God would deliver him? He uses the perfect tense of the verb, indicating that this is an accomplished fact.

It is a very tough call whether this is the Qal infinitive construct of *to come near, to draw near*; or the masculine singular noun of *a battle, a war*. The words are related and the only difference between them is the vowels (which were added long after Scripture was written). Since we already have a verb, we do not necessarily need another one in this phrase. However, *from drawing near* is much easier to translate than *from a battle*. The only caveat is, the verb goes well with the lâmed preposition which follows. Also, I tend to trust Owen more than the e-sword translations.

The idea is, God has preserved David in war, from those who are drawing near to him. David, at some point, would find out that the Absalom army is pursuing him; just as his soul has been preserved for all eternity. Furthermore, God does this because **David is for peace; and they are for war** (Psalm 120:7).

Application: People are very confused about warriors. They think that have a standing army somehow makes a country more likely to go to war; they think that somehow, soldiers love hurting or maiming people. A soldier is who he is out of great patriotism, serving a variety of political figures, most of whom are very self-serving. But the warrior desires peace, and will do whatever it takes to provide peace and security for his country and for his family.

Our verse so far: **He has rescued** [or, purchased] **my soul in** [or, by means of] **peace from** [those] **drawing near to me;...** This presents an odd juxtaposition, where David, being threatened with war, has had his life rescued and in relative peace; that is, with a calmness of mind. That would be David's perception of this. The Holy Spirit would be using peace in the sense of peace between God and man via the death, burial and resurrection of our Lord. Like many psalms, there is often a two-fold meaning—one which deals with the situation of the psalmist at the time of writing; and one which may look forward in time, most often to the death of Jesus Christ for our sins.

The man-ward side of v. 18a: **He has rescued my life in peace from [those] drawing near to me;...** David speaks of a specific deliverance or rescue by God; and this psalm can be applied to many people over many different centuries. *Those drawing near David* would be his enemies, Absalom and Ahithophel.

The God-ward side of v. 18a: **He has purchased my soul by means of peace from [those] drawing near to me;...** God has purchased the soul of David through the peace which He established between man and God. Here, assigning an identity to *those drawing near to David* is more difficult. Could this be Satan attempting to draw mankind to himself; and God has purchased David's soul, keeping him away from Satan?

There is an alternate way of translating this, because of the infinitive construct in this verse: **He has rescued [or, purchased] my soul in [or, by means of] peace from that battle that was against me;...** The problem here is, the lâmed preposition does not mean *against*. So perhaps, **from the battle that concerned me;...** Still, a little clunky.

That was the easy portion of this verse. The next portion is quite difficult, but with fairly common and simple words.

Psalm 55:18b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kîy (כי) [pronounced <i>kee</i>]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
b ^e (ב) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
rab (רב) [pronounced <i>rah^{bv}</i>]	<i>many, much, great (in the sense of large or significant, not acclaimed)</i>	masculine plural adjective	Strong's #7227 BDB #912
<p>One of the possibilities that I pursued here was taking brb (ברב) as a word; and it is—it means <i>hail</i>. Strong's #1259 BDB #135. However, there does not appear to be a plural form of this for the meaning <i>hail</i>. <i>Hailstones</i> is actually two words in the Hebrew. These same 3 consonants can also be the adjective, <i>sprinkled with spots</i>, which does have a plural form and meaning. Strong's #1261 BDB #136. However, neither of those words really fit well here.</p>			
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i>]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 rd person plural Qal perfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
<p>Although the plural of rab is right here in this context, that does not appear to be the plural noun that goes with this verb (if it did, it would not have a preposition in front of it). So <i>they</i> has to refer back to those who are opposed to David back in v. 15 and then showing up again in v. 19.</p>			
‘îm (עִם) [pronounced <i>geem</i>]	<i>with, at, by, near; like; from; against; toward; as long as; beside, except; in spite of</i>	preposition of nearness and vicinity; with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #5973 BDB #767

Translation: **...for with many, they were against [with?] me.** I am having a great deal of trouble with the bêt preposition before what appears to be the subject of the verb. I am unsure as to how to translate that. Normally, there is no preposition before the subject of a sentence. Literally, this would read **...for they in many were with [against, near?] me.** First off, the translation makes little sense; and, secondly, who is *they*? The only possible reference to the subject of the verb reaches back into v. 15 for David's enemies. There is also the problem of the final preposition which can be translated *against*, but most often is translated *with*.

Clarke gives his interpretation to this second half: *David may refer to the supernatural assistance which was afforded him when his enemies were so completely discomfited.*¹⁰³ So the many are the angels surrounding him and even protecting him.

The targum adds a few words in order to smooth this out: *He redeemed my soul in peace, so that no evil came near to me, for His word was my help in many troubles.* So, by the targum, David used God's Word. However, the problem is, those who translated the targum seem to have made up almost everything in the second half of this verse. Perhaps the idea is, *for His Word is with me in many troubles.* The problem is, of course, that we have added *His Word* and *troubles*. Also, a plural verb has been turned into a singular verb. So, whereas I really like that approach of the targum, there does not appear to be any support for it.

Here is how some have dealt with this problem:

NASB	For they are many <i>who strive</i> with me.
New RSV	for many are arrayed against me.
Updated Bible Version 2.11	For they were many [who strove] with me.
World English Bible	Although there are many who oppose me.
Young's Updated LT	For with the multitude they were with me.

You will note that, in these very literal translations, only Young made an attempt to translate every word here. The others completely ignored the *bêyth* preposition; and the WEB threw in the words *there are* instead. Note that *in the many* is not presented as the subject of the verb; but some put this as the object of the verb (which would really make more sense if it had no preposition in front of it).

So, this gives us: *For with* [in, by means of, among] *[the] many, they were with* [near, from, against, toward] *me.* That gives us 20 possibilities, none of which are easy to understand; and the most understandable require us using the least used meanings for the prepositions. I think I will hold off making any decisions on interpreting this until I look at Keil and Delitzsch and others who will try to explain this passage.

It is quite clear that many struggled with this passage. Barnes gives two interpretations: *This language conveys to us the idea that there were many on his side, or many that were associated with him, and that this was the reason why he was delivered. It is doubtful, however, whether this is the meaning of the original. The idea may be that there were many contending with him; that is, that there were many who were arrayed against him. The Hebrew will admit of this construction.*¹⁰⁴

Gill similarly writes: *...either enemies fighting with him; and so this is mentioned to set forth the more the power of God in his deliverance: or friends, who were on his side; all Israel and Judah, who loved David and prayed for him, as Jarchi interprets it: or the angels of God, as Aben Ezra; who being for the Lord's people, are more than they that are against them, 2Kings 6:16; or God, Father, Son, and Spirit.*¹⁰⁵

John Calvin¹⁰⁶ also gives a two-fold interpretation, but more as if it is intended: *What is added, they were in great numbers with me, admits of a double meaning. Some understand him as referring to enemies; with me being, according to them, equivalent to against me. He represents himself as having been beset, by a host of adversaries, and commends the goodness manifested by God in accomplishing his deliverance. Others think that he refers to the angels, whose hosts are encamped round about those that fear the Lord, (Psalm 34:7 *The Angel of Jehovah camps round about those who fear Him, and delivers them.*) The letter *ב*,beth, which I have rendered in, they consider to be*

¹⁰³ Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 55:18.

¹⁰⁴ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 55:18.

¹⁰⁵ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 55:18.

¹⁰⁶ John Calvin, *Calvin's Commentary on the Bible*; 2nd beta version from e-Sword, Psalm 55:18.

here, as in many other places, merely expletive;¹⁰⁷ so that we may read the words, great numbers were with me. The last of these interpretations conveys a comfortable truth, as God, although he cannot stand in need of auxiliaries, has seen fit, in accommodation to our infirmity, to employ a multitude of them in the accomplishment of our salvation. But David would appear rather to speak of enemies, and to refer to the number of them, with the view of magnifying the deliverance which he had received.¹⁰⁸ In other words, there is the sense in which David is a standoff against the forces of Absalom, the many; but there is also the sense that David stands with the many in salvation; with the elect angels. This would fit with the two-fold understanding of v. 18a.

The Geneva Bible also sees the angels as those who are the many who fought along side of David. He cites 2Kings 6:16–17 [And he answered, “Do not fear, for those with us are more than those with them.”](#) And Elisha prayed and said, [“I pray You, Jehovah, open his eyes so that he may see.”](#) And Jehovah opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw. And behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.

If we allow this two-fold understanding; then this agrees well with the two-fold meaning assigned to v. 18a.

Let’s look at the translation, and offer up two possible understandings of this verse.

A Possible Two-fold Explanation of 2Sam. 55:18

Scripture	Text/Commentary
<p>He has rescued my life in [or, by means of] peace from [those] drawing near to me; for with many, they were against me.</p>	<p>This is how David views this verse and the events of his life. He prayed to God, and God heard him and rescued him giving him peace, despite those who draw near to him in battle. These are David’s enemies spoken of back in v. 15 who have an army which will move against David.</p>
<p>He has purchased my soul by means of peace from [those] drawing near to me; for with the great ones, they were against me.</p>	<p>God, through His Son, purchased David’s soul by means of a peace between man and God established by Jesus Christ. Including David’s enemies here on earth, there are many who stand against him—including the fallen angels.</p>

My only difficulty in this understanding is, the final preposition more often means *with* rather than *against*.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

In **Psalm 3** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)), which is also properly exegeted with **2Sam. 15** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)) (and after Psalm 55), we find David at peace, even though he is on the run from Absalom. [I laid down and slept. I awoke, for Jehovah kept me. I am not afraid of ten thousands of people who have set against me all around. Arise, O Jehovah; save me, O my God; for You have struck all my enemies on the cheekbone. You have broken the teeth of the ungodly. Salvation belongs to Jehovah. Your blessing is on Your people. Selah.](#) (Psalm 3:5–8; MKJV). David, on the run from Absalom, is at ease, because God has defeated his enemies for him (David has assurance of that, as David was at peace before such a victory had occurred in time). What appears to be the case is, Psalm 55 is David’s **doctrinal rationale**. He is thinking doctrine in this psalm, which leads him to the peace clearly found in Psalm 3. That is, Psalm 55 tells us about how David felt (he was in fear and was thinking about himself) and then he began to apply some doctrine to the situation, along with some prayer. It is indeed possible that Psalm 55 was David’s thinking upon his exit out of Jerusalem and his march up the Mount of Olives;

¹⁰⁷ Calvin writes in the footnote: Rogers is of this opinion; and observes, that “in the Appendix to the first volume of Glassius, many instances are adduced of the redundancy of the prefix *o*; as Ex. 32:22; Psalm 68:5; Ezra 3:3.”

¹⁰⁸ Calvin writes in the footnote: Walford renders the sentence, [“Though multitudes be in opposition to me.”](#) “The sense,” says he, “which is here given, is evidently required, and is fairly deducible from the Hebrew text.” Bishop Horsley’s rendering is, [“For they who stood on my side told for many;”](#) — [“they who stood on my side,”](#) denoting the Divine assistance described under the image of numerous auxiliaries. See 2Kings 6:16; 1John 4:4.

and that Psalm 3 represents his doctrinal conclusions. When he met Hushai at the top of the mountain—an answer to prayer—this may have given David an extra boost of confidence. He throws off this quick 5 second prayer when climbing the Mount of Olives, after hearing the Ahithophel was with Absalom; and then, at the top of the mountain, is David’s answer to this prayer.

Psalm 27:1–3 has David exuding the same confidence in God: *Y^ehowah is my light and my salvation. Whom shall I fear? Y^ehowah is the strength of my life. Of whom shall I be afraid? When evil men came at me to destroy my life, even my adversaries and my foes, they stumbled and fell. Though an army should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear. Though war should rise against me, even then I will be confident.* It is possible that Psalm 27 was written long before this, and that Psalms 3 and 55 represent David regaining his confidence and the power of the Word of God in his soul, which he had lost in the Bathsheba/Uriah incident.

Application: The Christian life is very much what happens inside of your own soul. It is not a religion weighted down with constant introspection, but we learn to think like God thinks (Rom. 12:2 Philip. 2:5), which means that, the circumstances of our lives are simply circumstances. They are things which God has already dealt with in eternity past. In some of these circumstances, we are to act; and in some of them, we are to sit back and watch God take care of them. In most cases, it is a little bit of both. However, you do not have a problem that God has not already provided the solution for. In fact, you will never have a problem that God, in eternity past, has not already provided the solution for. This is what Psalms 55 and 3 are all about. It is because of David’s thinking in Psalm 55 that we can then go to Psalm 3 where he is at ease.

Listens Elohim and He answers [or, humbles, afflicts] them, and sitting [or, abiding, dwelling, remaining] [from] antiquity. Selah! Who no change to them and they have not feared Elohim.

Psalm
55:19

Elohim listens and He answers [or, humbles, afflicts] them, [Elohim, Who is] abiding [from] antiquity. [Musical] pause When [there is] no change for them and they do not fear/respect Elohim,...

**God listens to and answers these revolutionaries with affliction and pain;
—God, Who has been enthroned from eternity past—
[Musical interlude]
There is no change in their thinking or actions;
and they have no fear or respect for God.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum (trans. By Cook)

God will hear and *receive* from them [their prayer], and the one who dwells *in heaven* from of old forever; *but the wicked who are not from of old*, who do not change their *ways*, are evil, and are not afraid *in the presence of God*.

Latin Vulgate

God shall hear, and the Eternal shall humble them. For there is no change with them, and they have not feared God.

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)

Listens Elohim and He answers [or, humbles, afflicts] them, and sitting [or, abiding, dwelling, remaining] [from] antiquity. Selah! Who no change to them and they have not feared Elohim.

Peshitta (Syriac)

God, even the Eternal one, shall hear and humble them. With them also there are no changes; therefore they fear not God.

Septuagint (Greek) God shall hear, and bring them low, even He that has existed from eternity. Pause. For they suffer no recourse, and therefore they have not feared God.

Significant differences: You will note the second verb *to humble, to bring low* in the Latin, Greek and Syriac, which does not match the Hebrew verb *to answer*. However, there are two Hebrew verbs which are spelled the exact same way, one which means *to answer*; to the other which means *to humble, to afflict*. More information will be found in the Hebrew exegesis.

The Latin does not speak of God *abiding forever*; choosing, instead, to call Him *the Eternal*. Ditto for the Syriac. The Greek uses the word *existed* instead.

The Greek, in the 3rd clause (the clause after the pause); has *they suffer no recourse* (taken from the English translation) rather than *for whom there is no change*.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	God, who is enthroned from ancient days, will hear and humble them <i>Selah</i> because they don't change and they don't worship God.
Contemporary English V.	You have always ruled, and you will hear me. You will defeat my enemies because they won't turn and worship you.
Easy English	God will listen to me and he will *punish them. (God) will always be King! * SELAH
Easy-to-Read Version	He will never change towards the people that are not afraid of God. God listens to me. The Eternal King will help me. (SELAH [This word is for the musicians. It probably means the singers should pause here or the music should be louder here.]) My enemies will not change their lives. [Or, "The Ancient King, the One who never changes, will humiliate them."] They don't fear and respect God.
Good News Bible (TEV)	God, who has ruled from eternity, will hear me and defeat them; for they refuse to change, and they do not fear him.
<i>The Message</i>	God hears it all, and from his judge's bench puts them in their place. But, set in their ways, they won't change; they pay him no mind.
New Berkeley Version	God will hear and humble them [Usually, "hear" means a favorable response. Here it would result in their being humbled.], He, who sits enthroned from of old. <i>Selah</i> Because in them there has been no change [Continued prosperity renders them ever less godly.] and they do not revere God.
New Life Bible	God sits on His throne forever. And He will hear them and bring trouble upon them, because there has been no change in them. They do not fear God.
New Living Translation	God, who has ruled forever, will hear me and humble them. Interlude For my enemies refuse to change their ways; they do not fear God.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	God will listen and humiliate them (He who exists through the ages). There'll be none who can bargain with Him, since they've failed to show fear of God.
Beck's American Translation	May God who sits on His ancient throne hear and put them down (Music) because they never change and don't fear God.
Christian Community Bible	God who is enthroned forever will hear me and humble them, for they do not repent nor do they stand in awe of God.
God's Word™	God will listen. The one who has sat enthroned from the beginning will deal with them. <i>Selah</i> They never change. They never fear God.
New American Bible	God, who sits enthroned forever [Ps 29:10; 93:2], will hear me and afflict them. <i>Selah</i> For they will not mend their ways; they have no fear of God.
NIRV	God sits on his throne forever. He hears my prayers and makes my enemies suffer. <i>Selah</i> They never change their ways. They don't have any respect for God.
New Jerusalem Bible	But God will listen and will humble them, he who has been enthroned from the beginning; no change of heart for them, for they do not fear God.
New Simplified Bible	God will listen and answer them. The one who has sat enthroned from the beginning will deal with them. They never change. They never respect God.
Revised English Bible	God hears, and he humbles them, he who is enthroned from of old. They have no respect for an oath, nor any fear of God.
Today's NIV	God, who is enthroned from of old, who does not change- he will hear them and humble them, because they have no fear of God.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear	God hears, and humbles the ancient dwellers. <i>Selah</i> . They never changed and never feared God,...
Bible in Basic English	God will give thought to me; he who from early times is strong will send pain and trouble on them. <i>Selah</i> . Because they are unchanged, they have no fear of God..
Ferar-Fenton Bible	God hears me, and will punish them, And fling to distress from their rock, To which they will not be restored, Because they have no fear of God.
HCSB	God, the One enthroned from long ago, will hear, and will humiliate them <i>Selah</i> because they do not change and do not fear God.
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	God who has reigned from the first, who will have no successor, hears and humbles those who have no fear of God. <i>Selah</i> .
Judaica Press Complete T.	May God hear and answer them, and the One who dwells from time immemorial forever, for there is no passing for them, and they did not fear God.
NET Bible®	God, the one who has reigned as king from long ago, will hear and humiliate them [Heb "God will hear and answer them, even [the] one who sits [from] ancient times." The prefixed verbal from with vav (ו) consecutive carries on the anticipatory force of the preceding imperfect. The verb appears to be a Qal form from אָנָה ('anah, "to answer"). If this reading is retained, the point would

be that God “answered” them in judgment. The translation assumes an emendation to the Piel פָּנְיָיו (vay’annem; see 2 Kgs 17:20) and understands the root as פָּנָה (‘anah, “to afflict”; see also 1 Kgs 8:35).] (*Selah*)

They refuse to change,
and do not fear God.

NIV – UK

God, who is enthroned from of old,
who does not change -
he will hear them and humble them,
because they have no fear of God.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	God will hear and humble them, even He Who abides of old– <i>Selah</i> [pause, and calmly think of that]!-because in them there has been no change [of heart], and they do not fear, revere, <i>and</i> worship God.
Concordant Literal Version	El shall hear, and He shall answer them, The Dweller from aforetime, Interlude He in Whom there are no changes; Yet they do not fear Elohim.
Context Group Version	God will hear, and humble them, Even he who stays of old, <i>Selah</i> , [The men] who have no changes, And who don't fear God.
<i>Emphasized Bible</i>	GOD will hear, Yea He will humble them who aforetime sat enthroned . <i>Selah</i> . With whom are no changings, Neither have they revered God.
English Standard Version	God will give ear and humble them, he who is enthroned from of old, <i>Selah</i> because they do not change and do not fear God.
exeGesés companion Bible	El hears and answers them - he who settled from antiquity. <i>Selah</i> . He neither changes, nor awes Elohim; ...
The Geneva Bible	God shall hear, and afflict them, even he that abideth of old. <i>Selah</i> . Because they have no changes [But their prosperous estate still continues.], therefore they fear not God.
LTHB	God shall hear and answer them, even He who is enthroned of old. <i>Selah</i> . There are no changes to them; yea, they do not fear God.
Syndein	{Why Saul was Blind to the Grace of God And, Also Follows well with the Thoughts of David in the Absalom Revolution} 'El/'The Omnipotent God ' {El is used for God with emphasis on His Power} shall 'hear, listen and obey' {my prayers} {shama` - David's SuperGrace prayer request - David is confident God will deliver him and his followers}, and answer them {David's prayers}. For He is the One Who reigns from eternity past {David knows that his blessings came from God - and this was decreed in eternity past}. <i>Selah</i> { <i>Selah</i> means singers rest and instruments play on - it is a picture of you resting while the Grace of God continues on}. In whom {Saul and the Ziphites} they have no changes {means they were in reversionism and did not turn back to God - rebound and intake of doctrine, and fellowship with God - instead they stay out of fellowship}, because they do not respect {the authority of} 'Elohiym /Godhead. {in the Absalom revolution, they did not respect God's laws of Divine Establishment} {Saul and David Supposedly are at Peace}.
Updated Bible Version 2.11	God will hear, and answer them, Even he who remains of old. <i>Selah</i> . [The men] who have no changes, And who don't fear God.
A Voice in the Wilderness	The Mighty God will hear and testify to them, even He who abides from of old. <i>Selah</i> . Because they do not change, therefore they do not fear God.

World English Bible

God, who is enthroned forever, Will hear, and answer them. Selah. They never change, Who don't fear God.

Young's Updated LT

God does hear and afflict them, And He sits of old. Selah. Because they have no changes, and fear not God.

The gist of this verse:

God listens to these people, David's enemies, and He will respond with judgment, as they refuse to change and they do not fear Him.

Psalm 55:19a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
shâma ^c (שָׁמַע) [pronounced shaw-MAHG]	<i>to listen [intently], to hear, to listen and obey, [or, and act upon, give heed to, take note of], to hearken to, to be attentive to, to listen and be cognizant of</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #8085 BDB #1033
Ēlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced el-o-HEEM]	<i>God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʿânâh (אָנַח) [pronounced ġaw-NAWH]	<i>to answer, to respond; to speak loudly, to speak up [in a public forum]; to testify; to sing, to chant, to sing responsively</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect with the 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #6030 BDB #772

Although Owen calls this a Hiphil imperfect, it is not in the Hiphil form.

Or, the verb could be this one, which is how the Latin, Greek and Syriac understand it:

ʿânâh (אָנַח) [pronounced ġaw-NAWH]	<i>to humble, to be grace oriented, to be humbled, to be afflicted</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect with the 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #6031 BDB #776
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This word is a homonym, the other use also being very common; it means *to answer*. Strong's #6030 BDB #772.

Translation: **Elohim listens and He answers** [or, *humble, afflicts*] **them**,... David believes in an active God; a God Who is involved in his life. David points out that God is not only listening to all that is said, but He answers the revolutionaries—Absalom, Ahithophel and Amasa—and He responds to them.

Or, in the alternative, God afflicts David's enemies; He humbles them. God will answer the revolutionary actions of these men and afflict them with pain and suffering.

David's God did not just wind up the world and then wander off, finding other things to do. God does not have ADD (attention deficit disorder¹⁰⁹). He is very much involved with our lives; Abraham believed this; David believed this; and, if you pray, then you must believe this as well.

¹⁰⁹ In many cases, this actually means, *being a boy and acting like one*.

Psalm 55:19b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
yâshab (יָשַׁב) [pronounced yaw-SHAH ^{AV}]	<i>inhabiting, staying, remaining, dwelling, sitting</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #3427 BDB #442
qêdem (קֵדֶם) [pronounced KAY-dem]	<i>east, antiquity, front, that which is before, aforeside; in front, mount of the East; ancient time, aforeside, ancient, from of old, earliest time; anciently, of old; beginning; eastward, to or toward the east</i>	noun/adverb	Strong's #6924 BDB #870

Barnes: *Literally, He inhabits antiquity; that is, he sits enthroned in the most distant past.*¹¹⁰

Translation:...[Elohim, Who is] abiding [from] antiquity. Obviously, this is applied back to God, and not to the 2 or 3 men about whom David is speaking. It is God Who is enthroned from eternity past. In fact, what is implied here is, God knew about this, heard all of this, and answered what we find here in eternity past.

Barnes: *[God] is eternal and unchanging. The same God who has heard prayer [in the past], will hear it now; he who has always shown himself a just God and an avenger, He will show himself to be the same now. The fact that God is from everlasting, and is unchanging, is the only foundation for our security at any time, and the only ground of success in our plans. To a Being who is always the same we may confidently appeal, for we know what he will do. But who could have confidence in a changeable God? Who would know what to expect?*¹¹¹

Before Absalom was born, God knew all about Absalom and all that he would do. God knew Ahithophel in eternity past and God knew what Ahithophel would do in joining up with Absalom.

David speaks of God's eternal nature as, David is no longer on the throne in Israel; he cannot just issue and order and it will be obeyed. Not everyone in Jerusalem followed him. However, God is always on His throne; God is always in charge. Another way of putting this is, Jesus Christ controls history. Therefore, it is reasonable for David to appeal to Him.

David has reasoned that God will back him, answer his prayers, and afflict his enemies. So, because his enemies are resisting God, Who abides from eternity past, they will be defeated; they will be beaten down. David probably draws this final conclusion at the top of the Mount of Olives after he meet Hushai and forms a plan with him.

¹¹⁰ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 55:19.

¹¹¹ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 55:19 (edited).

Psalm 55:19c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
çelâh (סָלַח) [pronounced seh-LAW]	to lift up, to elevate, to exalt [with one's voice], to gather, to cast up [into a heap]; it is transliterated <i>Selah</i>	interjection	Strong's #5542 BDB #699

The verbal cognate is 'âlâh (עָלָה) [pronounced gaw-LAW], which means *to lift up and toss aside*. In the Piel stem, it means *to weigh*, which involves lifting up the object and placing it upon the balance. Gesenius gives the meaning of çelâh as *rest, silence, pause*, as çelâh does not necessarily have to match the meaning of its cognates. My thinking, which is a combination of BDB and Gesenius, is that the voices build up to a crescendo here, and, very likely, they are then followed by a vocal (but not necessarily, musical) silence. This would reconcile the points made by Gesenius and still make this compatible with its cognates.¹¹² Another very reasonable possibility is that the instruments *are lifted up* for a musical interlude. The instruments would be held down while the singing takes place, and then lifted up so that their sound would better project when the singing stops. The NLT translation of *Interlude* is very good.

Translation: [Musical] Pause [or, musical interlude; lit., *Selah!*] As described in the exegesis, this word çelâh comes from a verb which means *to lift up*. It is reasonable to assume that those who are playing musical instruments are to lift up these instruments and play during a pause in the singing. I believe that this is called the *bridge* in modern music? Keil and Delitzsch suggest: *The music, as Sela directs, here becomes more boisterous; it gives intensity to the strong cry for the judgment of God; and the first unfolding of thought of this Michtam is here brought to a close.*¹¹³

Here, David points out that God knows all about these men; God has heard them—even though they were not speaking directly to Him—and God has answered them; God has afflicted them (even though, very likely, it had not happened in time; David was simply assured in his own mind that it would). “Now, bring in the band!” Although this might be better rendered, “Hit it” or “Go” or David steps back and points to those playing the instruments.

Psalm 55:19d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
'âsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced uh-SHER]	that, which, when, who, whom	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
'êyn (אֵין) [pronounced ān]	nothing, not, [is] not; not present, not ready; expresses non-existence, absence or non-possession; [there is] no [none, not one, no one, not]	particle of negation; substantive of negation	Strong's #369 BDB #34
chălîyphâh (חַלְפָּה) [pronounced khă-lee-FAW]	a change, change (of garments), replacement; change (of raiment); relays; relief (from death); changing, varying (course of life)	feminine singular noun	Strong's #2487 BDB #322

¹¹² For more discussion, see H.W.F. Gesenius, *Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament*; ©1979 by Baker Books; p. 588.

¹¹³ Keil & Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 5, p. 404.

Psalm 55:19d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510

Translation: [When \[there is\] no change for them...](#) These men have not changed course. They have not looked at what they were doing and thinking, "Hmm, maybe I ought not to do this." This does not cross their minds; they do not realize the evil that they have embarked on, as revolution is evil. See the [Doctrine of Revolution \(HTML\) \(PDF\) \(WPD\)](#). If they continue on this particular course, then they will be destroyed by God. David comes to this conclusion based upon the doctrine in his soul.

Clarke: *Many of those who have few or no afflictions and trials in life, have little use for Christianity. They become sufficient to themselves, and call not upon God.*¹¹⁴

Spurgeon: *It is a very manifest fact that long-continued ease and pleasure are sure to produce the worst influences upon graceless men: though troubles do not convert them, yet the absence of them makes their corrupt nature more readily develop itself. Stagnant water becomes putrid. Summer heat breeds noxious insects. He who is without trouble is often without God. It is a forcible proof of human depravity that man turns the mercy of God into nutriment for sin.*¹¹⁵

Prosperity has hardened Absalom. He has no reason to rethink his position. His life has been fairly good. Even when he ran from David after killing Amnon, he simply went from one palace to another (Absalom's mother was the daughter of a king). He was able to secure 50 men to hang around with him as his personal guard; he was able to afford horses and a chariot. He could spend time by the city gate speaking to impassioned litigants about their cases, sympathizing with them. He had the time to do that. As the son of the king, Absalom had few if any real responsibilities.

This is, by the way, why Jesus said that it is difficult for the rich man to be saved. It is not because having money is inherently sinful; it is because people who have suffered few if any reversals in life rarely look to God. People who have all the good things in this life don't look to God because they don't believe that they need to for any reason. Psalm 30:6 (HCSB) [When I was secure, I said, "I will never be shaken."](#) Jer 22:21 (HCSB) [I spoke to you when you were secure. You said: I will not listen. This has been your way since youth; indeed, you have never listened to Me.](#)

Psalm 55:19e

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
lô' (לא or לוּל) [pronounced low]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518

¹¹⁴ Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 55:19 (edited).

¹¹⁵ Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *A Treasury of David*; e-Sword, Psalm 55:16–19.

Psalm 55:19e

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
yârê' (אַרַי) [pronounced yaw-RAY]	<i>to fear, to be afraid; to fear-respect, to reverence, to have a reverential respect</i>	3 rd person plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #3372 BDB #431
'Ēlōhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced el-o-HEEM]	<i>God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43

Translation: ...and they do not fear/respect Elohim,... Here is what clears all of this up for us: these men had no fear or respect for God; otherwise, they would not have lifted up their hands against His anointed (David).

Barnes: *[David's enemies] do not regard God. They do not dread His interposition as a just God. How many such there are upon the earth, who argue secretly that because they have always been favored with success, therefore they are safe; who, in the midst of abundant prosperity - of unchanging "good fortune," as they would term it - worship no God, feel no need of religion, and are regardless of the changes of life which may soon occur, and even of that one great change which death must soon produce!*¹¹⁶

Application: Anytime you are trying to evaluate a movement, think about their relationship to God. Let's say you are a new Christian, and you are thinking, "Hmm, maybe liberals are okay. They are for the poor; they are tolerant and love everyone; maybe they are reflecting divine viewpoint." But this is not the case. Most leftists are very anti-God. They believe in things antithetical to the Bible, like evolution or moral equivalency between the Jews and the Arabs; or the reasonableness of Islam. Somewhere in there, they have views which are very anti-God; and this tells you that the rest of their philosophy sucks as well.

Application: Another way you determine the legitimacy of a movement, determine who their friends and allies are. Among that group, if there are a number of unquestionably unsavory types, you know that they are the wrong crowd.

And if you provide them with divine viewpoint, they won't like that. All people ought to work and work hard? No way. Jesus is the only Savior? What about the Muslims? What about those who have never heard? And when told how easy it is to be saved, they bring up all of these other objections. "Jesus says that you must believe in Him, or you face His judgment." "Yeah, but what about the people in deep jungles of Africa? They have never heard this."

This is the 3rd verse in this chapter which is very difficult to translate. The first line is the difficult line.

He has sent forth his hands in his peace [pl.];
he has violated his covenant. Psalm 55:20

...he stretches out his hands against those
who are at peace with him [or, more literally,
He stretched out his hands in his
peacefulness]
[and therefore] he has violated his compact.

¹¹⁶ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 55:19 (slightly edited).

**Although he appears to reach out his hands in peace,
he instead violates his covenant.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Jerusalem targum	He stretched out his hands against <i>the men</i> of his peace; he desecrated his covenant.
Latin Vulgate	He has stretched forth his hand <u>to repay</u> . They have defiled his covenant.
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	He has sent forth his hands in his peace [pl.]; he has violated his covenant.
Peshitta (Syriac)	They have put forth their hands <u>against their neighbours</u> , they have broken his covenant.
Septuagint (Greek)	He has reached forth his hand <u>for retribution</u> ; they have profaned His covenant.
Significant differences:	The Latin, Greek and Syriac all seem to leave out <i>peace</i> (it is tough to translate this verse). The Greek definitely leaves it out.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	My friend attacked his allies, breaking his covenant.
Contemporary English V. Easy English	My friend turned against me and broke his promise. But my best friend attacks his friends. He does not do what he promised to do.
Easy-to-Read Version	My enemies attack their own friends. They don't do the things they agree to do.
Good News Bible (TEV) <i>The Message</i>	My former companion attacked his friends; he broke his promises. And this, my best friend, betrayed his best friends; his life betrayed his word.
New Berkeley Version	He put forth his hand against those at peace with him; he violated his covenant [His loyalty pledge as officer of the king and of the state.].
New Life Bible	He goes against those who were at peace with him. He has broken his agreement.
New Living Translation	As for my companion, he betrayed his friends; he broke his promises.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	He stretched out His hand and repaid, all those who've profaned His Sacred Agreement.
Beck's American Translation	Each lays hands on his friends and violates his covenant.
Christian Community Bible <i>God's Word</i> TM	My friend has attacked his associates and has violated his pact with them. My best friend has betrayed his friends. He has broken his solemn promise.
New American Bible	He stretched out his hand at his friends and broke his covenant.
NIRV	My companion attacks his friends. He breaks his promise.
New Jerusalem Bible Revised English Bible	They attack those at peace with them, going back on their oaths;... Such men do violence to those at peace with them and break their solemn word;...

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear Bible in Basic English	...and sent hands in peace to desecrate his covenant. He has put out his hand against those who were at peace with him; he has not kept his agreement.
Ferar-Fenton Bible	He held out his hand as if for peace,— But his treaty he broke.
HCSB	He acts violently against those at peace with him; he violates his covenant.
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	He [I.e., the friend of v. 14.] harmed his ally, he broke his pact;...
New Advent Bible	He has stretched forth his hand to repay. They have defiled his covenant,...
NET Bible®	He [He. This must refer to the psalmist's former friend, who was addressed previously in vv. 12-14.] attacks [Heb "stretches out his hand against."] his friends [The form should probably be emended to an active participle (שְׁלַמַּיִם, sholymayim) from the verbal root שָׁלַם (shalam, "be in a covenant of peace with"). Perhaps the translation "his friends" suggests too intimate a relationship. Another option is to translate, "he attacks those who made agreements with him."]; he breaks his solemn promises to them [Heb "he violates his covenant."].

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	[My companion] has put forth his hands against those who were at peace with him; he has broken and profaned his agreement [of friendship and loyalty].
Concordant Literal Version	He has put forth his hands against those at peace with him; He has profaned his own covenant.
Updated <i>Emphasized Bible</i>	He has thrust forth his hands, against them he was wont to salute, he has violated his covenant;...
English Standard Version	My companion [Heb, <i>he</i>] stretched out his hand against his friends; he violated his covenant.
exeGesés companion Bible	...he spreads his hands against such as are at shalom with him; he profanes his covenant;...
The updated Geneva Bible	He [I did not provoke him but was as at peace with him, yet he made war against me.] has put forth his hands against such as be at peace with him: he has broken his covenant.
Updated King James V	He has put forth his hands against such as be at peace with him: he has broken his covenant. .
LTHB Syndein	He sent out his hand against those who wish him well; he polluted his covenant. {Saul and David Supposedly are at Peace} He {Saul - and any evil aggressor nation} has 'acted aggressively'/'put forth his hands' against those who are at peace with him . . . he has violated/broken his treaty/covenant. {Note: To make a treaty with a reversionistic nation/'national leader' is asking for trouble. They will not keep their word and you will eventually have to fight them. Never trust a nation who does not respect God. And, in Absalom's case, Absalom was pardoned yet he violated the conditions of his pardon.}.
World English Bible Young's Updated LT	He raises his hands against his friends. He has violated his covenant. He has sent forth his hands against his well-wishers, He has polluted his covenant.
The gist of this verse:	David's friend has turned against those who were his allies, violating his covenant.

Psalm 55:20a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
shâlach (שָׁלַח) [pronounced shaw-LAKH]	<i>to send, to send for [forth, away], to dismiss, to deploy, to put forth, to stretch out, to reach out</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #7971 BDB #1018
yâd (יָד) [pronounced yawd]	<i>hand; strength, power (figuratively); side (of land), part, portion (metaphorically) (figuratively); (various special, technical senses); sign, monument; part, fractional part, share; time, repetition; axle-trees, axle; stays, support (for laver); tenons (in tabernacle); a phallus, a hand (meaning unsure); wrists</i>	feminine plural noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3027 BDB #388
Yâd (יָד) [pronounced yawd] can connote <i>power, strength, ability; control; leadership, guidance.</i>			
b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
shâlôwm (שָׁלוֹם) or shâlôm (שָׁלֵם) [pronounced shaw-LOHM]	<i>completeness, soundness, health and welfare, peace, prosperity, safe, secure, tranquil, undisturbed, unagitated</i>	masculine plural noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #7965 BDB #1022
Usually, yâd and shâlôwm are both single in number. I believe that there is a difference in meaning, but I do not find it listed in BDB or in Gesenius.			
Is it possible that this is a masculine plural participle with a 3 rd person masculine singular suffix? This would allow for a translation not far from what is below.			
It is difficult to determine if <i>in his peace</i> belongs with 20a or 20b.			

Translation: [He stretches out his hands against those who are at peace with him](#) [or, more literally, *He stretched out his hands in his peacefulness*]... I do like the translation, [He stretches out his hands against those who are at peace with him](#); however, this would be a slightly different set of words in the Hebrew. There is the possibility that the masculine plural noun *peace* is the masculine plural participle instead. That would give us [He stretched out his hands against his peaceful ones](#). This gets us close to the translation found in the Geneva Bible or in the Amplified Bible.

In any case, stretching out the hands against someone is an indication of force or violence, which is supported by Gen. 37:22 1Sam. 22:7 24:10 26:9 2Sam. 18:12 Neh. 13:21 Acts 12:1.¹¹⁷ The problem is the additional word *his peace plural*].

Barnes: [*He put out his hands*] against those who were his friends, or who had given him no occasion for war... The language [used]... leads us to suppose that the psalmist had Ahithophel in view, as being

¹¹⁷ Matthew Poole, *English Annotations on the Holy Bible*; ©1685; from e-Sword, Psalm 55:20.

*eminently the man that had in this cruel and unexpected manner put forth his hands against one who was his friend, and who had always treated him with confidence.*¹¹⁸

Given the nature of the person that we are speaking of combined with the following verse, we know that this refers back to vv. 12–14, to those who have betrayed David. For years he believed that they were friends, but he has since learned differently. So, this man appears to be for peace, but he is for war. David is his own father; David did not want war with this son; in fact, he never even considered it. This came completely out of the blue. Psalm 120:2, 6–7 sounds very much like David speaking about Absalom: *Deliver me, O LORD, from lying lips, from a deceitful tongue. Too long have I had my dwelling among those who hate peace. I am for peace, but when I speak, they are for war!* (ESV). You may recall, when Absalom went to Hebron to finalize the organization of his revolutionary movement, he told David that this was to fulfill a vow that he had made several years before. David told him to, “Go in peace.” (2Sam. 15:9).

Admittedly, I struggled with this translation, and tried not to take too many liberties with it. However, I did approach this differently in the Hebrew than Owen did. However, if you look at all of the various translations, it is quite obvious that many translators had trouble with the translation process as well.

Psalm 55:20b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
It is difficult to determine if <i>in his peace</i> belongs with 20a or 20b.			
châlal (חָלַל) [pronounced khaw-LAHL]	<i>to profane, to make [to treat as] common, defile, pollute; to violate the honour of, dishonour; to violate [break] (a covenant); to cast down, to destroy</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Piel perfect	Strong's #2490 BDB #320
There are several sets of meanings for this word; however, this one is the most apropos.			
b ^e rîyth (תִּיְרֵב) [pronounced b ^e reeth]	<i>covenant; pact, alliance, treaty, alliance, contract</i>	feminine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1285 BDB #136

Translation:...[and therefore] he has violated his compact. The proof of this man's disposition is, he has violated his covenant; he has violated his treaty. This does not mean that David had a particular covenant with Absalom or Ahithophel, but it was certainly an understanding. You simply do not attack your own people. With Ahithophel, this may simply refer to a one-time friendship, which would not have been a formal covenant.¹¹⁹

Barnes: *The “covenant” here referred to, according to the views expressed above, may be supposed to refer to the compact or agreement of Ahithophel with David as an officer of his realm - as an adviser and counselor - that he would be faithful to the interests of the king and to his cause. All this he had disregarded, and had treated as if it were a worthless thing, by identifying himself with Absalom in his rebellion.*¹²⁰

John Calvin sees this as being directed toward Absalom instead, writing: *it is probable that David begins by addressing the leader and head of the wicked conspiracy. He accuses him of waging war in the midst of peace, and being thus guilty of a breach of faith. He had neither suffered provocation,*

¹¹⁸ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 55:20.

¹¹⁹ Matthew Poole, *English Annotations on the Holy Bible*; ©1685; from e-Sword, Psalm 55:20.

¹²⁰ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 55:20.

*nor had he announced in an open manner his intention to give battle, but had commenced the attack unexpectedly and with treachery.*¹²¹

Clarke: *Ahithophel [had]...betrayed his friends, and he broke his covenant with his king. He had agreed to serve David for his own emolument, and a stipulation was made accordingly; but while receiving the king's pay, he was endeavoring to subvert the kingdom, and destroy the life of his sovereign.*¹²² Although we do not know if Ahithophel was still being paid by the kingdom of Israel, it is certainly possible.

The Geneva Bible: *I did not provoke him but was as at peace with him, yet he made war against me.*¹²³

Now, if we look at this as referring back to King Saul, there were several occasions in front of witnesses where King Saul appeared to be very sorry for what he was doing, and he apologized and made nice with David. But, not long after, he would violate his words and pursue after David once again. So, David, with these words, could look back to Saul as well as to Absalom.

**Were smooth buttery [words] of his mouth,
and war his heart [is];
were tender his words from oil,
and they [are] drawn swords.**

Psalm
55:21

**The buttery [words] of his mouth are smooth,
but his heart [is filled with] war.
His words are more tender than oil,
but they [are actually] drawn swords.**

**His words are smooth as butter, but his heart is filled with war.
His words appear to be softer than oil
but they are really drawn swords.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum (trans. By Cook)	Smoother than <i>oil of curds</i> are the <i>words of his mouth</i> ; and like <i>weapons of war</i> his heart. Softer are his words than tallow [Oil: +of fatlings.], but they are <i>deadly lances</i> .
Latin Vulgate	<u>They are divided by the wrath of his countenance, and his heart has drawn near.</u> His words are smoother than oil, and the same are darts.
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	Were smooth buttery [words] of his mouth, and war his heart [is]; were tender his words from oil, and they [are] drawn swords.
Peshitta (Syriac)	<u>They were afraid because of the anger in his countenance and the wrath in his heart;</u> his words were smoother than butter, yet were they sharp like the point of a spear.
Septuagint (Greek)	<u>They were scattered at the anger of His countenance, and his heart drew near to them.</u> His words were smoother than oil, yet they are darts.
Brenton's Septuagint	<u>They were scattered at the anger of his countenance, and his heart drew nigh them.</u> His words were smoother than oil, yet are they darts.

¹²¹ John Calvin, *Calvin's Commentary on the Bible*; 2nd beta version from e-Sword, Psalm 55:20 (slightly edited).

¹²² Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 55:20.

¹²³ Geneva Bible Translation Notes; 1599, courtesy of e-sword, Psalm 55:20.

Significant differences: Interestingly enough, the first sentence in the Greek, Syriac and Latin is completely different from the Masoretic (Hebrew) text. However, the targum appears to be in general agreement with the Hebrew. This is difficult to correlate, because the targum readings would have been used during the time of Christ and even before. Our manuscripts of them come from a later period of time (although some manuscripts exist from the 1st century); but they represent a paraphrase of the Bible which goes back several hundred years. In any case, I am at a loss to explain such a discrepancy.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V.	His words were smoother than butter, and softer than olive oil. But hatred filled his heart, and he was ready to attack with a sword.
Easy English	What he says is as soft as butter, but there is war in his *heart.
Easy-to-Read Version	His words are as *soothing as *oil but really they are *like sharp knives. My enemies are really smooth talkers; they talk about peace, but they are really planning wars. Their words are as slick as oil, but those words cut like a knife. The ERV is off by one verse.
Good News Bible (TEV)	His words were smoother than cream, but there was hatred in his heart; his words were as soothing as oil, but they cut like sharp swords.
<i>The Message</i>	All my life I've been charmed by his speech, never dreaming he'd turn on me. His words, which were music to my ears, turned to daggers in my heart.
New Berkeley Version	His mouth is sleeker than butter, but in his heart there is war; his words are softer than oil, yes they are drawn swords.
New Century Version	His words are slippery like butter, but war is in his heart. His words are smoother than oil, but they cut like knives.
New Life Bible	What he says is smoother than butter, but war is in his heart. His words are softer than oil, yet they are raised swords.
New Living Translation	His words are as smooth as butter, but in his heart is war. His words are as soothing as lotion, but underneath are daggers!.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	With the rage of His face He'll cut them to shreds, and then He will snatch out their hearts. For, though His words are as soft as olive oil, He can also use them like arrows.
Beck's American Translation	His talk is smoother than butter, but he means to fight; his words are softer than oil, but they are like drawn swords.
Christian Community Bible	His words were smoother than but ter, yet war was in his heart; his utterances, more soothing than oil, were swords ready and drawn.
<i>God's Word</i> TM	His speech is smoother than butter, but there is war in his heart. His words are more soothing than oil, but they are like swords ready to attack.
New American Bible	Softer than butter is his speech, but war is in his heart. Smoother than oil are his words,

but they are unsheathed swords. Ps 12:3; 28:3; 57:5; 62:5; 64:4; Prv 26:24-28; Jer 9:7.

NIRV

His talk is as smooth as butter.
But he has war in his heart.
His words flow like olive oil.
But they are like swords ready for battle.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear	<i>Their</i> mouth divides butter, but their hearts battle. His words tenderize as oil, but they open.
Bible in Basic English	The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart; his words were softer than oil, but they were sharp swords.
Complete Jewish Bible	What he said sounded smoother than butter, but his heart was at war. His words seemed more soothing than oil, but in fact they were sharp swords.
Ferar-Fenton Bible	Than butter his mouth was more smooth,— But war in his heart; His words were softer than oil,— But they were only traps!
Judaica Press Complete T.	Smooth were the buttery words of his mouth but his heart was set on war; his words were softer than oil, but they are curses.
NET Bible®	His words are as smooth as butter [Heb “the butter-like [words] of his mouth are smooth.” The noun מַחְמָה (makhma’ot, “butter-like [words]”) occurs only here. Many prefer to emend the form to מַחְמָה (mekhem’ah, from [i.e., “than”] butter), cf. NEB, NRSV “smoother than butter.” However, in this case “his mouth” does not agree in number with the plural verb הִלְקוּ (kholqu, “they are smooth”). Therefore some further propose an emendation of פִּי (piv, “his mouth”) to פָּנָיו (panayv, “his face”). In any case, the point seems to that the psalmist’s former friend spoke kindly to him and gave the outward indications of friendship.], but he harbors animosity in his heart [Heb “and war [is in] his heart.”]. His words seem softer than oil, but they are really like sharp swords [Heb “his words are softer than oil, but they are drawn swords.”].
NIV, ©2011	His talk is smooth as butter, yet war is in his heart; his words are more soothing than oil, yet they are drawn swords.
<i>The Scriptures</i> 1998	His mouth was smoother than curds, Yet in his heart is fighting; His words were softer than oil, But they are drawn swords.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	The words of his mouth were smoother than cream or butter, but war was in his heart; his words were softer than oil, yet they were drawn swords.
Concordant Literal Version	Words from his mouth are slicker than clotted cream, Yet an attack is planned in his heart; His words are more soothing than oil, Yet they are unloosed swords!
Darby Translation	Smooth were the milky [words] of his mouth, but his heart was war; his words were softer than oil, yet are they drawn swords.
exeGesés companion Bible	...his mouth is more tender than butter but in his heart, war; his words are softer than ointment, yet, openings.
LTHB	The butterings of his mouth <i>were</i> smooth, and war <i>was in</i> his heart; his words were softer than oil, but they <i>were</i> as drawn swords.

New RSV 20 My companion laid hands on a friend and violated a covenant with me*
 21 with speech smoother than butter, but with a heart set on war; with words that were softer than oil, but in fact were drawn swords. Previous verse inserted for context.

Syndein {Amplification}
 His speech was smoother than butter {true of Saul and of Absalom and true of the Communists today - they make promises, they sign treaties of peace . . . but they plan for war}, but war/revolution was in his 'right lobe'/heart. His words were 'slicker than grease'/'anointing oil', yet they {the words} are drawn swords.

A Voice in the Wilderness His flattery has been with forked tongue, and war was in his heart; his words were softer than oil, yet they were drawn swords.

World English Bible His mouth was smooth as butter, But his heart was war. His words were softer than oil, Yet they were drawn swords.

Young's Literal Translation Sweeter than honey hath been his mouth, And his heart is war! Softer have been his words than oil, And they are drawn swords.

The gist of this verse: David's enemy sounds kind, but in his heart, he desires war.

Psalm 55:21a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
châlaq (חָלַק) [pronounced chaw-LAHK]	to be smooth, to be slipper; to be deceitful; to flatter	3 rd person plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #2505 BDB #323
machămâ'ôth (מַחְמֵאוֹת) [pronounced mah-khuh-maw-OATH]	curd-like, buttery; smooth; hypocritical	feminine plural construct	Strong's #4260 BDB #563
This word occurs only here in Scripture.			
peh (פֶּה) [pronounced peh]	mouth [of man, animal; as an organ of speech]; opening, orifice [of a river, well, etc.]; edge; extremity, end	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #6310 BDB #804

Translation: The buttery [words] of his mouth are smooth,... Ahithophel does not appear to have deceived David directly. However, Absalom has been to the palace on several occasions, the final one being asking for permission to go to Hebron to make a sacrifice as a result of a personal vow (2Sam. 15:7–9). I suspect that Absalom knew how to work his father—given the story that he gave his father in 2Sam. 15—so that David, in retrospect, could see how Absalom played him.

Barnes: *The idea is, that he was a hypocrite; that his professions of friendship were false; that he only used pleasant words - words expressive of friendship and love - to deceive and betray.*¹²⁴

¹²⁴ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 55:21.

Psalm 55:21b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
qerâb (קֶרֶב) [pronounced <i>ker-AW^eV</i>]	<i>battle, war, hostile approach</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #7128 BDB #898
lêb (לֵב) [pronounced <i>lay^bV</i>]	<i>heart, inner man, mind, will, thinking; midst</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3820 BDB #524

The first sentence in the Greek, Syriac and Latin is very different: [They were scattered at the anger of His countenance, and his heart drew near to them.](#) The first half of the Greek sentence makes sense; the second half is an enigma to me.

Translation: ...but his heart [is filled with] war. Absalom went to the palace, and requested to take a leave of absence to go to Hebron in order to make a sacrifice. And at the end of four years [of plotting and planning and turning the people of Israel against King David] Absalom said to the king [David], "Please let me go and pay my vow, which I have vowed to the LORD, in Hebron. For your servant vowed a vow while I lived at Geshur in Aram, saying, 'If the LORD will indeed bring me back to Jerusalem, then I will offer worship to the LORD.'" The king said to him, "Go in peace." (2Sam. 15:7–9; ESV). Absalom did not make some vow in Geshur. Absalom thought little about God, insofar as we know. All of this was a cover, so that Absalom could make the final preparations for his revolution against David away from David's prying eyes.

Therefore, Absalom arose and went to Hebron. His father David thought that this was great and granted him the permission; however, the entire time, Absalom was thinking and planning a revolution against his father. In fact, he continued with the cover of offering a sacrifice while in Hebron, while he met with other revolutionaries.

We have two dichotomus statements put together. [The buttry \[words\] of his mouth are smooth, but his heart \[is filled with\] war.](#) On the one hand, he appears to desire peace. This is not some kind of a normalized peace with his father David; he achieved that back in 2Sam. 14:33. The buttry words that Absalom used were to get him what he wanted (see 1Sam. 15:1).

Barnes: [But war was in his heart - He was base, treacherous, false. He was really my enemy, and was ready, when any suitable occasion occurred, to show himself to be such.](#)¹²⁵

Application: We see this employed by communists all of the time. When communists are at peace, they kill more people than are killed during wartime. We find this approach made by dictators all of the time, where they speak of peace, but they are often engaged in war. When not in wars to take over more land and more people; the communists then go to war against their own people and purge out those who do not tow the party line. They are thrown into **gulags** where they spend a short and miserable existence before they die in slavery, giving into the hardship that their own government put upon them.

The point is, even though David wrote this psalm about a very particular time and circumstance, the essence of this psalm can be found in many historical examples. This or that verse or passage can be seen as principles which play out again and again in human history.

¹²⁵ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 55:21.

Psalm 55:21c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
rākak ^e (רָכַךְ) [pronounced raw-KAHK]	<i>to be tender, to be weak, to be soft [delicate]; to be softened, to be weakened; to be contrite [penitent] [in one's mind, soul]; to be timid, fearful</i>	3 rd person plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #7401 BDB #939
d ^e bārîym (דְּבָרִים) [pronounced daw ^b -vawr-EEM]	<i>words, sayings, doctrines, commands; things, matters, reports</i>	masculine plural noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1697 BDB #182
min (מִן) [pronounced mihn]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, beyond, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
shemen (שֶׁמֶן) [pronounced SHEH-men]	<i>fat, oil</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #8081 BDB #1032

Translation: His words are more tender than oil,... We are not given such exchanges between Absalom and David in a narrative. We know because of this psalm that Absalom buttered up David on several occasions. He knew what David like; he knew what pushed David's buttons; and Absalom, while planning out this revolution, apparently was very careful about continuing a relationship with David that appeared to be close and natural.

In the ancient world, oil was used to smooth the skin—particularly the feet—to moisturize and to provide a pleasant odor. Absalom words had this affect upon David; and made David think that, after all of those years, that his relationship with his son had blossomed into a great adult friendship.

Psalm 55:21d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, וְ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wāw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
hēmmâh (הֵמָּה) [pronounced haym-mawh]	<i>they, those; themselves; these [with the definite article]</i>	3 rd person masculine plural personal pronoun	Strong's #1992 BDB #241
p ^e thîychôwth (תְּחוּיָתָם) [pronounced perth-ee-KHOHTH]	<i>swords, drawn swords</i>	feminine plural noun	Strong's #6609 BDB #836

Translation: ...but they [are actually] drawn swords. However, Absalom, for a period of 4 years, was planning his revolt against David. He was a great plotter and no one knew what Absalom was thinking and plotting unless he let them. This was the one area where Absalom excelled. Poole described these drawn swords as: *pernicious in their design and consequences.*¹²⁶

¹²⁶ Matthew Poole, *English Annotations on the Holy Bible*; ©1685; from e-Sword, Psalm 55:21.

Do not drag me off with the wicked, with the workers of evil, who speak peace with their neighbors while evil is in their hearts (Psalm 28:3; ESV). My soul is in the midst of lions; I lie down amid fiery beasts-- the children of man, whose teeth are spears and arrows, whose tongues are sharp swords (Psalm 57:4; ESV).

The last two phrases taken together are: **His words were softer than oil yet were they drawn swords.**
 Gill writes: *At one time [his words are] full of soothing and flattery, at another time sharp and cutting, breathing out threatening and slaughter, destruction and death.*¹²⁷

The entire verse reads: **The buttery [words] of his mouth are smooth, but his heart [is filled with] war. His words are more tender than oil, but they [are actually] drawn swords.** David, in this psalm, finally takes a realistic look at his son. This realistic look does not last very long, as he will strongly mourn Absalom's death when he dies; but the pressures of life are reaching into David's soul with a strong dose of reality.

Clarke writes: *[Absalom's] words were as soft as butter, and as smooth as oil, while he meditated war; and the fair words which were intended to deceive, were intended also to destroy: they were drawn swords. This is a literal description of the words and conduct of Absalom, as we learn from the inspired historian, 2Sam. 15:2, etc. He was accustomed to wait at the gate; question the persons who came for justice and judgment; throw out broad hints that the king was negligent of the affairs of his kingdom, and had not provided an effective magistracy to administer justice among the people, and added that if he were appointed judge in the land, justice should be done to all. He bowed also to the people, and kissed them; and thus he stole the hearts of the men of Israel.*¹²⁸

Bishop Horsley: *The buttery mouth and oily words describe the insidious character of Absalom, as it is delineated in 2Sam. 15:5-9.*¹²⁹

Chapter Outline

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

The Bible has a lot to say about what comes out of our mouth. Jesus said, **"It's not what goes into your mouth that defiles you; you are defiled by the words that come out of your mouth."** (Matt. 15:11; NLT).

The Abuse of Words	
Scripture	Text/Commentary
Psalm 28:3	Do not drag me off with the wicked, with the workers of evil, who speak peace with their neighbors while evil is in their hearts.
Psalm 57:4	My soul is in the midst of lions; I lie down amid fiery beasts-- the children of man, whose teeth are spears and arrows, whose tongues are sharp swords.
Psalm 62:4	They only plan to thrust him down from his high position. They take pleasure in falsehood. They bless with their mouths, but inwardly they curse.
Psalm 64:2-3	Hide me from the secret plots of the wicked, from the throng of evildoers, who whet their tongues like swords, who aim bitter words like arrows.
Prov. 5:3-5	For the lips of a forbidden woman drip honey, and her speech is smoother than oil, the end she is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword. Her feet go down to death; her steps follow the path to Sheol.

¹²⁷ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 55:21.

¹²⁸ Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 55:21.

¹²⁹ Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 55:23.

The Abuse of Words

Scripture	Text/Commentary
Prov. 12:17–20	Whoever speaks the truth gives honest evidence, but a false witness utters deceit. There is one whose rash words are like sword thrusts, but the tongue of the wise brings healing. Truthful lips endure forever, but a lying tongue is but for a moment. Deceit is in the heart of those who devise evil, but those who plan peace have joy.
Prov. 26:24–26, 28	Whoever hates disguises himself with his lips and harbors deceit in his heart; when he speaks graciously, believe him not, for there are seven abominations in his heart; though his hatred be covered with deception, his wickedness will be exposed in the assembly. A lying tongue hates its victims, and a flattering mouth works ruin.

Texts from *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880, with introduction by R. A. Torrey; courtesy of E-sword, Psalm 55:20.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

David Trusts God With Every Burden and To Take Down His Enemies

We seem to suddenly come to an abrupt change in what David is saying. He first calls out to God; and then he frets about himself, then he is concerned for the city of Jerusalem, and finally, even though David can go to God in prayer, he is upset that he has been so betrayed by someone so close to him; someone with words like butter or like soothing oil. So, you should notice a certain amount of instability in all the David is saying.

Here is what appears to be happening: David is forced out of Jerusalem by Absalom having himself declared king in Hebron. David makes a run for it because there are 200 key men—probably younger men—whom David believes to have been seduced by Absalom (2Sam. 15:11). David seems to totter between knowing what to do, to feeling very sorry for himself (compare 2Sam. 15:14–29 with v. 30, where he is weeping as he goes up the mountain). As all of this is going on, David throws off this quick, 5 second prayer, “God, frustrate the counsel of Ahithophel.” (2Sam. 15:31); and then, when he reaches the summit of the Mount of Olives, who is waiting for him there but Hushai the Archite, the answer to David’s prayers (2Sam. 15:32). This leads David to come to a sudden conclusion: he is able to throw all of his difficulties and burdens upon God because it is God’s business to sustain us (to provide us with logistical grace); and God will not allow the righteous to be knocked over. David’s thinking, the circumstances he is in, and the sudden answer to his prayer leads David to come to a doctrinal conclusion, and that is what these final 2 verses are all about. David comes up with a doctrinal rationale, and he spells this out as a promise in vv. 22–23.

**Cast upon Y^ehowah your burden
and He—[even] He—will sustain you;
He will not give to forever a shaking to the
righteous one.**

Psalm
55:22

**Cast your burden upon Y^ehowah
and He [even He] will sustain [and protect]
you.
He will never give to the righteous a shaking.**

**Cast your burden upon the Lord
and He will sustain you.
He will never allow the righteous to be shaken.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum (trans. By Cook)	Cast your <u>confidence</u> on the Lord [Lord: +O David.], and he will <u>feed</u> you; he will never allow <u>privation</u> to the righteous.
Latin Vulgate	Cast your <u>care</u> upon the Lord, and he will sustain you: he will not suffer the just to waver for <u>ever</u> .
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	Cast upon Y ^e howah your burden and He—[even] He—will sustain you; He will not give to forever a shaking to the righteous one.
Peshitta (Syriac)	Cast your <u>worries</u> upon the LORD and he will sustain you; he will never suffer the righteous to <u>fear want</u> .
Septuagint (Greek)	Cast your <u>cares</u> upon the Lord, and He shall sustain you; He shall never permit the righteous to be moved.
Significant differences:	Although the first noun ought to be <i>burden</i> (see the Hebrew exegesis), the ancient versions suggest a plethora of applications as to what this burden might be. The targum has <i>feed</i> instead of <i>sustain</i> . Also, note the minor difference in the Syriac at the very end of this verse.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V. Easy English	Our LORD, we belong to you. We tell you what worries us, and you won't let us fall. Take your problems to the *LORD. He will give you help. (The *LORD) will never let his people fall.
Easy-to-Read Version	Give your worries to the Lord, and he will care for you. The Lord will never let good people be defeated.
Good News Bible (TEV)	Leave your troubles with the LORD, and he will defend you; he never lets honest people be defeated.
<i>The Message</i>	Pile your troubles on GOD's shoulders-- he'll carry your load, he'll help you out. He'll never let good people topple into ruin.
New Berkeley Version	Cast your burden on the LORD, and He will sustain you [As butter comes from the churning of milk, so comes this sentence out of the writer's experience. It is not always God's will to remove the trail, but rather to sustain the righteous in it.]; He will never allow the righteous to be pushed over.
New Century Version	Give your worries to the Lord, and he will take care of you. He will never let good people down.
New Life Bible	Give all your cares to the Lord and He will give you strength. He will never let those who are right with Him be shaken.
New Living Translation	Give your burdens to the Lord, and he will take care of you. He will not permit the godly to slip and fall.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Upon Jehovah throw all your worries, and He'll nourish and take care of you. For, He won't allow ages to pass, while the righteous are tossed all about.
Beck's American Translation	Throw your burden on the LORD and He will support you. He will never let the righteous fail.
Christian Community Bible	Place your burden on the Lord, and he will sustain you, for he never allows the upright to fall.
<i>God's Word</i> TM	Turn your burdens over to the LORD, and he will take care of you. He will never let the righteous person stumble.
New American Bible	Cast your care upon the LORD,

	who will give you support. He will never allow the righteous to stumble. Ps 37:5; Prv 3:5; 16:3; 1 Pt 5:7.
NIRV	Turn your worries over to the Lord. He will keep you going. He will never let godly people fall.
New Jerusalem Bible	Unload your burden onto Yahweh and he will sustain you; never will he allow the upright to stumble.
New Simplified Bible	Throw your burden upon Jehovah and he will sustain you. He will never allow the righteous to be shaken!
Revised English Bible	Commit your fortunes to the LORD, And he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous be shaken.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear	Cast your longings toward Yahweh, and he will sustain you and never give the righteous to be moved forever.
Bible in Basic English	Put your cares on the Lord, and he will be your support; he will not let the upright man be moved.
Complete Jewish Bible	Unload your burden on ADONAI, and he will sustain you. He will never permit the righteous to be moved.
Ferar-Fenton Bible	Ferar-Fenton seems to be messtup here; v. 23 appears to be v. 21; and v. 24 is v. 23. There does not appear to be a v. 22 in the F.F. text.
HCSB	Cast your burden on the LORD, and He will support you; He will never allow the righteous to be shaken.
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	Cast your burden on the LORD and He will sustain you; He will never let the righteous man collapse.
Judaica Press Complete T.	Cast your burden on the Lord, and He will bear you; He shall never allow a righteous man to falter.
New Advent Bible	Cast your care upon the Lord, and he shall sustain you: he shall not suffer the just to waver for ever.
NET Bible®	Throw your burden [The Hebrew noun occurs only here.] upon the LORD, and he will sustain you [The pronoun is singular; the psalmist addresses each member of his audience individually]. He will never allow the godly to be upended [Heb "he will never allow swaying for the righteous."].
<i>The Scriptures</i> 1998	Cast your burden on יהוה, And let Him sustain you; He never allows the righteous to be shaken.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

American KJV	Cast your burden on the LORD, and he shall sustain you: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.
<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	Cast your burden on the Lord [releasing the weight of it] and He will sustain you; He will never allow the [consistently] righteous to be moved (made to slip, fall, or fail).
Concordant Literal Version	Fling your granted burden on Yahweh, And He Himself shall sustain you; He shall not allow the righteous to slip for the eon.
Context Group Version	Cast your burden on YHWH, and he will sustain you: He will never allow the vindicated to be moved.
<i>Emphasized Bible</i>	Cast upon Yahweh thy lot, and, he, will sustain thee: He will not suffer, to times age-abiding, the righteous one to be shaken.
English Standard Version	Cast your burden on the LORD, and he will sustain you; he will never permit the righteous to be moved.

Evidence Bible	Cast your burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain you: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.
exeGesés companion Bible	Cast what he gives you on Yah Veh and he sustains you; he gives not the just to totter eternally.
The updated Geneva Bible	Cast your burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain you: he shall never suffer [Though for their bettering and trial, he permits them to slip for a time.] the righteous to be moved.
Green's Literal Translation	Cast on Jehovah what He has given, and He will keep you; He will not give the righteous to waver, forever.
LTHB	Cast on Jehovah what <i>He</i> has given, and He will keep you; He will not give the righteous to waver, forever.
Modern KJV	Cast your burden on Jehovah, and He will keep you; He will never allow the righteous to waver.
New RSV	Cast your burden [Or Cast what he has given you] on the Lord, and he will sustain you; he will never permit the righteous to be moved.
Syndein	{Definition of an Intrinsically Good Nation} Cast your burden on Jehovah/God {only client nations to God will do this}, and He will uphold you. {kuwl - Pilpel stem - very intensive stem} [Note: See also Galatians 6.].
A Voice in the Wilderness	Cast your burden upon Jehovah, and He will sustain you; He will never allow the righteous to totter.
World English Bible	Cast your burden on Yahweh, and he will sustain you. He will never allow the righteous to be moved.
Young's Updated LT	Cast on Jehovah that which He has given you, And He does sustain you, He does not suffer forever the moving of the righteous.

The gist of this verse: David sums up what he has said in this psalm with a two-line doxology; first, he says that all of our burdens should be placed upon the Lord, because God will now allow the righteous to totter or to be knocked off balance.

Psalm 55:22a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
shâlak ^e (שָׁלַךְ) [pronounced shaw-LAHK ^e]	<i>to throw, to cast, to fling, to throw off, to cast away [off]; to shed; to reject; to cast about; to cast down, to overthrow</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperative	Strong's #7993 BDB #1020
'al (עַל) [pronounced gah]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly yoh-WAH]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
y ^e hâb (בְּרֵי) [pronounced yeh-HAWB ^y]	<i>burden; lot; that which is given [lain, placed, provided]</i>	masculine singular noun with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3053 BDB #396

Psalm 55:22a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
This word only occurs here in Psalm 55:22, which is true of a number of words in this psalm. The meaning is almost as much traditional as anything else. However, there is a verb which seems to be the basis for this noun; and that verb means <i>to give, to place, to put</i> . So many have understood this as a <i>burden which has been placed upon us</i> .			

Translation: *Cast your burden upon Y^ehowah...* Although there are some problems with one of the words used, this does appear to be a reasonable translation. Whatever it is that you have been given, whatever it is that God has saddled you with, you place this upon God. God did not mean for us to carry every burden ourselves.

Note the Hebrew exegesis of the word *burden* above. This word is found only here, but it has a verbal cognate which helps to fix its meaning. However, this can be reasonably thought to include whatever cares, worries, afflictions, injustices and trials are heaped upon you. God gives us such burdens so that we can learn to trust him. You will note David's attitude throughout this psalm, where it seems to be up and down. He worries about himself; he worries about the people of Jerusalem; he is unhappy about being so betrayed. And then there is Hushai—the answer to his prayer—standing, waiting for him at the top of the mountain. Obviously, David can throw his burdens upon the Lord.

Application: There is a careful balance here. This does not mean that you park your butt on a park bench and wait for God to supply all of your needs. Sometimes God supplies the means by which your needs are met (i.e., a job).

Barnes: *This may be regarded as an address of the psalmist to himself, or to his own soul - an exhortation to himself to roll all his care upon the Lord, and to be calm. It is expressed, however, in so general language, that it may be applicable to all persons in similar circumstances.*¹³⁰

You may say to yourself, "Well, I don't want all of that trouble and difficulty; just let me do whatever." As a child, your mother could have carried you everywhere if she so chose to. However, she chose to help you to walk; and this was a good thing. At first, she held you up; and later, she stood a few feet away and you walked to her. But you needed the difficulties of walking set before you in order to learn how to walk; so that you do not end up being dependent upon your mother to carry you everywhere. God is the same way with our faith; we have difficulties and God allows us to do a little walking on our own. At first, He might stand a few feet away, ready to steady us as we stumble on over to Him; and then He lets us walk a greater distance. God takes us to the point where we are able to cast all of our cares upon Him; we are able to taken our burden and put it upon Him.

Psalm 55:22b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
hûw' (אוה) [pronounced <i>hoo</i>]	<i>he, it; himself as a demonstrative pronoun: that, this (one)</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, personal pronoun; sometimes the verb <i>is, is implied</i>	Strong's #1931 BDB #214

¹³⁰ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 55:22.

Psalm 55:22b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kûwl (כּוּל) [pronounced <i>kewl</i>]	<i>to sustain [support, nourish], to maintain; to contain, to hold [in]; to restrain; to endure; to protect</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Pilpel imperfect with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3557 BDB #465

Translation: ...and He [even He] will sustain [and protect] you. The emphasis here is upon *He*, which refers to God. The additional article is not needed unless an emphasis is being made. David promises that God will protect and sustain you, not matter what the problem or difficulty.

What David is doing at this point is giving his confidence in the power of God to deal with those who have harmed him. This could even be written as an addendum to this psalm, indicating what God has accomplished in his own life with the problems outlined in this psalm.

Cast your burden upon Y^ehowah and He [even He] will sustain [and protect] you. This is the beginning of the rationale that David fixes on. He knows, from the circumstances that he is in, because of the troubles which he faces—that God is there and God may have put some burdens on David, but God is able to help David bear up under these burdens. God is able to sustain David; God is able to protect David.

This is promised elsewhere in the Old Testament: I have been young and now I am old, yet I have not seen the righteous abandoned or his children begging bread (Psalm 37:25; HCSB). Peter gives us the New Testament version of this: Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God [that is, be grace oriented], that He may exalt you in due time [we will be vindicated, if not in time, then in eternity], casting all your anxiety [or, cares] upon Him, because He cares about you (1Peter 5:6–7).

Psalm 55:22c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lô' (לֹא or לוֹ) [pronounced <i>low</i>]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
nâthan (נָתַן) [pronounced <i>naw-THAHN</i>]	<i>to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set; to make</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5414 BDB #678
All of the BDB meanings for the Qal stem of nâthan are as follows: 1) <i>to give, put, set; 1a) (Qal); 1a1) to give, bestow, grant, permit, ascribe, employ, devote, consecrate, dedicate, pay wages, sell, exchange, lend, commit, entrust, give over, deliver up, yield produce, occasion, produce, requite to, report, mention, utter, stretch out, extend; 1a2) to put, set, put on, put upon, set, appoint, assign, designate; 1a3) to make, constitute.</i>			
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l'</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
'ôwlâm (עוֹלָם) [pronounced <i>go-LAWM</i>]	<i>long duration, forever, everlasting, eternal, perpetuity, antiquity, futurity; what is hidden, hidden time</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #5769 BDB #761

Psalm 55:22c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
<p>‘ōwlām together with the lāmed preposition mean <i>forever, always</i>. With the negative, this would logically mean <i>never</i>.</p>			
mōwt (מוֹט) [pronounced <i>mohṭ</i>]	<i>pole, bar [upon which something is carried]; used figuratively for wavering, shaking, tottering; oppression</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #4132 BDB #557
lāmed (ל) [pronounced <i>le</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
tsaddîyq (צַדִּיק) [pronounced <i>tsahd-DEEK</i>]	<i>just, righteous, justified, vindicated; absolute or perfect righteousness [if applied to God]</i>	masculine singular adjective, often used as a substantive; with the definite article	Strong's #6662 BDB #843

Translation: He will never give to the righteous a shaking. The shaking here is someone who is caught off-guard or cannot respond to the difficulties or is taken aback by these difficulties.

As mentioned in the Hebrew exegesis, the 3 particles in the Hebrew together mean *never*.

Barnes: *Literally [this means], “He will not give moving forever to the righteous.” That is, God will not so appoint, arrange, or permit things to occur, that the righteous shall be “ultimately” and “permanently” removed from their steadfastness and their hope; He will not suffer them to fall away and perish. In all their trials and temptations he will sustain them, and will ultimately bring them off in triumph. The meaning here cannot be that the righteous shall never be “moved” in the sense that their circumstances will not be changed; or that none of their plans will fail; or that they will never be disappointed; or that their minds will never in any sense be discomposed; but that whatever trials may come upon them, they will be “ultimately” safe.*¹³¹

John Wesley: *[God] may for a season allow the righteous to be shaken, yet God provides for them the wherewithal to not to be overwhelmed.*¹³²

Matthew Henry: *[God] will not suffer them to be moved forever [for even if]...they fall, they shall not be utterly cast down (Psalm 37:24).*¹³³

Our verse reads: **Cast your burden upon Y^ehowah and He [even He] will sustain [and protect] you. He will never give to the righteous a shaking.** David draws a conclusion—one which seems a little sudden in the text. One second, David is bemoaning the betrayal of those who were once his friends; the duplicity of those who have turned against him; and the next moment, he encourages those who read these words (or hear this song) to place their burdens upon the Lord (the betrayal and the duplicity; the problems and the heartaches), and God will sustain them.

God has given us many problems similar to the one above; a number of them are listed below.

¹³¹ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 55:22 (slightly edited).

¹³² John Wesley, *Explanatory Notes on the Whole Bible*; courtesy of e-sword, Psalm 55:22 (generously supplemented).

¹³³ Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 55:22.

Promises from God and Provisions by God	
Scripture	Text/Commentary
Psalm 27:14	Put your hope in Yahweh, be strong, let your heart be bold, put your hope in Yahweh. (NJB)
Psalm 37:5–6	Commit your destiny to Yahweh, be confident in Him, and He will act, making your uprightness clear as daylight, and the justice of your cause as the noon. (NJB capitalized ¹³⁴)
Psalm 62:1–2	In God alone there is rest for my soul, from him comes my safety; He alone is my rock, my safety, my stronghold so that I stand unshaken. (NJB capitalized)
Psalm 62:7–12	In God is my safety and my glory, the rock of my strength. In God is my refuge; trust in Him, you people, at all times. Pour out your hearts to Him, God is a refuge for us. Pause Ordinary people are a mere puff of wind, important people a delusion; set both on the scales together, and they are lighter than a puff of wind. Put no trust in extortion, no empty hopes in robbery; however much wealth may multiply, do not set your heart on it. Once God has spoken, twice have I heard this: Strength belongs to God, to You, Lord, faithful love; and you repay everyone as their deeds deserve. (NJB capitalized)
Psalm 63:6–8	On my bed when I think of You, I concentrate on You in the watches of the night, for You have always been my help; in the shadow of Your wings I rejoice; my heart clings to You, Your right hand supports me. (NJB capitalized and slightly edited)
Psalm 121:2–8	My help comes from Yahweh Who made heaven and earth. May He save your foot from stumbling; may He, your Guardian, not fall asleep! You see -- He neither sleeps nor slumbers, the Guardian of Israel. Yahweh is your Guardian, your shade, Yahweh, at your right hand. By day the sun will not strike you, nor the moon by night. Yahweh guards you from all harm Yahweh guards your life, Yahweh guards your comings and goings, henceforth and for ever. (NJB capitalized)
Isa. 50:10	Which of you fears Yahweh and listens to His servant's voice? Which of you walks in darkness and sees no light? Let him trust in the name of Yahweh and lean on his God! (NJB capitalized)
Matt. 6:31–34	So do not worry; do not say, "What are we to eat? What are we to drink? What are we to wear?" It is the gentiles who set their hearts on all these things. Your heavenly Father knows you need them all. Set your hearts on His kingdom first, and on God's saving justice, and all these other things will be given you as well. So do not worry about tomorrow: tomorrow will take care of itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.' (NJB capitalized)
Matt. 11:28–30	'Come to me, all you who labour and are overburdened, and I will give you rest. Shoulder my yoke and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. Yes, My yoke is easy and My burden light.' (NJB capitalized)
Philip. 4:6–7	Never worry about anything; but tell God all your desires of every kind in prayer and petition shot through with gratitude, and the peace of God which is beyond our understanding will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus. (NJB)

These passages came from *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880, with introduction by R. A. Torrey; courtesy of E-sword, Psalm 55:22.

¹³⁴ I prefer to capitalize pronouns referring to God.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

And You, O Elohim, will bring them down to a
pit of destruction
—men of blood and deceit—
they will not [live out] half their days!
But I, [even] I trust in You.

Psalm
55:23

And You, O Elohim, will bring them down to a
pit of death
—[these] men of bloodshed and deceit—
they will not live out half [of] their days!
But I [especially] trust in You.

And you, O God, will bring my enemies down into a pit of death
—such men who practice violence and deceit—
they will not even enjoy half of their days!
But I continue to trust in You.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum (trans. By Cook)	But you, O God, <i>by Your word</i> will bring them down to <i>deep Gehenna</i> ; <u>murderous</u> and deceitful men will not <i>see half</i> of their days; but I will trust <i>in Your word</i> .
Latin Vulgate	But You, O God, will bring them down into the pit of destruction. Bloody and deceitful men will not <u>live out</u> half their days; but I will trust in You, O Lord.
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And You, O Elohim, will bring them down to a pit of destruction —men of blood and deceit— they will not [live out] half their days! But I, [even] I trust in You.
Peshitta (Syriac)	But You, O God, will bring them down into the pit of destruction; bloody and deceitful men will not <u>live out</u> their days; but I will trust in You.
Septuagint (Greek)	But You, O God, shall bring them down to the pit of destruction; bloody and crafty men shall not <u>live out</u> half their days; but I will hope in You, <u>O Lord</u> .

Significant differences: *Murderous* in the targum is more or less an interpretation of *bloody*. It is difficult to determine if *live out* is part of the text; but that could be the meaning of that particular Hebrew word. The Greek adds *O Lord* to the final phrase.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V.	But what about those people who are cruel and brutal? You will throw them down into the deepest pit long before their time. I trust you, LORD!
Easy English	And you, God, you will make bad people go to the *pit. (The *pit) will destroy them. (It will destroy) the people that tell *lies and kill (people). They will only live half their lives! But I will *trust in you, God.
Easy-to-Read Version	As your part of the agreement, God, send those liars and murderers to their grave before their life is half finished! As my part of the agreement, I will put my trust in you.
Good News Bible (TEV)	But you, O God, will bring those murderers and liars to their graves before half their life is over. As for me, I will trust in you.

<i>The Message</i>	But you, God, will throw the others into a muddy bog, Cut the lifespan of assassins and traitors in half. And I trust in you.
New Berkeley Version	But Thou, O God, wilt bring them down into the pit of destruction; bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days.
New Century Version	But I will trust in Thee. But, God, you will bring down the wicked to the grave. Murderers and liars will live only half a lifetime.
New Life Bible	But I will trust in you. But You, O God, will bring the sinful down into the hole that destroys. Men who kill and lie will not live out half their days. But I will trust in You.
New Living Translation	But you, O God, will send the wicked down to the pit of destruction. Murderers and liars will die young, but I am trusting you to save me.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	But You, O God, will lead those men of blood and deception, into the well of corruption. There's no way they will live even half of their days; for Jehovah, I'm trusting in You.
Beck's American Translation	But You, O God, will throw the others down into a deep grave. Men who murder and deceive will not live out half their days. But I am trusting You.
Christian Community Bible	But you, O God, will cast the wicked into a pit; bloodthirsty and treacherous, they will not live out half their days. As for me, I trust in you alone, O Lord.
<i>God's Word™</i>	But you, O God, will throw wicked people into the deepest pit. Bloodthirsty and deceitful people will not live out half their days. But I will trust you.
New American Bible	But you, God, will bring them down to the pit of destruction. Psalm 28:1; 30:4; 40:3; 88:5; 143:7; Prov 1:12; John 2:7. These bloodthirsty liars will not live half their days, but I put my trust in you. Psalm 25:2; 56:4; 130:5
NIRV	God, you will bring sinners down to the grave. Murderers and liars won't live out even half of their lives. But I trust in you.
New Jerusalem Bible	You, God, will thrust them down to the abyss of destruction, men bloodthirsty and deceptive, before half their days are spent. For my part, I put my trust in you.
New Simplified Bible	But You, O God, will bring them down to the corruption of the grave. Men of bloodshed and deceit will not live out half their days. But I will trust in you.
Revised English Bible	But you will cast them down, God, into the pit of destruction; bloodthirsty and treacherous, they will not live out half their days. For my part, LORD, I shall put my trust in you.
Today's NIV	But you, God, will bring down the wicked into the pit of decay; the bloodthirsty and deceitful will not live out half their days. But as for me, I trust in you.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear	But God, you descend them to the well of destruction! Do not parcel days to men of blood and deceit. I trust in you!
Bible in Basic English	But you, O God, will send them down into the underworld; the cruel and the false will be cut off before half their days are ended; but I will have faith in you.
Ferar-Fenton Bible	Yet treacherous and blood-thirsty men, You, God, bring to deepest distress; They live not the half their days,— So I trust upon you!
HCSB	You, God, will bring them down to the pit of destruction; men of bloodshed and treachery will not live out half their days. But I will trust in You.
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	For You, O God, will bring them down to the nethermost Pit— those murderous, treacherous men; they shall not live out half their days; but I trust in You.
Judaica Press Complete T.	But You, O God, shall lower them to the Pit of Destruction; men of blood and deceit shall not live half their days, but I will trust in You.
NET Bible®	But you, O God, will bring them [The pronominal suffix refers to the psalmist's enemies (see v. 19).] down to the deep Pit [Heb "well of the pit." The Hebrew term שַׁחַת (shakhat, "pit") is often used as a title for Sheol (see Psalms 16:10; 30:9; 49:9; 103:4).]. Violent and deceitful people [Heb "men of bloodshed and deceit."] will not live even half a normal lifespan [Heb "will not divide in half their days."]. But as for me, I trust in you.
NIV – UK	But you, God, will bring down the wicked into the pit of decay; the bloodthirsty and deceitful will not live out half their days. But as for me, I trust in you.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	But You, O God, will bring down the wicked into the pit of destruction; men of blood and treachery shall not live out half their days. But I will trust in, lean on, <i>and</i> confidently rely on You.
Concordant Literal Version	And You, O Elohim, You shall bring them down to the well of ruin, These mortals of bloodshed and deceit, Who shall not live half their days; As for me, I am trusting in You.
Updated Darby Translation	And You, O God, wilt bring them down into the pit of destruction: bloody and deceitful men will not live out half their days. But as for me, I will confide in you.
English Standard Version	But you, O God, will cast them down into the pit of destruction; men of blood and treachery shall not live out half their days. But I will trust in you.
exeGesés companion Bible	And you, O Elohim, descend them into the well of the pit of ruin; men of bloods and deceit halve their days; but I confide in you.
The updated Geneva Bible	But You, O God, will bring them down into the pit of destruction: bloody and deceitful men will not live out half their days [Though they sometimes live longer, yet their life is cursed by God, unquiet, and worse than any death.]; but I will trust in you.
New RSV	But you, O God, will cast them down into the lowest pit; the bloodthirsty and treacherous

shall not live out half their days.

But I will trust in you.

Syndein

But You, O 'Elohim/Godhead, will cause them to be brought down {Reversionistic Kings and/or evil nations - including the Philistines - Also Absalom and the other Revolutionists} to the pit of destruction {sin unto death}. Men of 'bloodshed and deceit' {dam mirmah} {idiom for a surprise attack - like Pearl Harbor attack} will not live out half their days {Saul died in battle}. But I {David} will trust in You! {God - meaning David will live all the days allotted to him by God - the sin unto death will cause the days God had decreed for you in eternity past to be shortened.}.

World English Bible

But you, God, will bring them down into the pit of destruction. Bloodthirsty and deceitful men shall not live out half their days, But I will trust in you.

Young's Updated LT

And Thou, O God, will bring them down To a pit of destruction, Men of blood and deceit reach not to half their days, And I—I do trust in You!

The gist of this verse:

The result of casting his burdens on the Lord: David will depend upon God to dispense with these evil men, who will not live out their allotted days because of their desire to engage in violence and deceit. David, in the alternative, trusts in God.

Psalm 55:23a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
'attâh (אתָּ) [pronounced <i>aht-TAW</i>]	<i>you</i> (often, the verb <i>to be</i> is implied)	2 nd person masculine singular, personal pronoun	Strong's #859 BDB #61
'Ēlōhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced <i>el-o-HEEM</i>]	<i>God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43
Contrast this with, And you, O mortal man, of v. 13.			
yârad (יָרַד) [pronounced <i>yaw-RAHD</i>]	<i>to cause to go down, to cause to come down, to bring down, to lead down</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect with the 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #3381 BDB #432
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l</i> ']	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
b ^e êr (בְּעַר) [pronounced <i>b^e-AIR</i>]	<i>well, pit; spring</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #875 BDB #91
shachath (שַׁחַת) [pronounced <i>SHAH-kahth</i>]	<i>pit, cistern; underground prison; sepulcher, grave; corruption, destruction; grave; death</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #7845 BDB #1001

Psalm 55:23a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
<p>In the ancient world, <i>the pit</i> simply referred to either a hole dug in the ground designed to capture animals (Psalm 7:15 9:15); a cistern [which could be filled with mud] (Job 9:31); an underground prison (Isa. 51:14); or to a sepulcher or grave (Job 33:24 Psalm 55:24). By the time of the New Testament, it came to mean <i>corruption</i> and was so translated from the Hebrew into the Greek.</p>			

Translation: *And You, O Elohim, will bring them down to a pit of death...* David appears to continue his prayer against his enemies here; this is both a prayer and a guaranteed outcome, as God the Holy Spirit guides David as he writes this (2Peter 1:21). David expects this to be the outcome of his prayer.

He uses the 3rd person masculine plural suffix to refer to the set of his enemies who have arisen against him.

David realizes, when he meets up with Hushai, which answered a short prayer that David offered up, that God will deal with his enemies; God will deal with his deceptive, underhanded, dishonest enemies.

Application: Having had such enemies in my own life (although not in a life and death situation), it has always been a pleasure to know that God dealt with my enemies when they worked evil against me. If you are a growing believer and you work in any sort of job where there are a number of people, then some of them will work to destroy you.

The pit of destruction means that David's enemies would die. As we will see, David did not realize that this would mean Absalom as well; he was somehow able to separate himself from that eventuality. However, here, as inspired by God the Holy Spirit, David's enemies would die—and, historically, that would mean that Absalom and Ahithophel would die (which they did).

The Chaldee is emphatic: *“And You, O Lord, by your Word (רמימב bemeimerach) will thrust them into the deep gehenna, the bottomless pit, from which they will never come out; the pit of destruction, where all is amazement, horror, anguish, dismay, ruin, endless loss, and endless suffering.”*¹³⁵

Psalm 55:23b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾānāshîym (אֲנָשִׁים) [pronounced <i>uh-NAW-sheem</i>]; also spelled ʾīyshîym (אִישִׁים) [pronounced <i>ee-SHEEM</i>]	<i>men; inhabitants, citizens; companions; soldiers, followers</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #376 BDB #35
dām (דָּם) [pronounced <i>dawm</i>]	<i>blood, often visible blood; bloodshed, slaughter; bloodguilt; blood of the grape [wine]</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #1818 BDB #196
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wāw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
mir ^e māh (מִרְמָה) [pronounced <i>mir^e-MAW</i>]	<i>deceit, deception, duplicity, evil cunning, treachery</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #4820 BDB #941

¹³⁵ Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 55:23.

Psalm 55:23b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
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This word is found back in v. 11.

Translation:...—[these] men of bloodshed and deceit—... David describes the men who will suffer this—these are men of violence. They use violence to accomplish their ends. Here, this is called *blood* or *bloodshed*.

Also one of the weapons of their arsenal is deceit. Absalom sold himself as a man who would fix the judicial system of Israel (2Sam. 15:2–4) First of all, it wasn't broken (2Sam. 8:15); and second of all, Absalom had no concept of justice—and certainly not a better concept than David had. Absalom used deceit to go down to Hebron and to organize against his father David (who gave him this permission—2Sam. 15:7–9). Absalom used deceit to get 200 people to join him in Hebron who had nothing whatsoever to do with the revolution (2Sam. 15:11).

Application: No matter how much you like a particular politician or a particular party, think twice about voting for someone who is deceptive; or worse, consistently deceptive. If they believe X but they claim to believe in not-X, that is not a good thing. That means they intend to govern opposite of the will of the people. That is, they claim to believe in not X, which is what they tell the public, which indicates that they know what the public wants to hear. However, with many, it is clear that they believe in X and that is how they will govern. If a politician has to disguise what he believes in, then that is problematic.

We had a wonderful example of this today in Barack Obama, in making the closing argument before the election in 2012. He claimed that his plan has worked and he has lowered the deficit; when he has the highest deficits of any president ever; 3x the deficits of President Bush. And sadly, many of his followers believed what he said. He promised Hispanics in the first year, he would pass an immigration bill (and he did hold substantial majorities in the House and the Senate in 2009, so he could have done it). He introduced no such legislation. In fact, he never talked about this legislation until the next election, when he needed the Hispanic vote again.

Psalm 55:23c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lô' (לֹא or אֵין) [pronounced low]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
châtsâh (חָצַח) [pronounced khaw-TSAW]	<i>to divide [in half], to cut in half [two], to halve; metaphorically to live half of one's life</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #2673 BDB #345
yâmîym (יָמַי) [pronounced yaw-MEEM]	<i>days, a set of days; time of life, lifetime; a specific time period, a year</i>	masculine plural noun with the 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #3117 BDB #398

Translation: ...they will not live out half [of] their days! There are two ways to take this: (1) literally, meaning that all David's enemies in this psalm would live exactly half a lifetime or (2) figuratively, indicating that his enemies would live shortened lives. The Bible certainly teaches the latter. We can increase our lives with Bible doctrine; and we can decrease our lives when we reject truth.

The idea here is, because they engaged in revolution, their lives would be cut short. Revolution is wrong; and their revolution was based upon deception. Apart from deception, Absalom had no platform that he could run on.

This of course applies specifically to David's enemies in this revolution; but, in general, to those who choose a path which is against the **Laws of Divine Establishment** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)), which includes revolution.

Application: Although I doubt that the United States will endure a full-scale revolution over the next 20 years (as long as we do not have an economic collapse); there are people who will not live out their allotted time on earth for not obeying the laws of divine establishment. One of those laws involves work, which God assigned to man inside of the garden; and then added to when He threw man out of the Garden of Eden. There are several passages in the Bible which refer to the importance of work, including a passage where Paul says, "If a man does not work, then he should not eat." We have decided to take just the exact opposite approach. We have been rewarding women for having children out of wedlock, not marrying their children's father; and then rewarding them again for not working (*rewarding* means, we give them money). This is wrong and it destroys people's souls. I have contact with several people who live off Uncle Sugar and did not work—or worked reduced hours—and this was difficult for them. Their souls were warped. They engaged in goofy destructive behavior. I know one who was involved in property damage; another who took drugs and made herself a pariah to the neighbors, and another, who, while living in a very nice house, got herself arrested and she was removed from her home. Had these people worked a normal 40 hour work week, none of them would have had the time to be involved in self-destructive behavior.

Application: The laws of divine establishment are important to know because, when a society acts against these laws, that society is slowly destroyed from the inside out. When Communists wanted to destroy the United States, they chose to infiltrate the United States with **anti-establishment trends**. They understood that when a society chooses against the laws of divine establishment, then that society will destroy itself (what has saved us is a large number of believers in the United States with a small but powerful **pivot**).

Psalm 55:23d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or וַ) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
'ānîy (אֲנִי) [pronounced <i>aw-NEE</i>]	<i>I, me; in answer to a question, it means I am, it is I</i>	1 st person singular, personal pronoun	Strong's #589 BDB #58
This preposition hearkens back to v. 16.			
bâṭach (בָּטַח) [pronounced <i>baw-TAHKH</i>]	<i>to trust, to rely upon, to have confidence [hope] in, to be secure in; to fear nothing for oneself</i>	1 st person singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #982 BDB #105
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #88

Translation: **But I [especially] trust in You.** David's faith is in Y^ehowah Elohim, the Revealed Member of the Trinity; and David trusts the Word of God as well.

Poole: *[It is] in this confidence I will quietly and patiently wait upon You, for the downfall of my enemies, and for my own deliverance.*¹³⁶

¹³⁶ Matthew Poole, *English Annotations on the Holy Bible*; ©1685; from e-Sword, Psalm 55:23 (heavily edited).

We enter into the plan of God through trust in Jesus Christ, the Revealed Member of the Trinity (Gen. 15:6 John 3:16, 18, 36). However, after that point, we then move forward in the spiritual life through trust in the written Word of God (Rom. 10:17 Heb. 11:6).

David ends this psalm indicating that there are two paths for a man to walk down:

Cast your burden upon Y^ehowah
and He [even He] will sustain [and protect] you.
He will never give to the righteous a shaking.
And You, O Elohim, will bring them [David’s enemies] down to a pit of death
—[these] men of bloodshed and deceit—
they will not live out half [of] their days!
But I [especially] trust in You.

David’s burden are these men, his former confidants, who have turned against him. David will cast his burden upon the Lord, and God will sustain and protect him. God will keep the man of faith stable. But, those who oppose David and oppose the truth, will be brought down to the pit of death.

Chapter Outline	Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines	
Forward	Doctrines Covered and Alluded to	Chapters of the Bible Alluded To
Psalms Appropriately Exegeted with this Chapter	Other Chapters of the Bible Appropriately Exegeted with this Chapter	Definition of Terms
Introduction	Text	Addendum
www.kukis.org	Exegetical Studies in the Psalms	

Psalm 55 Addendum

Since I was not confined to verses, I found it easier to break this psalm up into more sections than the chapter outline originally given.

It may be helpful to see this chapter as a contiguous whole:

A Complete Translation of Psalm 55	
A Reasonably Literal Translation	A Reasonably Literal Paraphrase
Inscription	
To the Preeminent One; a Maskil [instructive psalm] by David.	For the choir director; an instructive psalm, written by David.
David Calls Upon God to Listen to Him	
Listen, O Elohim, [to] my prayer and do not hide from [or, <i>neglect</i>] my request. Pay attention to me and answer me.	Listen, O God, to my prayers and do not withdraw from my personal request to You. Pay attention to me, O God, and answer my prayers.

A Complete Translation of Psalm 55

A Reasonably Literal Translation

A Reasonably Literal Paraphrase

David is Restless Because of His Enemy's Lies

I wander about [restlessly] in my complaint [or, *concern*]
and I make a commotion on account of the sound of the enemy,
[and] because of the pressure of the malevolent;
for they have caused falsehood to move against
[possibly, *to rain down upon*] me,
and they oppose me in anger.

I wander about restlessly and concerned for my situation;
I am making a commotion from the sound of my enemy,
because of the pressure by the corrupt;
for they have caused lies and falsehoods to rain down upon me
and they oppose me with their anger and mental attitude sins.

David Imagines Being Able to Escape All of His Problems

My heart turns within me and the terror of death has fallen on me.
Dread and fear come into me;
consequently, trembling overwhelms me.

My heart is conflicted
and I find myself afraid of dying.
Because I have succumbed to dread and fear, I am overwhelmed with trembling.

So I thought, "O that one gives me wings like a dove; [then] I would fly away and I would live [elsewhere]."

So I thought, "O that someone would give me the wings of a dove; then I would fly away and be at peace in another place."

Listen, I will go off to depart [from here];
I will stay the night in the desert-wilderness."

Listen, I will wander away from here
and stay the night off in the desert-wilderness."

[Musical] pause.

[Musical interlude].

I would hasten [to] a shelter [or, *hasten an escape*] for me,
[a shelter] from a raging wind
[and] from a tempest-storm.

I would move quickly toward a shelter designed to protect me
from the raging wind and from a violent storm.

David Calls Upon God to Defeat His Enemies as There is Chaos Within Jerusalem

Destroy [them], my Adonai;
confuse [lit., *divide up*] their tongues;
for I have seen violence and strife in the city.

Destroy them, my Lord and confuse their inner communications,
for I have seen violence and arguments in Jerusalem.

Day and night, they [violence and strife] envelop her,
[going] over her walls;
and iniquity and misfortune [are] within her.

Day and night, violence and strife envelop the city,
going over her walls;
and there is iniquity and misfortune within those walls.

[There is] destruction in her [the city's] midst
and fraud and deceit is not departing from her plaza.

There is destruction and ruin in the city's midst
and fraud and deceit continue operating in the city plaza.

David's Intimate Friend Has Turned Against Him

A Complete Translation of Psalm 55	
A Reasonably Literal Translation	A Reasonably Literal Paraphrase
<p>For [it is] not my enemy [who] defies me, then I can bear [him]; not one who hates me [who] makes [himself] great against me, then I could conceal [myself] from him; but [it is] you, O man, as my evaluator, my prince [or, <i>friend, intimate</i>] and my acquaintance.</p>	<p>I could put up with an enemy who defies me; or one who hates me who treats me with scorn—I could easily avoid him; but, instead, the personal traitor is you, O man, who evaluates and assesses situations for me; my high-ranking prince as well as my acquaintance.</p>
<p>When we have a pleasant [time] together; we would walk with the crowd [to] the assembly in the House of Elohim.</p>	<p>We had very pleasant times together, walking along with the crowd to the assembling of the House of God.</p>
David Again Prays for their Destruction	
<p>Let death beguile [and seduce] them [alternate reading: (<i>Let</i>) desolation (or destruction) (be) upon them] [and] they will descend [into] Sheol alive; because evil is in their dwelling-place [and evil is] in their midst.</p>	<p>Let death beguile and seduce them so that they descend down into Sheol alive, because evil permeates their existence.</p>
David Calls Upon God to Rescue Him	
<p>I, [even] I, call unto Elohim, and Y^ehowah delivers me. I would speak [or, <i>meditate</i>] morning, noon and night; and I am [emotionally] stirred up; therefore, He hears my voice.</p>	<p>I especially call to God and Jehovah hears and delivers me. Every morning, noon and night, I should be meditating and communicating [with God], because I am emotionally stirred up; consequently, God hears me.</p>
<p>He has rescued [or, <i>purchased</i>] my soul in [or, <i>by means of</i>] peace from [those] drawing near to me; for with many, they were against [with?] me.</p>	<p>He has redeemed my soul by means of peace, separating me from those who draw near me in battle, although there were many who were against me.</p>
<p>Elohim listens and He answers [or, <i>humbles, afflicts</i>] them, [Elohim, Who is] abiding [from] antiquity.</p>	<p>God listens to and answers these revolutionaries with affliction and pain; —God, Who has been enthroned from eternity past—</p>
[Musical] pause	[Musical interlude]
David's Enemies are Recalcetrant and Phoney	
<p>When [there is] no change for them and they do not fear/respect Elohim, he stretches out his hands against those who are at peace with him [or, more literally, <i>He stretched out his hands in his peacefulness</i>] [and therefore] he has violated his compact.</p>	<p>There is no change in their thinking or actions; and they have no fear or respect for God. Although he appears to reach out his hands in peace, he instead violates his covenant.</p>

A Complete Translation of Psalm 55	
A Reasonably Literal Translation	A Reasonably Literal Paraphrase
The buttery [words] of his mouth are smooth, but his heart [is filled with] war. His words are more tender than oil, but they [are actually] drawn swords.	His words are smooth as butter, but his heart is filled with war. His words appear to be softer than oil but they are really drawn swords.
Doxology: David's Doctrinal Rationale	
Cast your burden upon Y ^e howah and He [even He] will sustain [and protect] you. He will never give to the righteous a shaking.	Cast your burden upon the Lord and He will sustain you. He will never allow the righteous to be shaken.
And You, O Elohim, will bring them down to a pit of death —[these] men of bloodshed and deceit— they will not live out half [of] their days!	And you, O God, will bring my enemies down into a pit of death —such men who practice violence and deceit— they will not even enjoy half of their days!
But I [especially] trust in You.	But I continue to trust in You.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

When I did the summary for this, I remarked how incongruous and disjointed that this psalm seemed.

I believe that I may see some parallels here, where portions at the end of this psalm match up with the psalm in the beginning. There is either a parallel meaning in similarity; or a parallel established by complementary verses. I am not certain if I matched these up perfectly, but there does seem to be a very clear set of parallels. Furthermore, looking at the psalm in this way tends to make more sense and appear to be more cohesive.

The Parallels Found in Psalm 55	
Psalm 55 going forward	Psalm 55 going backward
David Calls Upon God to Listen to Him Because He Knows He Can Trust God	
Listen, O Elohim, [to] my prayer and do not hide from [or, <i>neglect</i>] my request. Pay attention to me and answer me.	But I [especially] trust in You.
David is Restless Because of His Enemy's Lies, But He Knows that God Will Take Care of His Enemies	
I wander about [restlessly] in my complaint [or, <i>concern</i>] and I make a commotion on account of the sound of the enemy, [and] because of the pressure of the malevolent; for they have caused falsehood to move against [possibly, <i>to rain down upon</i>] me, and they oppose me in anger.	And You, O Elohim, will bring them down to a pit of death —[these] men of bloodshed and deceit— they will not live out half [of] their days!
David Imagines Being Able to Escape All of His Problems; However, This Can Be Done By Placing His Burdens Upon God	

The Parallels Found in Psalm 55

Psalm 55 going forward	Psalm 55 going backward
<p>My heart turns within me and the terror of death has fallen on me. Dread and fear come into me; consequently, trembling overwhelms me. So I thought, "O that one gives me wings like a dove; [then] I would fly away and I would live [elsewhere]. Listen, I will go off to depart [from here]; I will stay the night in the desert-wilderness." [Musical] pause. I would hasten [to] a shelter [or, <i>hasten an escape</i>] for me, [a shelter] from a raging wind [and] from a tempest-storm.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Cast your burden upon Y^ehowah and He [even He] will sustain [and protect] you. He will never give to the righteous a shaking.</p>
David Calls Upon God to Defeat His Enemies Because of Their Deception	
<p>Destroy [them], my Adonai; confuse [lit., <i>divide up</i>] their tongues; for I have seen violence and strife in the city. Day and night, they [violence and strife] envelop her, [going] over her walls; and iniquity and misfortune [are] within her. [There is] destruction in her [the city's] midst and fraud and deceit is not departing from her plaza.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">The buttery [words] of his mouth are smooth, but his heart [is filled with] war. His words are more tender than oil, but they [are actually] drawn swords.</p>
David's Intimate Friend Has Turned Against Him/One Friend Has No Respect for God	
<p>For [it is] not my enemy [who] defies me, then I can bear [him]; not one who hates me [who] makes [himself] great against me, then I could conceal [myself] from him; but [it is] you, O man, as my evaluator, my prince [or, <i>friend, intimate</i>] and my acquaintance. When we have a pleasant [time] together; we would walk with the crowd [to] the assembly in the House of Elohim.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">When [there is] no change for them and they do not fear/respect Elohim, he stretches out his hands against those who are at peace with him [or, more literally, <i>He stretched out his hands in his peacefulness</i>] [and therefore] he has violated his compact.</p>
David Again Prays for their Destruction/He is Content in His Own Deliverance	
<p>Let death beguile [and seduce] them [alternate reading: (<i>Let</i>) <i>desolation (or destruction) (be) upon them</i>] [and] they will descend [into] Sheol alive; because evil is in their dwelling-place [and evil is] in their midst.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">He has rescued [or, <i>purchased</i>] my soul in [or, <i>by means of</i>] peace from [those] drawing near to me; for with many, they were against [with?] me.</p>
David Calls Upon God to Rescue Him and He Knows That God Will	

The Parallels Found in Psalm 55	
Psalm 55 going forward	Psalm 55 going backward
I, [even] I, call unto Elohim, and Y ^e howah delivers me. I would speak [or, <i>meditate</i>] morning, noon and night; and I am [emotionally] stirred up; therefore, He hears my voice.	Elohim listens and He answers [or, <i>humbles, afflicts</i>] them, [Elohim, Who is] abiding [from] antiquity.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

The following chapters of the Bible would be appropriately studied at this time:

- 2Samuel 15** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#))
- Psalm 41** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#))

Chapter Outline		Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines
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www.kukis.org		Exegetical Studies in the Psalms