

The Doctrine of Çâlal

Introduction: We're studying Psalm 68:4, which reads: [Sing unto Elohim, make music which praises His name. **Elevate \[a highway\]** for the one riding in the \[desert\] Arabah. His name \[is\] in Yah, Rejoice before Him.](#) The verb in bold is the one which is in question.

Topics		
Pronunciation and Spelling	Meanings	An Examination of All Scriptural Occurrences
	Conclusion	
Charts, Maps and/or Doctrines		
	An Examination of All Scriptural Occurrences	

- Pronunciation and spelling:** çâlal (çâllal) [pronounced saw-LAHL].
- Meanings** already attributed to çâlal:
 - KJV renderings: *to cast, to raise, to exalt, to extol, to make plain.*
 - Strong's renderings: properly *to mound up (especially a turnpike); figuratively to exalt; reflexively to oppose (as by a dam);* Strong's #5549.
 - BDB translations: *1) to lift up, cast up, exalt; 1a) (Qal); 1a1) to cast up a highway; 1a2) to cast up a way; 1a3) to lift up (of song); 1b) (Pilpel) to exalt, esteem highly, prize; 1c) (Hithpoel) to exalt oneself.* BDB #699.
 - Gesenius translations: **Qal:** *to lift up, to elevate, to exalt, to gather, to cast up [into a heap]; to make a level way by casting up a bank, to embank.* From the notion of *being exalted, lofty*, has sprung the meanings *to move to and fro, to waver*; used of things that are lofty, tall and slender, which are easily shaken (e.g., boughs and twigs of trees, such as willows and palms. Somehow, Gesenius extends this to baskets and brooms made of these items, although it is not clear in Gesenius if this verb is actually involved in the action. BDB lists *to plait, to curl, to weave [?]* as the meanings of a verb which is spelled the same, but has its own cognates. **Pilpel:** *to lift up, to elevate, to exalt;* metaphorical use: *exalt her [wisdom] [with praises].* **Hithpoel:** *to oppose oneself as a mound, to resist.*
- Cognates:** A feminine noun which means *mound*; and feminine and masculine nouns which both mean *highway*.
- Passages:** Ex. 9:17 Psalm 68:4 Prov. 4:8 15:19 Isa. 57:14 62:10 Jer. 18:15 30:12 50:26

An Examination of All Scriptural Occurrences of the Word

Ex. 9:17 Psalm 68:4 Prov. 4:8 15:19 Isa. 57:14 62:10 Jer. 18:15 30:12 50:26

Passage	Morphology and Additional Comments
Ex. 9:17: "And yet exalt you yourself against my people, that you will not let them go?"	Hithpael participle; this is what God said, speaking to the Pharaoh of Egypt through Moses.

Passage				Morphology and Additional Comments					
Job. 30:12: Upon my right hand rise the youth; they push away my feet, and they raise up against me the ways of their destruction. (KJV2000). Upon my right hand rise the rabble. They thrust aside my feet, and they cast up against me their ways of destruction (ACV). Or, less literally, the HCSB: The rabble rise up at my right; they trap my feet and construct their siege ramp against me.				Qal imperfect; Job is speaking of the youth who have risen up against him and have knocked him off balance and have, apparently, set up their ways of destruction before him or in front of him.					
Psalm 68:4: Sing unto Elohim, make music which praises His name. Elevate [a highway] for the one riding in the [desert] Arabah. His name [is] in Yah, Rejoice before Him.				Qal imperative; the action of the verb is somewhat unclear, but the idea is, there is something done for one who rides in the desert.					
Prov. 4:8: Exalt her, and she shall promote you: she shall bring you to honor, when you do embrace her.				Pilpel imperative; spoken of <i>wisdom</i> .					
Prov. 15:19: The way of the slothful man is as a hedge of thorns: but the way of the righteous is made a highway .				Qal passive participle. The word <i>a highway</i> here is a part of the verb.					
Isa. 57:14: And it shall be said, Heap it up, heap it up , prepare the way, take up the stumbling block out of the way of my people.				Qal imperative					
Isa. 62:10: Go through, go through the gates; prepare you the way of the people; build up, build up the highway; gather out the stones; lift up a banner for the people.				Qal imperative					
Jer. 18:15: Because my people have forgotten me, they have burned incense to worthless idols, and they have caused them to stumble in their ways from the ancient paths, to walk in pathways, and not on a highway.				Qal passive participle					
Jer. 50:26: Come against her from the utmost border, open her storehouses: cast her up as heaps, and destroy her utterly: let nothing of her be left.				Qal imperative					
	LXX	Latin Vulgate	Peshitta	ACV	ESV	HCSB	LTHB	VW	Young
Job. 30:12: Upon my right hand rise the youth; they push away my feet, and they çalal against me the ways of their destruction.	<i>directed; leveled out</i>	<i>have over-whelmed</i>	<i>have perplexed</i>	<i>cast up</i>	<i>cast up</i>	<i>construct their siege ramp</i>	<i>raise up</i>	<i>raise</i>	<i>raise up</i>

	LXX	Latin Vulgate	Peshitta	ACV	ESV	HCSB	LTHB	VW	Young
Psalm 68:4: Sing unto Elohim, make music which praises His name. Elevate [a highway] for the one riding in the [desert] Arabah. His name [is] in Yah, Rejoice before Him.	<i>shall be troubled; make a way</i>	<i>shall be troubled</i>	<i>extol</i>	<i>cast up a highway</i>	<i>lift up [a song]</i>	<i>exalt</i>	<i>lift up [a song]</i>	<i>exalt</i>	<i>raise up a highway</i>
Prov. 15:19: The way of the slothful man is as a hedge of thorns: but the way of the righteous is made a highway .	<i>are beaten; are made smooth</i>	<i>is without offense</i>	<i>are plain</i>	<i>is made a highway</i>	<i>is a level highway</i>	<i>is a highway</i>	<i>[is] exalted</i>	<i>is a highway</i>	<i>is raised up</i>
Isa. 57:14: And it shall be said, Heap it up, heap it up , prepare the way, take up the stumbling block out of the way of my people.	<i>clear the ways (?)</i>	<i>make a way: give free passage</i>	<i>clear up, clear up</i>	<i>cast up</i>	<i>build up</i>	<i>build up</i>	<i>raise up</i>	<i>raise up</i>	<i>raise up</i>
Isa. 62:10: Go through, go through the gates; prepare you the way of the people; build up, build up the highway; gather out the stones; lift up a banner for the people.	<i>make</i>	<i>Make [the road] plain</i>	<i>make smooth</i>	<i>cast up</i>	<i>build up</i>	<i>build up</i>	<i>raise up</i>	<i>raise up</i>	<i>raise up</i>
Jer. 18:15: Because my people have forgotten me, they have burned incense to worthless idols, and they have caused them to stumble in their ways from the ancient paths, to walk in pathways, and not çâlal a highway.	<i>have no road for travel; impassable [with the negative]</i>	<i>trodden</i>	<i>trodden</i>	<i>cast up</i>	<i>not the highway</i>	<i>not the highway</i>	<i>not on the highway</i>	<i>not in the highway</i>	<i>raised up</i>
On several of the translations above, there is actually no verb found, but there is a corresponding negative with the Hebrew and the word for <i>road, highway</i> . The idea is, no <i>highway or road was constructed</i> to travel along.									
Jer. 50:26: Come against her from the utmost border, open her storehouses: cast her up as heaps, and destroy her utterly: let nothing of her be left.	<i>??</i>	<i>tread down, make heaps?</i>	<i>leave her?</i>	<i>cast up</i>	<i>pile up</i>	<i>pile up</i>	<i>pile up</i>	<i>cast up</i>	<i>raise up</i>
We do not seem to have a parallel word in the other ancient languages which parallels çâlal for this verse.									
I am using the English translations of others in the first 3 columns.									

5. Conclusion:

- The cognates (*mound, highway*) seem to give the general sense that this word is related to the building of a highway or thoroughfare.

- b. Most of the time when we build a road in the mountains, we cut a path into the dirt; in the ancient world, as this seems to suggest, stones and dirt and debris were piled up or put into a mound in order to flatten out a road for use. The modern equivalent of this is *to lay asphalt; to lay a road of concrete*.
- c. The only place where we seem to have the idea of elevating, exalting or lifting up something is in our passage, Psalm 68:4, and that, only because there are other verbs which mean that in the same verse.
- d. I think that the most likely meaning that we can take from this is *to construct [a road, a highway]; to mound up [dirt, debris] to make [a road, highway]*.
- e. There seems to be an unused verb which yields a whole other set of meanings, which has two cognates found in Scripture, the masculine and feminine nouns for *basket* (Strong's #5552 & #5536).
- f. Barnes also offers a similar conclusion: *The word here rendered "extol" —çâlal (חָלַל) [pronounced saw-L AHL]—means to lift up, to raise, to raise up, as into a heap or mound; and especially to cast up and prepare a way, or to make a way level before an army by casting up earth; that is, to prepare a way for an army. See the notes at Isa. 40:3. Compare also Isa. 57:14 62:10; Job. 19:12 30:12 Prov. 15:19 (margin) Jer. 18:15. This is evidently the idea here. It is not to "extol" God in the sense of praising him; it is to prepare the way before him, as of one marching at the head of his armies, or as a leader of his hosts. The allusion is to God as passing before his people in the march to the promised land; and the call is to make ready the way before him – that is, to remove all obstructions out of his path and to make the road smooth and level.*¹
- g. The NIV Study Bible suggests *prepare the way for Him Who rides through the deserts.*²

This is the abbreviated version of the **Doctrine of Çâlal**:

Çâlal	
Headline	Commentary/Explanation
Pronunciation and spelling	çâlal (חָלַל) [pronounced saw-L AHL].
Suggested meanings from BDB, Gesenius, etc.	<p>BDB translations: 1) <i>to lift up, cast up, exalt</i>; 1a) (Qal); 1a1) <i>to cast up a highway</i>; 1a2) <i>to cast up a way</i>; 1a3) <i>to lift up (of song)</i>; 1b) (Pilpel) <i>to exalt, esteem highly, prize</i>; 1c) (Hithpoel) <i>to exalt oneself</i>. BDB #699.</p> <p>Gesenius translations: Qal: <i>to lift up, to elevate, to exalt, to gather, to cast up [into a heap]; to make a level way by casting up a bank, to embank</i>. From the notion of <i>being exalted, lofty</i>, has sprung the meanings <i>to move to and fro, to waver</i>; used of things that are lofty, tall and slender, which are easily shaken (e.g., boughs and twigs of trees, such as willows and palms. Somehow, Gesenius extends this to baskets and brooms made of these items, although it is not clear in Gesenius if this verb is actually involved in the action. BDB lists <i>to plait, to curl, to weave [?]</i> as the meanings of a verb which is spelled the same, but has its own cognates. Pilpel: <i>to lift up, to elevate, to exalt</i>; metaphorical use: <i>exalt her [wisdom] [with praises]</i>. Hithpoel: <i>to oppose oneself as a mound, to resist</i>.</p>
Passages	Ex. 9:17 Psalm 68:4 Prov. 4:8 15:19 Isa. 57:14 62:10 Jer. 18:15 30:12 50:26

¹ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 68:4.

² *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 846 (footnote).

Çâlal	
Headline	Commentary/Explanation
Concluding points	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The cognates (<i>mound, highway</i>) seem to give the general sense that this word is related to the building of a highway or thoroughfare. 2. Most of the time when we build a road in the mountains, we cut a path into the dirt; in the ancient world, as this seems to suggest, stones and dirt and debris were piled up or put into a mound in order to flatten out a road for use. The modern equivalent of this is <i>to lay asphalt; to lay a road of concrete</i>. 3. The only place where we seem to have the idea of elevating, exalting or lifting up something is in our passage, Psalm 68:4, and that, only because there are other verbs which mean that in the same verse. 4. I think that the most likely meaning that we can take from this is <i>to construct [a road, a highway]; to mound up [dirt, debris] to make [a road, highway]</i>. The NIV Study Bible suggests <i>prepare the way for Him Who rides through the deserts</i>.³ 5. There seems to be an unused verb which yields a whole other set of meanings, which has two cognates found in Scripture, the masculine and feminine nouns for <i>basket</i> (Strong's #5552 & #5536).
Barnes comments	<p><i>The word here rendered “extol” —çâlal (לָּחַל) [pronounced saw-LAHL]—means to lift up, to raise, to raise up, as into a heap or mound; and especially to cast up and prepare a way, or to make a way level before an army by casting up earth; that is, to prepare a way for an army. See the notes at Isa. 40:3. Compare also Isa. 57:14 62:10; Job. 19:12 30:12 Prov. 15:19 (margin) Jer. 18:15. This is evidently the idea here. It is not to “extol” God in the sense of praising him; it is to prepare the way before him, as of one marching at the head of his armies, or as a leader of his hosts. The allusion is to God as passing before his people in the march to the promised land; and the call is to make ready the way before him – that is, to remove all obstructions out of his path and to make the road smooth and level.</i>⁴</p>
<p>I believe that we may reasonably conclude that the idea of this verb is <i>to build up [a highway]; to construct [a road]</i>. Every occasion of its use is found in the complete doctrine of çâlal.</p>	

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³ *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 846 (footnote).

⁴ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 68:4.