

Psalm 57

Psalm 57:1–22 David Trusts God—both His Grace and Truth—for the Future

Outline of Chapter 57:

Inscription	Psalm 57 Inscription
vv. 1–3	David Calls Upon God for Help, and Knows God Will Send Forth Grace and Truth
vv. 4–5	David’s Life is in Danger/He Calls for God to be Honored
v. 6	David’s Enemies Entrap Themselves
vv. 7–11	David Celebrates God’s Character/He Calls for God to be Honored

Charts and Maps:

v. 2	How God Completes [His Work] Upon David
v. 11	The 4.5.6; 4.5.6 Structure of Psalm 57

Doctrines Covered	Doctrines Alluded To
	Ark of God

Introduction: Psalm 57 was written by David during a transitional period of time. You will recall that he has been to Nob and to Gath, and his behavior and choices were less than exemplary. In I Sam. 22, we will see the result of David’s dishonesty with the priests in Nob. However, prior to this, David has gone from being frightened, directionless and out of fellowship, to being a leader, wise and in fellowship. In the book of Samuel, this is merely implied; however, David has clearly spiritually rebounded in Psalm 56, which cleansing has led to his writing several psalms and leading a small army.

If one reads I Sam. 21 and 22 carefully, it will make David seem schizophrenic. In chapter 21, he is on the run, he is afraid, he makes stupid choices, he lies, he produces phoney behavior, and he is worried about one person and one person only: himself. In chapter 22, on the other hand, we have David as a leader. Men have flocked to him; his family has come to him. David is not worried for his own safety now, but for the safety of others. David now exudes confidence and leadership and faith. The key, of course, is Psalm 56, where David turns toward God. Satan’s strategy for the believer is for the believer to focus on himself, on other people or on the circumstances of life. David had been focused on himself and on his problems. In Psalm 56, this focus turned toward God. Psalm 57 marks the 3rd in a series of psalms which demonstrate David’s spiritual focus, strength and growth. He wrote at least a half dozen psalms during this period of time.

I should mention that David spent a lot of time in caves; in fact, this will be his modus operandi for the next several years. Therefore, although I have placed this psalm at the beginning of I Sam. 22, it could have occurred at anytime between I Sam. 22–29.

We may make the general observation, based upon our study of the previous two psalms (Psalm 34–56), that David does not simply randomly throw words together until he runs out of steam. His psalms often have a structure, and the structure is often key to understanding the psalm. First of all, we have a chorus, vv. 5 and 11 (which are identical). We have the vocative for God found in vv. 1, 5, 7, and 11. David mentions the heavens in vv. 3, 5, 10, and 11. Finally, he speaks of grace and truth (of faithfulness) in vv. 3 and 10. I was unable to decipher a pattern; however, Keil and Delitzsch observed a **strophe-schema of 4.5.6;4.5.6**, which schema both gives us

an outline for the psalm, and is in complete agreement with the English text and line division as well. At the end of this psalm, I will gather the verses together and present them in this way.

One night even more simply refer to the first five verses as David's prayer, and the final verses as David's praise. David, in this psalm, describes the steps that he went through, in a rather simplified way. In realizing that his life was in danger and that there was no person that he could turn to, David turns to God, and prays for his deliverance. As a part of his prayer, David recognizes that God can be trusted to come through for him (vv. 2b–3). Then he praises God for this deliverance (these headings will be added to the **strophe-schema of 4.5.6;4.5.6** found at the end of this psalm).

David first speaks of asking God to be gracious to him, and then reveals his complete dependence upon God (vv. 1–2). He knows that God will protect him (v. 3), even though his life is in danger (v. 4). In v. 5, we have the chorus of this psalm, where David calls for God to be honored in the heavens and that His glory be over all the earth, which is not unlike, **"Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven"** (v. 5).

In v. 6, David again speaks of the dangers of his life, but that those out to trap him, trap themselves. Vv. 7–10 are celebratory verses, where David speaks of being occupied with the person of God and he celebrates God's grace among all peoples (which introduces us to some fairly difficult textual criticism). Finally, David ends with the chorus again.

We have a lot of themes in this psalm which are paralleled elsewhere. When we come to these parallels, they will be duly noted.

Let me add one more thing: Spurgeon suggests that *mystically*, this psalm could be applied to our Lord and His time on this earth.¹ In reviewing the psalm, apart from the inscription (or title), I would have to agree that this could very easily be a psalm of Jesus, spoken from His humanity.

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Psalm 57 Inscription

Slavishly literal:

To a Preeminent [One]. Do not destroy [or, you will not destroy]! To David a writing in a fleeing from faces of Saul in the cave.

Psalm
57 inscription

Moderately literal:

To the Preeminent One: Do not destroy [me]! A writing of David's when he fled from the presence of Saul [and hid] in the cave.

To the man who is pre-eminent: Do not Destroy me! A writing of David's when he fled from Saul and hid in a cave.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Early translations:

The Septuagint

For the end. Destroy not; by David, for a memorial, when he fled from the presence of Saul to the cave.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

¹ Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *A Treasury of David*; e-Sword, Psalm 57, inscription. Spurgeon's commentary on this psalm, by the way, is 7000 words and 10 pages long. Much of my commentary is really related strictly to the translation. Remove that, and I don't know if there would remain a 7000 word commentary.

CEV	[For the music leader. To the tune "Don't Destroy." A special psalm by David when he was in the cave while running from Saul.]
NJB	For the choirmaster. Tune: 'Do not destroy' Of David In a quiet voice When he escaped from Saul in the cave
NLT	For the choir director: A psalm of David, regarding the time he fled from Saul and went into the cave. To be sung to the tune "Do Not Destroy!"

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™	For the choir director; <i>al tashcheth</i> ; ² a <i>Mikhtam</i> by David when he fled from Saul into the cave.
JPS (Tanakh)	For the leader; <i>al tashheth</i> . Of David. A <i>Mikhtam</i> ; when he fled from Saul into a cave.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB	For the choir director; <i>set to Al-tashheth</i> . A <i>Mikhtam</i> of David, when he fled from Saul, in the cave.
Young's Updated LT	To the Overseer. — 'Destroy not.' — A secret treasure of David, in his fleeing from the face of Saul into a cave.

What is the gist of this verse? David identifies the time period during which this psalm was written—it was during the time that he was in the cave and Saul was after him.

Psalm 57 inscription a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ³]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
nâtsach (נָצַח) [pronounced <i>naw-TZAHKH</i>]	<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:... The first noun in this inscription is an interesting one, and has been given many different renderings: *choir director, choirmaster, music leader, leader, chief musician*. However, insofar as we know, there was no official choir or palace orchestra. In fact, to get any sort of music at all in the palace, David was sent for, a lone guitarist. Given the music-therapy which Saul's staff recommended (I Sam. 16:14–19), and given that Saul pretty much acted like a madman for the next decade or so, we can reasonably assume that, when these events took place that are mentioned in the remainder of this inscription, that Saul never organized any sort of in-house music after David became a fugitive. His cabinet perhaps organized additional music therapy for him. However, even if that were the case, David, while on the run from Saul, would have no reason to write something for the leader of that musical group. Therefore, there is no reason to interpret the Piel participle of *nâtsach* as *choirmaster, choir leader, or choir anything*.³ Given that this is followed by the 2nd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect of *to cause to ruin, to destroy* combined with a negative, I would reasonably suspect that the *pre-eminent*

² Unknown musical term.

³ Of course, David could have written this psalm many, many years later in retrospect. However, I see that as unlikely.

one is Saul. This psalm is addressed to him. Saul, please, do not destroy me! You may ask, *why didn't David just put Saul's name in here instead?* He did, in the inscription, a couple of words down.

Another interpretation is that these were given to a choirmaster or music leader long after the incident and long after they were written. When we studied Psalm 34, there were things in the inscription which suggested that there was a period of time between the writing of the psalm and the writing of the inscription (which does not necessarily conflict with the concept of Scripture being inspired of God). David did organize a choir and orchestra once he became king (I Chron. 25), so he possibly gathered his psalms, put titles to them, and took them to the choirmaster at that time. This would not, however, explain why some psalms were written for the *choirmaster* and why some were not.

Another, and better, interpretation is that the *Preeminent One* could be a reference to God, and David prays to God that his enemies not be allowed to destroy him. Since God can overrule man's volition, David can address God directly, and ask for Him not to destroy him. This is more reasonable that this psalm is addressed to God, as we have the vocative *Elohim* in vv. 1–2, 5, 7, 11.

Psalms 57–58 begin exactly in the same way, both being addressed to the *Preeminent One* and both carrying the plea *Do not destroy!* Both psalms are also attributed to David and Psalm 57 also speaks of a time when David fled from Saul. It would be reasonable to place the writing of all three of these psalms during the time that David was a fugitive in Israel. Also, since David is functioning on divine viewpoint, rather than human viewpoint, we would expect him to address God in this matter, rather than Saul (who would never actually hear this psalm anyway). Psalm 75 begins identically, but is attributed to Asaph.

Psalm 57 inscription b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾal (אֵל) [pronounced <i>a]</i>	<i>not; nothing; none</i>	adverb of negation; conjunction of prohibiting, dehorting, deprecating, desire that something <i>not</i> be done	Strong's #408 BDB #39.
shâchath (שָׁחַת) [pronounced <i>shaw-KHAHTH</i>]	<i>to cause one to go to ruin, to spoil, to ruin, to corrupt, to destroy</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect; apocopated form	Strong's #7843 BDB #1007

Apocopated means that the verb has been shortened. Generally, this means that the final hê (ה) and the vowel which precedes it are dropped. Apocopation is used when the verb functions as a jussive or when the verb is affixed to a wâw consecutive (here, it is *not* affixed to the wâw conjunction, so it is probably a jussive). A **jussive** expresses the speaker's desire, wish or command.⁴

Translation: [Do not destroy \[me\]!](#) As mentioned above, it is most likely that David is addressing God as the *Preeminent One* and asking God not to destroy him. We would expect David, when in fellowship, to recognize that God is the One in charge and God allows or disallows his destruction. We find almost the exact same morphology in I Sam. 26:9, when David tells Abishai not to destroy Saul (there is a suffix in this passage, which is not found in our psalm). See also Deut. 9:26, where Moses prays for God not to destroy the Jewish people.

This same translation is found in both the Greek and Latin manuscripts, and the more common explanation is that this is set to the music of a well-known song or psalm of that era, called *Do Not Destroy*.⁵ This would mean that

⁴ This is all taken from *Biblical Hebrew*; by Page Kelley, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., ©1992, pp. 131, 292.

⁵ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 57:1. Others also proposed the same solution.

Psalms 57–59, 75 are all set to the same tune, as this is found in each of their inscriptions. I reject this explanation for three reasons: (1) Why set 4 psalms to the exact same tune? I would think that there would be problems with meter and verse length. (2) The explanation given easily explains this phrase occurring at the beginning of these 4 psalms. (3) That David is asking not to be destroyed (or asking for Israel not to be destroyed) is apropos to the tenor and subject matter of these psalms.

Psalm 57 inscription c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^o]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	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
mik ^o tâm (מִכְתָּם) [pronounced mik-TAWM]	<i>possibly: writing; a poem, a song; transliterated Mikhtâm</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #4387 BDB #508

There is a very similar masculine noun, which is mik^oththâ^bv (מִכְתָּהֶב) [pronounced mik^o-TAW^bV], which means *writing, handwriting, that which is written*; which noun is found in titles, e.g., *Writing of Hezekiah*. The difference between the nouns is the final letter. Given their strong similarities, I would reasonably suppose that mik^otâm means *writing, a poem, a song*. This word is found only in the inscriptions of 6 psalms (all psalms of David) and giving it such a meaning does no damage to the psalms or the inscription.

Interestingly enough, a word which is also similar to mik^otâm is kâtham (כָּתָם) [pronounced kaw-THAHM], which means *to be stained; bloodstained; defiled*. Strong's #3799 BDB #508. Many times, a verb is made into a substantive by affixing a mem to the beginning of the word.

Translation: A writing of David's... Although many translations transliterate the word *mikhtam*, there is really no reason for that. We may reasonably understand this to mean *a writing, a poem or a song of David's*. We find this same designation in Psalms 16, 56–60 (see the exegesis above for a full explanation). We may reasonably assume that David is simply putting his signature to this psalm. It is also possible that, as has been mentioned before, this was done long after the psalm was written.

Psalm 57 inscription d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
b ^e (בֵּ) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's# none BDB #88

When verbs in the infinitive construct are preceded by the bēyth preposition, b^e acts as a temporal conjunction; that is, *in their being created = when they were created* (Gen. 2:4); *in their being in the field = when they were in the field* (Gen. 4:8).⁶

⁶ *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew-English Lexicon*; Hendrickson, ©1979, pp. 90–91.

Psalm 57 inscription d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
bârach (בָּרַח) [pronounced <i>baw-RAHKH</i>]	<i>to go through, to flee</i>	Qal infinitive construct with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1272 BDB #137
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>min</i>]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, above, beyond, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
pânîym (פְּנֵים) [pronounced <i>paw-NEEM</i>]	<i>face, faces; presence</i>	masculine plural construct (plural acts like English singular)	Strong's #6440 BDB #815
Together, mipânîym mean <i>from before your face, out from before your face, from one's presence</i> . However, together, they can also be a reference to the cause, whether near or remote, and can therefore be rendered <i>because of, because that</i> .			
Shâ`ûwl (שׂוּאָל) [pronounced <i>shaw-OOL</i>]	which is transliterated <i>Saul</i> ; it means <i>asked for</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #7586 BDB #982
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>min</i>]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, above, beyond, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
m ^{er} ârâh (מַעְרָא) [pronounced <i>m^{er}-ġaw-RAW</i>]	<i>cave</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4631 BDB #792

Translation: ...when he fled from the presence of Saul [and hid] in the cave. David at one time was in the palace of Saul. He began there as a musician hired to calm Saul. He eventually became a soldier and a leader of soldiers, and he married Saul's daughter. So, for a long time, David was before Saul (in Saul's presence) in the royal palace. However, Saul made an attempt on David's life while David was at home with his wife, Saul's daughter, and David fled from Saul at that time.

David was on the lamb for several years after this, and we might suppose that he has stayed in many caves. However, there are only two caves which are specifically mentioned in connection with David and this time period, and that is the cave of Adullam in I Sam. 22:1 (our passage) and the cave where David cut Saul's garment when he was defecating (I Sam. 24). Given that David was not fleeing from Saul, per se, in I Sam. 24, we may reasonably assume that this belongs with our passage, Psalm 22.⁷

On the other hand, David speaks in v. 6 of his enemies digging a pit, and then falling into it. This could describe the situation presented to us in I Sam. 24, where Saul wanders into David's cave of hiding in order to defecate. This would be in agreement with v. 6 and it is the reason many exegetes place this psalm with I Sam. 24.

Let me offer you a third possibility: David, with his 400+ men, will spend a lot of time in caves. There are a lot of men to hide, and the only safe place for them to hide would be in a cave, which is where they hide at least twice (I Sam. 22:1 24:3-4). There is no reason to think that these are the only two caves where David and his men

⁷ Obviously, it is possible that this refers to a cave which is not mentioned in Scripture.

stayed. Therefore, David could have composed these psalms while in these caves, and his reference here and in Psalm 142 is not to a particular cave, but to the various caves in which he stayed.

From Spurgeon's *Treasury of David*: "The cave." There appear good grounds for the local tradition which fixes the cave on the borders of the Dead Sea, although there is no certainty with regard to the particular cave pointed out. The cave so designated is at a point to which David was far more likely to summon his parents, whom he intended to take from Bethlehem into Moab, than to any place in the western plains.... It is an immense natural cavern, the mouth of which can be approached only on foot along the side of the cliff. Irby and Mangles, who visited it without being aware that it was the reputed Cave of Adullam, state that it "runs in by a long winding, narrow passage, with small chambers or cavities on either side. We soon came to a large chamber with natural arches of great height; from this last there were numerous passages, leading in all directions, occasionally joined by others at right angles, and forming a perfect labyrinth, which our guides assured us had never been perfectly explored - the people being afraid of losing themselves. The passages are generally four feet high by three feet wide, and were all on a level with each other." ... It seems probable that David as a native of Bethlehem, must have been well acquainted with this remarkable spot, and had probably often availed himself of its shelter, when out with his father's flocks. It would, therefore, naturally occur to him as a place of refuge when he fled from Gath.
- John Kitto (1804-1854), in "A Cyclopaedia of Biblical Literature."

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David Calls upon God for Help, and Knows God Will Send Forth Grace and Truth

Slavishly literal:

**Stoop over [or, *show grace*] [to] me, God
Stoop over [or, *show grace*] [to] me,
for in You has taken refuge my soul
and in a shadow of Your wings I take
refuge until passes on calamity.**

Psalm
57:1

Moderately literal:

**Grace me, O God; grace me,
for my soul trusts [and has taken refuge] in
You;
and I take refuge in the shadow of your
[protecting] wings
until calamity [and ruin] pass on by.**

**Be gracious to me, O God; be gracious to me,
for my soul trusts in You and has taken refuge in You;
and I trust in Your protection until calamity and ruin pass through.**

Here is how others have handled this verse:

Early translations:

The Septuagint

Have mercy upon me, O God, have mercy upon me; for my soul has trusted in You;
and in the shadow of Your wings will I hope, until the iniquity has passed away.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV

God Most High, have pity on me! Have mercy.
I run to you for safety.
In the shadow of your wings,
I seek protection till danger dies down.

NLT

Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy!
I look to you for protection.
I will hide beneath the shadow of your wings
until this violent storm is past.

REB God be gracious to me; be gracious,
for I have made you my refuge,
I shall seek refuge in the shadow of your wings
until the storms are past.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™ Have pity on me, O God. Have pity on me,
because my soul takes refuge in you.
I will take refuge in the shadow of your wings
until destructive storms pass by.

JPS (Tanakh) Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me,
for I seek refuge in You,
I seek refuge in the shadow of Your wings,
until danger passes. [This is actually v. 2 in the Tanakh]

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB Be gracious to me, O God, be gracious to me.
For my soul takes refuge in Thee;
And in the shadow of Thy wings I will take refuge
Until destruction passes by.

Owen's Translation Be merciful to me, O God; be merciful to me,
for in You takes refuge my soul
and in the shadow of Your wings I will take refuge till pass by storms of destruction.

Young's Updated LT Favor me, O God, favor me;
For in You my soul trusts,
And in the shadow of Your wings I trust,
Until calamities pass over.

What is the gist of this verse? David asks God for His grace, as he (David) has placed his entire trust in God. He will hide under the wings of God until calamities pass on over.

Psalm 57:1a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
chânan (חָנַן) [pronounced khaw-NAHN]	<i>bend or stoop over, show favor, show grace [as a superior would do on behalf of an inferior], show mercy, be gracious, be merciful</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperative with the 1 st person singular suffix	#2603, 2589 BDB #335
ʿêlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced el-o-HEEM]	<i>gods or God; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43
chânan (חָנַן) [pronounced khaw-NAHN]	<i>bend or stoop over, show favor, show grace [as a superior would do on behalf of an inferior], show mercy, be gracious, be merciful</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperative with the 1 st person singular suffix	#2603, 2589 BDB #335

Translation: Grace me, O God; grace me,... There is actually no preposition here, so literally, this is *Grace me* rather than *give grace to me*. It is stronger and more immediate. Why can David ask God to do this? Certainly not based upon David's behavior up until that point in time. He has lied to the priests, he has falsified his behavior

before the king of Gath; and both incidents will result in terrible destruction for innocent people (although there is actually no such thing). David was the person who committed the wrongs here, but others will suffer because of what he has done. So David can't go to God and say, "See how great my faith is. See what a great believer I have become." He can't say that, because he has screwed up royally. So he asks for God's grace and mercy instead. David can do that. **Application:** no matter how you have failed; no matter how faithless you have been, you can always go to God and ask Him for grace. God gives His grace on the basis of what Jesus did for us on the cross—not on the basis of our own pitiful lives and multifarious failures.

McGee comments on [Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me](#): *I don't know about you, but my prayer is the same as David's, "O God be merciful to me." I want God to be merciful to me. I don't want him to be just with me and righteous. If He is, I am going to get a whipping. I want Him to be merciful and gracious to me. He is that kind of a God—rich in mercy. He has enough for me—and I am going to require a lot of it—but there will be enough for you also.*⁸

Psalm 57:1b

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>	conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's# none BDB #88
The targum apparently reads <i>in Your word</i> here. ⁹			
châçâh (חָצַח) [pronounced <i>khaw-SAW</i>]	<i>to take refuge, and hence to trust [in]</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal perfect, pausal form	Strong's #2620 BDB #340
Generally, we would expect this line of the verse to end here; however, we do not have the subject yet.			
nephesh (נֶפֶשׁ) [pronounced <i>NEH-fesh</i>]	<i>soul, life, living being, desire</i>	feminine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #5315 BDB #659

Translation: [...for my soul trusts \[and has taken refuge\] in You;...](#) David does not go back to some great thing that he has done; he asks God to give him grace simply because he has trusted and taken refuge in God. What does it take to earn God's grace? Nothing, except to put your trust in Him; to take refuge in Him. This is non-meritorious. David has not earned or done anything to deserve God's grace or mercy. He has simply trusted in God; believed in Him. This is how we appropriate God's favor.

⁸ J. Vernon McGee, *Psalms Chapters 42–89*, ©1991 by J. Vernon McGee; Thomas Nelson, Inc.; p. 85.

⁹ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 57:1.

Psalm 57:1c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
b ^e (ב) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's# none BDB #88
tsêl (צל) [pronounced <i>tzale</i>]	<i>shadow</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #6738 BDB #853
kânâph (כנף) [pronounced <i>kaw-NAWF</i>]	<i>wings of birds (Gen. 1:21 Ex. 19:4 Deut. 32:11) as well as the extremity of a garment (Deut. 22:12, 30 Ruth 3:9)</i>	feminine plural noun with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3671 BDB #489
châçâh (חָצַח) [pronounced <i>khaw-SAW</i>]	<i>to take refuge, and hence to trust [in]</i>	1 st person singular, Qal perfect; pausal form	Strong's #2620 BDB #340

Translation: ...and I take refuge in the shadow of your [protecting] wings... God does not have wings like a bird. This is an anthropopathism. Baby birds, when it rains, or when they are afraid, crawl underneath the wings of their mother for protection. They don't deserve this protection; they haven't done anything good or bad to deserve this protection. It is instinct. David realizes that with all of his running around and soul full of fear, what he needs to do is to hide under the protection (shadow) of God's wings. God can protect David; the sword of Goliath, which David took from the priests at Nob cannot protect him; an attempt at some sort of alliance with the king of Gath cannot protect him. God can protect David.

This same image is also found in Psalm 17:8 36:7 61:4 63:7 91:4.

Gill makes the suggestion that this refers to the cherubs' wings—the cherubs who stand above the mercy seat. The **Ark of God** represents the person and work of Jesus Christ. We examined this doctrine back in Ex. 40:3. It was made out of acacia wood and covered with gold; the wood represented the humanity of Jesus Christ and the gold represented his deity. Above the ark was the mercy seat, whereupon the High Priest once a year sprinkled blood, behind the veil, so that it could not be observed (just as, the judgment of our Lord could not be observed on the cross). The angels, apparently, could view the judgment of God on His Son, which is represented by the cherubim (or cherubs) who stood over the mercy seat. David taking refuge in the wings of these cherubs means that he took refuge in the cross; he took refuge in God, and was safe in His protection.

Psalm 57:1d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿad (עד) [pronounced <i>gahd</i>]	<i>as far as, even to, up to, until</i>	preposition	Strong's #5704 BDB #723

The Amplified Bible I will cry to God Most High, Who performs on my behalf *and* rewards me — Who brings to pass [His purposes] for me *and* surely completes them!

Updated Emphasized Bible I will cry unto God Most High,
Unto God, who accomplishes on my .

NASB I will cry to God Most High,
To God who accomplishes *all things* for me. .

NKJV I will cry out to God Most High,
To God who performs *all things* for me.

Young's Updated LT I call to God Most High,
To God *who is* perfecting for me.

What is the gist of this verse? David calls out to God, to the God Who completes him.

Psalm 57:2a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
qârâ` (קָרָא) [pronounced kaw-RAW]	<i>to call, to proclaim, to read, to call to, to call out to, to assemble, to summon</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7121 BDB #894
Qârâ` is a homonym; the other qârâ` means <i>to encounter, to befall, to meet, to assemble</i> .			
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l']	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
`êlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced el-o-HEEM]	<i>gods or God; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43
´el`yôwn (עֲלִיּוֹן) [pronounced ´el-`YOHN]	<i>Most High, highest, Supreme</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #5945 BDB #751

Translation: I call out to Elohim the Most High,... David has first asked for God to grace him, and again, here, he calls out to God, Whom he designates as the *Most High*. I want you to recall David's other solutions: his first solution was to go to the city of the priests and to get a sword and food; his second solution was to go to Saul's greatest enemy, the king of Gath, and seek refuge there. Although we have not seen the end results of these bad decisions yet (that will come later in I Sam. 22–23), David's decision here is one of great wisdom. He isn't running anywhere, he isn't soliciting help from any man; he calls out to God.

Psalm 57:2b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l']	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
´el (אֵל) [pronounced ALE]	<i>God, God, mighty one, strong, hero</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #410 BDB #42
gâmar (גָּמַר) [pronounced gaw-MAHR]	<i>to complete, to finish, to end, to come to an end; to leave off, to fail</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #1584 BDB #170

Psalm 57:2b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
How do we explain this group of meanings? When someone has completed or finished a work, then he comes to an end of dealing with that work; he leaves off from working on that work.			
ʿal (לַעַל) [pronounced <i>gahl</i>]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity with the 1 st person singular suffix; pausal form	Strong's #5921 BDB #752

Translation: *...to the God [who] completes me.* As you will notice, I have given a large number of translations above. This is because it is difficult to determine exactly how to render this verb and the preposition which follows it. Not only is the verb difficult to understand (it means *to complete, to finish, to end, to come to an end; to leave off, to fail*), but the preposition which follows (*upon, beyond, on, against, above, over*) does not add much to our understanding.

What we can reasonably derive, at this point, is that David recognizes that God has placed him in this particular position for a reason, and that reason is to complete him, to bring him to a proper end. David may recognize that, for all his military victories, that he is not really complete yet as a person, as a man of God. God has him in this cave, with these 400 men, hiding from Saul, for a reason. This is not just some arbitrary series of events, but a well-ordered and well-orchestrated series of events; and that David can trust in God for the outcome of these events, as they will complete him.

Application: You are going to face trials and difficulties, and that some of them will not go away for a long time. This simply means that God is completing you or finishing the job that He has started with you. We must learn to trust Him and depend upon Him. I recall some teacher activities which we had to participate in at the beginning of school, which involved falling back into the arms of fellow teachers and trusting that they would be there. Well, that was some lame and worthless time spent; however, with regards to God, He must do this so that we can, in this life, depend upon Him and fall back into His arms, which are always there and will always catch us.

We know David's situation by correlating the inscription of this psalm with I Sam. 22:1. We know that he is facing difficult circumstances simply because of v. 1 (although that will be expanded in vv. 3–4, 6). Here, David tells us that God will complete him, and this will be done through David's trust while the circumstances are occurring. How do we know that this pressure is guiding David to spiritually grow and to be spiritually complete? Instead of running off to some man (a priest at Nob or a king at Gath), in v. 2, David calls out to God. Lesson #1: depend upon God in times of trouble.

There are actually quite a number of ways that God completes David, so we will list them below.

How God Completes [His Work] Upon David

1. David has to know who he can depend upon. David must learn to depend upon God and not upon man. This trust will come to pass in this and the previous two psalms that we have studied.
2. God is going to make David king of Israel. God must bring this to completion, as He has promised that to David (I Sam. 13:13–14 16:1–13 23:17).
3. In order to be king over Israel, David needs to know how to properly lead men. He will be given a ragtag band of malcontents to guide and shape into a premium fighting force (I Sam. 22:1–2). Prior to this, David has had experience as a leader, but these were over Saul's troops, who were hand-picked warriors (I Sam. 14:52 18:5, 13).
4. Unlike Saul, David needed to learn complete faithfulness when carrying out the commands of God

God's Word™ He sends his help from heaven and saves me.
He disgraces the one who is harassing me.
God sends his mercy and his truth!
JPS (Tanakh) He will reach down from heaven and deliver me:
God will send down His steadfast love;
my persecutor reviles
Selah.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

The Amplified Bible He will send from Heaven and save me from the slanders *and* reproaches of him who would trample me down *or* swallow me up, *and* put him to shame. Selah [pause, and calmly think of that]! God will send forth His mercy *and* loving-kindness *and* His truth *and* faithfulness.

NASB He will send from heaven and save me;
He reproaches him who tramples upon me. [Selah
God will send forth His lovingkindness and His truth.

NKJV He shall send from heaven and save me;
He reproaches the one who would swallow me up. Selah
God shall send forth His mercy and His truth.

Young's Updated LT He sends from the heavens and saves me,
He reproaches those panting after me Selah.
God sends forth His kindness and His truth.

What is the gist of this verse? God even from heaven has sent the necessary reinforcements to deliver David. The one who is chasing him (Saul) is discredited, defied and embarrassed. More importantly, God sends forth His grace and His truth.

Psalm 57:3a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
shâlach (שָׁלַח) [pronounced shaw-LAKH]	to send, to send for, to send forth, to send away, to dismiss, to deploy, to put forth	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7971 BDB #1018
The targum inserts <i>His angels</i> at this point. ¹⁰			
Barnes: David asserts that God <i>will interpose to save him. The psalmist does not say "how" he expected this interposition - whether by an angel, by a miracle, by tempest or storm, but he felt that help was to come from God alone, and he was sure that it would come.</i> ¹¹			
min (מִן) [pronounced min]	from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, above, beyond, more than	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
shâmayîm (שָׁמַיִם) [pronounced shaw-MAH-yim]	heavens, skies	masculine dual noun	Strong's #8064 BDB #1029

¹⁰ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 57:3.

¹¹ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 57:3.

Psalm 57:3a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
yâsha' (יָשָׁא) [pronounced <i>yaw-SHAHQ</i>]	<i>to deliver, to save</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect, with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3467 BDB #446

Translation: [He deploys from heaven](#) and [He delivers me](#);... Recall that troublesome verb from the previous verse: gâmar (גָּמַר) [pronounced *gaw-MAHR*], which means *to complete, to finish, to end, to come to an end; to leave off, to fail*. Strong's #1584 BDB #170. Here we understand what it means for God to bring these things to an end. David is on the run from Saul. He is holed up in a cave with about 400 men and possibly his family. God completes or brings things to an end, to a termination. That is, David's running from Saul. David is not delivered yet—not in time—but he knows that God has delivered him in eternity past. He knows that God has deployed His forces from heaven and God, from heaven, will save David. At the same time, God places David in situations which cause him to mature. So, God will complete or bring to an end the circumstances which David finds himself in simultaneously with bringing David to completion or fulfillment with regards to a maturation level which befits a king (something sorely lacking in Saul).

Application: God has foreseen all of our problems and difficulties from eternity past and He has already deployed the necessary forces from heaven to solve these problems.

Psalm 57:3b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
châraph (חָרַף) [pronounced <i>khah-RAHF</i>]	<i>to defy, to reproach, to scorn, to reproach, to scornfully defy; to discredit, to shame, to rebuke</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Piel perfect	Strong's #2778 BDB #357 & #358
shâ'aph (שָׂאֵף) [pronounced <i>shaw-AHF</i>]	<i>to gasp, to pant, to breathe heavily; to crush, to trample down</i>	masculine singular, Qal active participle with a 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #7602 BDB #983
çelâh (חֲלֵא) [pronounced <i>seh-LAW</i>]	<i>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></i>	interjection	Strong's #5542 BDB #699

Clarke, along with several translators, believes that *Selah* is misplaced here and belongs at the end of the verse.¹²

¹² Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 57:3.

Psalm 57:3b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
<p>The verbal cognate is ʿâlâh (אֲלָח) [pronounced saw-LAW], which means <i>to lift up and toss aside</i>. In the Piel stem, it means <i>to weigh</i>, which involves lifting up the object and placing it upon the balance. Gesenius gives the meaning of ʿelâh as <i>rest, silence, pause</i>, as ʿelâh 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.¹³ Another very reasonable possibility is that the instruments <i>are lifted up</i> for a musical interlude. The NLT translation of <i>Interlude</i> is very good.</p>			

Translation: He has scorned [defied and discredited] the one chasing me [lit., panting after me]. **Pause** David does not name Saul specifically here, but he does use the masculine singular, Qal active participle. This means that he is referring to one person specifically. The person who is panting after him is Saul. It is as though David can feel Saul's breath on the back of his neck as he runs from him. God has already scorned, defied and discredited Saul. David has had 400 men come to him. Now, many of these are malcontents who would be unhappy with anyone in power. However, there are also those in this group who have been treated unjustly by the Saulian regime. Their coming to David has encouraged David; David knows that Saul does not have complete popular support. These men were willing to leave their lives and possibly their families in order to give David their support. This encourages David.

These previous two lines describe what God has done *to bring to completion* this problem of David's.

Application: There are people who will come into your life who will be implacable towards you. It won't matter what you do or what you say. You will not be able to please them and they will declare war on you in one way or another. They may be very subtle and they may be quite overt about it. Be aware, at least if you did not bring this on yourself, that God has discredited, scorned and defied these sorts of people. That they will come into your life is inevitable. That God can take care of them is assured.

Psalm 57:3c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
shâlach (שָׁלַח) [pronounced shaw-LAKH]	<i>to send, to send for, to send forth, to send away, to dismiss, to deploy, to put forth</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7971 BDB #1018
ʿêlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced el-o-HEEM]	<i>gods or God; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43
cheçed (חֶסֶד) [pronounced KHEH-sed]	<i>grace, benevolence, mercy, kindness</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #2617 BDB #338
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251

¹³ For more discussion, see H.W.F. Gesenius, *Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament*; ©1979 by Baker Books; p. 588.

Psalm 57:3c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
<p>ʾēmeth (אֱמֶת)</p> <p>[pronounced EH-meth]</p>	<p><i>firmness, faithfulness, truth, certainty, stability, perpetuity, fidelity, reliable, stable, dependable</i></p>	<p>feminine singular noun with the 3rd person masculine singular suffix</p>	<p>Strong's #571 BDB #54</p>

Translation: [God sends His grace and His faithfulness](#) [or, *truth, stability*]. What God sends to us is His grace and His truth, the things which we need most. This is what He gives us to stabilize us. Grace, of course, is all that God is free to do for us on the basis of the cross; wholly apart from our own merit. God is both faithful in His dealings with David and God provides David with accurate information.

The pairing of grace and faithfulness (or, *mercy and truth*) is found throughout the psalms: Psalm 25:10 26:3 40:10–11 57:3, 10 61:7 69:13 85:10 89:13 108:4 138:2. [Do not withhold your compassion from me, O LORD. May your mercy and your truth always protect me](#) (Psalm 40:11). [Righteousness and justice are the foundations of your throne. Mercy and truth stand in front of you](#) (Psalm 89:14).

David has come to realize that there is no man that he can turn to for help. In fact, men have turned to him for help. So first, David prays to God for His grace (v. 1a); then he recognizes that he can hide in God (v. 1b), and that he can call to God, and God will answer him (vv. 2–3).

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David's Life Is in Danger/he Calls for God to Be Honored

**My soul in a midst of lions I lay down;
flaming ones [are] sons of Adam,
their teeth [are] a spear and arrows,
and their tongue [is] a sword—sharp.**

Psalm
57:4

**I lay my soul down in the midst of lions;
sons of Adam [who are] blazing,
their teeth [are] spears and arrows
and their tongues [are] sharp swords.**

**I lay down my soul in the midst of lions (who are fiery sons of men)
whose teeth are spears and arrows
and whose tongues are sharp swords.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Early translations:

The Septuagint

And He has delivered my soul from the midst of *lions'* whelps. I lay down to sleep, troubled. *As for* the sons of men, their teeth are arms and *missile* weapons, and their tongue a sharp sword.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV

I live among lions, who gobble down people!
They have spears and arrows instead of teeth,
and they have sharp swords instead of tongues.

NLT

I am surrounded by fierce lions
who greedily devour human prey—

whose teeth pierce like spears and arrows,
and whose tongues cut like swords.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

JPS (Tanakh) As for me, I lie down among man-eating lions
whose teeth are spears and arrows,
whose tongue is a sharp sword.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB My soul is among lions;
I must lie among those who breathe forth fire,
Even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows,
And their tongue a sharp sword.

NRSV I lie down among lions
that greedily devour [correction; Hebrew reads *are aflame for*] human prey;
their teeth are spears and arrows,
their tongues sharp swords.

Young's Updated LT My soul *is* in the midst of lions,
I lie down *among* flames—sons of me,
Their teeth *are* a spear and arrows,
And their tongue a sharp sword.

What is the gist of this verse? David is in the midst of men with spears and arrows who want to kill him (this simply refers to Saul's army).

Psalm 57:4a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
nepesh (נֶפֶשׁ) [pronounced <i>NEH-fesh</i>]	<i>soul, life, living being, desire</i>	feminine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #5315 BDB #659
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's# none BDB #88
tâvek ^e (תָּוֶק) [pronounced <i>taw-VEK^e</i>]	<i>midst, among, middle</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #8432 BDB #1063
lâbîy' (לְבַיִם) [pronounced <i>lâw²-VEE</i>].	<i>lion</i>	masculine plural noun:	Strong's #3833 BDB #522
shâka ^{bv} (שָׁכַבְתִּי) [pronounced <i>shaw-KAH^{BV}</i>]	<i>to lie down, to lie down [to sleep, to have sexual relations, to die; because of sickness or humiliation]; to relax</i>	1 st person singular, Qal imperfect; with the voluntative hê	Strong's #7901 BDB #1011

This can be used with an accusative (which would be *my soul* in this case).

Translation: *I lay my soul down in the midst of lions;...* David is in a cave and Saul's men have been searching all over the land for him. In fact, there will be several instances where they are quite close. When David goes to sleep, it is like placing himself into a den of lions. All around him are Saul's men searching for him, desiring to kill him.

Please understand that none of this is literal. David is not in the midst of lions. Given that these lions are men of Saul, he does not physically lie down in Saul's palace with Saul's men around him. The picture is *as if* he has laid down his soul—in other words, made himself vulnerable—before Saul's soldiers. How do we know that we should not take this psalm literally? David will, in the next line, identify these lions as being *sons of Adam*. He speaks of laying down his soul, but one's soul is ethereal; it is not a physical object—you cannot lay it down. There is nothing in David's life to ever suggest that he slept in a den of lions. There is nothing wrong with being a literalist; however, you do need to be able to recognize when a passage is not literal.

Psalm 57:4b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lâhaṭ (לֹהֵט) [pronounced law-HAHT]	<i>to set ablaze, to set on fire, to burn</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #3857 BDB #529
bên (בֵּן) [pronounced bane]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
ʿâdâm (אָדָם) [pronounced aw-DAWM]	<i>a man, a human being, mankind, Adam</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #120 BDB #9

Translation: *...sons of Adam [who are] blazing,...* David is not actually in a lion's den, but among men whose very essence is burning with a desire to kill him. It is as though their souls are on fire in their desire to kill David.

Psalm 57:4c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
shên (שֵׁן) [pronounced shayn]	<i>tooth, a sharp rock</i>	feminine dual noun with the 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #8127 BDB #1042
chănîyth (חַנִּיֶּת) [pronounced khuh-NEETH]	<i>spear</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #2595 BDB #333
wê (or vê) (וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
chêts (חֵט) [pronounced khayts]	<i>arrow; a wound [inflicted by an arrow]; a spear shaft</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #2671 BDB #346

Translation: *...their teeth [are] spears and arrows...* Again, David makes it clear that this passage is not to be taken literally. The analogy set up is the swords and arrows of David's enemies are like the teeth of the lions. David is not in a lion's den, but among men; he does not fear the sharp teeth of the lions, which are the spears and arrows of these men.

JPS (Tanakh) Exalt Yourself over the heavens, O God,
let Your glory be over all the earth!

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB Be exalted above the heavens, O God;
Let Thy glory be above all the earth.

Young's Updated LT Be exalted above the heavens, O God,
Above all the earth Your honor.

What is the gist of this verse? David honors God in the heavens; His integrity over all the earth.

This verse is the chorus, and it will be repeated in v. 11. This is the first clue which helps us to divide this psalm up as David had intended.

Psalm 57:5a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
rûwm (רום) [pronounced room]	<i>to lift up, to rise, to arise, to raise up, to grow; to be exalted, to become high, to become powerful; to be high an lofty; to be remote, to be in the far distance</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperative with the voluntative hê	Strong's #7311 BDB #926
ʿal (על) [pronounced gahl]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
shâmayîm (שָׁמַיִם) [pronounced shaw-MAH-yim]	<i>heavens, skies</i>	masculine dual noun with the definite article	Strong's #8064 BDB #1029
ʿĕlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced el-o-HEEM]	<i>gods or God; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43

Translation: *Be exalted, O God, above the heavens;...* David continually shifts his focus in this psalm, from himself and his problems, back to God and His solutions. Here, he calls for God to be exalted above the heavens. That is, one is to view God as greater than all the universe.

Psalm 57:5b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿal (על) [pronounced gahl]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced koh]	<i>the whole, all of, the entirety of, all; can also be rendered any of</i>	masculine singular construct followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
ʿerets (אֶרֶץ) [pronounced EH-rets]	<i>earth (all or a portion thereof), land</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #776 BDB #75

Psalm 57:5b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kâbôwd (כְּבוֹד) [pronounced kaw ^b - VODE]	<i>glory, abundance, honor</i>	masculine singular adjective that acts like a noun; with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3519 BDB #458

Translation: ...and [let] Your glory [*abundance and honor*] [be exalted] over all the earth. God's glory, abundance and honor is to be exalted over all the earth as well.

Although I am not entirely sure about the time of creation, since the fall, God's glory and honor have not been exalted over the earth. In fact, we live in a world which is very antagonistic to God, and the very essence of the governments of many countries is strongly against God. For instance, insurance companies make it almost a requirement for you to sue someone in order to collect the amount of money that they purport to insure your (or the other party) for. Court cases involving homosexuals and laws about hate speech have actually resulted in pastor's being sued (in other countries) for teaching what the Bible teaches about homosexuality. There is no honor or glory in this. God is not being exalted.

We have terrorist organizations whose very manifest is to kill as many United States citizens as possible. There is little in this world which speaks of the glory of God. We live in a cold, vicious and lustful world. David calls for a time when this is no longer the case.

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David's Enemies Entrap Themselves

**A net they have erected to my steps;
he bows down my soul.
They dug to my faces a pit;
they have fallen in her midst.
Selah!**

Psalm
57:6

**They have set up a net for my steps;
He has humbled [lit., bowed down] my soul.
They have dug a pit before me
[but] they have fallen into it.
Pause!**

**They have set up a net to capture me,
and God has humbled my soul.
They have dug a pit before me,
but they have fallen into it.
Musical Interlude**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Early translations:

The Septuagint

They have prepared snares for my feet and have bowed down my soul. They have dug a pit before my face and fallen into it [themselves]. Pause.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV

Enemies set traps for my feet and struck me down.

They dug a pit in my path, but fell in it themselves.

NLT My enemies have set a trap for me.
I am weary from distress.
They have dug a deep pit in my path,
but they themselves have fallen into it.

Interlude

REB Some have prepared a net to catch me as I walk,
but they themselves [probably reading; Hebrew reads / myself] were brought low;
they have dug a pit in my path
but have themselves fallen into it.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™ [My enemies] spread out a net to catch me.
(My soul is bowed down.)
They dug a pit to trap me,
but then they fell into it.

JPS (Tanakh) They prepared a net for my feet to ensnare me;
they dug a pit for me,
but they fell into it.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB They have prepared a net for my steps;
My soul is bowed down;
They dug a pit before me;
They *themselves* have fallen into the midst of it. [Selah.]

Young's Updated LT A net they have prepared for my steps,
Bowed down has my soul,
They have dug before me a pit,
They have fallen into its midst. Selah.

What is the gist of this verse? Although David's enemies have set traps for him, and although God has humbled his soul, his enemies have fallen into their own traps.

Psalm 57:6a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
resheth (רֶשֶׁת) [pronounced REH'-sheth]	net, trap; a brazen net [or criss-cross design]	feminine singular noun	Strong's #7568 BDB #440
kûwn (כּוּן) [pronounced koon]	to erect (to stand up perpendicular), to set up, to establish, to prepare, to strengthen, to be stabilized	3 rd person plural, Hiphil perfect	Strong's #3559 BDB #465
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l']	to, for, towards, in regards to	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510

Psalm 57:6a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
pa'am (פֶּאֱמָ) [pronounced PAH-áhahm]	beat, foot, anvil, occurrence, time, steps; the connotation is the passage of time	feminine plural noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #6471 BDB #821

Translation: *They have set up a net for my steps;...* This is a reference to David's enemies. His enemies have set a net in order to ensnare him. It is though they are just around the next corner with a net laid out for him. Again, like the language of v. 4, this is not literal. Saul's soldiers do not have nets set up all around this cave so that when David steps out, he will step into a net and be captured. Don't be silly. However, David's enemies were looking to capture or kill him. They were trying to determine where he was and where he was going, so that they could lay a trap for him and carry out Saul's commands.

Psalm 57:6b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kâphaph (כָּפַף) [pronounced kaw-FAHF]	to bend, to bend down, to be bent or bowed; to hollow, to dig out, to bore out	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #3721 BDB #496
The Septuagint, Vulgate and Luther all have this as a plural, which would mean it would refer to Saul and his army. See the explanation below.			
nephesh (נֶפֶשׁ) [pronounced NEH-fesh]	soul, life, living being, desire	feminine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #5315 BDB #659

Translation: *...He has humbled [lit., bowed down] my soul.* Suddenly, we have a 3rd person masculine singular verb, which does not refer to the masculine plural found in the previous verse. One could interpret this as God has humbled David's soul or that Saul has humbled his soul. Since David is fully aware that Saul cannot do anything unless God allows it, then David, guided by the Holy Spirit, would say that God has humbled or bowed down his soul. God has placed him in the place where he is, and David acknowledges that.

Again, recall that David has lived in the palace for many years, since he was brought there as a personal musician for Saul. He has commanded several large groups of soldiers. He married the king's daughter. So one can assume that David had a position of power and that he enjoyed relatively luxurious surroundings. Now he is in a cave, Saul is pursuing him, he is without his wife and luxurious surroundings. God has humbled him.

Application: Never take your surroundings for granted. There is no guarantee that the money that you have today will not be gone tomorrow. There is no guarantee that the life that you enjoy today will not be gone tomorrow. This does not mean that David took his life for granted, nor does it mean that he deserves any of this. However, God had to humble him so that he could grow and become Israel's truly great king.

Psalm 57:6c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kârâh (כָּרָה) [pronounced kaw-RAW]	<i>to dig</i> [a homonym]	3 rd person plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #3738 BDB #500
lâmed (ל) (pronounced l) ^e	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
pânîym (פָּנִים) [pronounced paw-NEEM]	<i>face, faces; presence</i>	masculine plural construct (plural acts like English singular)	Strong's #6440 BDB #815
Together, they mean <i>upon the face of, before, before the face of, in the presence of, in the sight of, in front of</i> . When used with God, it can take on the more figurative meaning <i>in the judgment of</i> .			
shîychâh (שִׁיחָה) [pronounced shee-KHAW]	<i>pit</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #7882 BDB #1001

Translation: [They have dug a pit before me...](#) Just as they have set a net before David's feet, David's enemies have also dug a pit right in front of him for him to fall into. They are looking to trap and capture David. Again, this is not to be taken literally. The idea is, Saul's soldiers are looking for David, and are trying to anticipate him, so that they can trap him.

Psalm 57:6d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
nâphal (נָפַל) [pronounced naw-FAHL]	<i>to fall, to lie, to die a violent death, to be brought down, to settle, to sleep deeply</i>	3 rd person plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #5307 BDB #656
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's# none BDB #88
tâvek ^e (תָּוֶק) [pronounced tau-VEK ^e]	<i>midst, among, middle</i>	masculine singular construct with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #8432 BDB #1063
çelâh (חֲלֵה) [pronounced seh-LAW]	<i>to lift up, to elevate, to exalt [with one's voice], to gather, to cast up [into a heap]; it is transliterated Selah</i>	interjection	Strong's #5542 BDB #699

Psalm 57:6d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
<p>The verbal cognate is ʿâlâh (אֲלָח) [pronounced <i>saw-LAW</i>], which means <i>to lift up and toss aside</i>. In the Piel stem, it means <i>to weigh</i>, which involves lifting up the object and placing it upon the balance. Gesenius gives the meaning of ʿelâh as <i>rest, silence, pause</i>, as ʿelâh 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.¹⁴ Another very reasonable possibility is that the instruments <i>are lifted up</i> for a musical interlude. The NLT translation of <i>Interlude</i> is very good.</p>			

Translation: ...[but] they have fallen into it. **Selah!** The trap which David's enemies have set for him have trapped them. You may wonder how this could be. I have mentioned before that I had problems at one job and three people on that job literally laid out traps for me. Although I don't keep up with any of them, I do know that one of the three lost his job very likely for the same concerns which he allegedly had with me. I have no idea what has happened to the other two, but I am not concerned; I don't need to follow them around. I can rest assured that God has dealt with them or is dealing with them.

Parallel passages: [He digs a pit and shovels it out. Then he falls into the hole that he made for others](#) (Psalm 7:15). [The nations have sunk into the pit they have made. Their feet are caught in the net they have hidden to trap others. The LORD is known by the judgment he has carried out. The wicked person is trapped by the work of his own hands](#) (Psalm 9:15–16).

Some exegetes like to place this psalm during the time that David cut the end of the robe of Saul (I Sam. 24). Now we haven't covered that passage yet, but (1) David did not take advantage of Saul and capture him or kill him in that passage; (2) and here we have the 3rd person masculine plural, not singular. For those two reasons alone, there is not reason to associate this psalm with I Sam. 24.

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David Celebrates God's Character/He Calls for God to Be Honored

Psalm 108:1–5

These final verses of this psalm are quite interesting, as David repeats them again in Psalm 108:1–5. At this juncture, David is looking forward. He trusts God now, even though his life is in danger. David celebrates God's grace and truth, even though he finds himself in a precarious place. When we get to Psalm 108, David appears to be in power, and he takes these lines of faith and places them at the beginning of this psalm, telling us, "What'd I say?" He had trusted God, and God brought him to a place of power, just as He had promised David.

**Is established my heart, O God,
is established my heart.
I must sing and I must make music.**

Psalm
57:7

**My heart is established [and prepared], O
God,
my heart is established [and prepared].
I must sing and I must make music.**

¹⁴ For more discussion, see H.W.F. Gesenius, *Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament*; ©1979 by Baker Books; p. 588.

**My heart is confident and sure, O God,
my heart is confident and certain.
I am compelled to sing and to make music [in celebration of Your character].**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Early translations:

The Septuagint My heart, O God, [is] ready, my heart [is] ready. I will sing, yes, I will sing psalms.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV I am faithful to you, and you can trust me.
 I will sing and play music for you, my God.

NJB My heart is ready, God,
 my heart is ready;
 I will sing, and make music for you.

NLT My heart is confident in you, O God;
 no wonder I can sing your praises!

TEV I have complete confidence, O God;
 I will sing and praise you!

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word[™] My heart is confident, O God.
 My heart is confident.
 I want to sing and make music.

JPS (Tanakh) My heart is firm, O God;
 my heart is firm;
 I will sing, I will chant a hymn.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

The Amplified Bible My heart is fixed, O God; my heart is steadfast *and* confident! I will sing and make melody.

The Emphasized Bible Fixed is my heart, O God,
 Fixed is my heart,
 I will sing and touch the strings.

NASB My heart is steadfast, O God,
 my heart is steadfast;
 I will sing, yes, I will sing praises.

Young's Updated LT Prepared is my heart, O God,
 Prepared is my heart, I sing and praise.

What is the gist of this verse? David's inner man is becoming mature, and in response, he is inspired to sing and praise God.

Psalm 57:7a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kûwn (כּוּן) [pronounced koon]	<i>to be firmly established, to be set up, to be established, to be prepared, to be ready; to confirm, to set up, to maintain, to found [a city]</i>	Niphal participle	Strong's #3559 BDB #465
lêb (לֵב) [pronounced lay ^b ṽ]	<i>heart, inner man, mind, will, thinking</i>	masculine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #3820 BDB #524
ʿĕlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced el-o-HEEM]	<i>gods or God; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43
kûwn (כּוּן) [pronounced koon]	<i>to be firmly established, to be set up, to be established, to be prepared, to be ready; to confirm, to set up, to maintain, to found [a city]</i>	Niphal participle	Strong's #3559 BDB #465
lêb (לֵב) [pronounced lay ^b ṽ]	<i>heart, inner man, mind, will, thinking</i>	masculine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #3820 BDB #524

Translation: *My heart is established [and prepared], O God, my heart is established [and prepared].* David fully realizes that there are those out there who want to get him. Saul's men want to capture him and Saul wants to kill him. However, David also knows his destiny and he believes God and believes that he will be made king over Israel. Therefore, his heart is established, prepared, confident and clear. He knows that he has a destiny and that Saul cannot foil his destiny. This means that David is experiencing some spiritual growth.

The comments of Albert Barnes: *David's heart is firm, steady, constant, fixed. This seems to be the meaning here, as it is expressed in our common version. His heart was firm and decided. He did not waver in his purpose, or lean now to one side and then to the other; he was not "swayed" or "moved" by the events that had occurred. He felt conscious of standing firm in the midst of all his troubles. He confided in God. He did not doubt his justice, his goodness, his mercy; and, even in his trials, he was ready to praise him, and was "resolved" to praise him. The repetition of the word "fixed" gives emphasis and intensity to the expression, and is designed to show in the strongest manner that his heart, his purpose, his confidence in God, did not waver in the slightest degree.*¹⁵

Psalm 57:7b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
shîyr (שִׁיר) [pronounced sheer]	<i>to sing</i>	1 st person singular, Qal imperfect with the voluntative hê	Strong's #7891 BDB #1010

¹⁵ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 57:7.

Psalm 57:7b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
<p>Since there are 2 voluntative hê's found in this verse, I though I should mention it. I find that it is mentioned by Owen, but I can't find it in any of my Hebrew grammar books, nor in ZPDB or any other Hebrew source whatsoever. In some places, some translations do differentiate, and in others, e.g., with this verse, they do not. Apparently, this almost functions like a helping verb, and could be rendered <i>I will, I can, I must, I should, I could, I would.</i></p>			
<p>w^ê (or v^ê) (ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]</p>	<p><i>and</i></p>	<p>simple wâw conjunction</p>	<p>No Strong's # BDB #251</p>
<p>zâmar (זָמַר) [pronounced <i>zaw-MAHR</i>]</p>	<p><i>to sing; to make music in praise of God, to make melody; properly to cut off (i.e., to divide up [a song] into its various parts)</i></p>	<p>1st person singular, Piel imperfect with the voluntative hê</p>	<p>Strong's #2167 & #2168 BDB #274</p>

Translation: *I must sing and I must make music.* David, knowing that God has taken care of all the details of his life and will deliver him out of these problems, is not just confident, but joyful. He has to sing and make music. He has to celebrate. His soul is moved to celebrate his life and God's protection thereof. One of the great by-products of spiritual growth is a feeling of freedom; we find ourselves in this world in the midst of problems and troubles, most of which we can do little or nothing about. Yet we still worry. David can't stop Saul. David can't say anything to convince Saul to stop persecuting him. So, should he worry about it? Absolutely not. God has everything under control.

Awake my glory, awake, the harp and lyre!
I will [cause to] awaken dawn.

Psalm
57:8

Wake up, my glory, wake up, harp and lyre!
I will cause to awaken the dawn!

Wake up, my glory and wake up, O harp and lyre!
I will awaken the dawn!

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Early translations:

The Septuagint *Awake, my glory; awake psaltery and harp. I will awaken early.*

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV *I feel wide awake! I will wake up my harp and wake up the sun.*

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™ *Wake up, my soul!*
Wake up harp and lyre!

JPS (Tanakh) *I want to wake up at dawn.*
Awake, O my soul!
Awake, O harp and lyre!
I will wake the dawn.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

- The Amplified Bible* Awake, my glory [my inner self]; awake, harp and lyre! I will awake right early [I will awake the dawn]!
- NASB* Awake, my glory;
Awake, harp and lyre,
I will awaken the dawn!
- Young's Updated LT* Awake, my honor, awake, psaltery and harp.
I awake the morning dawn.

What is the gist of this verse? David continues praising God, unable to control his praise.

Psalm 57:8a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿûwr (עוּר) [pronounced <i>góor</i>]	<i>rouse onself, awaken, wake up; be raised up [stirred up or lifted up]; be induced, be persuaded</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperative with a voluntative hê	Strong's #5782 BDB #734
kâbôwd (כְּבוֹד) [pronounced <i>kaw^b-VODE</i>]	<i>glory, abundance, honor</i>	masculine singular adjective that acts like a noun; with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #3519 BDB #458

Clarke: Instead of כבודי *kebodi*, “my glory,” one Hebrew manuscript, as well as the Syriac, have כנורי *kinnori*, “my harp.” Dr. Kennicott reads כבורי *kebori*, which he supposes to be some instrument of music; and adds that the instrument used in church-music by the Ethiopians is now called כִּבֵּר *kaber*. I think the Syriac likely to be the true reading: “*Awake up, my harp; awake, psaltery and harp: I will awake early.*”¹⁶ Clarke also points out that it is normal for there to be repetition in the psalms (in fact, see vv. 5 and 11 or v. 7). Recall that these last few verses are almost equivalent to Psalm 108:15; although the sentence is not exactly the same, the word found is *honor* in Psalm 108:1.

Bear in mind that, although this is a reasonable suggestion, it is often the fact that a verse is difficult to understand that it is changed so that it can be understood. In other words, it would be more likely that someone would change the manuscript from *glory* to *my harp*. The other option is the one word could be easily confounded with the other (as is shown above).

Translation: *Wake up, my glory...* It appears as though David is asking for the glory and honor within him to be awakened here. My thinking is that, this is the reflected glory of being a child of God. David is growing as a believer, and growing under God’s divine guidance and shaping.

Of course, it is possible that this reads *Wake up, my harp*; however, then the interpretation becomes somewhat less difficult; but also less interesting. See the Hebrew exegesis to see why *honor* is the preferred reading, although it is not impossible for this to read differently.

¹⁶ Slightly changed from Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 57:8.

Psalm 57:8b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿûwr (עוּר) [pronounced <i>góor</i>]	<i>rouse onself, awaken, wake up; be raised up [stirred up or lifted up]; be induced, be persuaded</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperative with a voluntative hê	Strong's #5782 BDB #734
nêbel (נֶבֶל) [pronounced <i>NĀY^b-ve]</i>	<i>a portable harp, lute, guitar</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #5035 BDB #614
w ^é (or v ^é) (וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
kînnôwr (כִּנּוֹר) [pronounced <i>kin-NOHR</i>]	<i>hand-harp, lyre</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #3658 BDB #490

Translation: ...wake up, harp and lyre! These are the instruments which were used to play this music. David celebrates God's *hands-on* approach with the raising up of musical instruments. David recognizes that these difficulties that he finds himself in are not random; they just didn't happen to him out of bad luck. It is God shaping his character. It is God getting him ready to rule over Israel. A child may at times feel stifled by his parents or feel as though his parents are too involved in his life; however, even as a child, he realizes that they do this out of love guidance and not out of some need to control him. So David recognizes why these things are happening to him; he recognizes that God is taking a very *hands-on* approach, and for that reason, he is celebrating.

Although that is the proper understanding of this verse, there is a Hebrew fable, not believed by many Christians, that David had a harp next to bed, and that when the wind (perhaps even the morning wind) blew through the trees, that it made music, to some degree, on his harp. Whether this is true or not, it does make for a nice picture. Clarke suggests that this was the recently discovered Aeolian harp.¹⁷

Psalm 57:8c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿûwr (עוּר) [pronounced <i>góor</i>]	<i>to cause one to be awakened; to cause one to be stirred up; to cause one to be roused from sleep</i>	1 st person singular, Hiphil imperfect with the voluntative hê	Strong's #5782 BDB #734
shachar (שַׁחַר) [pronounced <i>SHAH-khahr</i>]	<i>dawn, morning; felicity [a dawning after misery]</i>	masculine singular noun, pausal form	Strong's #7837 BDB #1007

Translation: I will cause to awaken the dawn! David is so enthusiastic, that his singing and celebration are loud and excited. Again, David cannot help but celebrate. Recall that not too long ago, he was afraid for his life and he even lied to the High Priest out of fear. However, now David is not only calm and collected, he is exuberant.

Two of our parallel verses: Psalm 16:9: [That is why my heart is glad and my soul rejoices. My body rests securely.](#) Psalm 30:11–12: [You have changed my sobbing into dancing. You have removed my sackcloth and clothed me](#)

¹⁷ Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 57:8.

with joy so that my soul may praise you with music and not be silent. O LORD my God, I will give thanks to you forever.

I give thanks to You in the peoples, my
Adonai's,
I sing to You in the Gentile peoples,...

Psalm
57:9

I celebrate You, my Adonai, among the peoples
[and] I praise You [with music] among the
Gentile peoples,...

I celebrate You, my Lord, among all the peoples
and I will praise You with music among all the Gentile peoples,...

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Early translations:

The Septuagint O Lord, I will give thanks to You among the nations; I will sing to You among the Gentiles.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV I will praise you, Lord, for everyone to hear,
and I will sing hymns to you in every nation.
NLT I will thank you, Lord, in front of all the people.
I will sing your praises among the nations.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

JPS (Tanakh) I will praise You among the peoples, O LORD;
I will sing a hymn to You among the nations.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Updated Emphasized Bible I will thank You among the peoples, O My Lord,
I will praise You in song among the races of men.
NASB I will give thanks to Thee, O Lord, among the peoples;
I will sing praises to Thee among the nations.
Young's Updated LT I than You among the peoples, O Lord,
I praise You among the nations.

What is the gist of this verse? David, because of his exuberance, will praise God not only among the Jews, but among all races of men.

Psalm 57:9a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
yâdâh (יָדָה) [pronounced yaw-AWH]	to profess, to confess; to show or point out [with the hand extended]; to give thanks, to praise, to celebrate	1 st person singular, Hiphil imperfect with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3034 BDB #392

Psalm 57:9a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's# none BDB #88
ʿam (אֶמ) [pronounced ʿahm]	<i>peoples, nations; tribes [of Israel]; relatives of anyone</i>	masculine plural collective noun with the definite article	Strong's #5971 BDB #766
ʿādôwn (אֲדוֹנַי) [pronounced aw-DOHN]	<i>lord, master, owner, superior, sovereign</i>	masculine plural noun with the 1 st person plural suffix	Strong's #113 BDB #10

Translation: I celebrate You, my Adonai, among the peoples... David is wrapping up his song in celebration; he is celebrating God among the peoples. This phrase can be taken to mean *among the tribes of Israel*, so there is no problem with anyone understanding it in this way.

You now need to brace yourselves for what's coming. Even though we appear to have a lot of agreement above with regards to this second phrase, it just isn't that easy. We only have 3 words here, with prepositions, adverbs and/or definite articles.

Psalm 57:9b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
zâmar (זָמַרְתִּי) [pronounced zaw-MAHR]	<i>to sing; to make music in praise of God, to make melody; properly to cut off (i.e., to divide up [a song] into its various parts)</i>	1 st person singular, Piel imperfect with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #2167 & #2168 BDB #274
bal (בִּלְ) [pronounced bah]	<i>nothing, not, not yet, scarcely; lest [when followed by a future]</i>	adverb	Strong's #1077 BDB #115
ʿummâh (אֲמִי) [pronounced um-MAW]	<i>tribe, people</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #523 BDB #52

We have several problems with the text here. First, it makes very little sense; second, ʿummâh is not generally found as a masculine plural and the New Englishman's Hebrew Concordance of the Old Testament doesn't even list it with this meaning or this passage. Gesenius mentions the word, but only in association with Gen. 25:16 Num. 25:15 Psalm 117:1 (and there is a parallel Chaldean word found in Daniel and Ezra). The text as we find it: bal ʿummîym (בִּלְ אֲמִי) [pronounced bahl-um-MEEM], which means *not [the] peoples*. An alternate reading is: ba l^e ʿummîym (בְּ אֲמִי) [pronounced bahl-um-MEEM], which means *in for tribes*.

Alternate reading below:

b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's# none BDB #88
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Psalm 57:9b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lâmed (ל) (pronounced ^l)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
These are the two most common prepositions in the Hebrew, and one would think that they would have a combined meaning. However, I can't find one. Furthermore, they do not seem to fit together. For this reason, this particular rendering would be suspect as well.			
ʿummâh (הַמָּח) [pronounced <i>um-MAW</i>]	<i>tribe, people</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #523 BDB #52
There is a third way that this could be read, which would not square with the MT, but only with respect to the vowel points: bi ʾôwm (לְאוֹמִים) [pronounced <i>bih- ʾohm</i>], which means <i>in [or within, among] the peoples [vulgar or common peoples; Gentiles; Gentile peoples]</i> .			
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's# none BDB #88
ʾôwm (לְאוֹמִים) [pronounced <i>ʾohm</i>]	<i>peoples; vulgar or common peoples; Gentiles; Gentile peoples</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #3816 BDB #522

This latter rendering is in agreement with e-sword's KJV+Hebrew word Bible, with the New Englishman's Hebrew Concordance of the Old Testament and with Zodhiates.

So, how and why is this all screwed up? It may sound the same to you, but it isn't. In the first case, we have the problem of it making very little sense as it stands. In the second rendering, we have the problem of two prepositions being thrown together which are generally not found together. However, the 3rd case appears to be correct. This would cause us to ask, *who would change something which is reasonable and probably correct into something which is not?* The word ʾôwm (לְאוֹמִים) [pronounced *ʾohm*] is principally a word which is applied to Gentiles. That's the problem. Some Jews would have a lot of problem with the idea that David is going to sing God's praises among the Gentiles. He's going to make music among the Gentiles. For many Jews, this just doesn't seem right. The Jews are God's chosen people; the Messiah is to come through David's line. Just what the hell does David think he's doing, singing the praises of Jehovah to Gentiles?

Let me see if I can modernize this somewhat. Let's say in the Koran or in some document valued by today's Arabs that we have the phrase, *Bless the Jews with all your soul and all your heart*. Now, that just wouldn't sit too well with those who have been historically the enemies of the Jews. These are people who are often brought up from a very early age to hate Jews—with a greater passion than there was hatred for Afro-Americans here in the states. So, it would be reasonable for someone to come along and change such a line to *Destroy the Jews, using all your soul and all your heart*. We have a similar situation here. David's singing Jehovah's praises to the Gentiles was an unsavory proposition. This got changed enough to make it by the "censors," so to speak, without destroying the original text.

Translation: ...[and] I praise You [with music] among the Gentile peoples. What we have here is not what the Jew wants to hear. David says that he will praise God with music among the Gentiles. This is an unusual thing for a man in the line of Messiah to sing. I've gone over this in great detail in the exegesis, showing how the other two interpretations really have too many problems. Now, from our perspective, 3000 years later, this makes perfect sense. But to a Jew, even as late at the 400's or 500's, this is a bitter pill to swallow. But David is writing this under the power of God the Holy Spirit, Who knows the beginning from the end. God knows that this is correct. He knows

that this psalm will be sung and celebrated among the Gentiles; that God's character, essence and being would be celebrated among the Gentiles. Therefore, this makes sense to us, many years after the fact. It also makes sense to us that those who did not share these sentiments would alter the text every so slightly in order to preserve the exclusivity of the Jews. Of course, most modern exegetes are in agreement with this translation as well as the general interpretation (Barnes, Clarke, Gill, etc.).

Paul quotes from a similar passage in Rom. 15:9: **People who are not Jewish praise God for his mercy as well. This is what the Scriptures say, That is why I will give thanks to you among the nations and I will sing praises to your name** (II Sam. 22:50). The fact that David expresses similar sentiments adds credence to the translation which I have presented. David also writes in Psalm 18:49: **That is why I will give thanks to you, O LORD, among the nations [or, Gentiles] and make music to praise your name.**

There is a viewpoint, Covenant Theology, which presents the church today as spiritualized Israel. The only sense in which there is some truth to that stance is that Israel was once responsible for the preservation and dissemination of God's truth, and now that is the responsibility of the Church. Also, the Jews who were responsible were regenerate Jews, just as these responsibilities are today in the hands of believers (who may or may not be members of a local church). However, Scripture always distinguishes between Israel and the Gentiles. At no time are we led to believe that one somehow morphs into the other. God has different plans for different time periods, and David hints at this in this psalm. What is made clear is, the Gentiles are not ignored by God in the realm of spiritual blessings.

Binnie makes an interesting point here: *The Hebrew church was neither called nor qualified to be a missionary society, but it never ceased to desire and hope for the conversion of the nations.*¹⁸ Although I am not prepared right now to spend time with this thought, this is an apt observation. We, as believers in the Church Age, should be associated with organizations (preferably a local church) which sends out missionaries. Paul, by his actions, illustrated that, and we have the great missionary commission of Jesus Christ, in His resurrection body: **"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you. Furthermore, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."** (Matt. 28:19–20). We find no such commission to Israel in the Old Testament. In fact, even during the early ministry on earth of Christ, He would not send his disciples to the Gentiles, but to the Jews only. Matt. 10:5–7: **Jesus sent out these twelve, commanding them, saying, "Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter into any city of the Samaritans. But rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as you go, proclaim, saying, The kingdom of Heaven is at hand."**

**...for great as far as heavens Your grace
and as far as clouds Your faithfulness [or,
truth].**

Psalm
57:10

**...for Your grace [is] great, even to [or, is
greater than even] the heavens,
and Your truth [or, faithfulness] [is greater
than or extends beyond] even to the [thin]
clouds.**

**...for your grace is greater than the heavens
and Your faithfulness and truth is above the highest clouds.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Early translations:

The Septuagint

For Your mercy has been magnified even to the heavens and Your truth to the clouds.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

¹⁸ William Binnie, D.D., in "The Psalms' their History, Teachings, and Use," 1870.

CEV	Your love reaches higher than the heavens; your loyalty extends beyond the clouds.
NJB	...for your faithful love towers to heaven, your constancy to the clouds.
NLT	For your unfailing love is as high as the heavens. Your faithfulness reaches to the clouds.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™	...because your mercy is as high as the heavens. Your truth reaches the skies.
JPS (Tanakh)	for Your faithfulness is as high as heaven; Your steadfastness reaches to the sky.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB	For Thy lovingkindness is great to the heavens, And Thy truth [or, <i>faithfulness</i>] to the clouds.
Young's Updated LT	For great to the heavens is Your kindness, And to the clouds Your truth.

What is the gist of this verse? God's grace and truth are greater than the heavens.

Psalm 57:10a			
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>	conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
gâdôwl (גָּדוֹל) [pronounced <i>gaw-DOLE</i>]	<i>great in quantity, great in magnitude and extent, mighty, vast, unyielding, immutable; great things, significant and astonishing [or mind-blowing] things</i>	masculine singular adjective often used as a substantive	Strong's #1419 (& #1431) BDB #152
ʿad (אֲד) [pronounced <i>gahd</i>]	<i>as far as, even to, up to, until</i>	preposition	Strong's #5704 BDB #723
The combination of this preposition and the adjective gâdôwl appears to result in a superlative, even though there is no superlative in the Hebrew, per se.			
shâmayîm (שָׁמַיִם) [pronounced <i>shaw-MAH-yim</i>]	<i>heavens, skies</i>	masculine dual noun	Strong's #8064 BDB #1029
cheçed (חֶסֶד) [pronounced <i>KHĒH-sed</i>]	<i>grace, benevolence, mercy, kindness</i>	masculine singular noun with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #2617 BDB #338

Translation: ...for Your grace [is] great, even [or, *is greater than even*] to the heavens,... David understood grace to a certain point at that time. He knew that God gave him far greater than he deserved. He did not know why, but he knew for a fact that God's grace was greater than the heavens above. When we observe the heavens above,

their seemingly infinite boundaries (or continual expansion) is beyond our comprehension. We have words that we have developed in our language, but the expanse and vastness of the universe is barely describable. God's grace is greater than even the incredible expanse of our universe. We have a vocabulary which we have devised, and some notions from Scripture, but when it comes right down to it, we have no real comprehension of how great God's grace is. We have no real comprehension of how incredible our future will be.

Psalm 57:10b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו) [pronounced weh]	and	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
We may reasonably insert gâdôwl again, which gives us a superlative-type meaning here.			
ʿad (עד) [pronounced gahd]	as far as, even to, up to, until	preposition	Strong's #5704 BDB #723
shachaq (שַׁחַק) [pronounced shaw-KHAWK]	dust, fine dust; cloud, thin cloud	masculine plural noun	Strong's #7834 BDB #1007
ʿemeth (אֱמֶת) [pronounced EH-meth]	firmness, faithfulness, truth, certainty, stability, perpetuity, fidelity, reliable, stable, dependable	feminine singular noun with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #571 BDB #54

Translation: *...and Your truth* [or, *faithfulness*] [*is greater than or extends beyond*] *even to the [thin] clouds*. At the end of v. 3, David tells us that God would send forth His grace and His truth. Here, he tells us that God's grace and truth extend even beyond the heavens in the greatness. David is just beginning to realize just how fantastic God is, just how great His grace is, and just how dependable God's Word is.

We have a parallel passage in Psalm 36:5: *O LORD, your mercy reaches to the heavens, your faithfulness to the skies*. This is another psalm of David's, who psalms apparently had similar themes running throughout.

Satan will always attack the most fundamental and powerful of God's gifts to us. Rather than God's grace, Satan presents us with a plethora of religions, all purporting some connection to God, and all requiring works to seal the deal. In every religion, there is something you must do, or some set of rules or behavior that you must follow in order to gain God's approval. When it comes to absolute truth, Satan does everything that he can to attack this truth. A public school teacher could lose his job, under certain circumstances, if he teaches a portion of Scripture; however, it may become required for teacher to present the homosexual union as being one of the many valid familial options out there. Since God's grace and truth are two of the most important parts of our faith, we can expect that they will be viciously attacked by demonic forces.

**Lift up above heavens, O Elohim,
above all the earth Your glory.**

Psalm
57:11

**Be exalted, O Elohim, above the heavens
[and let] Your glory [and honor] [be] over all
the earth.**

**Be exalted, O God, above all the heavens,
and let Your glory and honor be over all the earth.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Translation: *Be exalted, O Elohim, above the heavens...* David calls for God to reign over all the heavens. Obviously, all that is down here exists according to His purpose. However, it is clear that there is evil at work in this world. What David is actually calling for is for God’s will to be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Psalm 57:11b			
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	Strong’s #5921 BDB #752
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced <i>kohl</i>]	<i>the whole, all of, the entirety of, all; can also be rendered any of</i>	masculine singular construct followed by a definite article	Strong’s #3605 BDB #481
ʿerets (אֶרֶץ) [pronounced <i>EH-rets</i>]	<i>earth (all or a portion thereof), land</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong’s #776 BDB #75
kâbôwd (כְּבוֹד) [pronounced <i>kaw^b-VODE</i>]	<i>glory, abundance, honor</i>	masculine singular adjective that acts like a noun; with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong’s #3519 BDB #458

Translation: *...[and let] Your glory [and honor] [be] over all the earth.* The concept of the voluntative *hê* is continued in this half of v. 11, even though it is not found here. David calls for God’s glory and honor to be over all of the earth. Again, the idea is, *“Your kingdom will come, Your will to be accomplished, on earth as it is in heaven.”* (Matt. 6:10).

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As was discussed in the introduction, David puts some structure to this psalm, that is not necessarily apparent, until after one sees the structure, and then remarks, *oh, yeah, that’s it.* Keil and Delitzsch point out that there is a 4.5.6;4.5.6 structure to this psalm,¹⁹ which, after I examined the psalm with this in mind, I was forced to admit that it was a nice fit.

The 4.5.6; 4.5.6 Structure of Psalm 57	
Psalm 57	Outline
To the Preeminent One: Do not destroy [me]! A writing of David’s when he fled from the presence of Saul [and hid] in the cave.	Title or inscription
David’s Prayer	
Grace me, O God; grace me, for my soul trusts [and has taken refuge] in You; and I take refuge in the shadow of your [protecting] wings until calamity [and ruin] pass on by.	V. 1: David asks for God’s grace as he takes refuge in Him (4 lines; submission)

¹⁹ Keil and Delitzsch, Commentary on the Old Testament; from e-Sword; Psalm 57 introduction.

The 4.5.6; 4.5.6 Structure of Psalm 57	
Psalm 57	Outline
<p>I call out to Elohim the Most High, to the God [who] completes me. He deploys from heaven and He delivers me; He has scorned [defied and discredited] the one chasing me [lit., <i>panting after me</i>]. Pause God sends His grace and His faithfulness [or, <i>truth, stability</i>].</p>	<p>Vv. 2–3: David calls out to God in heaven, and God sends him grace and truth (5 lines; certain victory)</p>
<p>I lay my soul down in the midst of lions; sons of Adam [who are] blazing, their teeth [are] spears and arrows and their tongues [are] sharp swords. Be exalted, O God, above the heavens; and [let] Your glory [abundance and honor] [be exalted] over all the earth.</p>	<p>Vv. 4–5: David is in the midst of danger, and he calls for the exaltation of God (6 lines; song of praise)</p>
David's Praise	
<p>They have set up a net for my steps; He has humbled [lit., <i>bowed down</i>] my soul. They have dug a pit before me [but] they have fallen into it. Pause!</p>	<p>V. 6: David's enemies set traps for him, but fall into their own traps (4 lines; submission)</p>
<p>My heart is established [and prepared], O God, my heart is established [and prepared]. I must sing and I must make music. Wake up, my glory, wake up, harp and lyre! I will cause to awaken the dawn!</p>	<p>Vv. 7–8: David's heart is stabilized and he celebrates; his soul causes him to celebrate (5 lines; certain victory)</p>
<p>I celebrate You, my Adonai, among the peoples [and] I praise You [with music] among the Gentile peoples, for Your grace [is] great, even to [or, <i>is greater than even</i>] the heavens, and Your truth [or, <i>faithfulness</i>] [<i>is greater than or extends beyond</i>] even to the [thin] clouds. Be exalted, O Elohim, above the heavens [and let] Your glory [and honor] [be] over all the earth.</p>	<p>Vv. 9–11: David celebrates God's grace and truth among all peoples, and calls for the exaltation of God (6 lines; song of praise)</p>

Most literal Bibles will observe the same number of lines, and this is a nice and easy way to divide up this psalm. Keil and Delitzsch write: *A refrain of a lofty character closes the first and second parts. In the first part cheerful submission rules, in the second a certainty of victory, which by anticipation takes up the song of praise.*²⁰

Now that we have the psalm properly translated and all in one place, now go back and reread the psalm, approaching it as though a psalm of our Lord, perhaps even a part of His prayer in the garden of Gethsemane (Matt. 26:36 Mark 14:32). Of course, the inscription or title would not be a part of His prayer.

²⁰ Keil and Delitzsch, Commentary on the Old Testament; from e-Sword; Psalm 57 introduction.