
Psalm 59

Psalm 59:1–17

David Asks God for Deliverance as He Flees Saul

Outline of Chapter 59:

Inscription	Psalm 59 Inscription
vv. 1–5	David Asks God to Deliver Him from Vicious Men
vv. 6–7	The Dogs Return at Night
vv. 8–13	David Ask God, His Strength, to Destroy His Enemies
vv. 14–15	The Dogs Return at Night: A Refrain
vv. 16–17	David Praises God in Song for His Strength and Grace

Charts and Maps:

- v. 13 **Does God Destroy or Does God Preserve His Enemies?**

Doctrines Covered	Doctrines Alluded To

Introduction: Psalm 59 was written either during the time that David became a fugitive from Saul, or during a period of time when he reflectively looked back on that incident. This incident must be understood in order to have a full understanding of this psalm. David wrote eight psalms while a fugitive from Saul, in this order: Psalm 59 7 56 34 57 52 142 54¹ (we will summarize these at a later date). Ideally, you are reading this examination of Psalm 59 *after* studying I Sam. 19, but just in case you did not, here is the capsule version: David had another successful outing against the Philistines, and he returned to the palace of Saul victorious. He settles into his other vocation, which is playing music for Saul, and Saul suddenly tries to pin David to the wall with a javelin. David outmaneuvers Saul and escapes. He goes home, and Saul quickly gathers some of his officers and send them to fetch David, so that they could kill him the next morning. The soldiers come to David's home and, as we will see, are apparently rather noisy, possibly arguing over whether Saul's order to seize David is just. David's wife, Michal, observes these men outside their home and tells David that he has to escape the city altogether. She places a teraphim on his bed, and when the soldiers, knock on the door, she tells them that David is in bed, sick. They return to the palace while David is let out the window which probably was in the outside city wall (he may have already escaped prior to their coming to his front door).

This psalm examines this particular incident in David's life, which begins a whole new life for him. Throughout David's early life, he was a shepherd boy, held in low esteem by his family, and living a life of isolation, where he apparently honed his skill on his ancient guitar. Then David spend several years close to Saul's family, first as a court musician, then as a soldier, and finally as the son-in-law of King Saul. This incident begins a whole new phase in David's life: David, the fugitive.

However, like many great works of literature, what we read on the surface is only part of what is here. This is a psalm which applies to Israel, who is surrounded by her enemies—enemies lying in wait and willing to attack Israel at a moment's notice. These are bloodthirsty men whose souls are filled with hatred against Israel (does this sound familiar to today's world?). These enemies of Israel are like dogs, who come in at night and attack and forage, and

¹ This is according to Alfred Edersheim, *Bible History Old Testament*; ©1995 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; p. 487.

run like cowards. They howl and they speak ill of Israel. God laughs at these enemies and holds them in derision. If you understand this as your read, then you have a more complete understanding of this psalm and David's purpose in writing it. McGee is even more exact in his application of this psalm—he says that it applies to Israel during the tribulation, when Israel will be surrounded by enemies.

This psalm begins as a plea to God for deliverance from the men who seek his life; however, in the midst of the psalm, David speaks rather disparagingly of those who seek his life. David asks for their destruction, so that all men will know that God rules in Jacob (Israel). This psalm ends with David praising God.

Many of the psalms have a very particular time period that they represent, which information is often found in the inscription for the psalm (for those which have inscriptions). However, the inscription of this psalm does not actually give us the complete application of this psalm, as it is also applicable to Israel during times of enemy aggression (and perhaps during the Tribulation). Furthermore, the Psalms and Proverbs (and even the book of Ecclesiastes) often give us a more intimate and detailed examination of events that the historical books touch on. They often give us a backstage pass, a view on the thinking of the men of that era. These books often give us insight and detail that we would have otherwise missed.

Some break this psalm up into two parts—vv. 1–9, and vv. 10–17. The reason for doing so is that vv. 9 and 17 are almost identical, so they make good stopping points for each portion of the psalm, each looking to God as David's strength and refuge. Each of these verses is preceded by an identical phrase in vv. 6 and 14, phrases which characterize the enemies of David as dogs. The first half of this psalm is primarily a prayer for deliverance and the second half is thanksgiving for deliverance.² The problem with such a division is that, (1) there does not seem to be a clear break between vv. 9 and 10; and (2) if anywhere, the psalm suggests breaking points after vv. 5 and 13, both of which end with the word *Selah*, which word probably calls for a musical interlude.

I must admit, even though I disagree with the NIV's division of this chapter, I personally had trouble outlining it myself (and the paragraph breaks varied widely with each English translation). Barnes comments on this: *The psalm has no very regular order. The mind passes from one thing to another, —now uttering fervent prayer; now describing the enemy—his character and plans; and now expressing the confident hope of deliverance, and the purpose to praise God. Indeed the very structure of the psalm seems to me to furnished evidence that it describes feelings which would pass through the mind on such an occasion. Thus we have in verses 1, 5, 11–15, prayer for deliverance; in verses 3, 4, 6, 12, intermingled with these prayers, a description of the character and designs of these enemies; and in verses 8, 9, 16, 17, an expression of confident hope, —a purpose to praise God for deliverance and mercy. All this is indicative of such feelings as might, and probably would, pass through the mind in such a time of peril as that referred to in the title.*³ In other words, the very nature of the disorganization of this psalm points to a man running for his life, suggesting that the actual composition of this psalm occurred as David was escaping.

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart Index](#)

Like half of the psalms, the verse numbering is different from translation to translation. The Septuagint and the Masoretic text both generally list the inscription as v. 1 (verse numbering was added over a millennium after the original text was scripted). However, in the English, these inscriptions (or titles) are so listed, which is the way it should be (as long as you realize that they are a part of the psalms).

Psalm 59 Inscription

² This division is suggested by *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 838; and I took from this footnote to offer support for this division.

³ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes, Psalms; Volume 2*, reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 146.

Slavishly literal:

To a Preeminent [One]. Do not destroy! To David, a writing in a sending of Saul and so they watch the house to kill him.

Psalm
59 inscription

Moderately literal:

To the Preeminent One: Do not destroy [me]! A writing of David's when Saul sent [his officers] and they watched [David's] house to kill him.

To the one who is pre-eminent: Do not Destroy me! A writing of David's when Saul had sent his officers to watch David's house, for the purpose of seizing and killing him.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Early translations:

The Septuagint For the end. Destroy not; by David for a memorial, when Saul sent, and watched his house to kill him.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV *[For the music leader. To the tune "Don't Destroy." A special psalm by David when Saul had David's house watched so that he could kill him.]*

NJB *For the choirmaster Tune: 'Do not destroy' Of David In a quiet voice When Saul sent men to watch David's house in order to have him killed*

NLT *For the choir director: A Psalm of David, regarding the time Saul sent soldiers to watch David's house in order to kill him. To be sung to the tune "Do Not Destroy!"*

TEV [nothing]

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™ For the choir director; *al tashheth*; a *Mikhtam* by David when Saul sent men to watch David's home and kill him.

JPS (Tanakh) For the leader; *al tashheth*. Of David. A *Mikhtam*; when Saul sent men to watch his house in order to put him to death.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

The Amplified Bible To the Chief Musician; *set to the tune*, Do Not Destroy. Of David, record of memorable thoughts, when Saul sent men to watch his home in order to kill him.

NASB For the choir director; *set to Al-tashheth*. A *Mikhtam* of David, when Saul sent *men*, and they watched the house in order to kill him.

Young's Updated LT To the Overseer.— 'Destroy not,' by David. —A secret treasure, in Saul's sending and they watch the house to put him to death.

What is the gist of this verse? This inscription gives us a lot of information. First of all, it appears to be addressed either to Saul or to God—or possibly to both. The first few lines of the Psalm make it clear that David is addressing God. David asks God not to destroy him, and then gives the time and place of this psalm: when Saul sent men to his house to kill him.

Psalm 59 inscription a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lâmed (ל) (pronounced ^P)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging 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	Strong's #5329 BDB #663
The Piel participle of nâtsach is given a wide variety of renderings: <i>overseer</i> (Young), <i>the music leader</i> (CEV), <i>choir director</i> (NASB, NLT), <i>choirmaster</i> (Owens), <i>leader</i> (NRSV, NEB, NAB) and <i>chief musician</i> (Rotherham).			
ʾal (לֹא) [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

Translation: To the Preeminent One: do not destroy [me]! The first noun in this inscription is an interesting one, and 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 (1 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. Therefore, there is no reason to interpret the Piel participle of nâtsach as *choirmaster, choir leader, or choir-anything*.⁴ 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 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, 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 v. 1 and the vocative *Jehovah* in v. 3.

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. Psalm 75 begins identically, but is attributed to Asaph.

⁴ Of course, David could have written this psalm many, many years later in retrospect. However, I see that as unlikely.

Psalm 59 inscription b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lâmed (ל) (pronounced ^l)	<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 <i>daw-VEED</i>]	<i>beloved and is transliterated David</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #1732 BDB #187
mik ^{et} tâm (מִכְתָּם) [pronounced <i>mik-TAWM</i>]	<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 mîk^{et}hthâ^v (מִכְתָּהּ) [pronounced *mik^e-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^{et}tâm 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.

Translation: A writing of David's... A precursory examination of the various translations yields a veritable plethora of meanings for mik^{et}tâm. However, given the various similar nouns and verbs, we might assume that this is simply a cognate, and refers to some sort of writing, e.g., *a poem* or *a song*. More specific reasons are given in the exegesis above. Since this is found only in the inscriptions of the psalms, and since such a rendering would be both logical and consistent, there is little reason to assume that it means something different.

We do know that David has been writing songs or psalms for a long period of time. He spent many hours as a shepherd boy with his musical instrument alone. Therefore, given that David is a creative genius, that he composed several psalms would be in keeping with his character.

Like many portions of Scripture, there are those who wish to ascribe this psalm to an author other than the one named by the psalm itself. The NIV Study Bible suggest one of David's sons either wrote or revised this when Jerusalem was under siege by a hostile force (e.g., when Hezekiah was under siege by a hostile Assyrian force). Others ascribe this psalm to Nehemiah, citing Neh. 4 to substantiate this.⁵ The problem here is, Scripture does not indicate that Hezekiah or Nehemiah are the authors for this psalm—Scripture tells us that David authored this psalm. Therefore, we have little reason to assume otherwise. Furthermore, although it is clear that this psalm has a wider application than to just David and his escape from Saul and his minions, there is nothing so graphic as to suggest that this was written by an eyewitness to the Rabshakeh's address to the people of Israel (Isa. 36). Besides, prophecy is an integral part of Scripture and authorship should not be questioned simply because events of the future are revealed (Lev. 26, for example, tells about Israel being removed from the Land of Promise prior to them even entering into the Land of Promise).

⁵ Both of these are suggested by *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 838. These suggestions are not original to the NIV Study Bible; Adam Clark, for instance, suggests that Nehemiah was the author of this psalm, when there was opposition to his building of the walls around Jerusalem. He adds, *I conceive the Psalm to have been made on this occasion; and on this hypothesis alone I think it capable of consistent explanation. Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible, Psalm 59:1.*

Psalm 59 inscription c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, among, in the midst of; at, by, near, on, before, in the presence of, upon; with; to, unto, upon, up to; in respect to, on account of; by means of, with, about, concerning</i>	primarily a preposition of proximity; however, it has a multitude of functions	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, <i>in their being created</i> = <i>when they were created</i> (Gen. 2:4); <i>in their being in the field</i> = <i>when they were in the field</i> (Gen. 4:8). ⁶			
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>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #7971 BDB #1018
Shâ'ûwl (שָׂאוּל) [pronounced shaw-OOL]	which is transliterated <i>Saul</i> ; it means <i>asked for</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #7586 BDB #982
wa or va (וַ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
shâmar (שָׁמַר) [pronounced shaw-MAR]	<i>to keep, to guard, to watch, to preserve</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #8104 BDB #1036
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	generally untranslated	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
bayith (בַּיִת) [pronounced BAH-yith]	<i>house, household, habitation as well as inward</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #1004 BDB #108
lâmed (לְ) (pronounced l ^e)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
mûwth (מוֹת) [pronounced mooth]	<i>to kill, to cause to die, to put to death, to execute</i>	Hiphil infinitive construct with a 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #4191 BDB #559

Translation: ...when Saul sent [his officers] and they watched [David's] house to kill him. It is this portion of the psalm which gives us the occasion for the psalm, the incident mentioned in I Sam. 19:11, which reads: *Saul then sent assassins [lit., messengers] to David's house to keep watch [on] him and to kill him in the morning. Michal, his wife, made [this] known to David, saying, "If you don't deliver your soul [from danger] tonight, tomorrow, you will be killed."* David may write this as he escapes, writing the words and melody in his head; or, he may look back upon this escape and write this psalm. Obviously, David, on his trip down the wall to escape Saul, did not stop and scratch a few words out on a piece of paper, using the wall as backing. He took off quickly and we are not told when or if he stopped (prior to coming to Samuel). However, either along this trip, during a rest period, or in retrospection, David thought about and composed a psalm which dealt with Saul's pursuance of him.⁷ As has

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

⁷ I am always encouraged when I find another theologian dealing with the same nuances as I do. After discussing the actual time of the writing of this psalm, I find that Barnes examines the same topic in Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes, Psalms; Volume*

already been discussed, the lack of organization found in this psalm points to a man who is trying to escape with his life from a desperate situation. For this reason, we may reasonably assume that David composed the bulk of this psalm in his head as he was escaping from Saul. I occasionally jog, and while jogging, I will occasionally carry a song in my head; it helps with the rhythm of the jogging. For David, this would not have necessarily been a need to continue a rhythm, but to allow his mind to go to a place where he was not focused only on running from Saul.

Saul, as we have studied, sent his officers two times during that afternoon and evening to bring David back to the palace to be executed. The first time, they returned giving Saul a lame reason for not completing their mission (David appears to be ill). Saul then carefully outlines their mission statement, which was to kill David. Therefore, David's illness was a non-issue. By the time Saul sent these men back, mission statement in hand, David was long gone.

Barnes describes the occasion of this psalm: *This prayer was offered when the spies sent by Saul surrounded the house of David. They had come to apprehend him, and it is to be presumed that they had come in sufficient numbers, and with sufficient power, to effect their object. Their purpose was not to break in upon him in the night, but to watch their opportunity, when he went forth in the morning, to slay him 1Sa_19:11, and there seemed no way for him to escape. Of their coming, and of their design, Michal, the daughter of Saul, and the wife of David, seems to have been apprised - perhaps by someone of her father's family. She informed David of the arrangement, and assured him that unless he should escape in the night, he would be put to death in the morning. She, therefore, let him down through a window, and he escaped.*⁸

As with many of the psalms, there is some difficulty when it comes to simply numbering the verses. The inscription above is written with the psalm—it is not something which was tacked on later. Therefore, in the Masoretic text and in certain translations (e.g., the JPS and the NAB), the inscription is written as v. 1. In most English translations, this is presented as an inscription (although at least one, TEV, leaves it out altogether. In most English translations, the next verse will be v. 1; however, do not panic if your particular Bible says v. 2 instead.

David Asks God to Deliver Him from Vicious Men

Slavishly literal:

**Deliver me from my enemies, O Elohim;
From those rising [against] me, You set
me on high.**

Moderately literal:

**Deliver me from my enemies, O Elohim;
You set me above those rising [against]
me.**

Psalm
59:1

**Deliver me from my enemies, O God;
As they rise up against me, lift me higher above them.**

Here is how others have handled this verse:

Early translations:

The Septuagint

Deliver me from my enemies, O God; and ransom me from those that rise up against me.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV

Save me, God! Protect me from enemy attacks
Keep me safe from brutal people who want to kill me.

2, reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; pp. 145–146. Barnes concludes, by the way, that David probably wrote this psalm in retrospect, including in it his actual thoughts and feelings while escaping Saul.

⁸ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes, Psalms; Volume 2*, reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 146.

NAB Rescue me from my enemies, my God;
lift me out of reach of my foes.

REB Rescue me, My God, from my enemies;
be my strong tower against those who assail me.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™ Rescue me from my enemies, O my God.
Protect me from those who attack me.

JPS (Tanakh) Save me from my enemies, O my God;
secure me against my assailants. [This is v. 2 in JPS]

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

The Amplified Bible DELIVER me from my enemies, O my God; defend *and* protect me from those who rise up against me.

NASB Deliver me from my enemies, O my God;
Set me *securely* on high away from those who rise up against me.

Young's Updated LT Deliver me from my enemies, O my God,
From my withstanders set me on high.

What is the gist of this verse? David calls upon God to deliver him from his enemies and to place him above those who stand up against him.

Psalm 59:1a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
nâtsal (נָצַל) [pronounced naw-TSAHL]	to snatch away, to deliver, to rescue, to snatch out of danger, to preserve	2 nd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperative with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #5337 BDB #664
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, greater than	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
ʿāyaʿv (אֹיְבֵי) [pronounced aw-YAʻV]	enemy, the one being at enmity with you; enmity, hostility	masculine plural, Qal active participle with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #340 BDB #33
ʿēlōhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced el-o-HEEM]	gods or God; transliterated Elohim	masculine plural noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #430 BDB #43

Translation: Deliver me from my enemies, O Elohim;... The first word in this verse is an imperative addressed to God—*deliver me!* Even though it may seem strong, David is on good doctrinal ground. God has promised that he would be king; God anointed David king through Samuel. Therefore, God has to deliver David from his enemies. It is a matter of doctrine. It is a matter of stated truth.

Application: You can demand of God what He has promised you; the fact that David does it here in this psalm makes it not only allowed but encouraged.

Application: David prays on several occasions for deliverance from his enemies: Psalm 31:15 59:1 143:9. If a man of David's spiritual caliber had enemies, despite the fact that he did nothing to stir them up, we may rest assured that we, as believers, will also have enemies who will do whatever they can to destroy us. Furthermore, do not be surprised if your enemies are fellow believers.

Psalm 59:1b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
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, greater than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
qûwm (קוּם) [pronounced <i>koom</i>]	<i>to rise up, to cause oneself to stand</i>	masculine plural, Hithpoel (Hithpael) participle with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #6965 BDB #877
The Hithpael is the reflexive of the Piel. This is apparently equivalent in meaning to the Hithpoel, which designation is found only in Owen's book.			
sâgab (שָׁגַב) [pronounced saw-GAH ^{BV}]	<i>to be set on high, to exalt; to protect safely</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Piel imperfect with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #7682 BDB #960

Translation: You set me above those rising [against] me. This is somewhat of a play on words. Saul has steadily increased his aggression towards David. He has become more and more overt to the point where he is using his own men to arrest and bring David back to him to be executed. So, Saul rises up with increased overt attacks against David. However, David says here that God lifts David up higher and higher above Saul. As Saul becomes more and more overt in his hostilities toward David, God grants David greater and greater protection.

Application: God tests us throughout our lives. He begins with small things and gradually raises the ante, providing greater and greater protection as He does. I know that you personally don't want to be tested, but realize that some marriages, for instance, become stronger (or dissolve) under pressure and testing. I recall that my own family developed a greater bond when my kid brother was lain up in traction the hospital for several months. His suffering brought us closer together as a family. We gathered together as a family almost every night at his bed to play cards and visit. People in general become stronger, and more spiritually fit when tested (and of course, when they pass). We can hold to the promise that, **No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, Who will not allow you to be tested beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way out as well, that you may be able to endure it** (I Cor. 10:13).

We have parallel verses in Psalm 20:1 69:29; however, in neither of these verses do we have the same sort of play on words as we find here, where, as David's enemies rise up against him, God brings David to a higher place above them. There is another tongue-in-cheek reference here, which most exegetes miss. David wrote this as he was lowered *down* through a window, from a protected place. Physically, he was actually below his enemies as he was being delivered from them. However, metaphorically, he was lifted by God above them, outside of their grasp.

Psalm 59:2a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
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, greater than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
pâ'al (לַעֲשׂוֹת) [pronounced <i>paw-GAHL</i>]	<i>to do, to make, to construct, to fabricate, to prepare</i>	masculine plural construct, Qal active participle	Strong's #6466 BDB #821
'âven (אֲוֵן) [pronounced <i>AW-ven</i>]	<i>iniquity, misfortune which results from iniquity</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #205 BDB #19

Translation: [Deliver me from those who do iniquity...](#) The men of Saul's who act on his orders are now called by David *men of iniquity*. These are men who commit acts of iniquity. They habitually sin against God. Although this is not a call for us to revolt against our government, Saul's request that David be arrested in order to be executed was so egregious and so without merit that all his men should have recognized it. This is one of the few times these men should have banded together as one and told Saul, *no*. Not only should they have refused to seize David for execution, but they should have promised Saul that they would oppose all attempts to do so.

The phrase *men of iniquity* is also found in Psalm 14:4 28:3 36:12 53:4 92:7 94:16.

Psalm 59:2b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
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, greater than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
'îysh (אִישׁ) [pronounced <i>eesh</i>]	<i>man, each, each one, everyone</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #376 BDB #35
dâm (דָּם) [pronounced <i>dawm</i>]	<i>blood, often visible blood</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #1818 BDB #196
yâsha' (יָשָׁא) [pronounced <i>yaw-SHAHG</i>]	<i>to deliver, to save</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperative with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #3467 BDB #446

Translation: [...and save me from men of bloodshed \[or, bloody deeds\].](#) These officers of Saul, the first time that they returned from David's home, it was on a relatively lame excuse. "David was sick and you didn't tell us what to do if David was sick." Which statement prompted Saul to issue a mission statement. It was a half-assed act of rebellion. They should have unequivocally challenged Saul at this point. They have become *men of bloodshed*, because their trade is blood; these men work for Saul to kill, regardless of the injustice of the proposed killing. The

phrase *men of bloodshed* is also found in Psalm 26:9 139:19. This term along with *men of iniquity* is applied to those who attack the psalmist out of malice.⁹

The treasury of David tells us: *Saul had more cause to fear than David had, for the invincible weapon of prayer was being used against him, and heaven was being aroused to give him battle.*¹⁰ David's first line of defense was not a counterattack which he personally mounted, but a counterattack which he asked God to mount. When we are faced with insurmountable odds, our first choice should be prayer. No matter what the odds are against us, God is far greater.

**For, behold, they have lain in wait for my soul;
gather together against me fierce ones;
not my infraction and not my sin, O Y^ehowah,...**

Psalm
59:3

**For, listen: they lay in wait for my soul;
fierce men gather together against me;
[and] not [for] my transgression and not for my
sin, O Y^ehowah,...**

**Listen: they lie in wait for my soul;
fierce men band together against me;
and this is not because of a transgression or a sin, O Jehovah,...**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Early translations:

The Septuagint For, behold, they have hunted after my soul; violent men have set upon me; neither is it my iniquity nor my sin, O Lord.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV Merciless enemies, LORD, are hiding and plotting, hoping to kill me.
I have not hurt them in any way at all.

NAB They have set an ambush for my life;
the powerful conspire against me.
For no offense or misdeed of mine, LORD,...

NJB Look at them, lurking to ambush me,
Violent men are attacking me,
for not fault, no sin of mine, Yahweh,...

NLT They have set an ambush for me.
Fierce enemies are out there waiting,
though I have done them no wrong, O LORD.

REB Violent men lie in wait for me,
they lie in ambush ready to attack me;
for no fault of guilt of mine, LORD,...

TEV Look! They are waiting to kill me;
cruel men are gathering against me.
It is not because of any sin or wrong I have done,...

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

*God's Word*TM They lie in ambush for me right here!
Fierce men attack me, O LORD,

⁹ *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 838.

¹⁰ *The Treasury of David* by Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-1892); Psalm 59:2.

JPS (Tanakh) but not because of any disobedience,...
 For see, they lie in wait for me;
 fierce men plot against me
 for no offense of mine,...

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB For behold, they have set an ambush for my life;
 Fierce men launch an attack against me.
 Not for my transgression nor for my sin, O LORD.

Young's Literal Translation For, lo, they laid wait for my soul,
 Assembled against me are strong ones,
 Not my transgression nor my sin, O Jehovah.

What is the gist of this verse? Men lay in wait for David—just outside his door, in fact. Fierce men had assembled themselves against him. Then David adds: and not because of a sin or transgression which he committed.

Psalm 59:3a			
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
hinnêh (הִנֵּה) [pronounced <i>hin-NAY</i>]	<i>lo, behold, or more freely, observe, look here, look, listen, pay attention, get this, check this out</i>	interjection, demonstrative particle	Strong's #2009 (and #518, 2006) BDB #243
ʿârab (אַרַב) [pronounced <i>aw-RA^{AV}</i>]	<i>to ambush, to lay in wait, to hide</i>	3 rd person plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #693 BDB #70
lâmed (ל) (pronounced <i>l^{AV}</i>)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
nephesh (נֶפֶשׁ) [pronounced <i>NEH-fesh</i>]	<i>soul, life, living being, desire</i>	feminine singular noun with a 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #5315 BDB #659

Translation: For, listen: they lay in wait for my soul;... The word used here [*ʿârab*] is often employed to denote the act of lying in ambush; of watching in secret places to spring upon a victim: Jdg 9:32; Jdg 21:20; Psa 10:9.¹¹ The night that David wrote this psalm, just outside his door were Saul's officers, lying in wait for him. David, as a fugitive, will end up in Gath at one point, and will face a very similar situation (see Psalm 56:inscription, 6).

¹¹ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes, Psalms; Volume 2*, reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 147.

Psalm 59:3b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
gûwr (גור) [pronounced goor]	<i>to temporarily reside, to sojourn; to gather together with, band together with</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1481 BDB #157
ʿal (על) [pronounced ʿahl]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
ʿaz (אז) [pronounced ʿahz]	<i>strong, mighty, fierce</i>	masculine plural adjective; acts as a noun on its own	Strong's #5794 BDB #738

Translation: ...fierce men gather together against me;... These men were soldiers, and they were fierce in battle. Although I believe that they entered into this mission half-heartedly, looking for any excuse to return to Saul empty-handed, when push came to shove, they would obey Saul rather than their conscience. Spurgeon: *[These soldiers] were too fond of such sport to be away. The men at arms who ought to have been fighting their country's battles, are instead thereof hunting a quiet citizen; the gigantic monarch is spending all his strength to slay a faithful follower.*¹²

Psalm 59:3c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lôʾ (לֹא or לֹא־) [pronounced low]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
peshaʿ (פֶּשַׁע) [pronounced PEH-shahg]	<i>violation, infraction, disobedience, insubordination, rebellion, transgression, trespass</i>	masculine plural noun with the 1 st person plural suffix	Strong's #6588 BDB #833
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
lôʾ (לֹא or לֹא־) [pronounced low]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
chattâʾth (חַטָּאת) [pronounced khat-TAWTH]	<i>sin or sin-offering</i>	feminine singular noun with a 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #2403 BDB #308
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly yohh-WAH]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217

¹² Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *A Treasury of David*; e-Sword, Psalm 59:3.

Translation: ...[and] not [for] my transgression and not for my sin, O Y^ehowah,... David add that these men have not gathered together for a reason. David had not violated the law. He was not a criminal. He had not risen in insurrection against Saul. These men pursued him without a reason. Saul has already acknowledged this to Jonathan in I Sam. 19:4–6 and he will acknowledge this to David in I Sam. 24:11. *[David's] only fault was, that he was too valiant and too gracious, and was, besides, the chosen of the Lord, therefore the envious king could not rest till he had washed his hands in the blood of his too popular rival.*¹³

Application: There will be people in your life who persecute you without a reason. Their hatred for you will exist apart from anything which you have done against them.

...without a crime.
They run and they establish [themselves].
Awake to come [to] me and see.

Psalm
59:4

...without [committing] a crime.
They run and they prepare themselves.
Rouse [Yourself] and come [to] me and look.

...without having committed a crime.
They run and they prepare themselves against me.
Rise up and come to my aid and see for Yourself what they are doing!

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Early translations:

The Septuagint Without iniquity I ran and directed [my course]. Awake to help me, and behold.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV	But they are read to attack. Do something Help me! Look at what's happening.
NAB	for no fault they hurry to take up arms. Come near and see my plight!
NJB	...for no guilt, They come running to take up position. Wake up, stand by me and keep watch,... [the first part of v. 4 is treated as a continuation of v. 3]
NLT	Despite my innocence, they prepare to kill me. Rise up and help me! Look at my plight!
TEV	nor because of any fault of mine, O LORD, that they hurry to their places.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™	Or any sin, or any guilt on my part. They hurry to take positions against me. Wake up, and help me; see [for yourself]. [They combine the end of v. 3 with the beginning of v. 4, which makes a great deal of sense]
JPS (Tanakh)	For no guilt of mine do they array themselves against me. Look, rouse Yourself on my behalf!

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

¹³ *The Treasury of David*, Charles Haddon Spurgeon; Psalm 59:3.

NASB	For no guilt [lit., <i>without guilt</i>] of mine, they run and set themselves against me. Arouse Thyself to help [lit., <i>meet</i>] me, and see!
Young's Updated LT	Without punishment they run and prepare themselves, Stir up to me meet and see.

What is the gist of this verse? Even though David is guilty of no crime against the state, Saul's soldiers come to his house to arrest him. David calls to God to see what is going on.

Psalm 59:4a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
The Aramaic targum inserts <i>thought I am</i> here. ¹⁴			
b ^ə lîy (בְּלִי) [pronounced b ^ə LEE]	<i>not, without</i>	negative/substantive:	Strong's #1097 BDB #115
ʿāvōwn (אָוֹן) [pronounced ɡaw-VOHN]	<i>iniquity, crime, offense, transgression, depraved action, guilt, punishment from wrongdoing</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #5771 BDB #730

Translation: ...without [committing] a crime. This first portion of v. 4 really belongs with the previous verse. David tells God that he has not sinned, he has not done iniquity, he has not committed a crime. He is being persecuted by Saul without a legitimate reason. Saul's only reasons for persecuting David are jealousy and hatred.

I think at this time, David is also a bit naive. He has remained in the palace after Saul made previous attempts on his life. He is aware of injustices that Saul has committed against him, although he may not realize that some of his military missions were expressly given to him by Saul so that he would die in battle. David recognizes that Saul's pursuit of him is absolutely wrong; however, he may not realize that this is part of life. To have people hate you without a reason is a part of life. To have people persecute you without reason is a part of life.

Application: Most believers are aware that there are people who are persecuted for their beliefs and persecuted for spreading the gospel or the Word of Truth. However, this is not the case here. Saul is persecuting David out of hatred and jealousy. Do not be surprised when you suddenly face injustice; furthermore, don't be surprised when it turns out that this injustice is put upon you by fellow believers.

As an adult and as a former teacher, I must admit that there have been many times when I have told a young person, "Life isn't fair." And, I should acknowledge that I probably made this statement too flippantly at times. It is true that life isn't fair; this is becoming clear to David. However, recognize the cost here to David—he is losing his home, his wife, his position in the palace—David doesn't know that he will suffer no harm at the hand of Saul; he doesn't know unequivocally that, in the future, he will be placed in Saul's stead (David has been anointed by Samuel, but really, how much comfort is that to him now?). David is finding out first-hand that *life isn't fair*, and it is sometimes a difficult lesson.

¹⁴ *The Complete Parallel Bible*; NRSV, REB, NAB, NJB; Oxford University Press; ©1993; p. 1216.

Psalm 59:4a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
rûts (רץ) [pronounced roots]	<i>to run</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7323 BDB #930
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
kûwn (כון) [pronounced koon]	<i>to be established, to be confirmed; to prepare oneself</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Hithpolel (Hithpael) perfect	Strong's #3559 BDB #465

The **Hithpael** is the reflexive of the Piel, and appears to be equivalent to the **Hithpolel** and the **Hithpalal** (which are both found in Owen, but not elsewhere). The Hithpael conveys the idea that one puts himself into the state or the action of the verb, which is an achieved state. Seow gives several uses: (1) Its primary use is reflexive—the verb describes action on or for oneself. That is, the subject of the verb is also the object of the verb. However, this does not completely convey the reflexive use, as there are examples where the verb takes on another object. These verbs are known as tolerative—the subject allows an action to affect himself or herself. (2) Reciprocal use: Occasionally, the Hithpael denotes reciprocity; that is, *they worked with one another, they looked at one another*. (3) The third use is known as iterative, which means that the Hithpael suggests repeated activity (*he walked about, he walked to and fro, and turned back and forth*). (4) The fourth use is known as estimative: the verb indicates how one shows himself or regards himself, whether in truth or by pretense (*he pretended to be sick, they professed to be Jews*).¹⁵ The Hithpael is intensive (and sometimes seen as an accomplished state) and it is something that one does to oneself.

Translation: *They run and they prepare themselves.* The idea here is that these men, prior to coming to David's home, prepared themselves to fight against David. They were heavily armed. He was given no warning—obviously because there was no reason to arrest David in the first place—and these men were completely ready.

Spurgeon comments: *They are all alive and active, they are swift to shed blood. They prepare and use their best tactics; they besiege me in my house, and lay their ambuscades as for some notable enemy. They come up fully armed to the attack and assail me with all the rigour and skill of a host about to storm a castle; and all for no cause, but out of gratuitous malice. So quick are they to obey their cruel master, that they never stay to consider whether their errand is a good one or not; they run at once, and buckle on their harness as they run. To be thus gratuitously attacked is a great grief. To a brave man the danger causes little distress of mind compared with the injustice to which he is subjected. It was a cruel...shame that such a hero as David should be hounded down as if he were a monster, and beset in his house like a wild beast in its den.*¹⁶

Psalm 59:4b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿûwr (עור) [pronounced ʿoor]	<i>to rouse oneself, to awake</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperative with a voluntative hê	Strong's #5782 BDB #734

¹⁵ Choon-Leong Seow, *A Grammar for Biblical Hebrew (Revised Edition)*; Abingdon Press, Nashville; ©1995, pp. 298–299.

¹⁶ Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *A Treasury of David*; e-Sword, Psalm 59:4.

Psalm 59:4b			
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
qârâ' (אָרָא) [pronounced kaw-RAW]	<i>to encounter, to befall, to meet; to assemble [for the purpose of encountering God or exegeting His Word]; to come, to assemble</i>	Qal infinitive construct with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #7122 & #7125 BDB #896
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
râ'âh (רָאָה) [pronounced raw-AWH]	<i>look, see, behold, view, see here, listen up</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperative	Strong's #7200 BDB #906

Translation: [Rouse \[Yourself\] and come \[to\] me and look.](#) David calls upon God to awaken and to look at what is going on. Quite obviously, God does not sleep, and He was not caught up in some other activity. God monitors David's activity every moment of David's life. This is an anthropopathism. It appears as though God is asleep; it appears as though God does not know what is going on. However, God was simply moving forward with his plan for David's life.

Application: David is in an unjust situation. He is being persecuted without a cause. And, it appears as though God is asleep. When we run into some problems, there will be times that we pray to God, and many of these times, God will not solve the problem for us immediately. David will spend the next several years being pursued by Saul and the power of the state. God is not going to make everything nice right now for David. Therefore, we must recognize that we will go through periods of time—sometimes seemingly long periods of time—when we remain in testing; when we remain under pressure. On the other hand, this does not eliminate the need for prayer. Just because God will act according to His own timetable, this does not mean that we should not petition Him.

And You, Y^howah, God of armies, God of Israel;
awaken to visit all of the gentiles;
do not show grace [to] any of treacherous actions of iniquity.
Selah.

Psalm
59:5

And You, Y^howah, God of the Armies, God of Israel;
awaken to visit all the [heathen] nations [with Your wrath].
You will show no grace to those practicing treacherous actions of iniquity.
[Musical] Pause [or, Musical Interlude].

And You, Jehovah, the God of the Armies and the God of Israel—
Wake Yourself and visit all the heathen with Your wrath.
Show no grace to those who practice evil.
[Musical Interlude]

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Early translations:

The Septuagint

And You, Lord God of hosts, the God of Israel, draw near to visit all the heathen; pity not any that work iniquity. Pause.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV	LORD God All-Powerful, you are the God of Israel. Punish the other nations and don't pity those terrible and rebellious people.
NJB	Yahweh, God of Sabaoth, God of Israel, rise up, to punish all the nations, show no mercy to all these malicious traitors.
	<i>Pause</i>
NLT	O LORD God Almighty, the God of Israel, rise up to punish hostile nations. Show no mercy to wicked traitors.
	<i>Interlude</i>
TEV	Rise, LORD God Almighty, and come to my aid; see for yourself, God of Israel! Wake up and punish the heathen; show no mercy to evil traitors!

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

<i>God's Word™</i>	O LORD God of Armies, God of Israel, arise to punish all the nations. Have no pity on any traitors.
JPS (Tanakh)	You, O LORD God of hosts, God of Israel, bestir Yourself to bring all nations to account; have no mercy on any treacherous villain.
	<i>Selah.</i>

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	You, O Lord God of hosts, the God of Israel, arise to visit all the nations; spare none <i>and</i> be not merciful to any who treacherously plot evil. <i>Selah</i> [pause, and calmly think of that]!
NASB	And Thou, O LORD God of hosts, the God of Israel, Awake to punish [lit. <i>visit</i>] all the nations; Do not be gracious to any <i>who are</i> treacherous in iniquity. <i>Selah.</i>
<i>Young's Updated LT</i>	And You, Jehovah, God of Hosts, God of <i>Israel</i> , Awake to inspect all the nations. Favor not any treacherous dealings of iniquity. <i>Selah.</i>

What is the gist of this verse? David calls to God to visit the heathen nations with His wrath. He is asked not to show graciousness to those who habitually practice acts of evil.

You will note most obviously in this verse that this is a major change. We suddenly go from David and his being pursued by Saul, to the God of the armies of Israel and Gentile nations seem to be brought into this. Recall that it has already been pointed out that, structurally speaking, this psalm is somewhat messy. This observation is even more clear in this verse.

Psalm 59:5a

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
ʾattâh (אַתָּה) [pronounced <i>ah-t-TAW</i>]	<i>you</i> (often, the verb <i>to be</i> is implied)	2 nd person masculine singular, personal pronoun	Strong's #859 BDB #61
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly <i>yhoh-WAH</i>]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
ʾêlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced <i>el-o-HEEM</i>]	<i>gods or God; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43
ts ^{eb} âʾôwth (צְבָאוֹת) [pronounced <i>tz^{eb}-vaw-OHTH</i>]	<i>armies, wars</i>	masculine plural noun, simply the plural of Strong's #6635, but often used in titles	Strong's #6635 BDB #838
ʾêlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced <i>el-o-HEEM</i>]	<i>gods or God; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43
Yis ^{ra} ʾêl (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced <i>yis-raw-ALE</i>]	transliterated <i>Israel</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3478 BDB #975
qîyts (קִיַּץ) [pronounced <i>keets</i>] ¹⁷	<i>to be aroused out of sleep, to be aroused from the slumber of death, to be awakened</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperative with the voluntative hê	Strong's #6974 BDB #884
lâmed (ל) (pronounced <i>l</i>)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
pâqad (פָּקַד) [pronounced <i>paw-KAHD</i>]	<i>to go to a person, to visit, to have personal contact with, to sort out, to visit a person, to commit, to charge to the care of, to fall upon, to attack, to number, to take a census</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #6485 BDB #823
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced <i>kohl</i>]	<i>the whole, all of, the entirety of, all; can also be rendered any of with a plural noun</i>	masculine singular construct followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
gôwyîm (גוֹיִם) [pronounced <i>goh-YEEM</i>]	<i>Gentiles, [Gentile] nation, people, nation</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #1471 BDB #156

¹⁷ This is spelled differently in the *New Englishman's Concordance* and by Gesenius; and it is spelled like this in Owens, BDB and by Langenscheidt.

Translation: *And You, Y^howah, God of the Armies, God of Israel; awaken to visit all the [heathen] nations [with Your wrath].* This is kind of interesting. Suddenly David has seemingly forgotten all about Saul, as he implores God to visit the surrounding heathen nations with His wrath. The verb used here is very similar to the British slang term *to sort out*. The idea of this verb is that there is to be direct contact to occur between the *sorter* and the *sortee*. This verb can ask God to visit with blessing and it can ask Him to visit with wrath. The context determines how we are to understand the usage of the verb. In the next part of this verse, it will be clear how this is to be understood.

This verse also clues us in that this particular psalm has more than the simple application of David's problems and David's immediate enemies. This psalm applies similarly to Israel and Israel's enemies (whom David had fought on many occasions). Israel was surrounded by enemies. These were men of bloodshed who sought to ambush Israel at every turn. They were fierce men who were ready to launch an attack against Israel whenever they were strong enough. And, as David has pointed out in the previous verse, this is apart from Israel deserving their wrath.

De Wette suggests that this use of *Goiim* refers not necessarily to enemy gentiles, but any person or persons who by their general character and spirit indicated that they were without knowledge of the true God.¹⁸ Although this may be true, referring to Jehovah as *God of the Armies* is more consistent with giving a wider application of this psalm. I am not in disagreement with De Wette here—this term is surely applied to the enemies of David—however, one should not miss the point that this psalm applies to both David and to Israel as persecuted without a cause.

Along these same lines, let me insert what Barnes has to say: *DeWette infers that the psalm could not have been composed on the occasion referred to in the title, and argues, that this term could not be applied by David to Saul and his followers. This objection, however, will lose its force if the word is understood as denoting people who had the usual character of pagans, who were fierce, bloody, savage, cruel. In this sense the word might be employed with reference to those who were engaged in seeking the life of David. David, using the common word "heathen" or "nations," as denoting those who are wicked, cruel, harsh, prays that God would awake to visit them; that is, to visit them for purposes of punishment, or so to visit them as to prevent their carrying out their designs.*¹⁹

There is actually no problem here at all. David is simply making a wider application, and making one where we may be surprised to see it. David has fought against the Gentile nations for several years now. Every implication and direct statement of Scripture indicates that the surrounding nations led unprovoked attacks upon Israel on several occasions (see, for instance, I Sam. 11:1–13:5). David has had to respond to these attacks many times, and he sees, in this verse, the parallel between Saul's unjust persecution of him and the Gentiles unjust attacks against Israel. In both cases, it is the same God who is over all. In the wider application, David has observed (or was aware of) many occasions when God had delivered Israel (see I Sam. 7:1–14 14:1–15 17:41–52).

Psalm 59:5b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾal (אֵל) [pronounced <i>al</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.

¹⁸ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes, Psalms; Volume 2*, reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 145.

¹⁹ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes, Psalms; Volume 2*, reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 148.

Psalm 59:5b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
chânan (חָנַן) [pronounced <i>khaw-NAHN</i>]	<i>to bend, to stoop over, to show favor, to show grace as a superior would do on behalf of an inferior, to show mercy, to be gracious</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	#2603, 2589 BDB #335
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced <i>kohl</i>]	with a plural noun, it is rendered <i>all of; any of</i>	masculine singular construct with a masculine plural noun	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
bâgad (בָּגַד) [pronounced <i>baw-GAHD</i>]	<i>to behave deceitfully, to act covertly, to act fraudulently, to act in bad faith, to behave faithlessly; to oppress, to afflict</i>	masculine plural, Qal active participle	Strong's #898 BDB #93
ʾâven (אָוֵן) [pronounced <i>AW-ven</i>]	<i>iniquity, misfortune which results from iniquity</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #205 BDB #19

Translation: You will show no grace to those practicing treacherous actions of iniquity. We have an unusual combination of words. The final verb is a description of those to whom God should show no grace, and these are those who act covertly, fraudulently, faithlessly; who oppress and afflict others. Plus, this verb is affixed to the word for *iniquity, misfortune*. So, not only do they act covertly and fraudulently, but with malice and hatred—their desire is to cause those with whom they come in contact to suffer misfortune. Therefore, David calls upon God to come into contact with these types, and to show them no mercy or grace.

Application: It is okay in Scripture to pray for the destruction and/or discipline of your enemies. There might be times when you pray for them and that God touches them; however, when they are too far gone, then you may pray for God to take them out (an act which you cannot do yourself).

Spurgeon comments: *Shall Jehovah endure to see his people oppressed? Shall the God of hosts permit his enemies to exult over his servant? Shall the faithful God of a chosen people leave his chosen to perish? The name of God is, even in a literal sense, a fortress and high tower for all his people. What a forceful petition is contained in the words, "awake to visit!" Actively punish, in wisdom judge, with force chastise. "Be not merciful to any wicked transgressors." Be merciful to them as men, but not as transgressors; if they continue hardened in their sin, do not wink at their oppression. To wink at sin in transgressors will be to leave the righteous under their power, therefore do not pass by their offences but deal out the due reward. The Psalmist feels that the overthrow of oppression which was so needful for himself must be equally desirable for multitudes of the godly placed in like positions, and therefore he prays for the whole company of the faithful, and against the entire confraternity of traitors.*²⁰

²⁰ Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *A Treasury of David*; e-Sword, Psalm 59:5.

Psalm 59:5c

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

The verbal cognate is ʿâlâh (חֶלֶח) [pronounced saw-LAW], which means *to lift up and toss aside*. In the Piel stem, it means *to weigh*, which involves lifting up the object and placing it upon the balance. Gesenius gives the meaning of çelâh as *rest, silence, pause*, as çelâh does not necessarily have to match the meaning of its cognates. My thinking, which is a combination of BDB and Gesenius, is that the voices build up to a crescendo here, and, very likely, they are then followed by a vocal (but not necessarily, musical) silence. This would reconcile the points made by Gesenius and still make this compatible with its cognates.²¹ Another very reasonable possibility is that the instruments *are lifted up* for a musical interlude. The NLT translation of *Interlude* is very good.

Translation: [\[Musical\] Pause](#) [\[or, Musical Interlude\]](#) As described in the exegesis, this word çelâh comes from a verb which means *to lift up*. It is reasonable to assume that those who are playing musical instruments are to lift up these instruments and play during a pause in the singing. I believe that this is called the *bridge* in modern music? Keil and Delitzsch suggest: *The music, as Sela directs, here becomes more boisterous; it gives intensity to the strong cry for the judgment of God; and the first unfolding of thought of this Michtam is here brought to a close.*²² Let me suggest that this also is a time where David takes a break from writing, and concentrates on his run. Obviously, he is formulating this as he runs; he does not stop to scratch out a few verses on a rock or a tree; but this represents a break in his thinking, and the music intensifies as he simply runs.

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart and Map Index](#)

The Dogs Return at Night

**They return to the evening;
they growl like the dog
and go about a city.**

Psalm
59:6

**They return with the evening;
they growl like dogs
and go about the city.**

They return in the evening, growling like dogs as they prowl about the city.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Early translations:

The Septuagint

They shall return at evening, and hunger like a dog, and go round about the city.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV

My enemies return at evening,
Growling like dogs roaming the city.

NJB

Back they come at nightfall,
snarling like curs,

²¹ For more discussion, see H.W.F. Gesenius, *Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament*; ©1979 by Baker Books; p. 588.

²² Keil & Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 5, p. 404.

NLT
 prowling through the town.
 They come at night,
 snarling like vicious dogs
 as they prowl the streets.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

JPS (Tanakh) They come each evening growling like dogs,
 roaming the city.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Keil and Delitzsch They come again at evening, they howl like dogs,
 And go the rounds in the city.
 NASB They return at evening, they howl like a dog,
 And go around the city.
 NRSV Each evening they come back,
 howling like dogs,
 and prowling about the city.
 Young's Updated LT They turn back at evening,
 They make a noise like a dog,
 And go round about the city.

What is the gist of this verse? The soldiers left David's, but they returned, behaving like dogs (which is a strong insult in the ancient world).

Psalm 59:6a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
shûw ^b v (שׁוּב) [pronounced shoo ^b v]	<i>to return, to turn, to turn back, to reminisce, to restore something, to bring back something, to revive, to recover something, to make restitution</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7725 BDB #996
lâmed (ל) (pronounced ^l)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
I must admit to being a bit confused by the use of the lâmed here. I would have expected the bêyth preposition (which means <i>in</i>) instead.			
ʿereb (ערב) [pronounced ĠEH-re ^b v]	<i>evening, sunset</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #6153 BDB #787

Translation: *They return with the evening;...* Apparently, the men from Saul came to David's home while it was still light the first time. David had gone home after Saul tried to kill him and it was still daytime. Saul then sends his men to David's home, which was during the day. It appears as though they simply hung out in front of David's home for awhile, causing Michal, his wife, concern (particularly given that her father attempted to kill David within the past hour or so). This is when she tells David that he needs to escape their city.

Psalm 59:6b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
hâmâh (הַמָּה) [pronounced haw-MAW]	to murmur, to growl, to roar, to be boisterous	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1993 BDB #242
kaph or k ^e (כּ) [pronounced k ^e]	like, as, according to; about, approximately	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #453
keleb (כֶּלֶב) [pronounced KĒH-le ^b]	dog	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #3611 BDB #476

Translation: ...they growl like dogs... Dogs in the ancient world were held in very low esteem. Whenever anyone was compared to a dog, it was an insult. This tells us that these men were not particularly quiet in their approach to David's home. We discussed this in I Sam. 19; it is possible that one or two of the officers were purposely noisy outside David's home to give him time and reason to escape. It could have been an argument over their mission. The majority of the men, as they are characterized like dogs here, were no doubt willing and able to carry out Saul's demented commands. In fact, it may be a good idea to examine the **Doctrine of Dogs** at this point. The NIV Study Bible gives us the succinct comment: *The enemies besiege the city like dogs at night on the prowl for food.*²³ The same can be applied to David's enemies who prowl about the outside of his home as well.

Psalm 59:6c

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
çâbab (בּוֹבַב) [pronounced saw ^b -VAH ^b V]	to go about [in a place]; to surround	3 rd person masculine plural, Poel imperfect	Strong's #5437 BDB #685
îyr (עִיר) [pronounced ġeer]	encampment, city, town	feminine singular noun	Strong's #5892 BDB #746

Translation: ...and go about the city. The analogy to dogs is continued. In the ancient world, the dogs would prowl the city generally speaking, they are going to be outside the city walls) looking for food, whether it be trash or whatever they could capture. These dogs were vicious with bad attitudes, so those who came across these dogs would be like someone today walking into a fenced yard with a rottweiler in there. Even dog lovers are not overly enthusiastic about spending time with a large, strange, vicious dog. In the ancient world, this pretty much described all the dogs (although we do not know their actual size; however, most of my sources maintained that the dogs were descendants of wolves).

We have a parallel to this verse in v. 14 (it is exactly the same except for the wâw conjunction at the beginning of v. 14). We have another parallel pair of verses within this psalm—vv. 9 and 17, which verses are remarkably similar, designed to be parallel, but they do not contain precisely the same verbiage.

²³ The NIV Study Bible; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 838.

Behold, they pour out in their mouths,
swords in their lips,
for who hears?

Psalm
59:7

Listen, they gush out [or, *belch*] with their
mouths,
swords in their lips,
for [they say], “Who hears [us]?”

Listens, from their mouths comes a stream of abuse,
their lips are like swords;
and they think, “Who hears us?”

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Early translations:

The Septuagint Behold, they will utter a voice with their mouth, and a sword is in their lips; for who, *they say*, has heard?

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV They curse and their words cut like swords,
as they say to themselves, “No one can hear us!”

NLT Listen to the filth that comes from their mouths,
the piercing swords that fly from their lips.
“Who can hurt us?” they sneer.

REB From their mouths comes stream of abuse,
and words that wound are on their lips;
for they say, ‘Who will hear us?’

TEV Listen to their insults and threats.
Their tongues are like swords in their mouths,
yet they think that no one hears them.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God’s Word[™] See what pours out of their mouths—
swords from their lips!
[They think,] “Who will hear us?”

JPS (Tanakh) They rave with their mouths,
sharp words are on their lips;
[they think,] “Who hears?”

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

The Amplified Bible Behold, they belch out [insults with their mouth; swords [of sarcasm, ridicule, slander and lies] are in their lips; for who, they think, hears us?

NASB Behold, they belch forth with their mouth;
Swords are in their lips,
For, *they say*, “Who hears?”

NRSV There they are, bellowing with their mouths,
with sharp words [Heb. *with swords*] on their lips—
for “Who,” they think, [Heb. lacks *they think*] “will hear us?”

Young’s Updated LT Lo, they belch out with their mouths,
Swords *are* in their lips, for “Who hears?”

What is the gist of this verse? The soldiers outside David's home had, apparently, some very hurtful things to say. My guess is that one or two of them balked at this assignment of Saul's, and they argued about it outside of David's home, thinking that no one could hear them. Apparently, things that were said about David were very negative.

Psalm 59:7a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
hinnêh (הִנֵּה) [pronounced hin-NAY]	<i>lo, behold, or more freely, observe, look here, look, listen, pay attention, get this, check this out</i>	interjection, demonstrative particle	Strong's #2009 (and #518, 2006) BDB #243
nâba ^c (נָבַח) [pronounced naw ^b -VAHG]	<i>to pour out, to gush out, to gush forth, to flow, to spring, to bubble up</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #5042 BDB #615
<p>Barnes: The word nâba^c means properly <i>to boil forth; to gush out, to flow;</i> and then, to pour forth copiously, or in a running stream, as a fountain does. Hence, the word means also to pour out "words" - words that flow freely - words of folly, abuse, or reproach. Pro 15:2, "the mouth of fools pours out (or, belches or babbles) foolishness." Pro 15:28, "the mouth of the wicked pour out evil things;" that is, "gushes over" with wicked things - as a fountain overflows. In this place, the word means that the enemies of David who were in pursuit of his life, poured out reproaches and threatenings like a gushing fountain.²⁴</p>			
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
peh (פֶּה) [pronounced peh]	<i>mouth, edge</i>	masculine plural noun with a 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #6310 BDB #804

BDB mistakenly lists this as being singular.

Translation: Listen, they gush out [or, belch] with their mouths,... These few verses tell us a lot about what happened outside of David's home. These soldiers, sent by Saul, begin to speak quite vociferously right outside David's door. Probably, there was an argument about this assignment, and from the mouths of some of them came a litany of jealousy and hatred. What Saul thought and said had an effect upon his own men.

Application: All it takes is one person to begin a chorus of jealousy and hatred against another. I was in a department where, for several years, there were three in that department who spoke ill of me on a regular basis. For that reason, many in that department assumed that I was a substandard teacher. A new department head took over, stopped the gossiping, and the next year, several math teachers came to me for advice, suggestions and help, something that they would not have done in previous years. Several years later, a new department head, one of the three, and again, I became a pariah in the math department. I had changed very little during those periods of time; however, the opinions of the one in power affected how the many of the others in my department perceived me.

This should explain clearly how David could have received such popular acclaim (I Sam. 17–18), and still, Saul was able to round up enough men to go to his house to seize him. Furthermore, not only were they willing to go there,

²⁴ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes; I Samuel to Esther*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 148; slightly edited.

but apparently an argument broke out, and those of the anti-David faction were the loudest and in the majority. Furthermore, we may assume that they eventually swayed the pro-Davidic faction.

The NKJV reads **Indeed, they belch with their mouths...** and the NASB reads **Behold, they belch forth with their mouths...** It is almost as though this is an involuntary action. All of this gas is stored up and it suddenly is set free. What Saul said certainly had an affect on these men; they very likely suffered from their own petty jealousies; and suddenly, outside David's home, all this hatred and jealousy just poured out. **From the mouth of the fool spouts folly...the mouth of the wicked pours our evil things** (Prov. 15:2b, 28b).

From Spurgeon's *Treasury of David: Their malicious speech gushes from them as from a bubbling fountain. The wicked are voluble in slander; their vocabulary of abuse is copious, and as detestable as it is abundant. What torrents of wrathful imprecation will they pour on the godly! They need no prompters, their feelings force for themselves their own vent, and fashion their own expressions.*²⁵

Psalm 59:7b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
chereb (כֶּרֶב) [pronounced <i>khe-RE^BV</i>]	<i>sword, knife, dagger; any sharp tool</i>	feminine plural noun	Strong's #2719 BDB #352
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
sâphâh (שִׁפְהַי) [pronounced saw-FAWH]	<i>lip, tongue; words, speech; dialect, language; edge, border [or, lip] [of something]</i>	feminine plural noun with the 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #8193 BDB #973

Translation: **...swords in their lips,...** Although the previous verse is unclear as to what was gushing from the mouths of the officers of Saul, it is clear in this short phrase that what spewed from their lips was like swords, cutting David to pieces with what they said. We find a similar passage in Prov. 12:18: **There is one who speaks rashly like the thrusts of a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.** Also, Psalm 57:4: **My soul is among lions; I must lie among those who breathe forth fire, sons of men whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue is a sharp sword.** Barnes comments: *The mention of the tongue here has reference, probably, to the abuse and slander to which he was exposed, and which was like a sharp sword that pierced even to the seat of life.*²⁶ Spurgeon: *They speak daggers. Their words pierce like rapiers, and cleave like cutlasses. As the cushion of a lion's paw conceals his claw, so their soft ruby lips contain bloody words.*²⁷

Psalm 59:7c

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

²⁵ *The Treasury of David*; Charles Haddon Spurgeon from e-Sword, Psalm 59:7.

²⁶ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes; I Samuel to Esther*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 134.

²⁷ Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *A Treasury of David*; e-Sword, Psalm 59:7.

Psalm 59:7c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
mîy (מִי) [pronounced mee]	<i>who</i> ; occasionally rendered <i>how</i> , <i>in what way</i>	pronominal interrogative	Strong's #4310 BDB #566
shâma' (שָׁמַעַ) [pronounced shaw-MAHG]	<i>to listen, to hear, to listen intently, to listen and obey, to listen and act upon, to listen and give heed to, to hearken to, to be attentive to, to listen and take note of, to listen and be cognizant of</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #8085 BDB #1033

Translation: ...for [they say], "Who hears [us]?" The most clear understanding of this, is that David's enemies did not realize that anyone could hear them. A possible interpretation is, they did not care who heard them. However, the general understanding should be that these men felt no responsibility for their actions or intent. They believe that they can commit a sin without any repercussions. They do not recognize that God is over all and observes their every move. They were servants of the king; the king determined what was right and wrong. Barnes wrote: *That is, no one hears who will be able to punish us. They dread no man; and they have no fear of God.*²⁸ Also see parallel passages Psalm 10:11 64:5 73:11.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon: *They are free from all restraint, they fear no God in heaven, and the government on earth is with them. When men have none to call them to account, there is no accounting for what they will do. He who neither fears God nor regards man sets out upon errands of oppression with gusto, and uses language concerning it of the most atrociously cruel sort. David must have been in a singular plight when he could hear the foul talk and hideous braggings of Saul's black guards around the house...David called them dogs, and no doubt a pretty pack they were, a cursed cursing company of curs. When they said, "Who doth hear?" God was listening, and this David knew, and therefore took courage.*²⁹

I want you to recognize what actually resonated with David: the leaders in this group of soldiers essentially tells the rest of them, "We are the king's servants. We can do whatever he tells us to do. There are no repercussions. We are the law."

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart and Map Index](#)

David Ask God, His Strength, to Destroy His Enemies

**And You, O Y^ehowah, laugh to them;
You scorn to all Gentiles.**

Psalm
59:8

**But you, O Y^ehowah, You mock them;
You scorn all [heathen] nations.**

**But You mock them, O Jehovah,
You scorn the heathen.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Early translations:

²⁸ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes; I Samuel to Esther*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; pp. 148–149.

²⁹ Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *A Treasury of David*; e-Sword, Psalm 59:7.

The Septuagint You, Lord, will laugh them to scorn; You will utterly set at nought all the heathen.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV You, LORD, laugh at them and sneer at the nations.
 NJB For your part, Yahweh, you laugh at them,
 you make mockery of all nations.
 NLT But LORD, you laugh at them.
 You scoff at all the hostile nations.
 TEV But you laugh at them, LORD;
 you mock all the heathen.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

JPS (Tanakh) But You, O LORD, laugh at them;
 You mock all the nations.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

The Amplified Bible But You, O Lord, will laugh at them [in scorn]; You will hold all the nations in derision.
 NASB But Thou, O LORD, dost laugh at them;
 Thou dost scoff at all the nations.
Young's Updated LT And You, O Jehovah, laugh at them,
 You mock all the nations.

What is the gist of this verse? Again, it becomes clear that this psalm has wider application than David's immediate problems. These men in our context believe themselves to be the law (v. 7). God laughs at and scorns these heathen (as well as all heathen).

Psalm 59:8a			
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
ʾattâh (אַתָּה) [pronounced <i>ah-t-TAW</i>]	<i>you</i> (often, the verb <i>to be</i> is implied)	2 nd person masculine singular, personal pronoun	Strong's #859 BDB #61
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly <i>yhoh-WAH</i>]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
sâchaq (סַחַק) [pronounced <i>saw-KHAHK</i>]	<i>to laugh</i> ; by extension, it means <i>to sport, to play, to jest; to mock, to hold in derision</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7832 BDB #965
lâmed (ל) (pronounced <i>l^e</i>)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	preposition with a 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510

Translation: *But you, O Y^ehowah, You mock them;...* Given the previous context, David tells us that God laughs at—He mocks—David’s enemies. These soldiers are smug in their position as Saul’s elite force. They did not fear what anyone heard; they are the law. However, in the eyes of God, they are nothing.

This passage has wider application, as we will see in the next portion of this verse. God does not merely mock these soldiers, but He mocks all heathen nations who treat Israel with disdain.

We have a parallel passage in Psalm 37:12–13: *The wicked plots against the righteous, and gnashes at him with his teeth. Jehovah laughs at him, for He sees his day is coming.* Evil men have a very limited view of this world. They are unable to see God in most cases, and therefore, there is a dimension and a reality in this world that they are complete unaware of. They may blame fate, destiny, or chance; but their real problems are with the laws of God and the person of God. Obviously, God *mocking* the heathen and *laughing at* the wicked are anthropopathisms. The idea is, no matter how clever the heathen (and, in this case, Saul’s servants) believe themselves to be, no matter how far removed they are from all that is godly, these men are subject to God’s laws and the consequences of their actions—and, more importantly, the consequences of their unbelief. Prov. 1:26–32: *I will even laugh at your calamity. I will mock when your dread comes. When your dread comes like a storm, and your calamity comes on like a whirlwind, when distress and anguish come on you, then they will call on me, but I will not answer; they will seek me diligently, but they will not find me, because they hated knowledge and they did not choose the fear of Jehovah. They would not accept My counsel and they spurned all My reproof. Therefore, they will eat of the fruit of their own way, and they will be satiated with their own devices. For the waywardness of the naive will kill them, and the complacency of fools will destroy them.*

Barnes: *This verse expresses the strong conviction of David, that all the efforts of his enemies would be vain; that God “would be” his Protector; and that he would save him from their evil designs.*³⁰

Psalm 59:8b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s Numbers
lâ‘ag (אָגַג) [pronounced law-ḠAHG]	<i>to ridicule, to mock, to scorn, to laugh at, to stammer, to deride</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong’s #3932 BDB #541
lâmed (ל) (pronounced l ^e)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	preposition	No Strong’s # BDB #510
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced kohl]	with a plural noun, it is rendered <i>all of; any of</i>	masculine singular construct with a masculine plural noun	Strong’s #3605 BDB #481
gôwyîm (גוֹיִם) [pronounced goh-YEEM]	<i>Gentiles, [Gentile] nation, people, nation</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong’s #1471 BDB #156

Translation: *...You scorn all [heathen] nations.* Here we are again clued in that this psalm has a wider application than simply David’s personal enemies. The enemies of Israel behave the same way. They gather around Israel and lie in wait; they speak derisively of Israel and of Israel’s God. David informs them that God thinks of them in the same way.

This is also a great insult. David lumps his enemies, which are Saul and his lackeys, in with the Goy, the Gentiles. So, not only does David call them dogs (v. 6), but he calls them Goy as well. He is not insulting Saul and company simply to vent his own frustration—Saul knows God plans to remove him as king, and Saul knows David is his

³⁰ Albert Barnes, *Barnes’ Notes; I Samuel to Esther*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 149.

replacement (David may not know that Saul knows, but the Holy Spirit knows that Saul knows). So, in attacking God's anointed, Saul is behaving like a dog, like a Gentile, like a Goy. Saul (and his servants reveal no understanding of God's grace and God's plan.

Now, here is David's reasoning: he has been with Israel's army for sometime now, and the enemies of God have been unable to stand against the Jews—this is because God scorns the heathen nations. David can now reason from this wide application which he has observed with his own eyes that God will also deliver him, mocking those who stand against him.

Spurgeon has a slightly different take: *As if David had said - What are these fellows who lie in ambush? And what is the king their master, if God be on my side? If not only these but all the heathen nations were besetting the house, yet Jehovah would readily enough disappoint them and deliver me. In the end of all things it will be seen how utterly contemptible and despicable are all the enemies of the cause and kingdom of God. He is a brave man who sees this to-day when the enemy is in great power, and while the church is often as one shut up and besieged in his house.*³¹

We do have a parallel verse to this in Psalm 2:4, which is a psalm about the heathen nations.

**O his [possibly, my] Strength, unto You I am
guarded;
for God [is] my Height.**

Psalm
59:9

**O my Strength, I should be preserved in You
[or, let me sing to You],
for God [is] my refuge.**

**O my Strength, I should be guarded and preserved in You,
for God is my safe refuge.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Early translations:

The Septuagint I will keep my strength, to You, for You, O God, are my helper.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV	You are my mighty fortress, and I depend on you.
NAB	My strength, for you I watch; you, God, are my fortress, my loving God. [the NAB tacks the first part of v. 11 onto the last line of v. 10, as Young seems to do]. ³²
NJB	My strength, I keep my eyes fixed on you.
NLT	For my stronghold is God,... You are my strength; I wait for you to rescue me, for you, O God, are my place of safety.
REB	My strength, I look to you; for God is my strong tower.
TEV	I have confidence in your strength; you are my refuge, O God.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Emphasized Bible (updated) ||O my Strength|| <to you> will I make melody [So it should be. Compare v. 17],

³¹ Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *A Treasury of David*; e-Sword, Psalm 57:8.

³² The NAB follows the verse numbering of the LXX and the MT, both of which list the inscription as v. 1.

God's Word™ For || God || is my high tower.
 O my strength, I watch for you!
 God is my stronghold, my merciful God!

JPS (Tanakh) O my strength, I wait for You,
 for God is my haven.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

The Amplified Bible O my Strength, I will watch *and* give heed to You *and* sing praises; for God is my defense—my protector and high tower.

NASB *Because of his strength* [many manuscripts read *My strength*] I will watch for Thee, For God is my stronghold.

NKJV I will wait for You, O You his Strength [So with MT, Syriac; some Hebrew manuscripts, LXX, Aramaic Targum, Vulgate, *my Strength*]; For God *is* my defense [lit., *fortress*].

Young's Updated LT O my Strength, unto You I take heed, For God *is* my tower—the God of my kindness. [Unlike the NAB above, the last portion of this verse is placed as an actual part of v. 9].

Obviously, I have listed more translations here than for any previous verse in this psalm. That means that there could be a great deal of controversy as to how this verse is translated.

What is the gist of this verse? David looks to God as God should be his strength and fortress.

Psalm 59:9a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿôz (רֹעַ) [pronounced <i>gohz</i>]	<i>strength, might; firmness, defense, refuge, protection; splendor, majesty, glory praise</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd (?) person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5797 BDB #738
So reads the Masoretic text and Syriac; some Hebrew manuscripts, the LXX, the Aramaic Targum and the Vulgate read <i>my Strength</i> . ³³ Also, <i>my Strength</i> is what we find in v. 17, a parallel verse.			
So you can see the actual difference between the two suffixes, <i>my strength</i> is רֹעַי and <i>his strength</i> is רֹעַ, so it would be easy to see how a damaged manuscript or a slip of the pen could change <i>my</i> to <i>his</i> .			
ʿel (לְ) [pronounced <i>e/</i>]	<i>in, into, toward, unto, to, regarding, against</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied; with a 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #413 BDB #39
shâmar (רָחַץ) [pronounced <i>shaw-MAR</i>]	<i>to keep, to guard, to watch, to preserve</i>	1 st person singular, Niphal imperfect with a voluntative hê	Strong's #8104 BDB #1036
Owen lists this verb as a Qal, but it is preceded by an <i>aleph</i> , which is the mark of the Niphal in the 1 st person singular.			
The voluntative hê means that we could insert the helping verbs <i>may, might, ought, should</i> .			

³³ As per New King James Version; Thomas Nelson Publishers; ©1994; p 503, text notes.

Psalm 59:9a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
<p>Rotherham believes that this should read, O my Strength <to you> will I make melody, as that would make this verse more exactly parallel v. 17. The Hebrew for this verb in this verse reads $\text{׳esh}^{\text{e}}\text{m}^{\text{o}}\text{r}^{\text{a}}\text{h}$ (אֲשַׁמְרָה) [pronounced <i>esh-moh-raw</i>] and in v. 17, the verb is $\text{׳}^{\text{a}}\text{zamm}^{\text{e}}\text{r}^{\text{a}}\text{h}$ (אֲזַמְרָה) [pronounced <i>uh-zahm-may-raw</i>], which mean <i>to preserve</i> and <i>to sing</i>, respectively. Since the vowel points were added later, the verb in this verse reads אֲשַׁמְרָה and the verb in v. 17 reads אֲזַמְרָה. As you can see, there is very little difference between the two. Although it would be difficult to visually mistake a shin for a zayin (the only difference in the words), these are fairly similar in sound.</p> <hr/> <p>The similarity between v. 9 and v. 17 could have been intentional. Simply because they are very similar does not mean that they have to read exactly the same. David could be making a point here, which is a play on these words. His attitude in this verse is much different than his attitude in v. 17. It makes more sense that David should ask to be preserved in this verse, wherein we are still dealing with conflict and flight, and more sense for him to desire to sing to God in v. 17, where we are dealing with resolution (at least in David's soul). Therefore, the text just as it stands makes the most sense, as well as allowing a parallelism to be inserted by David.</p>			

Translation: **O my Strength, I should be preserved in You** [or, *let me sing to You*],... When I first looked at this verse and Owen's morphology, I thought, *this is a pisser!* I could see why there were so many different renderings of this verse. However, in all actuality, it does not appear to be that difficult. Owen lists this verb as a Qal, which is the normal stem. However, this word begins with an *aleph*, which is the mark of the Niphal stem in the 1st person. The Niphal is the passive stem, which means that David received the action of the verb. Affixed to *shâmar* is the voluntative *hê*; that is, it ends with *âh*, which indicates that with the verb in the 1st person, we should have the additional words *let me, allow me to*. However, since this is a Niphal verb, we might insert the helping verbs *may, might, ought, should*. David is saying that he *should* be preserved in God. He should receive protection and guarding by God. David understands his place in this world, and therefore recognizes that God *should* preserve him. Given the context, given David's escape to save his own life, given Saul's doggedness with regard to killing David, this translation makes a world of sense. David looks to God, who laughs at Israel's enemies, and says to God, **"I should be preserved in You, [O God] My strength!"**

To recall the exegesis on this portion of the verse: simply because vv. 9 and 17 are very similar, does not require them to read precisely the same. The similarities could very well be intentional on the part of David, indicating a shift in mental attitude from petition (please preserve me) to thanksgiving (allow me to sing Your praises). Textual criticism general supports the most difficult reading, which is the 3rd person masculine singular suffix. This is a much easier passage to exegete and understand when taken as a 1st person masculine singular suffix, which is the rendering that I am going to stick with.

A reasonable question would be, *how would one understand the interpretation of this as a 3rd person masculine singular suffix?* Barnes interprets it in this way: the passage reads *literally*, *"His strength - I will wait upon thee."* *The reference here is not to the strength or power of God, as if the fact that "He" was powerful was a reason why the psalmist should look to him - but it is to the strength or power of the enemy - of Saul and his followers. There is much abruptness in the expression. The psalmist looks at the power of his enemy. "His strength," he cries. It is great. It is beyond my power to resist it. It is so great that I have no other refuge but God; and because it is so great, I will fix my eyes on him alone.*³⁴

³⁴ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes; I Samuel to Esther*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 149. I have included Barnes' interpretation out of respect; however, I believe that I have offered the most reasonable interpretation of this passage, which requires this to read, *my Strength*. Clarke remarks: **Because of his strength will I wait upon thee** - With this reading, I can make no sense of the passage. But instead of ׳uzzo "his strength," ׳uzzi "my strength," is the reading of fourteen of Kennicott's and De Rossi's MSS., of the Vulgate, Septuagint, Chaldee, and, in effect, of the Aethiopia, Syriac, and Arabic; and also of the Anglo-Saxon. Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 59:9.

Psalm 59:9b

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
ʿĕlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced <i>el-o-HEEM</i>]	<i>gods or God; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43
misgâb (מִסְגָּב) [pronounced <i>mis-GA^{BV}</i>]	<i>height, secure height, retreat; a high place, a rock; hence a refuge, secure place</i>	masculine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #4869 BDB #960

Translation: ...for God [is] my refuge. Then David explains why he should expect to be preserved in God—for God is my refuge; God is my secure place; God is my secure height. It is a matter of doctrine that David should expect God's protection and preservation. Barnes: *God was to him "as" a high place, or a place of refuge; a place where he would be safe.*³⁵ The idea here is that David is now on the run, and, unbeknownst to him, he will be a fugitive for another half-decade or so. His security is God; his refuge is God; his safety is God. From a human standpoint, David has had all means of security removed from him. However, from the divine viewpoint, David is just as secure as he has ever been. His security depends upon an unchanging God, and that he has. His security depends upon the promises of an unchanging God, and these are in David's possession.

**[The] God of grace precedes me;
God causes me to see my [insidious]
observers.**

Psalm
59:10

**My God of grace [or, The God of my grace]
goes before me;
God causes me to see my [insidious]
watchers.**

**The God of grace will go before me;
He causes me to see those who are observing me.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Early translations:

The Septuagint My God—His mercy will go before me; my God will show me my enemies.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV You love me and will let me see my enemies defeated.

NAB May God go before me,
and show me my fallen foes.

NLT In his unfailing love, my God will come and help me.
He will let me look down in triumph on all my enemies.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Emphasized Bible (updated) || My God of lovingkindness || will come to meet me,
|| God || will let me look on my adversaries.

³⁵ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes; I Samuel to Esther*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 149.

God's Word™ God will come to meet me.
He will let me gloat over those who spy on me.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

The Amplified Bible My God in His mercy and steadfast love will meet me; God will let me look [triumphantly] on my enemies—those who lie in wait for me.
NASB My God in His lovingkindness will meet me; God will let me look triumphantly upon my foes, ...
Young's Updated LT God does go before me, He causes me to look on my enemies.

What is the gist of this verse? David's protection is guaranteed by God, Who goes before David and allows David to see those who believe themselves to be observing David unawares.

Psalm 59:10a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾēlōhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced el-o-HEEM]	gods or God; transliterated Elohim	masculine plural construct	Strong's #430 BDB #43
cheṣed (חֶסֶד) [pronounced KHEH-sed]	grace, benevolence, mercy, kindness	masculine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #2617 BDB #338
<p>This is read <i>God of my grace</i>, but is written <i>His God of grace</i>. The Aramaic and LXX read <i>His grace</i>. One Aramaic version and 2 early printed editions read <i>my grace</i>.³⁶ As you see, it reads <i>My God of grace</i> in v. 17. According to the textual notes in the NKJV, this is read <i>my God of mercy</i>. However, in some Hebrew manuscripts, the LXX and the Vulgate, this reads <i>my God his mercy</i>. This is written in some Hebrew manuscripts and in the Aramaic targum as <i>O God my mercy</i>. Finally, the Syriac reads <i>O God your mercy</i>.³⁷</p>			
qâdam (קָדַם) [pronounced kaw-DAHM]	to precede, to go before; to get before; to anticipate; to do before; to rush on; to meet, to go to meet anyone	3 rd person masculine singular, Piel imperfect with a 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #6923 BDB #869

Translation: *My God of grace* [or, *The God of my grace*] goes before me;... This verse is clearly a continuation of the one which comes before (*O my Strength, I should be preserved in You, for God [is] my refuge*). David answers his own concerns here. He recognizes that God is a God of grace and that God, since He is omniscient, goes before David. Wherever David goes, God has been before (this is, of course, an anthropopathism—God really doesn't take a trip out before David to check everything out; God is omniscient, not only with regards to place but with regards to time, so He knows all that David will face). But, the idea is that David has had every vestige of human security removed from him, but God is his refuge and God goes before him wherever David goes.

I believe that the most logical reading is *My God of grace* or *The God of my grace*. The insertion of the 3rd person masculine singular suffix in this and the previous verse would allow for there to be some differentiation between God the Son and God the Father; however, there is little else in this psalm which suggests this (as compared, to say, Isa. 43–48, where the trinity is taught in shadow form).

³⁶ Source: Joseph Bryant Rotherham's *The Emphasized Bible*; ©1971 by Kregel Publications; p. 558.

³⁷ New King James Version; Thomas Nelson Publishers; ©1994; p 503, textual notes.

The comments of Spurgeon: *God who is the giver and fountain of all the undeserved goodness I have received, will go before me and lead my way as I march onward. He will meet me in my time of need. Not alone shall I have to confront my foes, but he whose goodness I have long tried and proved will gently clear my way, and be my faithful protector.*³⁸

Psalm 59:10b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾēlōhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced <i>el-o-HEEM</i>]	gods or God; transliterated <i>Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43
râ`âh (רָאָה) [pronounced <i>raw-AWH</i>]	<i>to cause to see, to cause to look; to cause to see [with pleasure]; to cause to know, to cause to learn; to cause to experience [evil or good]</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect with a 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #7200 BDB #906
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
shârar (שָׂרַר) [pronounced <i>shaw-RAHR</i>]	<i>to twist, to twine; to be firm, hard; to press together; to oppress; in the plural participle, adversaries, enemies; [evil] observers, [insidious] watchers</i>	masculine plural, Qal active participle (possibly a Poel participle); pausal form	Strong's #8324 BDB #1004

There are several problems with this word. Owen lists it simply as a masculine plural noun. BDB also lists it as a masculine plural noun, rendering it *[insidious] watcher*. The New Englishman's Hebrew Concordance of the Old Testament and Gesenius both consider this to be a masculine plural, Qal (or possibly Poel) active participle which only occurs in this form in Scripture (the Hebrew Concordance lists the passages Psalm 5:8 54:5 56:2 59:10; BDB adds Psalm 27:10 (11) 92:11(12)). There appears to be a disagreement as to how this word is spelled, which would of course affect how we read it. The relative plethora and variety of meanings are due to disagreeing Hebrew scholars, rather than because there are many meanings that we could attach to this word. The verb as listed by Gesenius and the Hebrew Concordance is found nowhere else. Then renderings *[insidious] watcher, [evil] observer; adversary, enemy* are all apropos to the passages where *shârar* occurs.

Translation: ...God causes me to see my *[insidious] watchers*. Specifically, Saul sent men to watch over David's home and to then seize David. They are the insidious watchers, those who observe David with evil intent.

Application: There are people all around us who observe us for the purpose of bringing us down; or who watch in hopes that we will fall. It is important to mention, by the way, that Saul is a believer. He is a believer and he is out to kill David. Bear in mind that those who try to bring you down are going to very likely be fellow believers, not just Christians, but often Christians who faith is not unlike yours.

Barnes comments: *That is, He will let me see them discomfited, and disappointed in their plans. This is equivalent to saying that God would give him the victory, or would not suffer them to triumph over him.*³⁹

³⁸ Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *A Treasury of David*; e-Sword, Psalm 59:10.

³⁹ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes; I Samuel to Esther*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 149.

**Do not kill them lest forget my people;
shake them in Your power
and bring them down, our Shield, my Adonai.**

Psalm
59:11

**Do not kill them so that my people do not
forget;
shake them [instead] with Your power and
bring them down, my Adonai our Protector.**

**Do not kill them or my people will forget;
shake them instead with Your power and bring them down, O Lord our protector.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Early translations:

The Septuagint Slay them not, lest they forget Your Law; scatter them by Your power, and bring them down, O Lord, my defender.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV Don't kill them, or everyone may forget!
Just use your mighty power
to make them tremble and fall.

NLT Don't kill them, for my people soon forget such lessons;
stagger them with your power, and bring them to their knees,
O Lord our shield.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™ Do not kill them.
Otherwise, my people may forget.
Make them wander aimlessly by your power.
Bring them down, O Lord, our shield,...

JPS (Tanakh) Do not kill them lest my people be unmindful;
with Your power make wanderers of them;
bring them low, O our shield, the Lord,...

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB Do not slay them, lest my people forget;
Scatter them by Your power, and bring them down,
O Lord, our shield.

Young's Updated LT Do not slay them, lest my people forget,
Shake them by Your strength,
And bring them down, O Lord our shield.

What is the gist of this verse? .

Psalm 59:11a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾal (אֵל) [pronounced <i>al</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.
hârag (הָרַג) [pronounced <i>haw-RAHG</i>]	<i>to kill, to slay, to execute; to destroy, to ruin</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal perfect with a 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #2026 BDB #246
pen (פֶּן) [pronounced <i>pen</i>]	<i>lest, peradventure, or else, in order to prevent, or, so that [plus a negative]</i>	conjunction	Strong's #6435 BDB #814
shâkach (שָׁכַח) [pronounced <i>shaw-KAHKH</i>]	<i>to forget; to forget and leave</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7911 BDB #1013
ʿam (עַם) [pronounced <i>gahm</i>]	<i>people</i>	masculine singular collective noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #5971 BDB #766

Translation: *Do not kill them so that my people do not forget;...* Since this psalm has two applications, one personal and one for Israel, this verse also has two interpretations. First the more universal interpretation: David was a student of the Word of God; he knew Israel's history. Israel had a history of forgetting what God had done on their behalf. David asked that their enemies remain so that Israel would always recall how God had delivered them; and, if they forgot, the enemies were right there to attack again, and to be rebuffed against by God (see Deut. 4:9 6:10–12 Judges 2:2–3, 16–23). We know that God answered this prayer as David asked, as there are enemies surrounding Israel to this day. If you examine a map of the Middle East, Israel is a small postage stamp on a very large envelope of enemies.

On a personal level, David is not asking for his enemies—Saul and his officers—to be killed. They will become an object lesson for Israel; how God preserves David yet allows his enemies to live. God will allow for Saul to live for several years, and the contrast between his life and David's will make up the rest of the book of I Samuel.

Barnes comments: *The meaning of this seems to be, Do not destroy them at once, lest, being removed out of the way, the people should forget what was done, or should lose the impression which it is desirable should be produced by their punishment. Let them live, and let them wander about, as exiles under the divine displeasure, that they may be permanent and enduring proofs of the justice of God; of the evil of sin; of the danger of violating the divine law. So Cain wandered on the earth Gen 4:12-14, a living proof of that justice which avenges murder; and so the Jews still wander, a lasting illustration of the justice which followed their rejection of the Messiah. The prayer of the psalmist, therefore, is that the fullest expression might be given to the divine sense of the wrong which his enemies had done, that the salutary lesson might not be soon forgotten, but might be permanent and enduring.*

Psalm 59:11b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
nûwa' (נָוַע) [pronounced NOO-ahg']	<i>to move to and fro, to wag [the head in derision]; to shake, to disturb; to cause to stagger; to cause to totter; to cause to wander</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperative with a 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #5128 BDB #631
Given that the next Hiphil imperative verb means <i>bring [them] down</i> , this verb is most reasonably rendered <i>shake, cause to totter</i> , as you would nûwa' (<i>shake, cause to totter</i>) before you would yârad (<i>bring down, cause to come down</i>).			
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
chayil (חַיִל) [pronounced CHAH-yil]	<i>army, strength, valour, power, might; efficiency; and that which is gotten through strength—wealth, substance</i>	masculine singular noun with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #2428 BDB #298

Translation: ...shake them [instead] with Your power... David wants a clear demonstration of God's power and authority. He wants it to be known that God is in control and that God acts when petitioned. He asks for God to shake Saul and his lackeys.

On the more universal interpretation, David asks for God to shake up Israel's enemies. We have seen this again and again in both ancient and modern history. Today, any believer should be able to recognize that you don't mess with Israel. Israel may have fallen out of favor with God; however, Israel still remains in God's plan and God will not allow his people to be destroyed. Therefore, despite the fact that Israel is tremendously outnumbered in the middle east, and despite the fact that there are a huge number of Arabs who absolutely hate Israel; and despite the fact that even after two wars, Israel is still there—this demonstrates to us God's faithfulness. God has allowed Israel's enemies to remain to demonstrate His power and faithfulness.

Psalm 59:11c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
yârad (יָרַד) [pronounced yaw-RAHD]	<i>cause to go down, cause to come down, to bring down</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperative with a 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #3381 BDB #432
mâgên (מָגֵן) [pronounced maw-GAYN]	<i>shield, smaller shield; protection</i>	masculine singular noun with a 1 st person plural suffix	Strong's #4043 BDB #171

Psalm 59:11c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾādôwn (אֲדוֹן) [pronounced aw-DOHN]	<i>lord, master, owner, superior, sovereign</i>	masculine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #113 BDB #10
<p>Owen incorrectly identifies this as a masculine plural noun with a 1st person singular suffix, and then translates this <i>O Lord</i>, a singular noun with no suffix. The difference between the masculine plural noun with a 1st person singular suffix and a masculine singular noun with a 1st person singular suffix is simply a vowel point. Recall that these vowel points were added roughly a millennium after the last words of the Old Testament were penned. Therefore, Owen more or less correctly identifies this as a masculine plural noun with a 1st person singular suffix. However, even here, the vowel point doesn't exactly match either. A chiriq, which a dot below the consonant, is what we would find for a masculine singular noun with a 1st person singular suffix. A patah, which is hyphen placed below the consonant, and is pronounced as a short <i>a</i>, is what we would find with a masculine plural noun with a 1st person singular suffix. However, what we have here is a Qâmats, which looks like a squashed capital <i>T</i>, and is pronounced as a long <i>a</i>.⁴⁰ Even though it does not match any of the forms exactly, it is taken to mean a masculine plural noun with a 1st person singular suffix; however, every literal rendering I am aware of renders this <i>O Lord</i>, without any suffix (which I can find no justification for).</p>			

Translation: ...and bring them down, my Adonai our Protector. David asks that his personal enemies be brought down by God, Israel's protector. The idea is that the God of Israel, Who has preserved Israel all of these years, will also preserve the psalmist David, Israel's next king.

The more universal interpretation is that God bring down Israel's enemies as well. So, in this verse, although David asks God to cause his (Israel's) enemies to totter and to be brought down, he also asks that they be preserved.

**A sin of their mouth a word of their lips;
 and they are seized in their pride
 and from an oath and from deception they
 enumerate.**

Psalm
59:12

**The sin of their mouth [is] the word of their
 lips.
 They are trapped by their pride
 and on account of the [false] oaths and on
 account of deceptions [that] they utter.**

**They are trapped by the sin of their mouth even the words they speak;
 they are trapped in their pride and in the false oaths and deceptions that they utter.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Early translations:

The Septuagint The sin of their mouth, the word of their lips, let them be even taken in their pride.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV My enemies are liars
 So let them be trapped by their boastful lies.

⁴⁰ And, by the way, the Jews today do not distinguish between these pronunciations, so we really do not know exactly how to distinguish them (I make the distinction in pronunciation by rendering the short *a*, *ah* and the long *a*, *aw*, which is not a universal distinction by any means). The New Englishman's Hebrew Concordance of the Old Testament makes mention of this exact same problem (albeit more briefly) in Gen. 19:18 on p. 15 for the word *lord* (*Lord*).

NLT Because of the sinful things they say,
Because of the evil that is on their lips,
let them be captured by their pride,
their curses, and their lies.

REB Their every word is a sinful utterance.
Let them be taken in their pride,
by the curses and falsehoods they utter.

TEV Sin is on their lips; all their words are sinful;
may they be caught in their pride!
Because they curse and lie,...

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™ ... [because of] the sins from their mouths
and the words on their lips.
Let them be trapped by their own arrogance
because they speak curses and lies.

JPS (Tanakh) ...because of their sinful mouths,
the words on their lips.
Let them be trapped by their pride,
and by the imprecations and lies they utter.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Keil and Delitzsch The sin of their mouth (the sin of the tongue) is the word of their lips;
Let them, then, be taken in their pride, and on account of the curse and deceit which
they wilfully utter. [Taken from their exegesis].

NASB On account of the sin of their mouth and the words of their lips,
Let them even be caught in their pride,
And on account of curses and lies which they utter.

Young's Updated LT The sin of their mouth is a word of their lips,
And they are captured in their pride,
And from the curse and lying they recount.

What is the gist of this verse? These men who pursue David (as well as those who would destroy Israel) are betrayed by their own words.

I am going to say something that I rarely do: this verse was separated correctly from the other verses. Although several of the English translations attempt to affix the end of this verse to the next, v. 12 properly stands on its own.

Psalm 59:12a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
chattâ`th (חַטָּאת) [pronounced <i>khat-TAWTH</i>]	<i>sin</i> or <i>sin-offering</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #2403 BDB #308
peh (פֶּה) [pronounced <i>peh</i>]	<i>mouth, edge</i>	masculine singular noun with a 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #6310 BDB #804

Psalm 59:12a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
dâ ^b vâr (דָּבָר) [pronounced daw ^b -VAWR]	<i>word, saying, doctrine, thing, matter, command</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1697 BDB #182
sâphâh (פִּי) [pronounced saw-FAWH]	<i>lip, tongue; words, speech; dialect, language; edge, border [or, lip] [of something]</i>	feminine plural noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #8193 BDB #973

Translation: *The sin of their mouth [is] the word of their lips,...* Although this verse is properly segregated from the surrounding verses, it is rather difficult to break up without losing some of its flow. The sin of their mouths is equivalent to the words that they speak. I had trouble determining how I should render this phrase until reading the suggestion of John Gill, who inserts the verb *to be* between the phrases. Before, the trouble was the next phrase, *they are trapped [or captured]* and where it belonged. The lack of a connective between the two portions of v. 12a indicate that they are not the subject or object of what is to follow, but they are to be taken together as a subject and predicate nominative, in between which we insert *to be*, which is common in both the Hebrew and the Greek.

In the next portion, we are told that these men are trapped or seized or captured, and on both sides of that verb, we have what has caused them to be trapped. On the front end, *they are captured by the sin of their mouths and by the words of their lips*. It is their very words which condemn them; it is their very words which capture them. Although the verb which follows is not grammatically affixed to this phrase, theologically speaking, it is. The allowances of poetry mean that, even though the verb to follow goes with what follows it, it is still attached to some degree to what precedes it, even though the phrase we are covering can stand on its own.

As I have said before, David overhears the men from outside his home, probably arguing (this verse and v. 7 suggest that David heard these men). Given his popularity, there was obviously some dissent among those who were sent to arrest him. In this argument, it was clear that those who favored his capture would lie about who and what David was.

In applying this psalm to Israel and to the Jews, one of the best examples of a man being captured by the sin of his mouth and the word of his lips would be Hitler, who called for the preservation, glorification and perpetuation of a superior Aryan race, which involved the slaughter of those who were, in many ways, a superior people. He spread innumerable lies about the Jews in order to poison other Germans with hatred.

Psalm 59:12b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
lâkad (לָקַד) [pronounced law-KAHD]	<i>was captured, was seized, was taken, was chosen [by lot]; trapped</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Niphal imperfect	Strong's #3920 BDB #539
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

Psalm 59:12b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
gâ`ôwn (גֹּוֹן) [pronounced <i>gaw-OHN</i>]	<i>pride, arrogance, pomp; glory, splendor, excellence, majesty, exaltation</i>	masculine singular noun with a 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #1347 BDB #144
Gâ`ôwn is obviously a word that can be taken in two ways, and it is found evenly distributed in those two ways throughout Scripture.			
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
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, greater than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
`âlâh (אֵלָהּ) [pronounced <i>aw-LAW</i>]	<i>an oath, a solemn oath, a statement given under oath, a vow, a guarantee, a pledge, a judicial oath, solemn promise, a solemn declaration, a pact, an agreement or obligation, a verbal commitment or contract a curse, an execration</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #423 BDB #46

Translation: *They are trapped by their pride and on account of the [false] oaths...* I had mentioned that there was likely some jealousy on the part of Saul's officers toward David. He rose in the ranks probably faster than anyone in Saul's army, apart from Jonathan. Therefore, he would have taken a place superior in rank to them. Therefore, they would be jealous, prideful. They no doubt pledged loyalty and commitment to David on various occasions, and by this attempt to arrest them, turned these pledges into curses.

On a more universal level, our modern-example is Israel and the Palestinians. No matter what concessions are made to the Palestinians, they will never be happy and the violence in the Middle East will never cease. Their treaties and oaths are meaningless.

Solomon wrote a parallel verse in Prov. 12:13a: *An evil man is ensnared by the transgression of his lips.* Or Psalm 64:8b: *Their own tongue is against them.* The topic of sins of the tongue can be found throughout Scripture. Psalm 10:7 reads: *The mouth of the wicked is full of curses and deceit and oppression; under his tongue is evil and wickedness.* One passage even names 3 sins of the tongues on the list of the worst sins (Prov. 6:16–19). Barnes comments: *In the very midst of their schemes, or while confidently relying on the success of their plans. Even while their hearts are elated, and they are sure of success, let them be arrested, and let their plans be foiled.*⁴¹

⁴¹ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes; I Samuel to Esther*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 150.

Psalm 59:12c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
min (מִן) [pronounced min]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, above, beyond, more than, greater than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
kachash (כַּחַשׁ) [pronounced kah-KHAHSH]	<i>deception, falsehood, fraud, lying; leanness</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #3585 BDB #471
çâphar (סָפַר) [pronounced saw-FAHR]	<i>to recount, to enumerate, to tell with praise, to celebrate, to recall, to declare, to narrate, to tell or declare something from memory, to declare the facts or particulars of, to tell in a specific order</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Piel imperfect; pausal form	Strong's #5608 BDB #707

Translation: ...and on account of deceptions [that] they utter. Those soldiers who stood outside David's door and argued spread lies and deceptions about David, in order to support Saul.

Barnes comments: *That is, on account of the false charges which they have brought against me, and of their bitter imprecations on me. The allusion is to the accusations brought against David, and which were believed by Saul, and which were the foundation of the efforts made by Saul to take his life.*⁴² However, the actual force of David's statement is toward the men outside his home—these are men that he no doubt fought side-by-side with, and these are the men whose lies David has heard. Furthermore, all of the references in this verse are in the plural.

Similarly today, lies and deceptions are spread about the Jews in order to bring them down as a group.

Spurgeon comments: *Sins of the lips are real sins, and punishable sins. Men must not think because their hatred gets no further than railing and blasphemy that therefore they shall be excused. He who takes the will for the deed, will take the word for the deed and deal with men accordingly. Wretches who are persecutors in talk, burners and stabbers with the tongue, shall have a reckoning for their would-be transgressions.*⁴³

To sum up that last portion of this verse, these men standing outside David's door are trapped, captured or seized by three things that they do. (1) They are trapped or captured *in* (or *by means of*) their pride. Their own false estimations of their own power and authority cause them to act without regard to law. There appears to be no discussion among these men as to what is right or wrong. (2) Then they are trapped *from* something. The preposition is *mem*, which, most of the time means *from, out from*. However, their being captured emanates out from their cursing and lying. Their being trapped is *on account of* their lying and cursing, which is a legitimate rendering of *mem*. Although you will note that we have *mem* used twice, we first have the *bêyth* preposition; so, what is the difference here? Do you recall the story of *Brer Rabbit*? It is their pride which first placed their feet into

⁴² Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes; I Samuel to Esther*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 150.

⁴³ Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *A Treasury of David*; e-Sword, Psalm 59:12.

the tar pit. However, in their struggling to get out, it was their lying and cursing which got them firmly entrenched in the tar pit.

**Complete in anger; complete and they [are] not;
and they know that Elohim rules in Jacob to ends of the earth.
Selah.**

Psalm
59:13

**Consume [them] in rage; consume [them] until [lit., and] they [are] not;
so that they know Elohim rules in Jacob to the ends of the earth.
[Musical] Pause [or, Musical Interlude].**

**Consume them in Your rage and consume them until they have been wiped out completely
so that they know that God rules in Jacob all the way to the ends of the earth.
[Musical interlude].**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Early translations:

The Septuagint And for cursing and falsehood will utter destruction be denounced; by the wrath of utter destruction, and shall not be. So will they know that the God of Jacob is Lord of the ends of the earth. Pause.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV Get angry and destroy them. Leaven them in ruin.
Then all the nations will know that you rule in Israel.

NLT Destroy them in your anger
Wipe them out completely
Then the whole world will know
that God reigns in Israel [Hebrew in Jacob]. *Interlude*

REB In wrath bring them to an end,
and they will be no more;
then it will be known to earth's farthest limits
that God is ruler in Jacob. *[Selah]*

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™ Destroy them in your rage.
Destroy them until not one of them is left.
Then they will know that God rules Jacob
to the ends of the earth. *Selah*

JPS (Tanakh) In Your fury put an end to them;
put an end to them that they be no more;
that it may be known to the ends of the earth
that God does rule over Jacob.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB Destroy [lit., bring to an end] them in wrath, destroy [lit., bring to an end] them, that they may be no more;
That men may know that God rules [or, is Ruler] in Jacob,
To the ends of the earth. [Selah.

Young's Updated LT Consume in fury, consume and they are not,
And they know that God is ruling in Jacob,

To the ends of the earth.

Selah.

What is the gist of this verse? Here David calls for these men to be consumed until they are not and so that all will know that God rules in Israel.

Psalm 59:13a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kâlâh (הָלָאָה) [pronounced kaw-LAWH]	<i>to complete, to finish; to prepare; to come to an end; to consume, to waste, to destroy, to annihilate; to make pine away</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Piel imperative	Strong's #3615 BDB #477
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
chêmâh (חֵמָה) [pronounced khay-MAW]	<i>anger, fury, rage, heated anger, wrath; poison</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #2534 BDB #404
kâlâh (הָלָאָה) [pronounced kaw-LAWH]	<i>to complete, to finish, to prepare; to come to an end, to consume, to waste, to destroy, to annihilate; to make pine away</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Piel imperative	Strong's #3615 BDB #477
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʿêyn (אֵין) [pronounced ān]	<i>nothing, not, [is] not; not present, not ready; expresses non-existence, absence or non-possession; there is no</i>	particle of negation; substantive of negation with a 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #369 BDB #34

Translation: Consume [them] in rage; consume [them] until [lit., and] they [are] not;... John Gill comments: *The repetition of the request shows the ardour and vehemency of the mind of the petitioner, and the importunity in which he put up the petition; and suggests that the persons designed were guilty of very great sins, deserving of the wrath of God, and which came upon them to the uttermost.*⁴⁴

David calls for God to take two approaches. This second approach helps us to better nail down the meaning of v. 11. In v. 11, David urges God to *not kill them*. Here, he calls upon God to complete, finish or consume them. Therefore, we must reasonably assume that there are times when God may do one, but not the other; or He may do both. God may spare some and destroy others. I have not found a better explanation for this and v. 11 than this.

A problem which I have observed over the years with regards to interpretation is that a person will hold on to a set of verses and treat them as the end-all, be-all, and will ignore any other Scripture which seems to contradict his beliefs. This is particularly true of cultists. For instance, the Jehovah Witnesses will hold on for dear life to our Lord saying, "My Father is greater than I." and take this to mean that Jesus the Son is inferior to all respects to God and therefore, Jesus cannot be God. The bulk of their related theology is *explaining away* dozens of other verses which clearly state that Jesus is God. All Scripture must be tempered by other verses on the same topic. In this very

⁴⁴ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 59:13.

psalm, David calls for these men *not* to be killed; and in this verse, he calls for God to consume them. Whereas, one might make an argument that one verse in one book contradicts another verse in another book, it would be hard to make such an argument here, as we are talking about vv. 11 and 13. Therefore, our understanding must allow for both verses to stand. This is why I have taken the approach that, there are times when God will leave these people alive as object lessons and there will be times when He destroys them completely, also as object lessons.

As you have no doubt noticed, the LXX ([And for cursing and falsehood will utter destruction be denounced; by the wrath of utter destruction, and shall not be](#)) is very different from what we have in the MT. My guess is that this verse combined with v. 11 gave them fits, so that they interpreted this verse in such a way that it would not seem contradictory to v. 11.

Therefore, what we need to examine here briefly are instances where preservation of the wicked is called for and where their destruction is called for.

Does God Destroy or Does God Preserve His Enemies?	
Preservation	Destruction
Cain, though he kills his brother Abel, is allowed to live. Gen. 4:12	God proclaims that the man who sheds another man's blood will be executed (for instance, the man who kills Cain would be executed). Gen. 4:15 9:6
God allowed several generations of half-men and half-angels to survive until the only believers remaining were Noah and his family. Gen. 6:1–12	God destroyed these half-breeds, allowing only Noah and his family to remain. Gen. 6:13–9:7
The nations hostile to Israel are allowed to continue living in the Land of Promise. Deut. 7:22 Judges 1:27–36 2:21–23	To the nations and peoples who occupied the Land of Promise. Deut. 7:16–18
God allowed many of the men of the cursed exodus generation to survive. Ex. 32:11–14 Num. 14:11–24	God also killed many of those from the cursed exodus generation. Num. 11:33 14:28–35
Psalm 59:11: Do not kill them so that my people do not forget; shake them [instead] with Your power and bring them down, my Adonai our Protector.	Psalm 59:13: Consume [them] in rage; consume [them] until [lit., and] they [are] not; so that they know Elohim rules in Jacob to the ends of the earth.
Saul in I Sam. 15–30. It could be argued that Samuel prayed on behalf of Saul as an intercessory prayer (see I Sam. 15:35).	God removed Saul and his line in I Sam. 31.
Israel's enemies in the Mid-East right now.	Israel's enemies in the Mid-East at the end of the Tribulation.

Whereas, there were some instances above which were a result of intercession (e.g., Moses for the people of Israel), many times God allowed some to live until it suited His purpose (Gen. 4, 6). Therefore, given these instances (which are certainly not exhaustive), we cannot assume that God will annihilate His enemies upon request, nor can they be assured of a life of protection. God preserves them as per His Own purpose and design, and removes them also according to His Own purpose and design.

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart and Map Index](#)

What is very clear in Scripture is that we may pray for the destruction of the ungodly, which often include our enemies. David, in Psalm 104:35a prays: [Let sinners be consumed from the earth and let the wicked be no more.](#) We cannot ignore the several imprecatory psalms (Psalm 69 101 137) nor can we ignore the psalms which are

in part imprecatory (Psalm 33 55 58). If David can pray for the destruction of his enemies, than we may as well. However, note very carefully that, although Saul and his men were David's enemies, David did not himself raise his sword against them (see I Sam. 24 26). I don't want some freak to read about imprecatory prayers and then think that he needs to put *feet* to his prayers.

I know that some of you have heard the Sermon on the Mount taught, but never any of the imprecatory psalms. Your problem is, Jesus said, "Love your enemies. This doesn't sound like love." The love the Jesus referred to is a mental attitude love; he was not bitter, hateful, angry. If he faced Saul's men in a fair fight, he wouldn't seek to kill them. He wouldn't vent a verbal litany of vehemence toward them (which he does not do anywhere in this psalm). However, David is allowed to pray concerning the situation that he finds himself in and he is allowed to pray for God to deal with his enemies. We recognize today that all men are potentially salvageable. We clearly have the option to pray on behalf of our personal enemies or to pray for God to get tough with them. We may end up doing both. What we are clearly prevented from doing is exercising our own vengeance on our personal enemies.

Psalm 59:13b

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
yâda ^c (יָדָעַ) [pronounced <i>yaw-DAHÇ</i>]	<i>to see; to perceive, to acquire knowledge, to know, to become acquainted, to know by experience, to have a knowledge of something</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3045 BDB #393
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
ʿêlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced <i>el-o-HEEM</i>]	<i>gods or God; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43
mâshal (מָשַׁל) [pronounced <i>maw-HAHL</i>]	<i>to rule, to have dominion, to reign</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #4910 BDB #605
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
ya ^c ăqôb (יַאֲקֹב) [pronounced <i>yah-ğuh-KOH^{BV}</i>]	<i>supplanter; insidious, deceitful; to circumvent and is transliterated Jacob</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3290 BDB #784
lâmed (לְ) (pronounced <i>l^e</i>)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
ʿepheç (עֲפֵחַ) [pronounced <i>EH-fes</i>]	<i>end, extremities, extremity, extreme limits; ceasing; soles [extremities] of feet in dual</i>	masculine plural substantive construct	Strong's #657 BDB #67

ʿepheç is used as both a substantive and as an adverb with, of course, different meanings.

Psalm 59:13b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿerets (עֵרֶץ) [pronounced EH-rets]	earth (all or a portion thereof), land	feminine singular noun with a definite article	Strong's #776 BDB #75

Translation: ...so that they know Elohim rules in Jacob to the ends of the earth. The results are similar. In v. 11, they are allowed to live so that all Israel would remember that God is sovereign; here, the result is that all will know that God rules over Jacob (which is a name generally applied to degenerate Israel).

The phrase *to the ends of the earth* can be interpreted in two ways. My thinking is that, had the preposition *as far* as been used, then the point that David would be making is that God rules not only over Jacob, but He rules over the entire world, all the way to the ends of the earth. However, here, the point that God the Holy Spirit is making is that God rules over Jacob, no matter where Jacob is. Israel will be scattered throughout the world. The term used for Israel under discipline or in reversionism is *Jacob*. Therefore, God rules over all Israel, even though they are scattered and under discipline. Compare parallel verses Psalm 83:18.

What we have is a parallel to the wicket who are allowed to live to this day. We are surrounded by those who are consumed by their lusts; by those who are self-righteous; by those who are antagonistic to God. God allows these to live; however, there is coming the time when He will consume them all with fire—the final judgment.

Psalm 59:13c

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

See commentary in v. 5.

Translation: [Musical] Pause [or, Musical Interlude]. Again, David ceases to focus on the words, and the music intensifies, and he runs.

Spurgeon comments: *When a theme so wide and important is introduced, there is a good cause for this rest. Solemn subjects ought not to be hurried over; nor should the condition of the heart while contemplating themes so high be a matter of indifference. Reader, think about this. Sit still for awhile and consider the ways of God with man.*⁴⁵

Let me suggest that the first musical interlude represented David's immediate escape through the window in the wall of the city. He is let down and he just starts running. In his mind, this run is represented by the intensification of the music and the temporary halting of lyrics. However, in this second *Selah*, we have David running with a purpose; with a destination. When Michel first let him out the window, it was, "My father is coming after you; you must flee!" There was little time to do anything. David just got out of the city and began to run. However, during this time, during the time that he thinks about God and God's protection, David realizes in what direction he should run—he should run to Samuel, the prophet who anointed him the next king of Israel. And the music increases in tempo and volume as David now runs with direction and purpose. *Selah!*

⁴⁵ Slightly edited from Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *A Treasury of David*; e-Sword, Psalm 59:13.

Application: So, what do we get from this? David was in a desperate situation. His father-in-law, the king of Israel, pursued him with intent to kill. What David concentrates upon is God—he prays to God to deal with his pursuers; he recognizes that God is his shield; and suddenly, David has guidance and direction. We will find ourselves again and again in difficult situations and the key is to concentrate on Who and What God is, which can only be achieved through the assimilation of His Word.

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart and Map Index](#)

The Dogs Return at Night: a Refrain

**They return to the evening;
they growl like the dog
and go about a city.**

Psalm
59:14

**They return with the evening;
they growl like dogs
and go about the city.**

They return in the evening, growling like dogs as they prowl about the city.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Early translations:

The Septuagint They will return at evening and be hungry as a dog, and go round about the city.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV	Those liars return at evening, growling like dogs roaming the city.
NLT	My enemies come out at night, snarling like vicious dogs as they prowl the streets.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

JPS (Tanakh)	They come each evening growling like dogs, roaming the city.
--------------	---

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB	And they return at evening, they howl like a dog. And go around the city.
<i>Young's Literal Translation</i>	And they turn back at evening, They make a noise like a dog, And they go round about the city.

What is the gist of this verse? This is an exact replication of v. 6 (save for the introductory wāw conjunction). The enemies of David return that evening, prowling about the city like a pack of wild dogs on a hunt.

Psalm 59:14a

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
shûw ^b v (שׁוּב) [pronounced <i>shoo^bv</i>]	<i>to return, to turn, to turn back, to reminisce, to restore something, to bring back something, to revive, to recover something, to make restitution</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7725 BDB #996
lâmed (ל) (pronounced <i>l</i>)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
ʿereb (עֶרֶב) [pronounced <i>ĜĒH-re^bv</i>]	<i>evening, sunset</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #6153 BDB #787

Translation: [They return with the evening](#);... The officers of Saul allowed themselves to be turned back by Michal for the flimsiest of reasons at the first. However, they did return to David's home later that evening, after Saul issued them an unequivocally clear mission statement.

However, here is a possible problem—these men are said to *return in the evening* both here and in v. 6. Did they *return* twice? Very possibly, and it is also reasonable that David heard them. Let me explain: they return that night after having been given their mission statement, bang on David's door, Michal answers, says that David is still very sick, and they storm into the house, finding the household idol in David's bed. They regroup outside, which David apparently hears (see v. 15). I don't know if they look around the city for David, or whether they go outside the city walls and look for him (which would cause David to freeze in his tracks and wait them out). However, regardless of what they did immediately after seeing that David was not there, they *returned* again that night to David's home. They cannot go back to Saul empty-handed. They return again to grab up Michal (another set of details that we would miss in the I Samuel narrative).

Now, what about the more universal application? Israel's enemies return again and again; one defeat, even an undeniably successful one, would only dissuade Israel's enemies for a short while. Recall the Philistines—they continued to come again and again at Israel; they were defeated soundly on many occasions during Saul and David's reigns, but they returned and returned and returned (I Sam. 13:5 14:47 17:1 18:30 etc.).

Psalm 59:14b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
hâmâh (הָמָה) [pronounced <i>haw-MAW</i>]	<i>to murmur, to growl, to roar, to be boisterous</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1993 BDB #242
kaph or k ^e (כ) [pronounced <i>k^e</i>]	<i>like, as, according to; about, approximately</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #453
keleb (כֶּלֶב) [pronounced <i>KĒH-le^bv</i>]	<i>dog</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #3611 BDB #476

Translation: ...they growl like dogs... The voices of these men outside David's house was like listening to a pack of wild dogs on a hunt.

Clarke remarks: *He had mentioned before, Psalm 59:6 that these persons came like beasts of prey round the city striving to get in, that they might take possession. Now, being fully assured of God's protection and that they shall soon be made a public example, he says, Let them return and make a noise like a dog, etc., like dogs, jackals, and other famished creatures, who come howling about the city-walls for something to eat, and wander up and down for meat, grumbling because they are not satisfied.*⁴⁶

Psalm 59:14c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^ə (or v ^ə) (ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and</i>	simple wāw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
çābab (בּוֹבַב) [pronounced <i>saw^b-VAH^bV</i>]	<i>to go about [in a place]; to surround</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Poel imperfect	Strong's #5437 BDB #685
ʿîyr (עִיר) [pronounced <i>geer</i>]	<i>encampment, city, town</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #5892 BDB #746

Translation: ...and go about the city. Saul's men prowled about the city afterwards, apparently, looking for David.

Spurgeon comments: *Here Psalm 59:6 is repeated, as if the psalmist defied his foes and reveled in the thought of their futile search, their malice, their disappointment, their rage, their defeated vigilance, their wasted energy. He laughs to think that all the city would know how they were deceived, and all Israel would ring with the story of the image and the goats' hair in the bed. Nothing was more a subject of Oriental merriment, than a case in which the crafty are deceived, and nothing more makes a man the object of derision than to be outwitted by a woman, as in this instance Saul and his base minions were by Michal.*⁴⁷

Barnes also comments: *The enemies of David came around the city to take David; they shouted and shrieked as dogs bark and howl when they come upon their prey. David asked God to interpose and save him; and then, says he, let them come if they will, and howl around the city; they will find no prey; they will be like hungry dogs from whom their anticipated victim has escaped. Let them come, and howl and rage. They can do no harm. They will meet with disappointment; and such disappointment will be a proper punishment for their sins.*⁴⁸

**They—they move to and fro to eat;
if they are not satisfied, and so they tarry [the
night].**

Psalm
59:15

**They move about [looking for something] to
eat;
if they are not satiated, they murmur.**

**They meander about, looking for something to eat;
they murmur and complain if they are not satiated.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

⁴⁶ Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 59:14; slightly edited.

⁴⁷ Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *A Treasury of David*; e-Sword, Psalm 59:14; slightly edited.

⁴⁸ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes; I Samuel to Esther*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 151; slightly edited.

Psalm 59:15a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾâkal (אָכַל) [pronounced aw-KAHL]	<i>to eat; to devour, to consume, to destroy</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #398 BDB #37

Translation: *They move about [looking for something] to eat;...* The analogy to the dog is continued. The enemies of David are obviously not really looking around for something to eat, but to consume or to destroy that something (which is David). This is what was on the minds of the soldiers that Saul sent back to David's home.

Recall that this psalm also has a wider application. It describes those who are anti-Semitic. They are like a pack of wild dogs searching throughout the city for anything they can consume (which would be the Jews). They are undisciplined, unable to be reasoned with, and completely self-absorbed. They are ruled by bloodlust, which describes those Arab terrorists who are violently anti-Semitic. Their only regret in their evil and vicious actions is that they cannot kill more Jews in the process.

Psalm 59:15b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾîm (אִם) [pronounced eem]	<i>if, though; lo, behold; oh that, if only; when, since, though when (or, if followed by a perfect tense which refers to a past event)</i>	primarily an hypothetical particle	Strong's #518 BDB #49
lôʾ (לֹא or לוֹא) [pronounced low]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
sâbaʿ (שָׂבַע) [pronounced sawʰ-VAHGʰ]	<i>to satisfy, to satisfy [with food or drink], to fill, to satiate; to saturate [land with rain]</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7646 BDB #959
wa or va (וַ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
lûn (לֹן) [pronounced loon]	<i>to cause to lodge, to cause to pass the night, to cause to spend the night; to be stubborn; to murmur or complain [as a stubborn person would]</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #3885 BDB #533

Alternate spelling (which is found here): lîyn (לִיִן) [pronounced leen].

The relationship between the meanings is as follows: one stays the night or remains somewhere; staying somewhere could indicate that one is stubborn or obstinate; a stubborn and obstinate person often will murmur and complain.

Translation: *...if they are not satiated, they murmur.* With regards to food, in the analogy to dogs, if they are unsatiated, then they murmur and complain. However, the idea here, is they did not find David, and they are unsatisfied, so they murmur and complain. There is also the problem that they will have to return to Saul empty-

handed (save for the mission statement). This also causes them a great deal of concern, which they express vocally to one another. They could even face execution if they return empty-handed to the madman Saul.

David either left just in time where he could hear their excited utterances (which would have sounded like murmuring and complaining from outside the city walls), or he simply knew this would be their response. "If we go back to Saul like this, without David, the King will kill us!" They no doubt blamed one another. Those who had second thoughts about bringing David back at first convinced the others to simply return to the palace and tell Saul that David was ill. They didn't really think it through, but they figured that would be a reasonable compromise between those who were gung ho to do Saul's will and those who were reticent to do same. However, when they returned to David's home and found him gone, all of a sudden, this did not seem like a very wise concession for those of the anti-David camp to make. So they murmur and blame one another when they find that David is not at home. They temporarily leave Michal, go outside, argue and probably make an attempt to find David in the night.

For those of you who read ahead in I Sam. 19, you know how these men avoided Saul's wrath, which could have been unreasonable and deadly. They go back to David's home (a third time), grab up Michal, David's wife, Saul's daughter, and they bring her to Saul. The idea is to deflect Saul's livid anger. She will admit to enough to redirect Saul's anger away from his unsuccessful officers.

To the wider application: those anti-Semites who are alive are never satiated. There is no resetting of the boundaries of Israel that will ever satisfy them. What one has to understand with the Jewish-Arab conflict is that it has little to do with reason; Satan, in opposition to all that God plans, wants to destroy the Jewish people. He will do anything within his power to destroy them. Therefore, we will see throughout history tremendous acts of anti-Semitism, which defy human reason and rationale. However, when seen from the spiritual perspective (divine viewpoint), it is clear as to why the anti-Semites act as they do. They are inspired by Satan, to the point that they are reduced to being dogs who roam about the city looking for that which they may consume; a life that is never satisfied, a life filled with murmuring.

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart and Map Index](#)

David Praises God in Song for His Strength and Grace

**And I—I sing [of] Your strength
and I shout aloud in the morning [of] Your
grace;
for You have been a height to me
and a refuge in a day of distress to me.**

Psalm
59:16

**And I [even] I sing [of] Your strength
and in the morning I shout aloud [about] Your
grace;
for You have been a retreat for me
and a refuge for me in [my] day of distress.**

**I, even I, sing of Your power
and in the morning, I shout aloud about Your marvelous grace,
for You are my retreat and You are my refuge in my days of distress.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Early translations:

The Septuagint

But I will sing to Your strength and in the morning I will exult [in] Your mercy; for You have been my supporter and my refuge in the day of my affliction.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV

But I will sing about your strength, my God,
and I will celebrate because of your love.

NLT You are my fortress,
my place of protection in times of trouble.
But as for me, I will sing about your power.
I will shout with joy each morning
because of your unfailing love.
For you have been my refuge,
a place of safety in the day of distress.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™ But I will sing about your strength.
In the morning I will joyfully sing about your mercy.
You have been my stronghold
and a place of safety in times of trouble.

JPS (Tanakh) But I will sing of Your strength,
extol each morning Your faithfulness;
for You have been my haven,
a refuge in time of trouble.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB But, as for me, I shall sing of Thy strength;
Yes, I shall joyfully sing of Thy lovingkindness in the morning,
For Thou hast been my stronghold,
And a refuge in the day of my distress.

Young's Updated LT And I—I sing of Your strength,
And I sing at morning of Your kindness,
For You have been a tower to me,
And a refuge for me in a day of salvation.

What is the gist of this verse? David recognizes and believes that he is in God's hands, and he celebrates this fact.

Psalm 59:16a			
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
ʾânîy (אֲנִי) [pronounced <i>aw-NEE</i>]	<i>I, me</i> ; in answer to a question, it means <i>I am, it is I</i>	1 st person singular, personal pronoun	Strong's #589 BDB #58
shîyr (שִׁיר) [pronounced <i>sheer</i>]	<i>to sing</i>	1 st person singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7891 BDB #1010
ʿôz (עֹז) [pronounced <i>gohz</i>]	<i>strength, might; firmness, defense, refuge, protection; splendor, majesty, glory praise</i>	masculine singular noun with a 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5797 BDB #738

Translation: *And I [even] I sing [of] Your strength...* The attack of his enemies basically just caused David a change of circumstances. Most people dislike change, even though, in retrospect, it has often been for the good. David

wakes up the next morning; he has been temporarily delivered, and he praises God's strength and power over his enemies.

On a more universal level, David sings of God's power and strength over Israel's enemies.

Application: Sometimes we face changes in our lives which we resist. Sometimes, we simply need to accept the changes and allow ourselves to awaken, singing of God's strength.

Psalm 59:16b			
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
rânan (רָנַן) [pronounced <i>raw-NAHN</i>]	<i>to shout for joy, to celebrate with shouting; to celebrate in a loud voice</i>	1 st person singular, Piel imperfect	Strong's #7442 BDB #943
lâmed (ל) (pronounced <i>l</i>)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
bôqer (בֹּקֶר) [pronounced <i>BOH-ker</i>]	<i>morning</i>	masculine singular noun (with a definite article)	Strong's #1242 BDB #133
cheçed (חֶסֶד) [pronounced <i>KHEH-sed</i>]	<i>grace, benevolence, mercy, kindness</i>	masculine singular noun with the 2 nd person singular suffix	Strong's #2617 BDB #338

Translation: ...and in the morning I shout aloud [about] Your grace;... This is a continuation of the thought above. God not only demonstrates His strength in David's ordeal, but His matchless grace.

Note the stark contrast between David and his pursuers. His pursuers wander about, looking for him, murmuring at one another, blaming one another for their situation—David, on the other hand, sings of God's strength and grace that morning.

Psalm 59:16c			
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
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i>]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
misgâb (מִסְגָּב) [pronounced <i>mis-GA^{BV}</i>]	<i>height, secure height, retreat; a high place, a rock; hence a refuge, secure place</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #4869 BDB #960

Psalm 59:16c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lâmed (ל) (pronounced ^l)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	preposition with the 1 st person singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510

Translation: *...for You have been a retreat for me...* David recognizes that he is protected in Jehovah God. God has been a *high place* for him; that is, God takes him out of the problems and lifts him above his problems. Now, this does not mean that Saul is no longer looking for David, nor does it mean that David's life is no longer in danger. However, God allows David to see this situation from God's perspective, which gives David great comfort.

Psalm 59:16d

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
mânôwç (סנוח) [pronounced <i>maw-NOHSS</i>]	<i>flight, a place of escape, refuge</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #4498 BDB #631
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
yôwm (יום) [pronounced <i>yohm</i>]	<i>day, today (with a definite article)</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #3117 BDB #398
tsar (צ) [pronounced <i>tsar</i>]	<i>an adversary, an enemy; narrow, tight and therefore, distress, affliction, intense distress [caused by an adversary]</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #6862 BDB #865
lâmed (ל) (pronounced ^l)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	preposition with the 1 st person singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510

Translation: *...and a refuge for me in [my] day of distress.* God has been a refuge for David during this day of distress—namely Saul's persistent attacks on David's life.

**My Strength, unto You let me sing;
for God, my height
God, my grace.**

Psalm
59:17

**O my Strength, let me sing to You;
for God, [You are] my Refuge
God, [You are] my Grace.**

I will sing to you, O God my Strength, my refuge and my grace.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Early translations:

The Septuagint My Helper, to You I will sing; You are my Supporter, O my God, my Mercy.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV I will sing your praises!
 You are my mighty fortress, and you love me.

NJB My strength, I will make music for you,
 for my stronghold is God,
 the God who loves me faithfully.

NLT O my Strength, to you I sing praises,
 for you, O God, are my refuge,
 the God who shows me unfailing love.

TEV I will praise you, my defender
 My refuge is God,
 the God who loves me.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™ O my strength, I will make music to praise you!
 God is my stronghold, my merciful God!

JPS (Tanakh) O my strength, to You I sing hymns;
 for God is my haven, my faithful God.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB O my strength, I will sing praises to Thee;
 For God is my stronghold, the God who shows me lovingkindness.

Young's Updated LT O my Strength, unto You I sing praise,
 For God *is* my tower, the God of my kindness!

What is the gist of this verse? David ends this psalm calling God his strength, and his refuge, recognizing that Y^ehovah is a God of grace.

Psalm 59:17a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿôz (אָז) [pronounced <i>gohz</i>]	<i>strength, might; firmness, defense, refuge, protection; splendor, majesty, glory praise</i>	masculine singular noun with the 1 st person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5797 BDB #738
ʿel (אֵל) [pronounced <i>e/</i>]	<i>in, into, toward, unto, to, regarding, against</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied; with a 2 nd person masculine singular suffix)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
zâmar (צָמַר) [pronounced <i>zaw-MAHR</i>]	<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 voluntative <i>hê</i>	Strong's #2167–2168 BDB #274

Translation: *O my Strength, let me sing to You;...* As has been said before, it is uncertain exactly when David composed this psalm. Did he do it in his head as he was escaping from Saul? Did he do this the first night of rest, as he tried to calm himself down? Did he write this in retrospect?

My guess is that David began to formulate this song as he was escaping and running away from the city of Saul. Once he came to a place where he was either exhausted or felt relatively safe, he stopped and either wrote this psalm down or fixed the song in his mind. It has a jumbled, disorganized feel to it, which would be what we would expect of a psalm written while on the run. We have themes and verses repeated, which would be easier for one to remember while on the run. I think that in vv. 16–17, David finally sat down and rested, and penned these two verses (probably the next morning after a rest). He actually did not have far to go. As we have seen in I Sam. 19:18, David went to Samuel for guidance. This is not a long trip; it is one that David could have made at night, the darkness being the only thing that would slow him down. I like to think that David finalized this psalm upon awakening the next morning in the care of Samuel. Then David recognizes God's grace and what God had done on his behalf. He recognized that in God he was strong and in God, he was safe. Therefore, David here calls God his Strength.

As we have seen, there are two pairs of verses within this psalm which are almost exactly the same. Furthermore, we have a repetition of themes. David here speaks to God, calling God his Strength. David also called God *my Strength* back in v. 9.

Psalm 59:17b

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
ʿĕlōhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced <i>el-o-HEEM</i>]	<i>gods or God; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43
misgâb (מִסְגָּב) [pronounced <i>mis-GA^{BV}</i>]	<i>height, secure height, retreat; a high place, a rock; hence a refuge, secure place</i>	masculine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #4869 BDB #960

Translation: *...for God, [You are] my Refuge...* David then calls God his refuge. David is searching for a refuge, but his Refuge is with him always, and David writes this in recognition of that.

Note, however, David doesn't stop and march right back to the palace and say, "Here I am." He remains a fugitive from Saul, recognizing that in this state, God can take care of him and that God is his Refuge.

As was just mentioned, David allows for a repetition of themes. Here, he calls God *my Refuge*, which is how he referred to God in both vv. 9 and 16. The idea is that these final two verses are designed to pull the entire psalm together.

Psalm 59:17c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿĕlōhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced <i>el-o-HEEM</i>]	<i>gods or God; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43

Psalm 59:17c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
cheçed (חֶסֶד) [pronounced <i>KHEH-sed</i>]	<i>grace, benevolence, mercy, kindness</i>	masculine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #2617 BDB #338

Translation: ...God, [You are] my Grace. And more importantly than anything else, God is David's grace. We do not deserve and we do not earn what God has given to us. When David calls God *my Grace*, he formally recognizes that he has not earned or deserved God's love.

In this final portion of this last verse, David also calls God *my Grace*. Again, we have a repetition of themes which goes back to vv. 10 and 16. The idea is that, David, in the previous verses, recognized the doctrine and called to mind the doctrine that God was his refuge, his grace and his strength; however, in these final two verses, David feels assured; that is, he catches up emotionally where the rest of his soul was earlier.

Barnes sums this up: *David felt that his deliverance was to be traced wholly to God. He had interposed and had saved him; and it was proper, therefore, that praise should be ascribed to him. The experience of David in the case referred to in this psalm should be an inducement to all who are in danger to put their trust in God; his anticipated feelings of gratitude, and his purpose to praise God when he should be delivered, should awaken in us the resolution to ascribe to God all the praise when we are delivered from impending troubles, and when our lives are lengthened out where we have been in imminent danger. Whatever may have been the means of our rescue, it is to be traced to the interposition of God.*⁵⁰

⁵⁰ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes; I Samuel to Esther*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 152.