

Psalm 63

Psalm 63:1–10

David Finds Fellowship with God in the Dessert Wilderness

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Introduction: We do not know exactly when David penned Psalm 63. We are told in the inscription that he was in the wilderness of Judah, which is where he will spend much of the next several years, hiding from Saul and his army. We may most reasonably place this as the general time period that David wrote this (more on this later in the exegesis). Recall that we have studied how David went from a position of power, respect and wealth, to that of being a fugitive, without earthly resources. God was teaching David how to depend upon Him. God was causing David to focus on Him.

As we often feel in times of pressure, David at times felt as though God had abandoned him. He could not worship at the Tent of God, because Saul had wiped out the population of the city of Nob, the city of priests. One man from that city, Abiathar, came to live with David, as he had become a fugitive as well, narrowly escaping Saul’s slaughter with his life and the Ephod of God. However, this man is very young (probably his early teens) and is more dependent upon David than David is upon him.

What I have emphasized many times is that you personally need a teacher. That is, you need someone who can guide you through the Word of God. You cannot simply pick up the Bible and start reading, and get much out of it (with some exceptions).

Why You Need a Bible Teacher

This psalm is an excellent example. It is a short 11 verse psalm, but if you just read it, apart from being guided by a Bible teacher, it does not hold together. The psalm will appear to be disjointed and aimless. If you don't doubt me, stop reading this and read the psalm to yourself. I will provide you with an accurate translation below:

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A Corrected Translation of Psalm 63

A Psalm of David while he was in the wilderness of Judah.

Elohim, You [are] my God;
I diligently seek You.
My soul has thirsted for You
[and] my flesh has longed for You
in a dry and exhausting land without water.
Thus, in the sacred [Tent] I have beheld You
to perceive Your strength and Your glory.
Because Your grace is better than life [itself],
I give praise to You [lit., *my lips praise You*].
So I celebrate You in my being alive
I lift my hands before Your name [or, *reputation*].
My soul is satiated as [with] fat and oil,
and my mouth celebrates with joyful words.
When I recall You [while] upon the couch,
I meditate on You in the [night] watches.
Because You have been a help to me
and I shout for joy in the shadow of Your wings.
My soul has clung to You
and Your right hand has taken a hold of [or, *supports*] me.
They seek my soul for destruction
they will enter into the depths of the earth.
They deliver him over [to] hands of the sword;
they are a portion for jackals.
The king will rejoice in Elohim
and those swearing by Him will glory [or, *will be praised*],
for the mouths of those speaking lies will be shut up.

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See? David first talks about thirsting for God, as if he is without God; but then he celebrates God and thinks about God. God's right hand supports David. Then we have these guys who are seeking David's life, but God will see that they are jackal food. Finally, there is something about a king who either glories or is praised and those who lie are shut up. Certainly, all of these things are true, more or less, but this psalm should appear to you to be unfocused. Like David just wrote down some miscellaneous thoughts and then put music to it. However, if you have studied David's other psalms with me, then you know that David is highly organized and that his psalms reflect this characteristic of David. So, what's the deal? The deal is, you read this on your own, and that is why it did not seem to hang together as a whole, but appeared to be a variety of thoughts written down, added together, and suddenly, it is a psalm. I hope that you recognize that maybe you did not really get from this psalm what David was teaching.

Why You Need a Bible Teacher—Part II: the Key to Psalm 63

Now let me give you the key to this psalm. If you do not understand the gist of the psalm, then it sounds like

Why You Need a Bible Teacher—Part II: the Key to Psalm 63

David is schizophrenic, and that his thinking appears to be scattered and disorganized. However, if there is one thing you should recognize about David's psalms is that they are highly organized and well thought-out. David has enjoyed a real relationship with God, but it has been tied to traditional worship at the Tent of God. Now, not only does he find himself in the Judæan desert apart from the Tent of God, but the city of the priests has been destroyed, along with all of their families and that aspect of worship for David is gone, and he does not know how long this will be the case. David, however, recognizes that God's character and God's blessings exist with or without formal religious services related to the Tabernacle. Therefore, David brings what he knows about God to mind—he recalls those things about God which will sustain him under pressure. In other words, David is applying doctrine to his situation. As Bob Thieme would have put it, David is applying one of the problem-solving devices to his life. David knows and understands the character of God, and God's character does not change under any circumstance; so, since God is still God, David can continue to trust in Him and to be refreshed by Him, even though he can no longer attend Tabernacle services. Since God is God, then David can further trust Him to right all wrongs, and to destroy David's enemies. Those who depend upon God will be vindicated, and those who look to destroy David will they themselves be destroyed.

Then we have the *problem* of v. 11, where David says, [The king will rejoice in God](#). This causes most exegetes to become discombobulated, because David isn't the king; and Saul is not the kind of king to rejoice in God. So, therefore, this can't be written while David is out in the desert, hiding from Saul. But, their problem is, they do not understand the gist of this psalm. This psalm marks a great turning point in David's life. We've discussed his application of the problem-solving devices to his situation; but in this verse, he recognizes that he will be king, that he will rule over Israel, and that human viewpoint no longer applies. This psalm marks the point in time that David accepts his commission and believes in it. We already know that this is David writing from the desert; not from the palace. He hereby accepts his commission and believes God.

Most people have no idea as to what is going on in this psalm. They see it just as a few nice thoughts thrown together. However, this is a tremendous psalm which marks a great turning point in David's life. He recognizes God's presence and control, even out in the desert under the most adverse of circumstances, and he accepts his commission as king as real and definite.

It is unfortunate that the psalms which we have studied are taken out of their historical context. Where David is and what he is going through is an integral part of these psalms. We understand how David changes from chapter to chapter in the narrative of Samuel by examining these psalms; and we understand what David is really saying in these psalms when we examine the narrative context.

On a personal note, when I first exegeted this psalm, I had very little by way of commentary. There just didn't seem to be much here. However, once I understood the key to this psalm, it opened up to me as a flower in the morning, revealing great beauty and depth.

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In contrast, there are a lot of writers who spew meaningless words about this psalm. Generally, I just ignore this stuff. However, it might be important that you see what others have written about this psalm, to see how completely devoid of meaning their take is.

Meaningless Crap Written About Psalm 63

“As the whole Book of Psalms is, oleum effusum (as the spouse speaks of the name of Christ), an ointment poured out upon all sorts of sores, a cerecloth that supple all bruises, a balm that searches all wounds; so are there some certain Psalms that are imperial Psalms; that command over all our affections, and spread themselves over all occasions - catholic, universal Psalms, that apply themselves to all necessities. This is one of these; for of those constitutions which are called apostolical, one is that the church should meet every day to sing this Psalm. And, accordingly, St. Chrysostom testifies 'That it was decreed and ordained by the primitive Fathers, that no day should pass without the public singing of this Psalm.'" - J. J. Stewart Perowne.¹

Clauss describes this psalm as “A precious confession of a soul thirsting after God and his grace, and finding itself quickened through inward communion with him, and which knows how to commit its outward lot also into his hand.”

“Its lesson is, that the consciousness of communion with God in trouble is the sure pledge of deliverance. This is the peculiar fountain of consolation which is opened up to the sufferer in the Psalm.” E. W. Hengstenberg.

This is but a small portion of the worthless literature which is out there. I could include this kind of crap with each and every verse, but I will spare you the misery.

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What is Wrong with the Content of Biblical Commentaries?

The basic problems with commentaries on the psalms (in general) are as follows:

1. They often miss the overall thrust of the psalm.
2. They do not properly integrate it into the historical time and place, and miss the intent and reasons for the psalm. In fact, those who misplace the psalm spend so much time justifying their misplacement, that they never apprehend the reason that a psalm is written.
3. The commentaries tend to be long on devotional thoughts and short on accurate explanations and mechanics.
4. The result is, the content of many commentaries is, *God is really nice and you should like Him*. Even though that is an accurate thought, most psalms have a tad bit more depth than that.

There are times that I wonder, *why am I examining the Scripture in such detail? Why do I do this?* Then I read a commentary and realize, very few exegetes have really bothered to get it right. Very few exegetes have bothered to plumb the depths of Scripture as they should have. They have gone to a banquet and stuffed a couple of crackers and nothing else into their pockets.

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Now that you understand the glue which holds this psalm together, let me give you a general summation: David misses the formal worship of the Tabernacle services and the sacrifices made to God (vv. 1–2). Then David thinks about God’s graciousness, and he is motivated to praise God (vv. 3–4). In fact, David realizes, in musing about God’s grace, that his own soul has become satiated, causing him to praise God again (v. 5). David recognizes that he has a memory which allows him to think about God, to cling to God, and to be upheld by God (vv. 6–8). Now David applies God’s character—His graciousness and faithfulness—to his own present situation: David has enemies, but God will deal with them (vv. 9–10). Those who believe in God will be vindicated, and those who choose a lifestyle of deceit and self-service will be shut down (v. 11).

¹ Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *A Treasury of David*; e-Sword, Psalm 63 introduction. The following two quotes also came from there.

This psalm was written by David while David was in the wilderness desert of Judah; although I have placed it at I Sam. 23:14, David may have written this psalm when he was alone and he may have written it later in this time of exile.

Like any piece of Scripture, someone questions the authorship of this psalm. The reason is, there is a reference to the king in the final verse. The argument is, how can David write favorably about the king if David is not king and the only king on the throne is Saul, who is in reversionism.² Although we will cover this in greater detail when we exegete this verse, there are two basic explanations: (1) David is speaking theoretically about a king on the throne who is faithful to God, or (2) David is speaking of the King of Kings, Who will occupy this throne in the Millennium. In any case, there is no reason to doubt David's authorship. The other reason given that David could not have been the author is that he refers to himself in the 3rd person, if he himself is the king referred to in the final verse. Again, this argument is not valid, as David may not be referring to himself and because many authors, ancient and contemporary, have referred to themselves in the 3rd person. That is simply a literary style, which we have observed before in Scripture. Here's the deal: if the Bible says that David wrote it, then David wrote it. We would have to have a preponderance of evidence to the contrary before we would doubt the veracity of the inscription.

One reasonable option, presented by Barnes, is that David did not write this when he was running from Saul, but later in his life when he was running from his son Absalom, who temporarily dethroned David (II Sam. 15). Barnes suggests that these belong with Psalm 42:1-11 43:1-5 61:1-8, other psalms written (according to Barnes) during this period of time. If this is the case, then David could be the king referred to in the final verse.

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Psalm 63 Inscription

Slavishly literal:

[A Psalm to David in his being in a wilderness of Judah.](#)

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Moderately literal:

[A Psalm of David while he was in the wilderness of Judah.](#)

[A Psalm of David written while in the wilderness of Judah.](#)

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Early translations:

[The Septuagint](#)

[A Psalm of David, when he was in the wilderness of Idumea.](#)

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

TEV [none]. [Footnote: Hebrew Title: *A psalm by David, when he was in the desert of Judea.*]

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

[JPS \(Tanakh\)](#)

[A psalm of David, when he was in the Wilderness of Judah.](#) [This is v. 1 in the JPS].

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

[The Emphasized Bible NASB](#)

[A Melody of David. When he was in the Wilderness of Judah.](#)
[A Psalm of David, when he was in the wilderness of Judah.](#)

² Saul is against God.

Young's Literal Translation A Psalm of David, in his being in the wilderness of Judah.

What is the gist of this verse? David wrote this psalm while in the desert wilderness of Judæa.

Psalm 63 inscription a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
miz ^e môwr (מִזְמוֹר) [pronounced <i>mizê-MOHR</i>]	<i>melody, song, poem, psalm</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #4210 BDB #274
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
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

Translation: A Psalm of David... As we have discussed, this was the way that a *by line* was established for a psalm. David wrote this psalm, and it makes infinitely more sense when so understood.

Psalm 63 inscription b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
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
When verbs in the infinitive construct are preceded by the bêt 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). ³			
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i>]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	Qal infinitive construct with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
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
mid ^e bâr (מִדְּבָר) [pronounced <i>mid^e-BAWR</i>]	<i>wilderness, unpopulated wilderness, desert wilderness</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #4057 BDB #184

³ *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew-English Lexicon*; Hendrickson, ©1979, pp. 90–91.

Psalm 63 inscription b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Y ^h hūwdâh (יְהוּדָה) [pronounced y ^h hoo- DAW]	possibly means <i>to praise, to be praised</i> ; and is transliterated <i>Judah</i>	masculine proper noun/location	Strong's #3063 BDB #397

Clarke: *Instead of Judea, the Vulgate, Septuagint, Ethiopic, Arabic, several of the ancient Latin Psalters, and several of the Latin fathers, read Idumea, or Edom; still there is no evidence that David had ever taken refuge in the deserts of Idumea. The Hebrew text is that which should be preferred; and all the manuscripts are in its favor.*⁴

The Syriac has, "Of David, when he said to the king of Moab, My father and mother fled to thee from the face of Saul; and I also take refuge with thee."⁵ We have no evidence that David took refuge himself with the king of Moab. In fact, this would be counterintuitive, as there were 400 men in Judah who depended upon David at this time. Again, the Hebrew manuscript is to be preferred.

Translation: ...while he was in the wilderness of Judah. This is actually a fairly open time frame, as David spend perhaps a year or three moving about in this general area (the desert wilderness of Judæa). Clarke suggests that David wrote this in the forest of Hereto in the wilderness of Ziph, after having left the presence of Achish.⁶ However, could have been written even as much as a year or three later.

Many suggest that this psalm was written much later in David's life—when Absalom has him on the run. The point to the use of the word *king* in the final verse, saying that David would only use this word if he were already king. However, that makes little sense, because Absalom is king over Israel during this time, not David. So we would encounter essentially the same problem in either case. However, when this psalm is carefully examined, so that it's meaning is clearly understood, then we better understand that its context demands that this be written before David actually becomes king over Israel. The proper interpretation can be found back in **Why You Need a Bible Teacher—Part II: the Key to Psalm 63**.

J. P. Lange tells us: The term "wilderness" (מְדִבְרָה, as distinguished from עֲרָבָה, a steppe) was given to a district which was not regularly cultivated and inhabited, but used for pasturage, being generally without wood and defective in water, but not entirely destitute of vegetation.⁷

I want you to notice something else: David is under pressure right now—his life is in danger. Furthermore, he has no access to the Tent of God. Yet he still has a spiritual life. His relationship with God has not been hampered. In fact, it is because of this situation that David will grow closer to God.

What we have here is possibly a parallel situation. David is in the wilderness of Judæa speaking about the coming King (v. 10), just as John the Baptizer was the forerunner of the Messiah in Matt. 3:1. David is also a type of Christ, being forced to hide in the wilderness, just as the infant Jesus was forced to be hidden from the political power of His day (Matt. 2:13–15, 19–23).

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⁴ Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 63 introduction. Gill confirms this.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 63 introduction.

⁷ Taken from Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *A Treasury of David*; e-Sword, Psalm 63 introduction. Lange referred back to a verb here which was really not related to *wilderness*, so I edited that reference out.

David Yearns for God

Slavishly literal:

Elohim my God, You;
I diligently seek You.
Has thirsted for You my soul;
has longed for You my flesh,
in a land dry and weary without waters.

Moderately literal:

Elohim, You [are] my God;
I diligently seek You [or, I seek You early].
My soul thirsts for You
[and] my flesh longs for You
in a dry and exhausting land without water.

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Elohim, You are my God Whom I diligently seek.
My soul thirsts for you and my flesh longs for You
in this dry and exhausting land of no water.

In the Hebrew, this is v. 2.

Here is how others have handled this verse:

Early translations:

The Peshitta	O God, You are my God; on You I wait; my soul thirsts for You, my flesh longs for You as in a dry and thirsty land where no water is.
The Septuagint	O God, my God, I cry to You early; my soul has thirsted for You; how often has my flesh [longed] after You, in a barren and trackless and dry land!

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV	You are my God, I worship you. In my heart, I long for you, as I would long for a stream in a scorching desert.
NLT	O God, you are my God; I earnestly search for you. My soul thirsts for you; my whole body longs for you in this parched and weary land where there is no water.
REB	God, you are my God; I seek you eagerly with a heart that thirsts for you and a body wasted with longing for you, like a dry land, parched and devoid of water.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™	O God, you are my God. At dawn I search for you. My soul thirsts for you. My body longs for you In a dry, parched land where there is no water.
JPS (Tanakh)	God, You are my God; I search for You, my soul thirsts for You, my body yearns for You, as a parched and thirsty land that has no water.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Updated Emphasized Bible	O God, <my GOD> You are, Earnestly I do desire You, — My soul thirsts for You, My flesh faints for You, In [Syriac has <i>like</i>] a land—dry and wary for want of water,—...
NASB	O God, Thou art my God; I shall seek Thee earnestly [lit., <i>early</i>]; My soul thirst for Thee, my flesh years for Thee In a dry and weary land where there is no water.
Young's Updated LT	O God, You <i>are</i> my God, earnestly do I seek You, My soul has thirsted for You, My flesh has longed for You, In a land dry and weary, without waters.

What is the gist of this verse? David lacks the relationship with God as he once knew it to be. He desires to have that relationship back.

Psalm 63:1a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
`ēlōhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced <i>el-o-HEEM</i>]	<i>gods</i> or <i>God</i> ; transliterated <i>Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43
`ēl (אֵל) [pronounced <i>ALE</i>]	<i>God, God, mighty one, strong,</i> <i>hero</i>	masculine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #410 BDB #42
`attâh (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
shâchar (שָׁחַר) [pronounced <i>shaw-</i> <i>KHAHR</i>]	<i>to diligently seek, to look for</i> <i>diligently, to seek early; to long</i> <i>after; to turn towards</i>	1 st person singular, Piel imperfect, with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #7836 BDB #1007

Translation: *Elohim, You [are] my God; I diligently seek You [or, I seek You early].* *Elohim* is the name for the Trinity. It is a plural noun which is plural because it is plural, and not just emphatic (it is alleged that this noun is the emphatic plural, meaning that it is not plural, but simply emphatic). Being the plural noun, and referring to the Trinity, this means that David is speaking to God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Now, whether or not David had himself a concept of the Trinity is unknown. We do know that very early on, the Trinity was alluded to (Gen. 1:26, which reads: **Then Elohim said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over...all the earth."**) and that the Trinity was also made known to Isaiah (Isa. 48:16, which reads: **"Come near to Me, listen to this. From the first, I have not spoken in secret. From the time it took place, I was there. And now the Lord Jehovah has sent Me and His Spirit."**). For more information on this, please refer back to the **Doctrine of the Trinity** in Deut. 5:11.

There are actually two thoughts here: David addresses this psalm to the Godhead and then he says that he diligently seeks God; he looks for God. This could also mean that David seeks God early. Even though I attended church, I found that the best time for me to study was early in the morning (I'm a morning person); this is when my head was most clear, and I could absorb the most information. It could be that David himself, saddled with the

responsibility that he was, took this time out in the morning, before his 400 refugees were up, to commune with God. Memory would be a part of this (see v. 6); and writing down these psalms would also be a part of David's communion with God.

Application: Diligently seeking God may involve attending almost every church in your city and in the adjacent cities until you find a church where the Word of God is carefully taught. Although seeing books taught verse by verse often suggests that a church is doing their job, this is not always the case. I attended one church where classes were taught on books of the Bible regularly and had high hopes for this church. However, the church was infested with legalism. The fact that their main teachers were women should have been a dead giveaway (after a class, a tape of a woman who taught, and her teaching was riddled with legalism and incorrect doctrine⁸). If a church cannot be found where God's Word is taught correctly, there are many sights now on the internet where there are accurate, doctrinal teachers who post their teachings as MP3 files.

Psalm 63:1b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
tzâmê' (אָמַעַ) [pronounced tzaw-MAY]	<i>to thirst, to be thirsty; [metaphorically] to desire, to strongly desire, to desire eagerly</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #6770 BDB #854
lâmed (ל) [pronounced lû]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	preposition with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
nephesh (נֶפֶשׁ) [pronounced NEH-fesh]	<i>soul, life, living being, desire</i>	feminine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #5315 BDB #659

Translation: My soul thirsts for You... The city of Nob is no more; all of the priests are dead, save one, along with all of their families. Therefore, the Tent of God is abandoned. David cannot go there for spiritual growth. He can look to Abiathar the young priest, who is with him, for guidance, but not for spiritual growth. There is no way that David has any access at this point in time to the Word of God. So, more than you can imagine, David's soul searches for God.

Psalm 63:1c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kâmah (אָמַחַ) [pronounced kaw-MAH]	<i>to long for, to pine for, to long for [something] and to grow faint [from longing]</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #3642 BDB #484
lâmed (ל) [pronounced lû]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	preposition with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510

⁸ The teaching which was most heinous is that the true believer would behave in accordance to certain standards and that those who don't are not really true believers. This is the false doctrine of perseverance of the saints.

Psalm 63:1c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
bâsâr (בָּשָׂר) [pronounced <i>baw-SAWR</i>]	<i>flesh; body; animal meat</i>	masculine singular noun with a 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #1320 BDB #142

Translation: ...[and] my flesh longs for You... David's physical being longs for God. All that David desires more of a relationship with God. We have no idea in this day and age. Down the street from any of us are a half dozen churches (whether they are any good or not is another thing). David had nothing and he longed for God.

In v. 1b, we had David's *soul* thirsting for God; in this portion of v. 1, we have David's *flesh* longing for God. The idea is, the two together make up the entirety of David. All that David is, desires God. Recall that David is out in the desert wilderness with 400 reprobates, so the normal methods of worship are out—i.e., going to the Tabernacle and seeing the priest offer up animal sacrifices. In this psalm, David is going to turn toward God's character and being, and latch onto that, as opposed to reaching those things through ceremonies. This, in fact, is the great break through that David has in this psalm. He is able to turn toward God and to function under divine resources out in the desert wilderness—that is a great turning point in David's life.

Application: Most of us dislike hardship and testing; however, David's greatest growth is had out here in the desert wilderness, under what may be reasonably characterized as exigent circumstances. You may think what you need is a church next door that you can walk to, whose hours perfectly match your schedule, and who's additional services, e.g., child care, are exactly what you need. David here has nothing that he needs, or so it seems. And then he realizes that God is still God, and God is just as much a part of his existence here as He is anywhere else.

Psalm 63:1d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
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
ʿerets (אֶרֶץ) [pronounced <i>EH-rets</i>]	<i>earth (all or a portion thereof), land</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #776 BDB #75
tsiyyâh (צִיָּאָה) [pronounced <i>tzee-YAWH</i>]	<i>dry, dry place, aridity, drought</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #6723 BDB #851
w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʿâyêph (אֵיֵפֶה) [pronounced <i>gay-YAWF</i>]	<i>tired, weary, faint, worn out, exhausted, languishing [from toil or thirst]</i>	masculine singular adjective	Strong's #5889 BDB #746
b ^{eh} y (לֹא) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}LEE</i>]	<i>not, without</i>	negative/substantive	Strong's #1097 BDB #115
mayim (מַיִם) [pronounced <i>MAH-yim</i>]	<i>water, waters</i>	masculine plural noun, pausal form	Strong's #4325 BDB #565

Psalm 63:2a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kên (קַן) [pronounced kane]	<i>so, thus; upright, honest; rightly, well; [it is] so, such, so constituted;</i>	properly, an active participle; used primarily as an adverb	Strong's #3651 BDB #485
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
qôdesh (קֹדֶשׁ) [pronounced koh-DESH]	<i>holiness, sacredness, apartness, that which is holy, holy things</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #6944 BDB #871
châzâh (חָזָה) [pronounced khaw-ZAW]	<i>to see, to behold; to see [God], therefore, to enjoy His favor, to know Him; to choose</i>	1 st person singular, Qal perfect with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #2372 BDB #302

Translation: *Thus, in the sacred [Tent] I have beheld You...* We have the perfect tense here, often referring to a completed event. David has worshiped God in sacred places, and we would assume that to have been the Tent of God. Even though it was not fully functional, and even though we have little about the priests of that day, there was enough spiritual information available for David to grow. David, as we have talked about before, was not yet spiritually mature. This is why we find him in caves and in the desert wilderness and not as a king. He is not ready to be a king. However, David has observed or beheld God and David recognizes the importance of his spiritual life. David recognizes the importance of a relationship with God. This is where we find him at this time.

Psalm 63:2b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^{eh}]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
râ`âh (רָאָה) [pronounced raw-AWH]	<i>to see, to look, to look at, to view, to behold; to perceive, to understand, to learn, to know</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #7200 BDB #906
`ôz (עֹז) [pronounced gôhz]	<i>strength, might; firmness, defense, refuge, protection; splendor, majesty, glory praise</i>	masculine singular noun with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5797 BDB #738
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
kâbôwd (כְּבוֹד) [pronounced kaw ^b -VODE]	<i>glory, abundance, honor</i>	masculine singular adjective that acts like a noun; with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3519 BDB #458

Translation: ...to perceive Your strength and Your glory. When David had observed God, so to speak, in the Holy Tent, he learned about God's great strength and God's great glory. David has not *seen* God's strength and glory, as these things cannot be seen—only their manifestations. However, David has perceived God's strength and glory; he has come to understand these aspects of God's character. He also learned of these things in Tabernacle and when he had access to Holy Writ in the palace (recall that the king was supposed to have a copy of the Law at his disposal). So David learned about God academically, as well as seeing how God functioned in his day to day life. However, he is now under different circumstances. He has no access to the Bible, as it existed in those days. He is no longer one of the top soldiers under Saul. He is not living with Saul's daughter in a nice home anymore. The circumstances for David have changed dramatically. But God has not changed. That is the key to this whole psalm. It appears as though everything has changed, but it has not. David's circumstances have changed, but God is still God. In this psalm, David will realize that God's character remains the same, despite his own changing circumstances. David's access to God remains unfettered, even though, from human viewpoint, it appears as though David has no access to God. He does not have access to God's Word; he cannot attend Tabernacle services. What David does have is internal operating assets. God's Word is in his soul. David has fellowship with God, even though there is no longer a functioning Tabernacle.

Application: At some point in time, all that you have depended upon—the reading of your Bible, the study of Scripture, the attending church—will be suddenly gone. Who knows what might happen? A debilitating illness. The overthrow of your government. Every church in your periphery goes apostate. Circumstances change, your life changes, and you can no longer access doctrine as before. Then what can you use to function with? You must use the doctrine which is built up in your human spirit. Let me give you an analogy: when a hiker finds himself lost without supplies for an extra day in the wilderness, his body will begin to convert his fat into energy. His body will metabolize the fat that he carries and use that so that the hiker can continue to walk and to make progress. We must have these internal assets in our human spirit. If we have a human spirit filled with divine viewpoint, filled with the various problem-solving rationales, then if we must go for a few days without doctrine, or even a few months, we are able to function without our spiritual life going to hell.

Application: Don't misunderstand the previous point. This does not mean that you can simply choose to skip doctrine whenever it is inconvenient. You have a lot of work, you go on vacation, there is a really good television show on. As long as you are able to take in doctrine, then you take in doctrine. As long as you are able to learn about Who and What God is, you continue to learn. There will come a time in your life when you *cannot* take in the Word of God. That is, it will be impossible (and I don't mean difficult or inconvenient; I mean impossible). That is when your body can begin to draw upon the fat that you have stored up.

Finally, this does not mean that you should go out and try to gain as much weight as humanly possible. I include that for the ½% of complete and total freaks who do everything possible to misinterpret anything which is accurate information.

Now, why does David focus upon God's power and glory? Simple: David knows that God is all-powerful. Saul may have an army behind him; David may not be safe in another country or city (like Gath); the people of Israel may be willing to give David up in a heartbeat (cp. I Sam. 23:12, 19). None of this matters, because David is protected by God. David can depend upon God for his strength. God is all-powerful, so the temporary circumstances which make David think that all is lost—they are meaningless. Let me give you an example. You are the new kid in school and you are tiny and you walk down the hallway in the midst of a plethora of jocks and bullies—by yourself, you may have reason to fear or to be at least apprehensive. However, now walk down that same hallway and your best friend, who is walking beside you, is the biggest, toughest kid in the school. Now you have no reason to fear anyone. You don't mind all of the bullies looking you over, because right next to you walks a kid who can knock the stuffing out of them. So you want them to look and recognize who is your ally. This is David; the hallway is Israel; and the bullies are Saul and his army. However, David is walking down this hallway with God, so no one can lay a hand on him. Only if God allows it to happen can it happen.

Next, why does David focus in on God's glory? Simple: everything that God chooses to happen glorifies Him. Even though David finds himself out in the wilderness of Judæa, the circumstances in which he finds himself are orchestrated by God to glorify God. There is nothing amiss. There have been no mistakes. God isn't going to

What is the gist of this verse? David, even in these exigent circumstances, will praise God because of His matchless grace.

Psalm 63:3a			
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
ṭôwb (טוֹב) [pronounced <i>toh^bv</i>]	<i>pleasant, pleasing, agreeable, good, better</i>	masculine singular adjective which acts like a substantive	Strong's #2896 BDB #373
cheçed (חֶסֶד) [pronounced <i>KHEH-sed</i>]	<i>grace, benevolence, mercy, kindness</i>	masculine singular noun with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #2617 BDB #338
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>min</i>]	<i>from, off, out from, out of, away from, on account of, since, than, more than, greater than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
chayyîym (חַיִּים) [pronounced <i>khay-YEEM</i>]	<i>being alive, being vigorous, having life, sustaining life, living prosperously—it is life as opposed to death</i>	Masculine substantive plural abstract	Strong's #2416 BDB #313

Translation: *Because Your grace is better than life [itself],...* We would have normally turned this phrase around. That is, stated v. 3b first, and then 3a. What follows is that David praises God (more accurately, his lips praise God). David does that because God's grace—His undying and unmerited love—to us is greater than our human existence. David does not know exactly what the future holds for him. He knows that he will be king over Israel. However, he knows, more importantly, that he can depend upon God's grace throughout his life. In fact, his life, apart from grace, is worth nothing. Therefore, God's grace is greater than David's human existence. God's grace is greater than anything in this life.

What David has done is he has focused on three aspects of God's character and purpose: His strength, His glory and His graciousness. God is all-powerful no matter what circumstances David finds himself in. Even though things may seem bleak, God is grace and He is pouring his unfiltered love upon David. So David cannot become discouraged, nor is there any reason for him to doubt God. The psalms of this general time period show that David is making great spiritual strides, and that, if anytime, he is experiencing accelerated growth, growth which would be impossible under non-adverse circumstances. God has plans for David—incredible plans, and God must get David prepared for these things which will come to pass. Therefore, God must do whatever it is to prepare David. Remember that, not only will David rule over all Israel, and not only will the Messiah come through David's bloodline, but David will be a type of Christ. Few men will further the plan of God like David. Therefore, his preparation must be carefully directed and intense.

David, at first, was running for his life. Ever since his wife, Michal, let him down through the window of their home, David has been running from Saul, trying to preserve his own life. He's made some tremendous mistakes while running, which are covered in I Sam. 21–22. With this verse, David recognizes that his life is not greater than God's grace. He lives because of God's grace. What David does in this verse is to put things in perspective. David has the divine perspective at this point.

Application: When things don't appear to be going your way, focus on God's power and His graciousness. Then realize that, what God does will glorify Him. Therefore, do not become discouraged or confused by adverse

circumstances. While things are easy, then prepare for the future by taking in doctrine. When things get difficult, then feed off of that doctrine in your soul

Psalm 63:3b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
sâphâh (הָפָה) [pronounced saw-FAWH]	lip, tongue; words, speech; dialect, language; edge, border [or, lip] [of something]	feminine dual noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #8193 BDB #973
shâ ^b vach (חַבַּח) [pronounced shaw ^b -VAHKH]	to still [the waves]; to praise, to soothe with praises; to pronounce happy	3 rd person masculine plural, Piel imperfect with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #7623 BDB #986

Translation: ...I give praise to You [lit., my lips praise You]. Although David is in a place where he is without the ability to attend the services at the Tent of God; he is away from the Word of God; still, David praises God. The basis for his praise was just given—God’s glorious graciousness. David recognizes that these adverse circumstances are a product of God’s power and grace—therefore, who is he to bitch and complain? He has no reason to be upset and he has no reason to doubt God. When examining this situation from God’s viewpoint, taking into consideration God’s character, David’s response is to praise God. Most of you would have the sense to thank God if someone suddenly delivered a wheel barrel of money to you. Please realize that God is also involved when there are unfavorable conditions in your life. So, you go with whatever He chooses for you, and glorify Him, recognizing that He is purposeful, even if we do not immediately recognize the purpose of where he places us and what he allows to be done to us.

**So I bless You in my lives
in Your name I lift up my [two] palms.**

Psalm
63:4

**So I celebrate You in my being alive
I lift my hands before Your name [or,
reputation].**

**Thus I celebrate being alive,
lifting up my hands because of Your character.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Early translations:

The Septuagint Thus I will bless You during my life; I will lift up my hands in Your name.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV As long as I live, I will pray to you.
NLT I will honor you as long as I live,
 lifting up my hands to you in prayer.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God’s Word™ So I will thank you as long as I live.
 I will lift up my hands [to pray] in your name.
JPS (Tanakh) I bless You all my life;
 I lift up my hands, invoking Your name.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

- NASB So I will bless Thee as long as I live;
I will lift up my hands in Thy name.
- NRSV So I will bless you as long as I live;
I will lift up my hands and call on your name.
- Young's Updated LT So I bless You in my life;
In Your name, I lift up my hands.

What is the gist of this verse? David celebrates God while he is alive, giving an external sign of this of raising up his hands.

Recognize that this verse is a parallel to the previous verse. God's graciousness is greater than life itself, so David praises God. Therefore, David will celebrate God for as long as he lives, and he will lift up his hands in praise and worship.

Psalm 63:4a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kên (כֵּן) [pronounced kane]	<i>so, thus; upright, honest; rightly, well; [it is] so, such, so constituted;</i>	properly, an active participle; used primarily as an adverb	Strong's #3651 BDB #485
bârak ^e (בָּרַךְ) [pronounced baw-RAHK ^e]	<i>to invoke God, to praise, to celebrate, to adore, to bless [God]; to bless [men], to invoke blessings; to bless [as God, man and other created things], therefore to cause to prosper, to make happy; to salute anyone [with a blessing]; to curse</i>	1 st person singular, Piel imperfect with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1288 BDB #138
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
chayyîym (חַיִּים) [pronounced khay-YEEM]	<i>being alive, being vigorous, having life, sustaining life, living prosperously—it is life as opposed to death</i>	Masculine substantive plural abstract with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #2416 BDB #313

Translation: So I celebrate You in my being alive... David is alive and God therefore has a purpose for his life. Therefore, even if he is unable to enjoy many of the spiritual blessings that he has had in the past, David can still celebrate, as he can depend upon God.

This historical background is the key to this psalm. David has been running for his life, and then, suddenly, he realizes, "Hey, I am still alive...all of Saul's army is out to kill me but I am still alive." David has already recognized that God's omnipotence and His grace have kept him alive to this point (vv. 2–3). So, rather than concentrate on preserving his own life, David celebrates Who and What God is. He is alive not because he has cleverly eluded Saul, but he is alive because of God's grace and power. Therefore, it would be ridiculous to be in a panic, to be

worried, to distrust God and God's plan. The opposite mental attitude is to not just trust God, but to celebrate God's character.

Psalm 63:4b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
b ^e (ב) [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
shêm (שֵׁם) [pronounced shame]	<i>name, reputation, character</i>	masculine singular noun with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #8034 BDB #1027
nâsâ' (נָסָא) [pronounced naw-SAW]	<i>to lift up, to bear, to carry</i>	1 st person singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5375 (and #4984) BDB #669
kaph (כַּף) [pronounced kaf]	<i>palm, hollow or flat of the hand, sole of the foot; bowl, spoon</i>	masculine dual noun with the 1 st person singular suffix, pausal form	Strong's #3709 BDB #496

Translation: ...I lift my hands before Your name [or, reputation]. Lifting up his hands is giving glory to God and recognizing God's grace and blessings. This is a demonstrative gesture of prayer and reverence. Psalm 28:2: *Hear the voice of my prayers, when I cry to You, when I lift up my hands toward Your Holy Place.* David recognizes and pays homage to God and His grace in this psalm.

Because I tend to go into great detail on each verse, it is sometimes difficult to see the forest through the trees. Therefore, I will put vv. 3–4 together, so that the parallelisms are obvious.

The Parallelisms of Psalm 63:3–4

[Because Your grace is better than life](#) [itself],

[I give praise to You](#) [lit., my lips praise You].

So I celebrate You in my being **alive**

[I lift my hands before Your name](#) [or, reputation].

Lines 1 and 3 are obviously related, as David first says that God's grace is greater than life (chayyîm), therefore he celebrates God because he is alive (chayyîm). Note the exact same word, in the Hebrew, is used.

Lines 2 and 4 give two ways which David praises God: with his lips and with his hands. One may take this a step further, to understand that David praises God in what He says and does.

Note that David's psalms are not just some nice holy words thrown together but that his psalms have structure, relevance, and interdependence. What this would suggest to me is, either we will find a parallelism in vv. 1–2 and 5–6, or that this parallelism could be between vv. 1 and 6 and vv. 2 and 5 (the latter appears to be the case). Therefore, when we finish with v. 6, we will look back on these parallelisms.

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As noted above, David honors God with what he says (v. 3b) and with what he does (v. 4b).

**As fat and fatness is satiated my soul,
and lips of joyfulness praises my mouth.**

Psalm
63:5

**My soul is satiated as [with] fat and oil,
and my mouth celebrates with joyful words.**

**My soul is satisfied as with fat and delicacies
while my mouth celebrates with joyful words.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Early translations:

The Peshitta My soul will be enriched as with cream and fatness; and my mouth will praise You with joyful lips.
The Septuagint Let my soul be filled as with marrow and fatness; and [my] joyful lips will praise You name.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV I will sing joyful praises and be filled with excitement like a guest at a banquet.
NJB All my longings fulfilled as with fat and rich foods, a song of joy on my lips and praise in my mouth.
NLT You satisfy me more than the richest of foods.
 I will praise you with songs of joy.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™ You satisfy my soul with the richest foods.
 My mouth will sing [your] praise with joyful lips.
JPS (Tanakh) I am sated as with a rich feast [lit., *suet and fat*],
 I sing praises with joyful lips.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB My soul is satisfied as with marrow and fatness,
 And my mouth offers praises with joyful lips.
Young's Updated LT As *with* milk and fatness is my soul satisfied,
 And *with* singing lips does my mouth praise.

What is the gist of this verse? David, although out in the desert, on the run, is satisfied in his soul with God and with God's provisions. He continues to praise God.

Psalm 63:5a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
k ^o mô (כִּמּוֹ) [pronounced k ^o moh]	<i>like, as, when; thus, so</i>	Adverb/conjunction	Strong's #3644 BDB #455
chêleb (חֵלֶב) [pronounced KHAY-le ^b v]	<i>fat</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #2459 BDB #316

Psalm 63:5a

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
deshen (דֶּשֶׁן) [pronounced <i>DĒH-shen</i>]	<i>fatness, fat ashes, fertility, abundance; oil</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #1880 BDB #206
sâba ^c (סָבַע) [pronounced <i>saw^b-VAHG</i>]	<i>to satisfy, to satisfy [with food or drink], to fill, to satiate; to saturate [land with rain]</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7646 BDB #959
nephesh (נֶפֶשׁ) [pronounced <i>NEH-fesh</i>]	<i>soul, life, living being, desire</i>	feminine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #5315 BDB #659

Translation: My soul is satiated as [with] fat and oil,... There are certain kinds of foods which make you *feel* full, and often these are foods with fats and oils. Here, we are not speaking of a person literally feeling physically satiated, but rather David's soul which feels spiritually satiated from fellowship with God and knowing God's Word. The reality of David's situation is that he is in the midst of the desert wilderness with 400 reprobates and malcontents, and they are scrambling for any kind of food, and hiding out from Saul. They are in the worst kind of circumstances. The fullness of David's soul is probably in contrast to the occasional hunger that he suffers in hiding out in the Judæan desert. Furthermore, David, as I've pointed out earlier, lacks Tabernacle services as well as access to the Word of God. However, all of these things taken together, and David still says that his soul is satiated. He is happy and he is content. Philip. 4:11–13: **Not that I speak according to need, for I have learned to be content in whatever state I am. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound. In everything and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.** David is at peace with God and his circumstances.

David's soul is satisfied in several ways. First of all, he is a believer in Jesus Christ, and therefore his soul has been redeemed and David will enjoy fellowship with God throughout eternity. Secondly, David is in fellowship; we know this because he is writing Scripture (it would make no sense for an unbeliever or for a believer out of fellowship to write Scripture). Thirdly, David's soul is filled with doctrine—he knows God's Word and he is beginning to apply God's Word. Finally, David is applying the character of God to his circumstances; he knows of God's grace and God's power. Therefore, David is not the scared man hiding out from Saul, but a man filled with power and strength. David is satisfied and grounded and at peace with God and the world.

Psalm 63:5b

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
sâphâh (סָפָה) [pronounced <i>saw-FAWH</i>]	<i>lip, tongue; words, speech; dialect, language; edge, border [or, lip] [of something]</i>	feminine dual construct	Strong's #8193 BDB #973
r ^e nânâh (רִנָּה) [pronounced <i>r^enaw-NAW</i>]	<i>joyful singing, shouting for joy, exultation</i>	feminine plural noun	Strong's #7445 BDB #943

Psalm 63:5b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
hâlal (לָלַל) [pronounced haw-L AHL]	<i>to praise, to sing, to celebrate; to glory</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Piel imperfect	Strong's #1984 BDB #237
peh (פֶּה) [pronounced peh]	<i>mouth, edge</i>	masculine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #6310 BDB #804

Translation: ...and my mouth celebrates with joyful words. In fellowship, David also showed his emotional appreciation of God through singing. Again, for the third time in as many verses, David speaks about praising or celebrating Who and What God is. His psalms reverberate with parallelisms.

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David Recalls God's Hand in His Life

If I remember You upon the couch
in watches I murmur in You.

Psalm
63:6

When I call You to mind [while] upon the
couch,
I meditate on You in the [night] watches.

I recall You at night;
I mediate upon you during the night watches.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Early translations:

The Septuagint If as I remembered You on my bed, in the early seasons I have meditated on You.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV I think about you before I go to sleep,
and my thoughts turn to you during the night.

NJB On my bed when I think of you,
I muse on you in the watches of the night,...

NLT I lie awake thinking of you,
meditating on you through the night.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™ As I lie on my bed, I remember you.
Through the long hours of the night, I think about you.

JPS (Tanakh) ...when I call You to mind upon my bed,
when I think of You in the watches of the night;...

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Updated Emphasized Bible <Should I call You to mind upon my couch>

NASB <In the watches of the night> would I breathe soft speech of You.
 When I remember Thee on my bed,
 I meditates on Thee in the night watches.
 Young's Updated LT If I have remembered You on my couch,
 In the watches—I meditate on You.

What is the gist of this verse? David's turnaround is based upon memory—the doctrine in his soul.

Psalm 63:6a			
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</i> (or, if followed by a perfect tense which refers to a past event)	primarily an hypothetical particle	Strong's #518 BDB #49
zâkar (זָכַר) [pronounced zaw-KAHR]	<i>to remember, to recall, to call to mind</i>	1 st person singular, Qal perfect, 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #2142 BDB #269
ʿal (עַל) [pronounced ǵahl]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
yâtsûwaʿ (יָצוּא) [pronounced yaw-TSOO-ahǵ]	<i>couch, bed</i>	masculine plural noun (plural, because a bed is made up of several components); with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #3326 BDB #426

Translation: *When I call You to mind [while] upon the couch...* This is interesting, because David writes this psalm from the desert wilderness of Judah (inscription and v. 1). What David is doing is looking back to previous times, when he would think of God at night. At his royal home, in the city of Saul, David would have been able to leisurely study the Word of God; and he thinks back upon those times. As a country which seeks to legitimize the gay lifestyle, along with other forms of degeneracy, we do not know what will happen to this nation. We do not know if we will be rocked by earthquakes or subject to vicious terrorism attacks. There will be a time when you will look back on the many days that you spend in Bible class or in the study of God's Word as a time of relaxation, a time when tension was at a minimum, a time that you will view as blessed. This is what David is doing.

Psalm 63:6b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's# none BDB #88
ʿash ^e mûwrâh (אֲשֵׁמוֹרָה) [pronounced ash-moo-RAW]	<i>watch, part of the night, division of time</i>	feminine plural noun	Strong's #821 BDB #1038

Psalm 63:6b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
hâgâh (הָגָה) [pronounced haw-GAW]	to murmur, to mutter, to growl; to utter, to speak; to meditate [to speak to yourself in a low voice], to muse	1 st person singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1897 BDB #211
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within	a preposition of proximity with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's# none BDB #88

Translation: ...[then] I meditate on You in the [night] watches. There were three night watches, and David is not specific here, but is referring to any time in the past when he would recall God. When he would wake up thinking about God, he would meditate about God. Now, this is not the sort of meditation where your mind goes blank, but the word means that someone is murmuring quietly to themselves (in this particular sense, anyway). David would no doubt recall to mind a chapter of Scripture, or a few verses, and he would repeat these to himself.

Barnes explains the concept of *watches* to those who are unfamiliar: *The word watches here refers to the ancient divisions of the night for municipal or military purposes - periods of the night assigned to different persons to keep watch around a camp or city. The most common division of the night was into three parts, though the arrangement varied at different times. See Matt. 14:25; Luke 12:38.*⁹ In the Jewish systems, there were generally three 4 hour watches in the night; the Romans had four 3 hour watches instead, which accounts for some minor Old and New Testament differences.

I want you to recognize that these two halves of v. 6 are antithetical in a way. The first half hearkens back to David taking in God's Word when his life was easy; the second half views him now, staying awake during the various watches with his men, under the pressure of being discovered and attacked by Saul's army. David spends this time meditating and recalling to himself God's Word. The idea is, David's circumstances have changed; but God has not. David has gone from great power and wealth to poverty and hiding, yet God's Word remains the same.

Because none of the commentaries which I read understood the gist of this psalm or its proper historical context (which helps to explain the psalm), I will reasonably guess that none of them properly explain this verse. Therefore, let us examine...

The Contrast Between Psalm 63:6a and 63:6b	
When I call You to mind [while] upon the couch	I meditate on You in the [night] watches.
The couch (or bed) indicates a place of safety and repose.	The night watch indicates a time of danger.
The couch or bed indicates that David will be losing consciousness and falling asleep.	A night watch indicates that David is intentionally remaining awake and alert.
One would have a couch or bed inside a personal residence.	One would have a night watch from a cave or a field or a place where one is not safe.

⁹ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 63:6.

The Contrast Between Psalm 63:6a and 63:6b

When I call You to mind [while] upon the couch	I meditate on You in the [night] watches.
David does not carry a bed or a couch around with him everywhere he goes—not while he is hiding from Saul.	As a part of palace royalty, David did not have to worry about the night watches. There were underlings who handled the night watches while those of the royal family slept.
However, when in this place of safety and comfort, David is occupied with the person of Jesus Christ. Therefore, he thinks about the Lord while falling asleep.	To occupy his mind, during this time of uncertainty, David reminded himself of Jehovah God and His promises to him.

The idea is, regardless of the changing circumstances, **Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow** (Heb. 13:8), and the Word of God can be depended upon in all times and under all conditions. In fact, one might see this as a secondary theme running throughout Scripture.

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Application: I want you to recognize the principles found in this psalm, and see how David applies them to his daily life when on the run from Saul. I saw a new program the other evening and it dealt with the death of an infant, and a religious cult was, in part, to blame for this. Cultists often take faith and trust in God and completely confuse the application. David is safe from Saul; God preserves David and satiates his soul. This does not mean that David is going to take his army and move back to the city of Saul and live there in defiance. This is not faith. David is not going to place his men in front of Saul's army and then say, "I have faith that God will deliver us." In other words, he does not act like an idiot even though he believes in God. You don't throw yourself in front of a moving train and say, "God will take care of me." What God is going to do is take you out of this world so that you will not do another handful of stupid and embarrassing things. Similarly, you do not refuse medical care or refuse to take medicine because that shows a lack of faith. I had cataracts early in my life; the last place I was going to the was to the tent of some faith-healer to remove them. I went to a physician (actually two), and they removed the cataracts. Then I went to another institution and had the centers of my lens sacs burned away with lazars. Did I pray? Many times, on many occasions, for myself and the hands of the physicians involved. Were the operations successful? Wildly so. I could not have asked for a better outcome. My point is, you live in a real world. Having faith is not the same as making a complete ass of yourself.

Application/Tangent: Recognize when you are in a cult. A cult is often dominated by a strong personality (who could be the founder of the cult). That cult will rarely recognize anyone who falls outside of the narrow confines of the cult as being spiritually mature or even as being saved (for instance, I am close to the doctrine of the Baptists; however, I recognize that some Catholics, Presbyterians, and even a few Mormons and Jehovah Witnesses are saved). If your religion attempts to separate you from family and friends, to reduce the amount of time that you spend with them, your religion is probably a cult. We are not to separate from the unbelieving world. We are to be witnesses to the unbelieving world, in both our lives and in presenting them with the gospel. If everyone around you thinks that you are an asshole because of the behavior instituted by the religion that you belong to, either (1) that religion is a cult and/or (2) you are an asshole. Will some unbelievers dislike you? Absolutely. Some believers will dislike you and persecute you. However, if that is pretty much everyone's reaction from outside your religion's periphery, then you probably belong to a cult.

Application/Tangent: It is true that family relationships are redefined for the believer. Your permanent family members are those who are fellow believers. However, this does not mean that you withdraw from your biological family. Will becoming a Christian cause a rift in your family? It could. However, this rift should not be because you act like an idiot and embarrass Jesus Christ. In many cases, you will be a witness to your family. Antagonizing them is not really the best approach in the realm of witnessing.

**For You were a help to me
and in a shadow of Your wings I shout [for joy].**

Psalm
63:7

**Because You have been a help to me
and I shout for joy in the shadow of Your
wings.**

**Because You have always been a help to me,
I have shouted for joy while under Your protection.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Early translations:

The Septuagint For You have been my helper, and in the shelter of Your wings I will rejoice.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV I have seen your power and your glory
in the place of worship.

NLT I think how much you have helped me;
I sing for joy in the shadow of your protecting wings.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

JPS (Tanakh) for you are my help,
and in the shadow of Your wings
I shout for joy.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Updated Emphasized Bible For You have become a help to me,—
And <in the shadow of Your wings> will I shout for joy [or Ginsburg thinks, *will I
tarry*].

NASB For You have been my help,
And in the shadow of Thy wings I sing for joy.

Young's Updated LT For You have been a help to me,
And in the shadow of Your wings I sing.

What is the gist of this verse? What has been consistent in David's life is that God has guided and protected him.

Psalm 63:7a

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
ʿezrâh (עֲזָרָה) [pronounced <i>gez'-RAW</i>]	<i>help, aid</i>	feminine singular substantive	Strong's #5833 BDB #740

Psalm 63:7a

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

Translation: *Because You have been a help to me...* Even though David is now out in the Judæan desert wilderness, he recognizes that God has always been there to help him and to guide him. So David is not upset or worried about his circumstances, because he knows what God has been to him.

In the previous verse, there was a contrast presented, between David's life as the son-in-law of Saul, and as a fugitive from Saul. Here, God's consistency is emphasized, in all situations.

Psalm 63:7b

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
b ^e (ב) [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
tsêl (צל) [pronounced tzale]	<i>shadow</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #6738 BDB #853
kânâph (קנף) [pronounced kaw-NAWF]	<i>wings of birds (Gen. 1:21 Ex. 19:4 Deut. 32:11) as well as the extremity of a garment (Deut. 22:12, 30 Ruth 3:9)</i>	feminine dual noun with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3671 BDB #489
rânan (רנן) [pronounced raw-NAHN]	<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

Translation: *...and I shout for joy in the shadow of Your wings.* David uses the imperfect tense here—this means that he continues to shout for joy or to celebrate being under God's protection (which is the imagery of being under the shadow of God's wings). When David was among the hierarchy of Israel, and one among an army of Israelis, he felt God's protection. However, as we have seen in I Sam. 21, he was running scared, giving no thought to God—not even when in the city of Priests. However, by this time, not only has David rebounded (named his sins to God), but he has begun to apply the character of God to his situation, and he realizes that, no matter how difficult the circumstances seem to be, he is still under God's protection.

Application: I want to reiterate this application, because I read and hear about so many screwball cults and misapplications: David, although he is protected by God, does not cease making intelligent military decisions. He does not camp out in the open, he does not make himself an easy target for Saul, he continues to act with evasive maneuvers. The application here is, God does take care of you, but you still need to have a job. God heals you, but that does not mean that you abstain from all medical treatment. Because God performed a relatively small number of miracles at specific periods of time, some idiots think they will get sick, and God will cure them

miraculously—that is hogwash. God can cure and even on rare occasion, does cure, miraculously. However, when you are sick, you seek the care of a doctor. Thinking that you can break your arm and that God will heal your arm instantly if you had faith is ludicrous. Can God do that? Certainly. Does God do that? Probably not even one time out of a million.

Application: God works through people. Most people, even the goofiest of the cultists, seem to understand that God works through missionaries. A missionary goes to another country and teaches the Word of God (specifically the gospel). Almost every single believer and quasi-believer observes this and thinks nothing of it. God is working through the missionary to bring Christ to that nation. God does not miraculously appear to this nation in a cloud, or a burst of fire, and give them the gospel. Can God do that? Sure He can. Does He? Not even one time in a million. Therefore, you should not be confused when God chooses to work through a doctor instead of healing us miraculously.

David, by the way, used this same imagery in Psalm 57:1 (see also Psalm 17:8 36:7 61:4 91:4).

**Has clung my soul after You
in me has taken a hold Your right hand.**

Psalm
63:8

**My soul has clung to You
and Your right hand has taken a hold of [or,
supports] me.**

My soul clings to You and Your right hand supports me.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Early translations:

The Peshitta	My soul follows hard after You; Your right hand upholds me.
The Septuagint	My soul has been glued close behind You; Your right hand has upheld me.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV	I stay close to you, and your powerful arm supports me.
NLT	I follow close behind you; your strong right hand holds me securely.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

JPS (Tanakh)	My soul is attached to You; Your right hand supports me.
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Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB	My soul clings to Thee; Thy right hand upholds me.
NKJV	My soul follows close behind You; You right hand upholds me.
Scofield's KJV Young's Updated LT	My soul followeth close behind thee; thy right hand upholdeth me. Cleaved has my soul after You, On me has Your right hand taken hold.

What is the gist of this verse? David, under these adverse circumstances, is drawn closer to God, recognizing that God's right hand upholds him.

Psalm 63:8a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
dâbaq (דָּבַק) [pronounced daw ^b -VAHK]	<i>to cling, to cleave, to hold close, to keep close, to adhere</i>	3 rd person feminine plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #1692 BDB #179
<p>Because so many ancient commentaries depend upon the KJV, which reads <i>to follow after</i> at this point, it is important that you see just what this verb actually means. This is the same word which is used of Adam <i>clinging</i> to his wife (Gen. 2:24); no fundamentalist wants to see this word interpreted as Adam <i>following after</i> his wife. This word is also found in Ruth 1:14 I Kings 11:2 Job 19:20 29:10. This does reasonably mean <i>to follow after, to pursue</i> when found in the Hiphil (see Judges 20:45 I Sam. 14:22 II Sam. 1:6). Barnes concurs, writing: <i>dâ^bvaq</i> - means properly to cleave to; to adhere; to be glued to; to stick fast. Then it means <i>to attach oneself to anything; and then, to pursue or follow after</i>. The idea here is that of <i>adhering to, or cleaving to</i>.¹⁰</p>			
nepshesh (נֶפֶשׁ) [pronounced NEH-fesh]	<i>soul, life, living being, desire</i>	feminine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #5315 BDB #659
ʿachar (אַחַר) [pronounced ah-KHAHR]	<i>after, following, behind</i>	preposition with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #310 BDB #29

Translation: *My soul has clung to You...* Again, David is speaking of a completed action (perfect tense). His soul has clung to God in the past, and David continues to cling to God at the time of writing this psalm.

Application: We dislike all adverse conditions and often ask God, “Where are You?” during particularly difficult times. David in this psalm was the same way, saying *My soul thirsts for You and my flesh yearns for You*. However, we have seen in these past few verses is that David has been drawn closer to God because of this adversity. Sometimes, we have to endure suffering in order for God to get our attention; and sometimes, we are asked to suffer by God as evidence testing.¹¹ No matter what the reason, suffering is a part of this life. If you don't like that, there is a simple solution to minimize your suffering: learn God's Word and obey His mandates. This will reduce disciplinary suffering to almost nil and make it easier for you to cope with suffering for blessing.

Psalm 63:8b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's# none BDB #88
tâmak ^e (תָּמַק) [pronounced tau-MAHK]	<i>to take hold of, to grasp; to obtain, to acquire; to hold fast; to hold up, to support; to take hold of [one another], to hold together, to adhere</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #8551 BDB #1069

¹⁰ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 63:8.

¹¹ This is a term of R. B. Thieme Jr. referring to the evidence of our faith in Him as a part of the angelic conflict.

Psalm 63:8b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
yâmîyn (יָמִיַן) [pronounced yaw-MEEN]	<i>the right hand, the right side, on the right, at the right; the south</i>	feminine singular noun with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3225 BDB #411

This word can be associated with blessing or prosperity.

Translation: ...and Your right hand has taken a hold of [or, supports] me. It is a mutual thing. As David's soul takes a hold of God, God's right hand supports David (God's right hand refers to His grace and mercy in delivering His own—Psalm 18:35 20:6 44:3 80:15, 17). See Ex. 15:16 for the **Doctrine of the Right Hand of God**. David recognizes that in the past, God has upheld him in all kinds of troubles. The right hand is used repeatedly in Scripture for being in a place of great blessing.

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So that we understand what David is telling us, let's examine...

Some Points of Doctrine on Suffering and Psalm 63:8

1. Suffering in this life is inevitable. Everyone suffers. Every believer, every unbeliever. This is the devil's world and we are fallen man. Being a sinful man in the devil's world guarantees that we will suffer.
2. God does take care of growing believers who suffer. God never tests us beyond what we are capable of enduring (which includes suffering) and He gives us the strength to endure our suffering.
3. David at first felt abandoned in the desert wilderness, and thought that God was not with him. His actions in I Sam. 21 and the first verse of this psalm confirm that attitude.
4. However, in suffering and adversity, David has been drawn closer to God. Nothing makes a child feel so secure than the arms of one of his parents after a bad dream.
5. Suffering has given David a sense of destiny, direction and has increased the quality of his relationship with God. He is more occupied with Christ than before. In fact, in I Sam. 21, David gave no thought to God's power.
6. God responds to us. As we pull closer to God, He pulls closer to us.
7. Under adversity, when we have doctrine, we have the ability to understand and deal with the situation that we are in. In this way, the Word of God in our souls gives us strength and upholds us.
8. God continues to give strength to the believer under adversity. Recall Paul and his eye affliction: **And He said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore I will rather glory in my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may overshadow me. Therefore I am pleased in weaknesses, in insults, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am powerful** (II Cor. 12:9–10).
9. Our suffering is a part of the angelic conflict. It is obvious when a person receives blessing and he is thankful to God for that blessing. However, it is striking when a person is under suffering, and still, in front of all the angels, is willing to say, **"Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him"** (Job 13:15a).
10. The book of Job is a testimony to suffering as evidence testing—that is, as evidence to all fallen and elect angels that God can preserve and bless His own, even under the greatest of adversities.
11. Let me conclude with a point made by Keil and Delitzsch: *David depends upon God, to be with Him everywhere and not forsaking Him; and on the other side God's right hand holds him fast, not letting him go, not abandoning him to his foes.** David can find this out only through suffering and adversity.

*Keil and Delitzsch, Commentary on the Old Testament; from e-Sword; Psalm 63:4–8. Slightly revised and edited.

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God Will Avenge All Wrongs and Bless Those Who Trust in Him

And they, for destruction, seek my soul
they come in low places of the earth.

Psalm
63:9

They seek my soul for destruction
they will enter into the depths of the earth.

Those who seek my soul to destroy it will enter into the depths of the earth.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Early translations:

The Septuagint But they vainly sought after my soul; they will go into the lowest parts of the earth.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV All who want to kill me will end up in the ground.
NLT But those plotting to destroy me will come to ruin.
 They will go down into the depths of the earth.
REB May those who seek my life themselves be destroyed,
 may they sink into the depths of the earth;...

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™ But those who try to destroy my life
 will go into the depths of the earth.
JPS (Tanakh) May those who seek to destroy my life
 enter the depths of the earth.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Keil and Delitzsch On the other hand, those, to (their own) ruin do they seek my soul.
NASB But those who seek my life [lit., *soul*], to destroy it,
 Will go into the depths [lit., *lowest places*] of the earth.
Young's Updated LT And they who for desolation seek my soul,
 Go in to the lower parts of the earth.

What is the gist of this verse? David knows that those who are out to kill him will die in hell.

Psalm 63:9a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^ə (or v ^ə) (ו) [pronounced <i>veh</i>]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
hêmmâh (הֵמָּה) [pronounced <i>haym-mawh</i>]	<i>they, those; themselves; these</i> [with the definite article]	3 rd person masculine plural personal pronoun	Strong's #1992 BDB #241

Psalm 63:9a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^{eh}]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
shôw'âh (שׁוֹאֵה) [pronounced show-AW]	<i>a storm, a tempest; destruction, devastation, ruin, waste; desolation</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #7722 BDB #996
bâqash (בָּקַשׁ) [pronounced baw-KAHSH]	<i>to seek, to search, to desire, to strive after, to attempt to get, to require, to demand, to ask, to seek with desire and diligence</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Piel imperfect	Strong's #1245 BDB #134
nephesh (נֶפֶשׁ) [pronounced NEH-fesh]	<i>soul, life, living being, desire</i>	feminine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #5315 BDB #659

Translation: *They seek my soul for destruction...* David is not just pursued by Doeg. Saul's entire army is after him. Saul and his entire army seek David's life—to destroy it. Saul is, of course, in the lead. We already know that Saul's army was very close to standing up against Saul when it came to killing the priests (1 Sam. 22:17)—however, the actions of Doeg galvanized them into action. Now there is a degenerate army out their looking to kill David, seeking to destroy his soul.

Psalm 63:9b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
bôw' (בּוֹא) [pronounced boh]	<i>to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #935 BDB #97
b ^e (בֵּ) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's# none BDB #88
tach ^e tîy (תַּחְתִּי) [pronounced tahkh ^e -TEE]	<i>lower, lowest [places], deepest; hidden</i>	adjective & substantive; feminine plural construct	Strong's #8482 BDB #1066
'erets (אֶרֶץ) [pronounced EH-rets]	<i>earth (all or a portion thereof), land</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #776 BDB #75

Translation: *...they will enter into the depths of the earth.* David here promises that these who seek his life will enter into the depths of the earth, meaning that they will rot in hell. We find a parallel verse in Psalm 55:15: *Let desolation take hold on them, and let them go down alive into hell; for evils are among them in their dwellings.*

People do not trust God's justice sometimes. There remains a lot of bitterness and hatred toward those men who guided the airplanes into the World Trade Center on 9/11/2002. Please realize that the souls of these men went directly into torments; and some day, they will be cast with Satan into the Lake of Fire. The 50 virgins weren't there

to meet them at their deaths; God's judgment was there to meet them at their deaths. Every single suicide terrorist will spend eternity in the Lake of Fire. Their pain and suffering will be unfathomable. Every time one of them dies, they are delivered into torments where they await judgment for their evil. So David is assured of these men who pursue him and seek his life.

Application: I have been persecuted on several occasions, unjustly so. I have been cheated, taken advantage of, and a myriad of other things. I could sit down and name quickly a dozen people; perhaps two dozen, that I would like revenge on. However, I don't have to worry about that. God will deal with them. I've seen God deal with some of them. If you are a growing believer, and you are cheated, lied to, unjustly persecuted, you don't need to worry about taking revenge. You don't need to worry about getting even. God will take care of that for you. God is better at it. God is more fair. Someone cheats you out of \$100; don't worry about it. God will deal with that. If someone misrepresents themselves in a business deal, God can right that wrong. I have lost some jobs unjustly. Every single time, something better—often much, much better—comes along immediately. I never kept track or worried much about those who were against me; I know God takes care of them, just as God has taken care of me after the fact. My point is, you do not need to think revenge, you do not have to carry all these mental attitude sins around with you, you do not have to be upset just because you have been the victim of an injustice, or many injustices. God will balance the scales. At the end of the day, if you did your job as unto the Lord, the scale is going to tip in your favor. For those who unjustly persecuted you? Their scales are going to tilt the other way. God takes care of that. We don't have to. You may think you need to sue; you may think you need to make an example of them. Do you think you can inflict more pain and suffering than God? Do you think you can mete out just the right amount of judgment? God can take care of it. Just get out of His way.

**They pour him out upon hands of a sword
a portion of jackals they are.**

Psalm
63:10

**They deliver him over [to] hands of the sword;
they are a portion for jackals.**

**They are delivered over to the hand of the sword;
they are food for the jackals.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Early translations:

The Peshitta	They shall fall by the sword; they shall be a portion for foxes.
The Septuagint	They will be delivered up to the power of the sword; they will be portions for foxes.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV	Swords will run them through, and wild dogs will eat them.
NLT	They will die by the sword and become the food of jackals.
REB	...may they be given over to the sword, And become carrion for jackals.
TEV	They will be killed in battle, and their bodies eaten by wolves.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™	They will be cut down by swords. Their dead bodies will be left as food for jackals.
JPS (Tanakh)	May they be gutted by the sword; may they be prey to jackals.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

<i>Updated Emphasized Bible</i>	Everyone will be give up to the power of the sword, They will become <the portion of jackals>.
NASB	They will be delivered over to the power of the sword; They will be a prey for foxes.
<i>Young's Updated LT</i>	They cause him to run on the edge of the sword, They are a portion for foxes.

What is the gist of this verse? David continues to speak of what will happen to his enemies; they will die by the sword and become jackal food.

Psalm 63:10a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
nâgar (נָגַר) [pronounced <i>naw-GAHR</i>]	<i>to pour out, to push down; to deliver over [to the power of something else]</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Hiphil imperfect with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5064 BDB #620
In the Septuagint, <i>they will be delivered [over to]</i> . The Peshitta and the Dead Sea Scrolls appear to be in agreement (I have their English translation).			
ʿal (עַל) [pronounced <i>gahl</i>]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
yâd (יָד) [pronounced <i>yawd</i>]	<i>hand</i>	feminine dual construct	Strong's #3027 BDB #388
chereb (חֶרֶב) [pronounced <i>khe-RE^{BV}</i>]	<i>sword, knife, dagger; any sharp tool</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #2719 BDB #352

Translation: *They deliver him over [to] hands of the sword;...* What we have here, and what is ignored by the other translators, is the masculine singular suffix at the end of the main verb. Since the verb is masculine plural, we may reasonably assume that this applies to the same evil men of the previous verse—those who seek David's life. What they would like to do is to deliver David over to the sword—they would like to deliver David over to death.

Psalm 63:10b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
m ^e nâth (מִנְתָּ) [pronounced <i>m^enawth</i>]	<i>a part, a portion</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #4521 BDB #584
shûʿâl (שׁוּעָל) [pronounced <i>shoo-GAWL</i>]	<i>foxes or jackals or both</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #7776 BDB #1043
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i>]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224

Translation: ...they are a portion for jackals. However, here, in a reversal of fortune (a theme of Psalm 52), they are the ones who become food for the jackals. Also note that David is not necessarily wishing this upon his enemies—that they become jackal food—he is saying that this is the natural outcome of their actions against him.

Thompson writes: *Jackals are wild, fierce, savage; they howl around dwellings at night - producing most hideous music, beginning in a sort of solo, a low, long-drawn wail, rising and swelling higher and higher until it quite overtops the wind and ready to gather at any moment when there is prey to be devoured. These sinister, guilty, wobegone brutes, when pressed with hunger, gather in gangs among the graves, and yell in rage, and fight like fiends over their midnight orgies; but on the battlefield is their great carnival. Let me never even dream that anyone dear to me has fallen by the sword, and lies there to be torn, and gnawed at, and dragged about by these hideous howlers.*¹² Ward's Customs tells us: *The jackal, or chokal, is a very ravenous beast, and fond of human flesh. It devours dead bodies, steals infants out of the lap of their mothers, devours alive the sick who are left by the side of the Ganges, and even in the streets of Calcutta has been known to eat persons who were in a state of intoxication.*¹³

Application: If you have made an enemy out of a believer, then you may want to back down. If you are acting with malice toward a growing believer, then you had better stand down. This is a war you will not win. Maybe they are obnoxious and their personality grates on you. No problem; this is a big world, and you and these people that you do not like can often find places where you are not together. There is nothing wrong with avoiding a believer that you do not like—unless, of course, it is your husband or wife. And if you work with a believer that you do not like, then you use impersonal love. You do not have mental attitude sins toward this person and you do not malign or talk badly about this person. David's enemies are going to become jackal food. Is that the end that you want for yourself?

There are many exegetes who place David, when writing this psalm, in the desert wilderness escaping from Absalom his son. This is an even which will be covered in the future (II Sam. 16–18). What these exegetes ignore is what David desires for his enemies. If you read this verse and the next, you will see that David had no kind thoughts for his enemies. However, when Absalom was killed, David was beside himself with grief (“**Oh, my son Absalom, would that I had died instead of you, Absalom, my son my son!**” —II Sam. 18:33b). Even though David did not desire for his son to overcome him, he also was not willing to have his son killed—quite the opposite of the sentiments expressed in this psalm. It is no wonder that the exegesis presented by these same men is pap. Now, you may raise the objection that David will not raise his hand against God's anointed (Saul). And he won't. However, Saul has acted with great malice towards David. Saul has been reasoned with in every way possible and he continues to return to a place of unreasonable anger toward David. Furthermore, if it were Saul alone, then David could live with that. But it is Saul and his army and his underlings. We have seen that Saul's army, had they any moral conviction, could have stood up to Saul. They chose not to and took the expedient route. So David has no love for these men.

Application: A Bible teacher needs to be open to the passage that he examines. It is great to have a theory and an opinion; however, you should be willing to revise that opinion if there is a preponderance of evidence that you are wrong. At first, theorizing that David may be hiding out from Saul or he may be hiding out from Absalom is fine. However, once you get into this psalm, it is clear that David is not talking about his son.

**And the king rejoices in Elohim,
glories all the one swearing in Him,
for shut up are mouths of speakers of a lie.**

Psalm
63:11

**The king will rejoice in Elohim
and those swearing by Him will glory [or, will
be praised],
for the mouths of those speaking lies will be
shut up.**

¹² Thomson's "Land and the Book," i. P. 133. Quoted by Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 63:10.

¹³ Taken from Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 63:10.

**The king will rejoice in God
and those who swear by Him will glory
because liars will be permanently silenced.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Early translations:

The Septuagint But the king will rejoice in God; everyone that swears by Him will be praised; for the mouth of them that speak unjust things has been stopped.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV Because of you, our God, the king will celebrate with your faithful followers,
but liars will be silent.

NJB Then the king shall rejoice in God,
all who swear by him shall gain recognition,
for the mouths of liars shall be silenced.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™ But the king will find joy in God.
Everyone who takes an oath by God will brag,
but the mouths of liars will be shut.

JPS (Tanakh) But the king shall rejoice in God;
all who swear by Him shall exult,
when the mouth of liars is stopped.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

The Amplified Bible but the king shall rejoice in God; every one who swears by Him [that is, who binds himself by God's authority, acknowledging His supremacy, and devoting himself to His glory and service alone] *every such one* shall glory, for the mouth of those who speak lies shall be stopped.

NASB But the king will rejoice in God;
Everyone who swears by Him will glory,
For the mouths of those who speak lies will be stopped.

Young's Updated LT And the king does rejoice in God,
Boasts him does everyone swearing by Him,
But stopped is the mouth all those speaking lies!

What is the gist of this verse? The king rejoices in God, and those who swear by God will boast in Him. Simultaneously, those who speak lies will be shut up.

Psalm 63:11a

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

Psalm 63:11a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
melek ^e (מֶלֶךְ) [pronounced MĒH-lek]	king, ruler, prince	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4428 BDB #572
sâmach (שָׂמַח) [pronounced saw-MAHKH]	to rejoice, to be glad, to be joyful, to be merry	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #8055 BDB #970
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within	a preposition of proximity	Strong's# none BDB #88
ʿĕlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced el-o-HEEM]	gods or God; transliterated Elohim	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43

Translation: The king will rejoice in Elohim... This is quite interesting. David writes this while in the desert wilderness of Judah. Israel's king at this time was Saul, who was out to kill David. Saul had little or no interest in God. Therefore, we must understand this in principle: a righteous king—a believer king—would rejoice in God.

This also marks a turning point in David's understanding and faith. He was named king some time ago. He had possibly assumed that he would become king through the normal means. He married the king's daughter, with the king's blessing...and that would eventually lead to his being king. All of a sudden, David finds himself cast out from the palace, with no more logical path to this great office, and he herein accepts his office and recognizes the reality of this office. That is, David is the king in this passage. He is the one rejoicing in Elohim. No other interpretation really makes any sense. However, this understanding does explain this psalm. David is not just a fugitive in the desert, but he is waiting on God to install him as king. This means he has apprehended his future and his destiny. These psalms that we have studied mark the changes in David as he grows spiritually.

This could be understood as the King, Jesus Christ, would rejoice in Elohim, the Godhead.

Psalm 63:11b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
hâlal (הָלַל) [pronounced haw-LAHL]	to be praised; to glory, to boast [about oneself]	3 rd person masculine singular, Hithpael imperfect	Strong's #1984 BDB #237
This, interestingly enough, is one form of the verb that we found back in I Sam. 21:13: Then David changed his behavior before them [lit., <i>in their eyes</i>] and he feigned madness in their presence . The Hithpael is the passive (as per Gesenius) or reflexive (as per Zodhiates) of the Piel (intensive) stem. This verb appears to have an active use here in this psalm (and whenever else it has <i>God</i> as the object as in Isa. 41:16 Jer. 4:2). The meaning of this verb, and there are several, appear to stay within the general boundaries of their stems.			
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced kohl]	the whole, all of, the entirety of, all; can also be rendered any of	masculine singular construct followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481

Psalm 63:11b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
shâbva ^c (שָׁבַע) [pronounced shaw ^b -VAHÇ]	<i>to swear, to imprecate, to curse, to swear an oath, to take a solemn oath, to swear allegiance</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Niphal imperfect	Strong's #7650 BDB #989
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 with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's# none BDB #88

Translation: ...and those swearing by Him will glory [or, will be praised],... Those who either swear by God or swear allegiance to God will glory or boast in their position. These, of course, would be believers. Men swear in that which they believe in.

It is difficult to determine exactly to whom *by Him* refers. *God* is the nearest masculine singular noun; however, also nearby is *the king*. If David is the king in this verse, which is about the only reasonable point of view, then those who swear allegiance to David will be praised or will glory (as they will share in David's glory). However, this *by Him* also reasonably applied to God, the nearest noun in context. Obviously, those who are in allegiance with God are glorified as well.

Swearing by a king or a God or by God was quite common in those times. The Jews were encouraged to swear by God (Deut. 6:13). In Scripture, God is even said to swear *by Himself* (Isa. 45:23). Clarke tells us: *It was customary to swear by the life of the king. The Egyptians swore by the life of Pharaoh; and Joseph conforms to this custom, as may be seen in the book of Genesis, Gen. 42:15–16.*¹⁴ He adds: *...swearing by [the name of God the King] signifies binding themselves by his authority, acknowledging his supremacy, and devoting themselves to his glory and service alone.*¹⁵

The alternative reading, which is also accurate from a doctrinal standpoint, is that those who trust in God will also be praised—*being praised* in not so much, a “Good show, old boy” but more that they are praised because they are in Christ and He stands praised for all time. However, I don't see this as being the proper meaning of this verse.

Interestingly enough, Psalm 64 ends in a very similar fashion: Psalm 64:10: **The righteous will be glad in Jehovah, and they will trust in Him; and all the upright in heart shall glory.** However, it was written probably at a much later date.

Psalm 63:11c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced kee]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
çâkar (סָכַר) [pronounced saw-KAHR]	<i>to shut up, to stop up</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Niphal imperfect	Strong's #5534 BDB #698

¹⁴ Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 63:11.

¹⁵ Ibid.

Psalm 63:11c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
peh (פֶּה) [pronounced <i>peh</i>]	<i>mouth, edge</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #6310 BDB #804
dâ ^b var (דְּבַר) [pronounced <i>daw^b-VAHR</i>]	<i>speakers of, proclaimers of, announcers of</i>	masculine plural construct, Qal active participle	Strong's #1696 BDB #180
sheqer (שֶׁקֶר) [pronounced <i>SHĒH-ker</i>]	<i>a lie, lying words, deception, falsehood; a liar; whatever deceives, fraud, vanity; falsely [absolute used as adverb]</i>	masculine singular noun, pausal form	Strong's #8267 BDB #1055

Translation: *...for the mouths of those speaking lies will be shut up.* This final line tells us one reason that the king rejoices in God and why those who believe in God will be glorified: those who speak lies will be shut up. The idea is, the final judgment will remove these from the earth—the liars, and, by implication, all sinners—and the earth will be sin-free once more. Now, don't panic. I realize that you sin. So do I. However, we are in Christ Jesus, and we share His righteousness. Therefore, we will participate in God's perfect plan, and only our sin natures will be eradicated in the end.

Why does David choose the sin of *lying* here? He chooses this sin because this is what Saul has done to condemn him; and this is what Doeg did in order to take the heat off himself and to elevate himself in Saul's eyes. So David's enemies are specifically those who have lied about him.

Application: When you are attacked by another believer, or maligned, it will be with lies, exaggerations and half-truths. If your enemies simply use the truth against you, perhaps you need to rethink your modus operandi.

*Barnes: All who have sworn falsely; all who have professed allegiance and have proved unfaithful; all those who, contrary to their oaths and their obligations, have been found in the rebellion. They shall not be permitted to exult or rejoice, but they shall be confounded and silenced. This expresses, therefore, the fullest confidence in God; the absolute belief of David that he would be placed on his throne.*¹⁶

¹⁶ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 63:11. I did some slight editing; Barnes was actually making a different point at the end.