

Psalm 142

Psalm 142:1–22

David, While in a Hopeless Situation, Calls Out to God

Outline of Chapter 142:

Inscription	Psalm 142 Inscription
vv. 1–4	David Calls to God from a Place of Trouble
vv. 5–7	David Knows that God is His Refuge

Charts and Maps:

v. 7	A Summary of Psalm 142
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Doctrines Covered		Doctrines Alluded To	
Siyach	Gâmal		

Introduction: Psalm 142 is written while David is in the cave of Adullam (probably), and from which cave, he calls out to God for God's grace. This is a rather short psalm, with 6 verses of petition followed by one verse of confidence. We would probably place this psalm at the end of I Sam. 22:1 and we might want to exegete Psalm 142 prior to Psalm 57. You may look at this and these other psalms which David wrote at this time (Psalms 34 56 57 142) and wonder, *why did he write so many psalms?* The answer is the key to understanding David in I Sam. 21–23. He seems to be in a tizzy in chapter 21, confused, scared, and on the run. However, at the beginning of I Sam. 22, David is a leader, a man that other fugitives and malcontents flock to for guidance. His own family, who once looked down upon him, come to him for help. The key is a change of mental attitude, which will be illustrated in this psalm, particularly in v. 7. In vv. 1–6, David tells why he has every right to be afraid and confused. However, in v. 7, he states why he is confident and trusting. Between I Sam. 21 and 22, David rebounds (names his sins to God, and gets back into fellowship—Psalm 56) and he celebrates this new lease on life by writing a half dozen psalms. So briefly, what we have in this psalm, is a celebration by David in the Lord (v. 7), despite his situation (vv. 1–6).

David writes this psalm from a cave—probably the cave of Adullam. Throughout most of the psalm, David is pouring out his troubles to God and appealing to God. Vv. 1, 2, 5, 6 all speak of him calling out to God. In the first verse, David petitions God for His grace; in the second verse, David tells God his complaints and his troubles; in the fifth verse, David recognizes that God is his true refuge; and, in v. 6, David asks God to deliver him from his persecutors, who are stronger than he is. In v. 3, David speaks of being overwhelmed or feeling as though he is without God the Holy Spirit. In v. 4, he recognizes that he has no person upon whom he can depend. In v. 7a, David calls to God to bring his soul out of prison. Only twice in this psalm does David present the positive side to his ordeal. In v. 5a, he recognizes that God is his true refuge and in the second half of v. 7, David recognizes that he is surrounded by guardian angels and that God will bless him. At the end of this psalm, I will again **summarize** this psalm at the end of the exegesis.

Psalm 142 inscription a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Gesenius lists this as the Hiphil of sâkal (לַּשׁוֹ) [pronounced saw-KAHL], which means (in the Hiphil) <i>to look at, to attend to, to turn the mind to; to be understanding, to become understanding, to be prudent; to be successful, to act prosperously; to instruct, to make prudent, to teach</i> . In any case, mas ^e kîyl comes from sâkal. Strong's #7919 BDB #968.			
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
Dâvid (דָּוִד); also Dâvîyd (דָּוִיִּד) [pronounced daw-VEED]	<i>beloved and is transliterated David</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #1732 BDB #187

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

You will notice that this psalm, like many of David's other psalms, is very personal. Everything is in the 1st person. David is not exhorting anyone else to do anything else. He speaks only of himself in this psalm.

Psalm 142 inscription b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, among, in the midst of; at, by, near, on, before, in the presence of, upon; with; to, unto, upon, up to; in respect to, on account of; by means of, about, concerning</i>	primarily a preposition of proximity; however, it has a multitude of functions	Strong's #none BDB #88
When verbs in the infinitive construct are preceded by the bêyth 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). ²			
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced haw-YAW]	<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
The verb <i>to be</i> in the construct often carries with it a temporal meaning, e.g., <i>when [he] was, while [he] was</i>			

² *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew-English Lexicon*; Hendrickson, ©1979, pp. 90–91.

Psalm 142 inscription b

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
m ^{er} ârâh (הַרְעָה) [pronounced m ^e -gaw-RAW]	<i>cave</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4631 BDB #792

Translation: ...while he was in the cave. As goes for the previous psalm, we do not know which cave is referred to here. I suspect that this is also the cave of Adullam, and you may wonder why, given that there is not enough information here to so identify it (I had an inherent reason for Psalm 57). Again, like Psalm 57, this refers to David *being in the cave*. There is no other identifying information. There is an inherent reason for identifying this as the cave of Adullam, as it appears in this psalm as though David is just getting his footing as a leader and as a man on the run. By I Sam. 24, when he is in the cave of En-ge-di, he has already led his men on several exploits and in the cave, cuts the hem of Saul's royal overcoat. In other words, by I Sam. 24, David is a bit more fearless. David remained in this cave for awhile, allowing enough time for 400 malcontents to find him and join him (I Sam. 22:2). He remained there for awhile, and then took his parents to safety. For a short time, this was his base of operations (plus, we do not know how many times he returned here as he moved across the land of Judah). The cave mentioned with Saul appears to be a one-time situation. David was not in the act of fleeing from Saul, per se, but Saul had come to him, albeit unintentionally. Furthermore, there is more urgency expressed in this psalm, which would be more in keeping with I Sam. 21–22, as opposed to David's sparing of Saul's life in I Sam. 24. So, this is educated speculation. I suspect that the cave mentioned in Psalms 57 and 142 is the same cave, however.

A contemporary description of this cave may be found in my exegesis of I Sam. 22:1–2.

Psalm 142 inscription c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
t ^e phillâh (תְּפִלָּה) [pronounced t ^e -phil-LAWH]	<i>prayer, intercession, supplication for any one; prayer or supplication in general; a hymn or inspired song</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #8605 BDB #813

Translation: A prayer [or, supplication]. This is a prayer where David realizes that he cannot depend upon man; he cannot even depend upon his own craftiness; he will need to depend upon God. Therefore, this psalm is a prayer or a supplication to God for His blessing and protection.

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David Calls to God from a Place of Trouble

Slavishly literal:

Moderately literal:

**My voice unto God, I call out;
my voice unto God, I petition for grace.**

Psalm
142:1

**I call out to God [with] my voice;
[with] my voice, I petition [Him] for grace.**

**I call out to God with my voice;
with my voice, I petition Him for grace and mercy.**

Here is how others have handled this verse:

Early translations:

The Septuagint I cried to the Lord with my voice; with my voice I made supplication to the Lord.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV I pray to you, LORD. I beg for mercy.
NLT I cry out to the LORD;
I please for the LORD's mercy.
TEV I call to the LORD for help;
I plead with him.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

JPS (Tanakh) I cry aloud to the LORD;
I appeal to the LORD loudly for mercy. [This is verse 2 in the JPS, and so on throughout].

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Updated Emphasized Bible <With my voice—to Yahweh> I cry out,
<With my voice—to Yahweh> I make supplication.
NASB I CRY aloud with my voice to the LORD;
I make supplication with my voice to the LORD.
Young's Literal Translation My voice is unto Jehovah, I cry,
My voice is unto Jehovah, I entreat grace.

What is the gist of this verse? David calls out to Jehovah, asking him to bestow grace upon him.

Psalm 142:1a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
qôwl (קוֹל) [pronounced kohl]	sound, voice, noise; loud noise, thundering	masculine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #6963 BDB #876
ʿel (אֶל) [pronounced e/]	unto, in, into, toward, to, regarding, against	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
YHWH (יְהוָה) [pronunciation is possibly yohh-WAH]	transliterated variously as Jehovah, Yahweh, Y ^e howah	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217

Psalm 142:1a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
zâ'âq (צָאֵק) [pronounced zaw-GAHK]	<i>to cry out, to call, to cry</i>	1 st person singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #2199 BDB #277

Translation: *I call out to God [with] my voice;...* David has exhausted his human resources. He has used his voice to call out to man—Abimelech, priest of Nob, and Achish, king of Gath. However, now David will turn his voice toward God. This does not mean that David is speaking aloud to God, although there is no reason to think that he is not either. Because he is in this large cave, David may call out as loudly as he wishes.

One of the reasons that I place this writing of this psalm in the cave of Adullam, the first cave mentioned, is that this marks the turning point of David's life. It marks when David stopped obsessing about himself and his troubles, recognized what God was able to do, and recognized that he had a place in life. This realization did not come to him in I Sam. 24, but between I Sam. 21 and 22. Therefore, we should expect to find several psalms from this time period which indicate a spiritual turn around.

By the way, I should mention that you do not go from zero to a hundred overnight. With respect to spirituality, being in fellowship and out of fellowship is either 0 or 100; however, the ability to do something with that fellowship is a matter of spiritual growth. A 1 year old child can be heir to a fortune, and have no understanding or appreciation of this fortune; this is even true of a 16 year-old. However, when a man is around 30, then being the heir to a fortune might begin to have some meaning, as long as he is able to think outside his own experience. To a 1 year-old, money means nothing. To a 16 year-old, he will think only in terms of what can this money do for him right here and how, and what lusts he can satisfy with the money. With some 30 year-olds, there may be a sense of responsibility that comes with the inheritance. He may realize that pissing away a life's work, the accumulated fortune of a lifetime, is not prudent or appropriate. So David will have to experience some spiritual growth which follows his turn around.

Psalm 142:1b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
qôwl (קוֹל) [pronounced kohl]	<i>sound, voice, noise; loud noise, thundering</i>	masculine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #6963 BDB #876
ʿel (עַל) [pronounced el]	<i>unto, in, into, toward, to, regarding, against</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
YHWH (יְהוָה) [pronunciation is possibly yohh-WAH]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
chânan (חָנַן) [pronounced khaw-NAHN]	<i>to petition for grace, to make a request for grace, to make an appeal for grace, to entreat for mercy, to make a request as an inferior for something from a superior, to ask for gracious treatment</i>	1 st person singular, Hithpael imperfect	#2603, 2589 BDB #335

Translation: ...[with] my voice, I petition [Him] for grace. You will note that in the four most recent psalms that we have studied (or will study)—Psalms 34 56 57 142—the concept of grace plays a prominent role in 3 of them. In fact, the first word of Psalm 56 and 57 is *be gracious [to me]*. In this psalm, it is the 4th word. When you have been out of fellowship for awhile, then the most logical and reasonable approach is to ask God for His grace. If you have been out of fellowship for a week, or a month or a year, the first thing that you should ask God for is gracious treatment. Let me give you an analogy: you work for your father's business and, for a year, you defraud your father. Now, just walking into his office and saying, "My bad" is not going to cut it. Reparations and then gaining his trust are going to require a great deal of time. Where the analogy breaks down is, God has already forgiven us for all of the sins that we have committed. That's a done deal. We already have His forgiveness. So, even after a long period of being out of fellowship, we do not have to promise to do better, to resolve to do better, to be contrite, to do acts of penance. That's stupid. Here's why it's stupid: Jesus Christ already paid for those sins that you have committed. Do you think you can improve on His perfect work by, say, not eating desert for a week? By giving God a few measly dollars in the collection plate? By feeling bad and looking downward a lot? Yeah, that's real stupid. You do not improve upon God's perfect work. This is an area where some Catholics are so fouled up that it is almost beyond comprehension. Lent, fasting, personal sacrifice in order to impress God. The work of Jesus Christ on the cross impresses God; the nonsense crap that you to somehow pretend that you're going to rough it for awhile, is meaningless. I've even heard one Catholic talk about some personal sacrifices that she would make in order to experience some of our Lord's pain and suffering. It was not easy for me to keep from saying, "Is it possible for you to be any more stupid? Like there is some way that you could feel even an iota of the pain and suffering that our Lord felt?" What we petition God for after an extended time out of fellowship is for His grace, to ask Him to allow us a little more time on this earth, that we might in some way participate in His plan.

McGee comments: *In other words, David laid out before God everything that was in his heart and life. That is the way you and I should pray. This idea that we should "pray around" something, or rationalize in our prayers, or pray "all around Robin Hood's barn," is wrong. We ought to get right down to the niity-gritty and tell God everything in our lives. David said, "I declared my trouble before Him." My friend, you can tell Him about your temptations; you can tell Him about everything.*³

Many of David's psalms, at their beginning, call out to God for help: *Rescue me, O Jehovah, from evil men; preserve me from violent men* (Psalm 140:1). *O Jehovah, I call upon You; hasten to me! Listen to my voice when I call to You!* (Psalm 141:1). *Hear my prayer, O Jehovah, listen to my petitions for grace. Answer me in Your faithfulness and righteousness* (Psalm 143:1). And these are just the nearest psalms to Psalm 142.

		I pour out my complaint [or, concern] before Him;
I pour out to His faces my complaint;	Psalm	
my anguish to his Faces I make known.	142:2	I make known my anguish [or, affliction] to Him.

**I pour out my complaint to Him
and I make my anguish known to Him.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Early translations:

The Septuagint I will pour out before him my supplication; I will declare before him my affliction.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV	I tell you all of my worries and my troubles,...
NJB	I pour out my worry in his presence,

³ J. Vernon McGee, *Psalms Volume 1*; Thru the Bible Books, ©1977, pp. 170–171. I updated the translation that McGee used.

TEV
 in his presence I unfold my troubles.
 I bring him all my complaints;
 I tell him all my troubles.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™ I pour out my complaints in his presence
 and tell him my troubles.
 JPS (Tanakh) I pour out my complaint before Him;
 I lay my trouble before Him...

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB I pour out my complaint before Him;
 I declare my trouble before Him.
 Young's Literal Translation I pour forth before Him my meditation,
 My distress before Him I declare.

What is the gist of this verse? David goes to God with what is troubling him.

Several exegete missed the boat on this verse. Barnes⁴ says that David is not dealing with his complaints here (we will cover that in more detail); and Gill⁵ tells us that David is telling God all about his personal sins. Gill is flat out wrong because David has already rebounded in one of the psalms that we have just finished (Psalm 56). Therefore, he does not need to spend anytime in this psalm naming his sins to God. Throughout most of this psalm, David recognizes that only God can save him from the danger that he is in (vv. 4–6); therefore, although rebound would be in order, if he were out of fellowship, there is not indication that David is out of fellowship.

Psalm 142:2a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
shâphak ^e (שָׁפַח) [pronounced shaw-FAHK ^e]	<i>to pour, to pour out, to shed</i>	1 st person singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #8210 BDB #1049
lâmed (ל) (pronounced l ^e)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
pânîym (פָּנִים) [pronounced paw-NEEM]	<i>face, faces; presence</i>	masculine plural construct (plural acts like English singular) with a 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #6440 BDB #815
Together, they mean <i>upon the face of, before, before the face of, in the presence of, in the sight of, in front of</i> . When used with God, it can take on the more figurative meaning <i>in the judgment of</i> .			
sîyach (שִׁיחַ) [pronounced SĒE-ahkh]	<i>complaint; concern, voiced concern; communication, declaration, talk; mediation, study, contemplation</i>	masculine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #7879 BDB #967

⁴ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 142:2.

⁵ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 142:2.

Psalm 142:2a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
<p>Barnes⁶ questions that this word means <i>complaint</i>; so we therefore need to take a closer look at this word. Therefore, we will examine the Doctrine of Siyach.</p>			

Translation: *I pour out my complaint* [or, *concern*] *before Him*;... David is doing two things differently. First of all, in v. 1, David goes to God instead of man. Secondly, he let's God know just how he feels. David did not bare his soul to Abimelech the priest. He wasn't honest with him about anything. With Achish, David pretended to be insane—there was no honesty there. Now, you may look back on that chapter, which we have already covered, and remark, "David could not be honest with Achish—he is among Israel's sworn enemies." Wrong, theology-breath; David did go back to Achish and he was very honest with him. Furthermore, Achish took him in as an ally (I Sam. 27). In this psalm, David is honest with God, and he is honest with God about how he feels.

By the way, David has a right to be mad. He had almost everything, and he was faithful to King Saul. David was not some kiss-ass or brown-noser; but he was loyal to Saul. We never saw any indication that David ever did anything to undermine Saul's authority. Yet Saul turned on him, forced him out of his home, away from his wife, removed him from his job, and put him on the run. So David has good reason to be angry. And David takes his case before the ultimate judge, Jesus Christ.

Psalm 142:2b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
tsârâh (צָרָה) [pronounced <i>tzaw-RAW</i>]	<i>anguish, adversity, affliction, travail, trouble and distress</i>	feminine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #6869 BDB #865
lâmed (ל) (pronounced פ) ⁶	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
pânîym (פָּנִים) [pronounced <i>paw-NEEM</i>]	<i>face, faces; presence</i>	masculine plural construct (plural acts like English singular) with a 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #6440 BDB #815
<p>Together, they mean <i>upon the face of, before, before the face of, in the presence of, in the sight of, in front of</i>. When used with God, it can take on the more figurative meaning <i>in the judgment of</i>.</p>			
nâgad (נָגַד) [pronounced <i>naw-GAHD</i>]	<i>to make conspicuous, to make known, to expound, to explain, to declare, to inform, to confess, to make it pitifully obvious that</i>	1 st person singular, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #5046 BDB #616

Translation: *...I make known my anguish* [or, *affliction*] *to Him*. David is not necessarily mad as much as he is hurt and afflicted. There are times when you as a believer are going to give your all to something, and not only you will get back nothing in return, but you may even be persecuted or afflicted because of it. Satan and his demon army does not like to see growing believers successful in this world. They don't like to see everything going your

⁶ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 142:2.

way. They particularly like to influence negative believers to put up road blocks, detours and hazards along your path. This gives Satan a particular thrill—not just to cause you difficulty, but to do it using the volition and resources of another believer. There is nothing Satan likes more than setting believers at odds with one another.

**In an enveloping of upon me my spirit
and You have known my path.
In a way which I go
they have hidden a trap for me.**

Psalm
142:3

**When my Spirit is wrapped in darkness above
me,
You know my path.
In the way that I go,
they hide a trap for me.**

**You know my path, even when my spirit faints within me.
They have hidden traps for me along the route I take.**

Here is how others have translated this verse; as you will notice, several continued verse 2 into this verse and/or began a new section of the psalm midway through v. 3:

Early translations:

The Septuagint When my spirit was fainting within me, then You knew my paths. In the very way wherein I was walking, they hid a snare for me.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV ...and whenever I feel low, you are there to guide me.

NJB A trap has been hidden along my pathway.
However faint my spirit;
you are watching over my path.

NLT On the road I have to travel
they have hidden a trap for me.
For I am overwhelmed,
and you alone know the way I should turn.

TEV Wherever I go,
my enemies have set traps for me.
When I am ready to give up,
he knows what I should do.
In the path where I walk,
my enemies have hidden a trap for me.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™ When I begin to lose hope,
you [already] know what I am experiencing.

JPS (Tanakh) [My enemies] have hidden a trap for me on the path where I walk.
...when my spirit fails within me.
You know my course;
they have laid a trap in the path I walk.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	When my spirit was overwhelmed <i>and</i> fainted [throwing all its weight] upon me, then You knew my path. In the way wherein I walk they have hidden a snare for me.
<i>Updated Emphasized Bible</i>	<When my spirit fainted concerning myself> Then you took note of my path, — <In the course which I was about to take> They had hidden a snare for me.
NASB	When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, Thou didst know my path. In the way where I walk They have hidden a trap for me.
NRSV	When my spirit is faint, you know my way.
<i>Young's Updated LT</i>	In the path where I walk they have hidden a trap for me. When my spirit has been feeble in me, Then You have known my path; In the way in which I walk, They have hid a snare for me.

What is the gist of this verse? This is a carefully crafted parallel of thoughts (as was the previous verse). There are times when even the Holy Spirit is hidden from David, yet God has a path for David to go down. David's enemies, however, attempt to determine what his path will be and they lay traps before him.

Despite the fact that several translators placed part of v. 3 with 2, and began a new section of this psalm in the middle of v. 3, the translation of the *Emphasized Bible* gives us a clear parallelism in v. 2 and a clear parallelism in this verse. In other words, when these verses were split apart by the Massorites a millennium+ ago, that was done correctly right here.

Also, you need to pay attention to the exegesis and the reasoning behind my translation for this verse. This is a very carefully crafted pair of lines, which offers parallel views to David's present path. I will give this a different translation than any of those above, but still be more in line with the meaning of the Hebrew and the logic of this verse.

Psalm 142:3a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
b ^e (בֵּי) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, among, in the midst of; at, by, near, on, before, in the presence of, upon; with; to, unto, upon, up to; in respect to, on account of; by means of, about, concerning</i>	primarily a preposition of proximity; however, it has a multitude of functions	Strong's #none BDB #88
When verbs in the infinitive construct are preceded by the bēyth preposition, b ^e acts as a temporal conjunction; that is, <i>in their being created = when they were created</i> (Gen. 2:4); <i>in their being in the field = when they were in the field</i> (Gen. 4:8). ⁷			

⁷ The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew-English Lexicon; Hendrickson, ©1979, pp. 90–91.

Psalm 142:3a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿâṭaph (אֶטַף) [pronounced ʿaw-TAHF]	<i>to envelop oneself; to be wrapped in darkness, to languish, to faint</i> [generally used of soul or spirit]	Hithpael infinitive construct	Strong's #5848 BDB #742
ʿal (עַל) [pronounced ʿahl]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
rûwach (רוּחַ) [pronounced ROO-ahkh]	<i>wind, breath, spirit, apparition</i>	feminine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #7307 BDB #924

Translation: *When my Spirit is wrapped in darkness above me,...* Although Gesenius allows for this verb to mean *to languish, to faint*, it first and foremost refers to something which *has enveloped, or hidden or wrapped itself*. The meaning most closely parallels the meaning in v. 3d, which is what we would expect in this carefully crafted parallel. There is not a reference to the spirit (or, Spirit) *within* David, but that Spirit which is *above or upon or against or on* him. In the Church Age, we are indwelt by God the Holy Spirit; however, in the Age of Israel, the saints were empowered by the Spirit coming upon them. David refers to a time when he is not aware of the Holy Spirit. It is clothed in darkness above him. The Holy Spirit is hidden from him, which pretty much describes David's entire experience of I Sam. 21. You may say, *well, David was out of fellowship!* My point exactly. David was out of fellowship, so the Holy Spirit was not resting upon him.

Psalm 142:3b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^ə (or v ^ə) (וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʿattâh (אַתָּה) [pronounced aht-TAW]	<i>you</i> (often, the verb <i>to be</i> is implied)	2 nd person masculine singular, personal pronoun	Strong's #859 BDB #61
yâdaʿ (יָדָע) [pronounced yaw-DAHG]	<i>to know, to perceive, to acquire knowledge, to become acquainted, to know by experience, to have a knowledge of something; to see</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #3045 BDB #393
nâthîyb (נִתְיַב) [pronounced naw-THEE ^B V]	<i>path, pathway, footpath, a trodden down path</i>	masculine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #5410 BDB #677

Translation: *...You know my path.* David, without God the Holy Spirit, has no idea what to do or where to go. However, God knows where David should go. There is a path, and this is the sort of path which has been trodden down with footsteps. It may not be the normal route, but it has become the normal route from the usage of many

spirit-empowered believers of the past. God knows this route that David should be on, even when David cannot perceive the Holy Spirit upon him.

Psalm 142:3c

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
ṛōrach (רֹחַץ) [pronounced OH-rahkh]	<i>path, way, highway; those on the path, a traveler; a caravan; used figuratively as way [of righteousness]</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #734 BDB #73
zûw (זוּ) [pronounced zoo]	<i>this; which, that, where</i>	both a demonstrative and relative pronoun; undeclinable	Strong's #2098 BDB #262
hâlak ^e (הָלַךְ) [pronounced haw-LAHK ^e]	<i>to go, to walk; to live, to follow some manner of life; to depart, to go away, to vanish; to fall upon [as a robber]; a vagrant?</i>	1 st person singular, Piel imperfect	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229

Translation: *In the way that I go,...* This is a parallel line. Just as David had a path which God had designed for him in the previous half of v. 3, here we speak of David's route that he travels. Now we will see this from the perspective of his enemies. God has a path down which David should walk. David's enemies attempt to predict the way that David will go, in order to capture him.

Psalm 142:3d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ṭāman (טָמַן) [pronounced taw-MAHN]	<i>to hide, to conceal; to bury</i>	3 rd person plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #2934 BDB #380
pach (פַּח) [pronounced pahkh]	<i>a snare, a trap, a bird-trap; a trap [into which one falls or one is taken to destruction]</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #6341 BDB #809
lâmed (לְ) (pronounced l ^e)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	preposition with the 1 st person singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510

Translation: *...they hide a trap for me.* In David's earthly route, his enemies hide or conceal a trap for him. You will note the parallels. In the first half of this verse, there is a path that God is aware of, but that David may not know because the Holy Spirit is hidden from him. In the second half, there is a path that David travels and his enemies hide traps for David along this path. We have a parallel verse in Psalm 140:5: *Arrogant people have laid a trap for me. They have spread out a net with ropes. They have set traps for me along the road.* And Psalm 119:85: *Arrogant people have dug pits to trap me in defiance of your teachings.* David's enemies are looking to ingratiate

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	Look on the right hand [the point of attack] and see, for there is no man who knows me [to appear for me]; refuge has failed me <i>and</i> I have no way to flee; no man cares for my life <i>or</i> my welfare.
NASB	Look to the right and see; For there is no one who regards me; There is no escape for me; No one cares for my soul.
<i>Young's Updated LT</i>	Looking on the right hand—and seeing, And I have none recognizing; Perished has refuge from me, There is none inquiring for my soul.

What is the gist of this verse? David has no right hand man. He has no clear route to escape. There is no one who is concerned about him.

Psalm 142:4a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
nâbaṭ (נָבַט) [pronounced naw ³ -VAHT]	<i>to look intently at, to examine carefully; to regard, to consider</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperative	Strong's #5027 BDB #613
yâmîyn (יְמִינַי) [pronounced yaw-MEEN]	<i>the right hand, the right side, on the right, at the right; the south</i>	feminine plural noun	Strong's #3225 BDB #411
This word can be associated with blessing or prosperity.			
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
râ`âh (רָאָה) [pronounced raw-AWH]	<i>look, see, behold, view, see here, listen up</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperative	Strong's #7200 BDB #906

Translation: Look carefully to [my] right hand and observe... The person on David's right hand would be his trusted ally. This has come down to us today as one's *right-hand man*. We find this particular phrase in several places, e.g., Psalm 110:5: *The Lord is at your right side. He will crush kings on the day of his anger.* Or, Psalm 121:5: *The LORD is your guardian. The LORD is the shade over your right hand.* In the next verse, David will clearly recognize Jesus Christ as the One upon Whom he should depend. However, in this verse, David tells us that there is no man upon whom he could depend.

There is no one there who could take over in his absence; David has no man he can trust implicitly; and any man there might take such responsibility as an opportunity to indulge in power lust. With David and Jonathan, they had each other. David asks the reader to look to his right hand (to David's right hand) to the observe.

Psalm 142:4b

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
ʿêyn (אֵין) [pronounced <i>ān</i>]	<i>nothing, not, [is] not; not present, not ready; expresses non-existence, absence or non-possession; there is no [none, no one]</i>	particle of negation; substantive of negation	Strong's #369 BDB #34
lâmed (ל) (pronounced <i>l</i>)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	preposition with the 1 st person singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
nâkar (נָכַר) [pronounced <i>naw-KAHR</i>]	<i>to contemplate, to behold, to recognize, to acknowledge, to be acquainted with, to know, to know how, to care for</i>	Hiphil participle	Strong's #5234 BDB #647

A **participle** takes a verb and uses it as an adjectival noun—that is, it acts as a noun but describes that noun by the action that it performs. It is occasionally legitimate to append a participle with a *who*.

Translation: ...that [there is] no one who acknowledges [or recognizes] me. There is no one that is closely acquainted with David; there is no one who recognizes David's authority (particularly as king); there is no one on his right hand who cares for him. Recall, David is now surrounded by 400 malcontents. Whether they have legitimate gripes or not is never disclosed to us; however, they were there because (1) God brought them there and (2) because they were pissed off about something. Their focus was on how they had been slighted. They went to David because he was a leader sort; but there was no one that David could lean back upon for strength. David did not have a backup. There was no second-in-command. He was there on his own, with 400 pairs of outstretched hands saying, "Gimme." In the future, David might be able to whip these guys into shape; however, at this point in time, these men have gathered to David simply because they see him as an outlaw and an outcast as well. It is his leadership skills which will capture their imaginations—something which had not taken place as of the writing of this psalm.

Psalm 142:4c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿâbad (אָבַד) [pronounced <i>aw^b-VAHD</i>]	<i>to be lost, to lose oneself, to wander; to perish, to be destroyed; to be ready to perish, to be wretched [miserable or unfortunate]</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #6 BDB #1
mânôwç (מַנְוֶה) [pronounced <i>maw-NOHSS</i>]	<i>flight, a place of escape, refuge</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #4498 BDB #631
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 with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #4480 BDB #577

Translation: [A place of refuge is lost to me](#) [or, *has wandered from me*];... There is no place that David can go to. He been to Nob; he's been to Gath. Neither work out too well. Although he is in a cave right now, that is temporary. As we will see in subsequent chapters, David's life will be one of escaping Saul and his soldiers. There is nowhere that David can go and be safe. We will see in I Sam. 23 that he will rescue a city from the Philistines, and still that city will be willing to give him up. In fact, they are willing to give him up in a heartbeat. So there is nowhere for David to run to. He will never enjoy human safety again—even as king. Quite obviously, David's refuge should be Jesus Christ, Whom David will acknowledge in the next verse.

Psalm 142:4d			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾēyn (אֵין) [pronounced ān]	<i>nothing, not, [is] not; not present, not ready; expresses non-existence, absence or non-possession; there is no [none, no one]</i>	particle of negation; substantive of negation	Strong's #369 BDB #34
dārash (דָּרַשׁ) [pronounced daw-RASH]	<i>to seek, to make inquiries concerning, to consult, to investigate, to study, to follow, to inquire</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #1875 BDB #205
lāmed (ל) (pronounced ʾ)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	preposition	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: [...\[there is\] no one who is concerned for my soul.](#) There is no one that has associated himself with David who is concerned for David. The 400 come to him because they are malcontents; his family comes to him, fearing for their own safety.

At first, this verse seems like, *boo hoo, nobody loves me!* However, that is not David's sentiment here at all. He is presenting a very accurate and objective view of the situation at hand. He looks around, and there is no person who is more concerned for David's soul; he has no right hand man; he has no clear refuge to run to.

What God has done to David is place him in a situation where David must depend upon God. He has no other choice. God has taken away from David every human prop. David is not complaining; he is making an accurate assessment of his situation.

David is often seen as a type of Christ, and here, we have a nice parallel. At the end of our Lord's life on this earth, in the garden of Gethsemene, Jesus looked to his right hand, and his disciples were asleep when he needed them to pray with him. They were too tired to regard Him in his last few hours. There was no escape for our Lord and no one of his disciples appeared concerned for His soul.

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David Knows that God is His Refuge

I cry out unto Y^ehowah,
I say, "You [are] my refuge;
in a land of the living.

Psalm
142:5

I call out to Y^ehowah,
I say, "You [are] my refuge;
in the land of the living.

I call out to you, Jehovah, and I say,
"You are my refuge and hiding place in this land of the living.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Early translations:

The Septuagint I called unto You, O Lord, and I said, "You are my hope, my portion in the land of the living.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV I pray to you, LORD! You are my place of safety,
and you are my choice in the land of the living.
NLT Then I pray to you, O LORD,
I say, "You are my place of refuge.
You are all I really want in life.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™ I call out to you, O LORD.
I say, "You are my refuge,
my own inheritance in this world of the living."
JPS (Tanakh) So I cry to You, O LORD;
I say, "You re my refuge,
all I have in the land of the living."

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Updated Emphasized Bible I have made outcry to You, O Yahweh, —
I have said
||You|| are my refuge,
My portion in the land of the living [or, *the land of life*].
NASB I cried out to Thee, O LORD;
I said, "Thou art my refuge,
My portion in the land of the living.
Young's Updated LT I have cried unto You, O Jehovah,
I have said, "You *are* my refuge,
My portion in the land of the living."

What is the gist of this verse? David calls out to God, proclaiming that God is his refuge in this life.

It is with this passage that David has a turn around of his mental attitude. Prior to this, his mind focused on things from the human standpoint; with this verse, David examines things from the divine viewpoint.

Psalm 142:5a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
zâ'âq (קָעַץ) [pronounced zaw-GAHK]	<i>to cry out, to call, to cry</i>	1 st person singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #2199 BDB #277
ʿel (אֶל) [pronounced e/]	<i>unto, in, into, toward, to, regarding, against</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied); with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #413 BDB #39
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly yhoh-WAH]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217

Translation: I call out to Y^ehowah,... David knows to Whom he must appeal. With all human resources cut off from him, David can turn only to God. Here, we parallel the first verse. I cry aloud with my voice to Jehovah; I make supplication with my voice to Jehovah (Psalm 142:1).

Psalm 142:5b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿamar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MARH]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	1 st person singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
ʿattâh (אַתָּה) [pronounced aht-TAW]	<i>you</i> (often, the verb <i>to be</i> is implied)	2 nd person masculine singular, personal pronoun	Strong's #859 BDB #61
mach ^o zeh (מַחְצֵה) [pronounced mahkh ^e -SEH]	<i>refuge, shelter; the person to whom one flees</i>	masculine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #4268 BDB #340

Translation: ...I say, "You [are] my refuge;... There is no man-made shelter for David; there is no natural refuge for David. His shelter and refuge is God. The One David can depend upon is God. As you would expect, this is not the only psalm which refers to God as a refuge. For instance, Psalm 91:9: You, O LORD, are my refuge! You have made the Most High your home. And we have New Testament parallels as well: Heb 6:18 ...so that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us, which hope we have as an anchor of the soul (Heb. 6:18–19a).

Now, just so you understand, David is not out of fellowship between vv. 1–4 (or 2–4), and then, in v. 5, he gets back into fellowship. He is describing his thoughts while in the cave of Adullam. He begins the psalm in such a way to indicate that he is in fellowship from the outset. Obviously, David cannot write an inspired psalm while being out of fellowship with God. However, vv. 2–4 present David's place from human viewpoint. In this verse, David takes the divine perspective.

I have outlined the strengths and weaknesses of the various English translations already. A fairly good and rather free translation is the *New Living Translation* (also called *The Open Bible*). However, one of the big problems with this translation is the footnotes, which are often very misleading. For instance, for this verse, they suggest, *The*

psalmist either was a Levite or put himself in their place of total dependence on God.⁸ The author was David; its says so in their title. David was from the tribe of Judah. So why even suggest that maybe someone from the tribe of Levite wrote this?

Psalm 142:5c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
chêleq (חֵלֶק) [pronounced KHAY-lek]	portion, tract, territory, share, allotment; smoothness	masculine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #2506 (and #2511) BDB #324
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
ʿerets (אֶרֶץ) [pronounced EH-rets]	earth (all or a portion thereof), land	feminine singular construct	Strong's #776 BDB #75
chayyîym (חַיִּים) [pronounced khay-YEEM]	being alive, being vigorous, having life, sustaining life, living prosperously—it is life as opposed to death	Masculine substantive plural abstract with the definite article	Strong's #2416 BDB #313

Translation: ...in the land of the living. David recognizes that, in all of his days as a soldier, there is life and there is death. At present, David is alive, although Saul persecutes him and seeks his life. However, while he is alive, David's shelter is in Jehovah God.

Interestingly enough, this phrase occurs in at least three other psalms: I believe that I will see the goodness of the LORD in this world of the living (Psalm 27:13). God will likewise destroy you forever; He shall take you away, and pluck you out of your tent, and root you out of the land of the living. Selah (Psalm 52:5). I will walk before Jehovah in the land of the living (Psalm 116:9; see also Isa. 38:11 53:8 Jer. 11:19 Ezek. 26:20 32:23–27, 32). This, of course, simply refers to life here on earth. It's an interesting phrase which I did not realize occurred so often in Scripture. I've even heard a modern song of this same name, as well as a book.

**Give attention unto my cry
for I have hung down exceedingly.
Deliver me from those pursuing me
for they are strong from me.**

Psalm
142:6

**Pay attention to my cry
for I am extremely low [or, weak].
Deliver me from my persecutors
for they are stronger than I.**

**Pay attention to my calling out for I am extremely down.
Deliver me from my persecutors, because they are stronger than I am.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Early translations:

The Septuagint

Attend to my supplication, for I have been brought down very low. Deliver me from those who persecute me, for they are stronger than I.

⁸ The Open Bible; the New Living Translation; Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, TN; ©1996, p. 818.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV
NJB

Please answer my prayer, I am completely helpless.
Listen to my calling,
for I am miserably weak.

Rescue me from my persecutors,
for they are too strong for me.

TEV

Listen to my cry for help,
for I am sunk in despair.
Save me from my enemies;
they are too strong for me.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™

Pay attention to my cry for help
Because I am very weak.
Rescue me from those who pursue me
because they are too strong for me.

JPS (Tanakh)

Listen to my cry, for I have been brought very low;
save me from my pursuers,
for they are too strong for me.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB

“Give heed to my cry,
For I am brought very low:
Deliver me from my persecutors,
For they are too strong for me.

Young's Updated LT

Attend You to my loud cry,
For I have become very low;
Deliver You me from my pursuers,
For they have been stronger than I.

What is the gist of this verse? David asks for God to pay attention to him, as his persecutors are stronger than he is.

Psalm 142:6a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
qâshab (קָשַׁב) [pronounced kaw-SHAH ^{AV}]	<i>incline, attend to, give attention to, be caused to attend to</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperative, with the voluntative hê	Strong's #7181 BDB #904
ʿel (עַל) [pronounced e/]	<i>unto, in, into, toward, to, regarding, against</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied); with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #413 BDB #39

Psalm 142:6a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
rinnâh (רִנָּה) [pronounced rin-NAW]	shouting for joy; cry, loud cry, a mournful cry, wailing; a ringing cry [in an entreaty or supplication]	feminine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #7440 BDB #943

Translation: [Pay attention to my cry...](#) David is calling out to God. He is in a position where his human resources and his human ideas are at an end. He does not have enough human ability to withstand his persecutors.

Psalm 142:6b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced kee]	for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time	conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
dâlal (דָּלַל) [pronounced daw-LAHL]	to hang down, to swing, to wave; to be low, to languish; to be feeble, to be weak	1 st person singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #1809 BDB #195
m ^e ôd (מְּוֹד) [pronounced m ^e -ODE]	exceedingly, extremely, greatly, very	adverb	Strong's #3966 BDB #547

Translation: [...for I am extremely low](#) [or, weak]. David recognized that he did not have the ability in himself to stand against his persecutors. I don't think that this is a reference to feeling depressed but more of a recognition of the weakness of his own flesh. David knows that, from human viewpoint, there is no way that he can stand up against Saul and his army.

Barnes' comments: *The language would be applicable to one who had been in better circumstances, and who had been brought down to a condition of danger, of poverty, of want. It is language which is commonly applied to poverty.*⁹ As I have mentioned earlier, David went from a place of great respect and wealth, to the station of a fugitive, with few material possessions.

Robert Bellarmine: *"I am brought very low," etc. However true this may have been of David lurking in a cave, while his enemy, Saul, was at the head of a powerful army, it is more literally true of Christ, who could truly say, "I am brought very low," because "he himself became obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross." He was also "brought very low," when he, that had the right of sitting on the cherubim, hung between two robbers. Truly also were his enemies "stronger than he" when "their hour came," and "power was given to darkness," so as to appear, for awhile, to eclipse the sun of justice itself.*¹⁰

⁹ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 142:6.

¹⁰ Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *A Treasury of David*; e-Sword, Psalm 142 introduction.

Psalm 142:6c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
nâtsal (לָצַד) [pronounced <i>naw-TSAHL</i>]	<i>to snatch away, to deliver, to rescue, to snatch out of danger, to preserve</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperative with the 1 st person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5337 BDB #664
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 with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
râdaph (רָדַף) [pronounced <i>raw-DAHF</i>]	<i>pursuing, persecuting; pursuer, persecutor</i>	masculine plural, Qal active participle with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #7291 BDB #922

Translation: *Deliver me from my persecutors...* David turns to God to ask for deliverance from his persecutors (or, those who are pursuing him). An objective, human observation would be that David did not have the ability to stand up against Saul and his army.

Psalm 142:6d

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
ʾâmêtz (אַמְעָץ) [pronounced <i>aw-MAYTS</i>]	<i>to be strong [firm, alert; eager], to be strong [in the feet], to be fast [or swift-footed]; to prevail over</i>	3 rd person plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #553 BDB #54
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 with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #4480 BDB #577

Translation: *...for they are stronger than I.* David recognizes that Saul and his army are simply stronger than he is. Again, this is all from a human perspective.

**Bring out from prison my soul
to confess Your name.
In me surround righteous ones
that You recompense upon me.**

Psalm
142:7

**Bring my soul out from prison [or, out from
confinement]
to confess [or, celebrate] Your name;
for righteous ones [or, righteousnesses]
surround me [or, crown me]
for You bestow [great blessing] upon me.**

**Lead my soul out of confinement so that I may confess [or, celebrate] Your name,
because righteous ones will surround me [or, righteousnesses will crown me]
and because You will heap benefits upon me.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Early translations:

The Septuagint Bring my soul out of prison, that I may give thanks to Your name, O Lord. The righteous will wait for me, until You recompense me.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV Rescue me from this prison, so I can praise your name.
And when your people notice
your wonderful kindness to me,
they will rush to my side.

NJB Lead me out of prison
that I may praise your name.
The upright gather round me
because of your generosity to me.

NLT Bring me out of prison
so I can thank you.
The godly will crowd around me,
for you treat me kindly.”

REB Set me free from prison
that I may praise your name.’
The righteous will place a crown on me [or, *crowd around me*],
when you give me my due reward.

TEV Set me free from my distress [or, *prison*];
then in the assembly of your people
I will praise you
because of your goodness to me.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™ Release my soul from prison
so that I may give thanks to your name.
Righteous people will surround me
because you are good to me.

JPS (Tanakh) Free me from prison,
that I may praise Your name.
The righteous shall glory in me
for Your gracious dealings with me. [*shall glory in me: Hebrew uncertain*].

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB “Bring my soul out of prison;
So that I may give thanks to Thy name;
The righteous will surround me,
For Thou wilt deal bountifully with me.”

Young's Updated LT Bring forth from prison my soul to confess Your name,
The righteous do compass me about,
When You confer benefits upon me!

What is the gist of this verse? David likens his persecution to being in a prison. However, he concludes this psalm with the recognition that the angels of God surround him and that God is gracious to him.

Psalm 142:7a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
yâtsâ' (אֲצֵא) [pronounced yaw-TZAWH]	to cause to go out, to lead out, to bring out, to carry out, to draw out, to take out; [of money:] to put forth, to lay out, to exact; to promulgate; to produce	2 nd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperative with the voluntative hê	Strong's #3318 BDB #422
min (מִן) [pronounced min]	from, off, out from, out of, away from, on account of, since, than, more than, greater than	preposition of separation with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
maç ^e gêr (מַגְרֵר) [pronounced mahs ^e -GAYR]	locksmith, smith; prison, dungeon	masculine singular noun	Strong's #4525 BDB #689
nepesh (נֶפֶשׁ) [pronounced NEH-fesh]	soul, life, living being, desire	feminine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #5315 BDB #659

Translation: *Bring my soul out from prison* [or, *out from confinement*]... David is in a cave, hiding from Saul. Although he is in his own country, it is as though he is in prison. However, even worse than this is that his soul has been completely caught up in fear and concern over Saul. This was his true prison. David has been overly upset over this, which state of mind saw its culmination in I Sam. 21. So David asks for his soul to be delivered first. The key is mental attitude; the key is what you think. Once David's soul has been liberated, all of his actions are made from a position of strength.

Interestingly enough, according to Gill, some Catholic writers say that this is an allusion to some sort of purgatory.¹¹ Obviously I would agree with Gill's thinking on the matter: *absurd*. Although David finds himself in a cave (the emphasis of Gill's further commentary), it is the prison of his soul which is in view here. That imprisonment is David simply viewing his status quo from the human perspective.

Speaking of poor commentaries, the Open Bible again makes a ludicrous suggestion: *Possibly an actual imprisonment*.¹² This psalm was written by David from a cave, not from a prison. Also, in the Hebrew, David says that his *soul* is in prison, also suggesting that this should not be taken literally. Now, even though the Open Bible then writes, *...but more likely a figure of speech for a distressing emotion*,¹³ why suggest in the first place that maybe this is a literal imprisonment? Why not, instead, suggest, *This is probably not a reference to a literal imprisonment, since the title tells us that David is writing this from a cave, but is more likely a figure of speech for a distressing emotion?* It would be nice if the person who wrote these notes read the entire psalm as well.

Psalm 142:7b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lâmed (ל) (pronounced l ^e)	to, for, towards, in regards to	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510

¹¹ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 142:7.

¹² *The Open Bible*; the New Living Translation; Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, TN; ©1996, p. 818.

¹³ *Ibid*.

Psalm 142:7b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
yâdâh (יָדָה) [pronounced yaw-AWH]	<i>to profess, to confess; to show or point out [with the hand extended]; to give thanks, to praise, to celebrate</i>	Hiphil infinitive construct	Strong's #3034 BDB #392
ʿêth (אֵת) [pronounced ayth]	generally untranslated	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
shêm (שֵׁם) [pronounced shame]	<i>name, reputation, character</i>	masculine singular noun with a 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #8034 BDB #1027

Translation: ...to celebrate [or, confess] Your name;... Although David expresses great concern in this psalm, he comes to a point in this psalm where he asks God to bring his soul out of prison, which causes David to celebrate God's name (or character). This is David's recording of his actual turn around from being a soul in prison to a soul which celebrates God's name and a soul which is surrounded by the righteous ones of God (v. 7c).

Psalm 142:7c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
bîy (בִּי) [pronounced bee]	<i>please, I pray, excuse me</i>	particle of entreaty	Strong's #994 BDB #106
or, possibly...			
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced kee]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
or, possibly...			
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
The latter reading is correct, according to Owen and Zodhiates. Keil and Delitzsch give this over a paragraph of discussion. However, kîy is the most reasonable understanding, although we do not have the manuscript evidence to back it up.			
kâthar (כָּתַר) [pronounced kaw-THAR]	<i>to surround [in a good or hostile sense]; to put on as a crown to crown oneself with anything</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #3803 BDB #509
tsaddîyq (צַדִּיקִים) [pronounced tsahd-DEEK]	<i>just, righteous, justified; just ones, righteous ones, justified ones; absolute or perfect righteousness [if applied to God]</i>	masculine plural adjective, often used as a substantive	Strong's #6662 BDB #843

Translation: *for righteous ones* [or, *righteousnesses*] *surround me* [or, *crown me*]... This is a confusing final verse because its interpretation is difficult. My first interpretation of this would be that David would be surrounded by God's righteous angels—a part of God protection given to David. This is something which would be extremely important to David, as he is on the run from Saul. He does not know if Saul will locate him or not, and David is therefore constantly on the move and constantly looking over his shoulder. This is his assurance that God has him surrounded. This interpretation is also more in line with the context. David is concerned that his enemies lie in wait to trap him (v. 3) and that he has no one else that he can depend upon (v. 4). He calls out to God for help (vv. 1, 5, 6). We would expect God to help. God the Holy Spirit, through the inspiration of Scripture, tells David that he is protected, that part of his protection includes a cadre of guardian angels.

A second interpretation would be that David would be crowned with God's righteousness. This understanding tends to go along with the singular noun, which is not what we have here. Furthermore, this does not really fit in with the text. David is awarded God's righteousness, but there is little contextual reason to say anything about that here.

Although the commentary of Keil and Delitzsch is excellent at times, at this point they talk about David being a part of a *community or church whose destiny is interwoven with his own*.¹⁴ The problem with this approach is that, if David writes this thinking about all of these malcontents who have come to him, that makes little sense. These men were anything but righteous. It was David who whipped them into shape. In v. 4, when David says he lacks a right hand man and anyone who respects him, he cannot just turn around in this verse and act as if these men were his righteous brigade. This third interpretation makes the least sense of all.

Psalm 142:7d

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
gâmal (גָּמַל) [pronounced <i>gaw-MAHL</i>]	<i>to produce [fruit]; to wean; to do, to make; to give, to recompense; to reward, to bestow [blessings as a result of a stage of growth; when followed by עַל]</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #1580 BDB #168
A complete study of this verb will be offered below.			
ʿal (עַל) [pronounced <i>gahl</i>]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #5921 BDB #752

When not showing a physical relationship between two things, ʿal can take on a whole host of new meanings: *on the ground of, according to, on account of, on behalf of, concerning, besides, in addition to, together with, beyond, above, over, by on to, towards, to, against, in the matter of, concerning, as regards to*. It is one of the most versatile prepositions in Scripture. This word often follows particular verbs. In the English, we have *helping verbs*; in the Hebrew, there are *helping prepositions*.

Translation: *...for You bestow [great blessing] upon me*. The key to this final phrase is the verb, gâmal. Therefore, let's look at the **Doctrine of Gâmal**. The reason for this is, if you look this up in your lexicon, you might become confused or question my translation. Therefore, it may be a good idea to examine this verb in depth.

¹⁴ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 142:6–7.

In this case, the great blessing which God has bestowed upon David is complete security in the midst of turmoil. David does not have to worry about what will happen to him; God has him surrounded by angels and has brought his soul out of confinement.

I want you to get this one main point from this psalm: David's circumstances did not change; it was his mental attitude which changed. In fact, at this point, let's examine...

A Summary of Psalm 142

1. David wrote this psalm while hiding in the cave of Adullam (title).
2. Because of his precarious situation, David calls out to God several times in this psalm to listen to him (vv. 1, 2, 5, 6).
3. David has good reason to complain (v. 2). He was once a member of the royal family of Saul, having married into it. He was a soldier who was highly respected with his own cadre of soldiers. He occupied a home with a window in the wall of the city. Now, all of that is gone.
4. Although one would assume that a restoration of these things would be in order, David himself points out that the key to his unhappiness is his soul: God the Holy Spirit is not upon him (v. 3) and his soul feels as though it is in prison (v. 7a).
5. All of this is exacerbated by the fact that he has no man upon whom he can depend; and there is no one among those who have joined to him that really respect him (v. 4). Those who persecute him are too strong for him (v. 6).
6. Then David recognizes that God is his refuge and his portion in this life (v. 5).
7. The key is, God will bring David's *soul* out of prison (v. 7a).
8. God has surrounded David with an unseen cadre of righteous guardian angels (v. 7c).
9. Therefore, David can celebrate God's character, know that God will give to him great blessings (v. 7).
10. Finally, the key is the soul. David felt imprisoned *in his soul*. He is out of this prison by a change of his mental attitude.

Application: God does not always deliver you out of circumstances which initially seem too difficult for you. However, God does, on the other hand, provide you with the mental and emotional resources to deal with these situations. David's first choice for his life may not have been one of leaving his safe and secure royal home and hanging out in a cave with a bunch of dissidents, but the end result was a man of great character and accomplishment, whose later rule over Israel was one of unparalleled greatness throughout all of Israel's history. David could not have been the great ruler that he was had he not (1) been disassociated with his own family and left out in the field to see the some of the family sheep; and (2) been confined in a cave with 400 malcontents and dissidents. Therefore, do not rebel when God help you work on your own character.

Application: Finally, and most importantly, the key to your life is your soul. Feed the soul first. That is, stay in fellowship, get back into fellowship when you get out, and do not neglect the Word of God.