Preaching the Psalms
Psalm 54 Sermon Research
Carmen Gass
6/9/23

Save me, O God, by Your name,
And [c]vindicate me by Your power.

2 Hear my prayer, O God;
Give ear to the words of my mouth.

3 For strangers have risen against me
And violent men have sought my [d]life;
They have not set God before them. [e]*Selah.*

4 Behold, God is my helper;
The Lord is [f]the sustainer of my soul.

5 [g]He will recompense the evil to [h]my foes;
[i]Destroy them in Your [j]faithfulness.

6 [k]Willingly I will sacrifice to You;
I will give thanks to Your name, O Lord, for it is good.

7 For [l]He has delivered me from all [m]trouble,
And my eye has looked *with satisfaction* upon my enemies.

Thoughts…
What is the contextual backdrop?
Synonymous parallelism??
God acknowledged/named
Psalmist appeals to the name
Ear, mouth, eye
Individual speaking
Me/my/I
Hear – loaded word
Anthropomorphism
v1 What is being used to save? Name

Vindicate by power
v3-4 Opposing relationship with God
v6 What is the sacrifice?
Elohistic Psalm??

Nouns
1. Me/God/your/name/Me/your/**power**
2. My/prayer/God/ear/words/my/ mouth
3. Strangers/me/men/my/life/they/God/them
4. God/my/**helper**/Lord/**sustainer**/my/ soul
5. He/evil/my/foes/Your/**faithfulness**
6. I/sacrifice/You/I/thanks/name/Lord/ **good**
7. He/all/trouble/my/eye/satisfaction/ my/enemies

Verbs
1. Save/vindicate
2. Hear/give ear
3. Risen/against/sought/set
4. Is/Is
5. Will recompense/destroy
6. Sacrifice/give/is
7. Delivered/looked/upon

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According to the superscription, David wrote this psalm during the period when Saul was seeking his life. On

one occasion the Ziphites informed Saul that David was hiding in their territory (see 1 Sam 23:19-20).

v3 – Foreigners - Many medieval Hebrew mss read זֵדִים (zedim, "proud ones") rather than זָרִים (zarim,

"foreigners"). This is a case of confusing ד (dalet) and ר (resh). The term זֵדִים (zedim) occurs in parallelism

with עָרִיצִים (ʿaritsim, "violent ones") in Ps 86:14 and Isa 13:11.

v6 – sacrifice - The cohortative verbal form expresses the psalmist's resolve/vow to praise.

v7 – verb tense - The perfects in v. 7 are probably rhetorical, indicating the psalmist's certitude and confidence that God will intervene. The psalmist is so confident of God's positive response to his prayer, he can describe God's deliverance and his own vindication as if they were occurring or had already occurred.

Psalm 54 by Bob Utley

v1 – vindicate - BDB 192, KB 220, *Qal* imperfect used between three imperatives and parallel to the first. It is functioning as an imperative of request after examples in Ugaritic poetry (AB, p. 24). It denotes a "legal verdict." The psalmist is asking God for judicial acquittal. He has been unfairly accused.

v1-2 - "O God" This is the name for God (*Elohim*) that refers to Him as creator, sustainer, and provider of all life on this planet (cf. Gen. 1:6, see Special Topic at Ps. 1:1). It appears twice, 54:1a and 54:2a.

v2- 1. strangers (BDB 266 I, cf. Ps. 44:20; 109:11) have arisen against me, 54:3a. This is usually used of other covenant people.
2. violent men (BDB 792). This is usually used of enemies of other nations (i.e., invaders, cf. Isa. 13:11; Ezek. 28:7; 30:11; 31:12; 32:12)

v3 - Selah - The function of the Hebrew term סֶלָה (selah), transliterated here "*Selah*," is uncertain. It may be a musical direction of some kind.

v5 - The psalmist asked God to destroy (lit. "put to silence," BDB 856, KB 1035, *Hiphil* imperative, cf. Ps. 143:12) his enemies as they were trying to silence him, cf. Ps. 18:4; 69:4; 73:27; 94:23; 101:5,8

v6 - Psalm 54:6 has a rare use of the covenant name for Israel's God, YHWH, in Book 2 of the Psalter.

v1 – A person suffering was believed to be receiving deserved punishment from God. Vindication of the psalmist would then come when God intervened to turn the tables and punish the psalmist's enemies. Such an action would proclaim the psalmist's innocence and show that he had not lost God's favor.

v6 – (Num. 15:3)"freewill offering" – offerings of the communion type, in which certain portions of the animal were offered to God as a savory aroma, and the remaining were consumed by the priests and the offerer in the communal setting of the tabernacle or temple. Hence the totality of the Israelite community engaged in a corporate meal that celebrated the unity of the community of faith.

The Psalms: Hebrew text & English translation with an introduction and commentary (Cohen)

Pgs. 170 – 171

Pg. 170 – Title connects it with Saul's persecution of David. A difficulty is, however, created by the mention of strangers in verse 5 which normally indicates non-Israelites.

Ziphites – see 2 Samuel 23:19; Hyperlink: https://bibleatlas.org/full/ziph.htm

- Strangers = Ziphites who betrayed David
- Zar (root word = different) – used of an Israelite of another family Deut. 25:5
- Perhaps inhabitants of Keilah, of Canaanite origin, violent men would be Saul and his followers

Pg. 171

v4 – God is my helper – confidence that God is helping him although the proof of the aid lies in the future

as the upholder of my soul - the sense is not that God is the support of the psalmist among many others, but that He is so in a supreme degree - that he sums up in Himself the qualities of a class "the class of helpers"

v6 – more probably Hebrew translation "with a free will" in a spirit of glad relief

Thy name is good not giving thanks is good. There may be a reference back to verse 1 save me by thy name, and the fulfillment of that petition.

v7 - the verbs are prophetic perfect. to gaze upon one's enemies is to rejoice in their defeat. The sudden change to the third person, he hath delivered, immediately after thy name, oh Lord, is in accordance with the Hebrew idiom. It can however be avoided here by rendering it hath delivered the subject being name.

v3 - Heb. soréray 'my enemies' is attested four more times in the Bible, all in the Book of Psalms: 5:9; 27:11; 56:3; 59:11, and the biform зутду is attested once in Ps. 92:12.

v5 - Rashi's comment here seems to be inspired by (a) Sifra at Lev. 19:16, which juxtaposes precisely the Heb. terms for slander and murder employed here; and (b! Sifra at Lev. 18:1, which interprets "I am the LORD" (passim in Lev. 18-19) to mean, "1 AM full of compassion; 1 AM a judge in exacting punishment, and I AM faithful to pay a reward"; cf. Rashi at Lev. 19:16.

Word Bible Commentary: Psalms 51-100 – Marvin E. Tate

v4 – "The Lord" may have the correct meaning "the Lord (of all)"

v6 – "O Yahweh"

p. 45 – Psalm 54 = Individual Lament

v7 – change of mood found in several laments (3:7; 6:9; 10:16-18) – not sure if due to external "word from priest" or designed to bring one praying to point of faith"

v6 – strenghthens petition of two previous verses

Mowinckel places this psalm in a group which he calls protective psalms because they express prayer to Yahweh for protection against imminent danger. Mowinckel argues that such psalms have more confidence and

assurance of getting help than do the psalms of lamentation. Kraus places Psalm 54 in the broad category of prayer songs.

Info about applying to community as opposed to individual

Superscription - the Zephites lived in a hill town southeast of him Hebron 1 Samuel 26:1

The distinctive element here is the prayer for deliverance by the name of Yahweh. The prayer presupposes A theology of the name, which is an expression of the presence of God. The name carried something of the essential nature and power of God to invoke his name was to invoke his presence. The name theology is especially evident in the deuteronomic writings. Yahweh is repeatedly affirmed to be in heaven, but his powerful presence is invoked because his name is in the temple.

Save: the verb save carries the idea of help/deliver/ rescue probably going back to a root idea of to be wide or broad, and thus in the causative form it conveys the idea of to make room or to be free from constricting circumstances.

Vindicate – legal term; it also occurs in context dealing with victory in battle genesis 49: 16-17; Psalm 110:6.

Strangers - the reference is to those members of the community who are not true members of the Yahweh community. They are ruthless persons who have no regard for Yahweh. If this is the case they have made themselves outsiders by their behavior Yahweh does not have his proper place with these people.

Explanation: the major stress in the Psalm is clearly on the powerful and effective name of Yahweh. Yawei may seem absent from the world, but those who invoke his name with faith and courage will discover the reality of his awesome presence. The name of Yahweh will not fail the suppliant in a time of crisis. The enemies will not prevail.

Psalms Introduction and Commentary by JH Eaton

Page 145-this psalm of David fits naturally into the tradition of the royal prayers, though the lack of conclusive evidence has encouraged some to think of the private troubles of an individual appealing at the temple

1-3 God is called upon to give deliverance by the agency of his name and might his power on earth centered in Zion, giving effect to his covenant work and saving his faithful king. Danger threatens from terrifying foes, who have thrown off all restraints of divine authority. The main textual tradition supported by Greek, Syriac and Jerome calls them strangers or aliens rather than insolent, suggesting dreaded conquerors from afar the same combination of adjectives in Ezekiel 28:7; 31:12

4-5 the psalm's central petition verse 5 may be translated "let the danger recoil upon my ambushers! By thy truth annihilate them!" This prayer is preceded by a supporting affirmation which invokes the salvation promise to God's elect (Psalm 118:7; Isaiah 50:9).

6-7 the song ends in a confident expectation of deliverance. A vow is made to bring a costly offering in glad testimony to God's name (v. 1), when the day of triumph shall have come (Psalm 118:7)

Rather the psalm was understood to pray for the vanquishing of the terrifying forces of evil ranged against the Kingdom of God. The Psalm is thus seen as an intercession corresponding to the prophecies of ultimate victory.

Classical Hebrew poetry: a guide to its techniques, Wilfrid GE Watson

Parallel word pairs

Page 133 figurative word pairs include metaphorical words in parallel and meant to nomic pairs such as abstract nouns used in parallel with concrete and synecdochic couples. Metonymy is the use of one word For another; synecdoche is the part for the whole or the species for the genus and the other way around too.

Proverbs 5:3 the metaphorical word pair honey//oil is used. See also Job 20:17; Genesis 27:28; 39. When used in parallel with a concrete noun and abstract noun, too, takes on a concrete meeting as in Psalm 54:9 foe and enemies

Page 134 - fixed + variant word pairs are parallel pairs in which the first element is unchanging while the second invariant is varied symbolized as A// B_1, B_2, B_3 etcetera; Psalm 54:4

page 137 a high percentage of word pairs in a particular passage is a strong indication that the text originated orally, although it does not automatically follow that poems with such high ratios were necessarily orally composed. Yoders example of Psalm 54 will provide a convenient illustration of such a poem. It will be set out as follows beside each couplet the corresponding word pair will be given with references to its occurrences elsewhere

Psalm 54 (p. 127-138) [corresponding word pair appearing elsewhere]

God, by your *name save* me, [Jeremiah 16:21; Psalm 106:8]

And by your *might defend* me. [Psalm 70:4; 9:9; Proverbs 31:9; Psalms 7:9]

God, *hear* my *prayer,* [Psalm 39:13; 49:2; 80:9]

Give ear to the *words of my mouth*. [Proverbs 28:9; Psalms 88:1] ***fixed + variant word pairs***

For

foreigners have risen up against me, [Isaiah 25:5; 29:5]

vicious men seek my *life*. [Psalm 86;14]

See!

God is my *helper*; [Psalm 68:18; 104:7]

The *Lord* really is the *supporter* of my life [Isaiah 63:5]

Making *evil recoil* on my slanderers, [Psalm 94:23]

In truth, he really *destroyed* them.

For generosity I will *sacrifice* to you, [Psalm 116:17]

I will *praise* your *name*, Yahweh, for it is good.

For,

From all my *enemies* he rescued me, [Psalm 138:7] ***figurative word pairs***

And my eyes gloated over my *foes*.

Page 141 function of parallel word-pairs

1. assist in composing verse

2. The word pair effectively slowed down the flow of verse making and at the same time reedit reiterated

keywords in each line enabling the audience or reader to follow the meaning better

3. The third function of parallel word pairs operative at a linguistic level is cohesion: the use of stock word pairs

help bind together the parallel lines of couplets.

<mark>**Psalms: Reading and studying the book of praises WH Bellinger**</mark>

page 45 Psalm 54 is an example of an individual lament

  superscription describes the background for individual laments

 1. Invocation - addresses the prayer to God

 2. Complaint - describes in a variety of ways the crisis which has prompted the lament

 3. Petition- pleading for help, motivations or reasons concerning why God should help

 4. Conclusion- usually positive. It may include an expression of confidence that god hears the prayer;

   An expression of trust in God;

   Or a promised, a vow to offer praise to the God who delivers

Page 52 - Walter Brueggemann categorizes laments as psalms of disorientation

Page 57 – "the pervasiveness in the laments of a positive conclusion, Aaconclusion that consistently speaks of

hope for the future"

Page 58 one of the rhetorical devices used in the laments is motivation. The lamenter often gives reasons why God should deliver. Since the laments are prayers addressed to God, the presence of divine names is noteworthy. The more general point, however is that the laments use language vividly in order to persuade God to deliver. They also use echo effects as a means to draw the reader into the world of the text, a world structured around relationship with God.

Page 72 - the certainty that God hears the prayer is a dominant note in the laments. The laments deal with the experience of abandonment, and yet it is clear that they move to praise when in the midst of crisis; The laments end with hope. This aspect is essential in understanding these psalms. The laments cry out of the depths for God's help; God responds.

The Psalms: Translated and interpreted in the light of Hebrew life and worship Elmer A Leslie

Page 315 the deuteronomic law recognizes this same distinction. In the historical introduction to the deuteronomic code it is stated that when a dispute is too difficult for the appointed judges, the matter must be brought unto God: the cause that is too hard for you, ye shall bring unto me and i will hear it (1:17B). That is, it shall be brought to the sanctuary, which in the deuteronomist's thought was the Jerusalem temple.

- Page 316 - The fact that such matters were to be decided in judgment given at the temple is implied in the prayer of the dedication of the temple by king Solomon….The Lord is to hear and judge, condemning the wicked and bringing punishment upon him, and pronouncing the righteous 1 guiltless and ordering whatever redress shall be forthcoming to him first kings 8: 31 through 32.

- Exactly how this decision was arrived at we are not told, but the fact that it was done in this way remains, and out of this practice and in connection with it there grew up a considerably large group of psalms which are properly viewed as prayers of the falsely accused. The first group is the prayers of the falsely accused seeking vindication which includes Psalm 54.

Page 331-Psalm 54 is the lamenting prayer of one who has been falsely accused. He has come to the temple to secure his own vindication and to pray that his insolent and formidable accusers may themselves be destroyed by God.

- To call upon the name of the Lord refers to the utterance of the Lord's name in divine worship. Those who call upon his name are His worshippers. Those who do not call upon his name do not worship him. Moreover his name implies His character, His nature.

- The psalmist is not alone. He has faith in the supporting presence of his God, and at the same time with thirst for revenge he longs for the destruction of his enemies. With characteristic semitic feelings he hopes that their evil may come back upon themselves (v5)

- We understand the close of the psalm verses 6 -7 when we see that its background is that of the songs of personal Thanksgiving, where those who have peculiar cause for gratitude bring their offering to the Temple and in the presence of the congregation give their testimonies as to what the Lord has done. Our psalmist is now certain of vindication at God's hands. As though in anticipation of this longed-for experience, he hears the glad festal coral of the Temple "for it is good". The tense of the verb suggest certainty.

Context: 1 Samuel 23: 13 – 29 (netbible.com)

13 So David and his men, who numbered about 600, set out and left Keilah; they moved around from one place to another. When told that David had escaped from Keilah, Saul called a halt to his expedition. 14 David stayed in the strongholds that were in the desert and in the hill country of the wilderness of Ziph. Saul looked for him all the time, but God did not deliver David into his hands. 15 David realized that Saul had come out to seek his life; at that time David was in Horesh in the wilderness of Ziph.

16 Then Jonathan son of Saul left and went to David at Horesh. He encouraged him through God. 17 He said to him, "Don't be afraid! For the hand of my father Saul cannot find you. You will rule over Israel, and I will be

your second-in-command. Even my father Saul realizes this." 18 When the two of them had made a covenant before the Lord, David stayed at Horesh, but Jonathan went to his house.

19 Then the Ziphites went up to Saul at Gibeah and said, "Isn't David hiding among us in the strongholds at Horesh on the hill of Hakilah, south of Jeshimon? 20 Now at your own discretion, O king, come down. Delivering him into the king's hand will be our responsibility."

21 Saul replied, "May you be blessed by the Lord, for you have had compassion on me. 22 Go and make further arrangements. Determine precisely where he is and who has seen him there, for I am told that he is extremely cunning. 23 Locate precisely all the places where he hides and return to me with dependable information. Then I will go with you. If he is in the land, I will find him among all the thousands of Judah."

24 So they left and went to Ziph ahead of Saul. Now David and his men were in the wilderness of Maon, in the rift valley to the south of Jeshimon. [This section of the rift valley is along the western part of the Dead Sea] 25 Saul and his men went to look for him. But David was informed and went down to the rock and stayed in the wilderness of Maon. When Saul heard about it, he pursued David in the wilderness of Maon. 26 Saul went on one side of the mountain, while David and his men went on the other side of the mountain. David was hurrying to get away from Saul, but Saul and his men were surrounding David and his men to capture them. 27 But a messenger came to Saul saying, "Come quickly, for the Philistines have raided the land!"
28 So Saul stopped pursuing David and went to confront the Philistines. Therefore that place is called Sela Hammahlekoth

- [the name סֶלַע הַמַּחְלְקוֹת (selaʿ hammakhleqot) probably means "Rock of Divisions" in Hebrew, in the sense that Saul and David parted company there (cf. NAB "Gorge of Divisions"; TEV "Separation Hill")]
- **29** (24:1) Then David went up from there and stayed in the strongholds of En Gedi.

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Psalm 54 is an individual lament. It consists of a dialogue between the pray-er and God that is based on the conviction stated in verse 4, "God is my helper." All the components of the genre are here: the petition (vv. 1-2), the complaint (v. 3), the statement of trust (vv. 4-5), and the promise of thanksgiving by an offering and praise (vv. 6-7). The psalmist makes no claim of innocence, which other psalms of the genre sometimes make.

The structure is simple: "your name" in verses 1 and 6 frames the poem; "God" occurs three times in the first part (vv. 1-3, 'ĕlōhîm) and three times in the second part (vv. 4-7) though in three different names: "God" (v. 4a, 'ĕlōhîm), "the Lord" (v. 4b, 'ădōnāi) and "LORD" (v. 6b, YHWH). The structure is otherwise

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As noted, NRSV and other translators emend the Masoretic Text, "strangers, foreigners" (v. 3a, zārîm) to "insolent" (zēdîm) on the basis of several Hebrew manuscripts, the targum (the later translation into Aramaic), and the parallel passage in Ps 86:14. Copyists sometimes confused the two words because the letters d and r are virtually indistinguishable in some scripts. It is difficult to judge which word was original. The similar Hebrew nouns zārîm and zēdîm both occur in parallelism with "ruthless" ('ārîṣîm, v. 3b). 'Ārîṣîm and zēdîm are parallel in Ps 86:14 ("the insolent" and "ruffians") and Isa 13:11cd (NRSV: "the arrogant" and "insolence"). 'Ārîṣîm and zārîm are parallel in Isa 25:5 and 29:5. Though both readings are possible, the Masoretic Text "foreigners" is more likely. If that reading is correct, it would be likely that the king is the speaker.

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Verse 3c may be a later addition.

Verse 4 is the middle line of the psalm, and, perhaps not coincidentally, it contains the central theological assertion: "God is my helper." It is significant, too, that verse 4 is surrounded by references in verse 3 and 5 to those who oppose the psalmist. Structurally speaking, the affirmation comes in the midst of opposition. Experientially speaking, the same is true.

Superscription

- Several commentators suggest that it may have been used by persecuted persons seeking refuge in the temple see solms 5; 7 while gerstenberger maintains that it was rooted in small group ritual and employed in order to save and rehabilitate suffering group members. On the other hand, several scholars approached some 54 as the communal prayer of the embattled post exilic community.

(54:1-2) the opening petition is a frequent one in psalms. The appeal to God's name is often interpreted as evidence of a late due to Toronto Mystic name theology. While this is possible, it perhaps more simply indicates an appeals to God's fundamental character which includes both might and faithfulness.

(54:3-5) The editors of the Psalter apparently had verse 3B in mind in linking Psalm 54 with David (1 Samuel 23:15), but others also had their lives threatened by enemies Elijah and Jeremiah, the people of Jerusalem, Jesus. Thus verse 3B is another reminder of the adaptability of Psalm 54.

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The appeal in verse 5B is based on God's character "faithfulness" just as the same petition Psalm 143:12 is based on God's steadfast love. The issue is not so much revenge as it is the psalmist's conviction that God wills to do justice, to give life, to set things right. If God does not deal with the enemies, then god's will is thwarted.

Reflection: this tension between "already" and "not yet" makes the ambiguity of verse 7 theologically significant for us. In other words, persons who live in dependence upon God will experience the life that God intends, yet always in a world where brokenness and pain and disobedience are real. It is theologically appropriate that we not try to resolve the ambiguity of verse 7, for it reminds Christian readers of the truth that the cross and the resurrection are experienced not as separate but as simultaneous realities.

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A number of Old Testament psalms particularly 2,37, 69, 79, 109, 139 and 143, contain expressions of an apparent vengeful attitude toward enemies. For some people these expressions constitute one of the moral difficulties of the Old Testament. It is helpful to know however that (1)imprecations are not confined to the Old Testament: therefore, insofar as they constitute A moral problem that problem pervades the Bible as a whole. What we find here is not a reprehensibly low morality but an aspect of the biblical view of the conflict between good and evil. (2)Many if not all of the imprecatory psalms contained (as well as the imprecation) theological and moral sentiments that we also desire to attain. We can hardly, then, dismiss the psalms under some blanket condemnation as Old Testament morality.
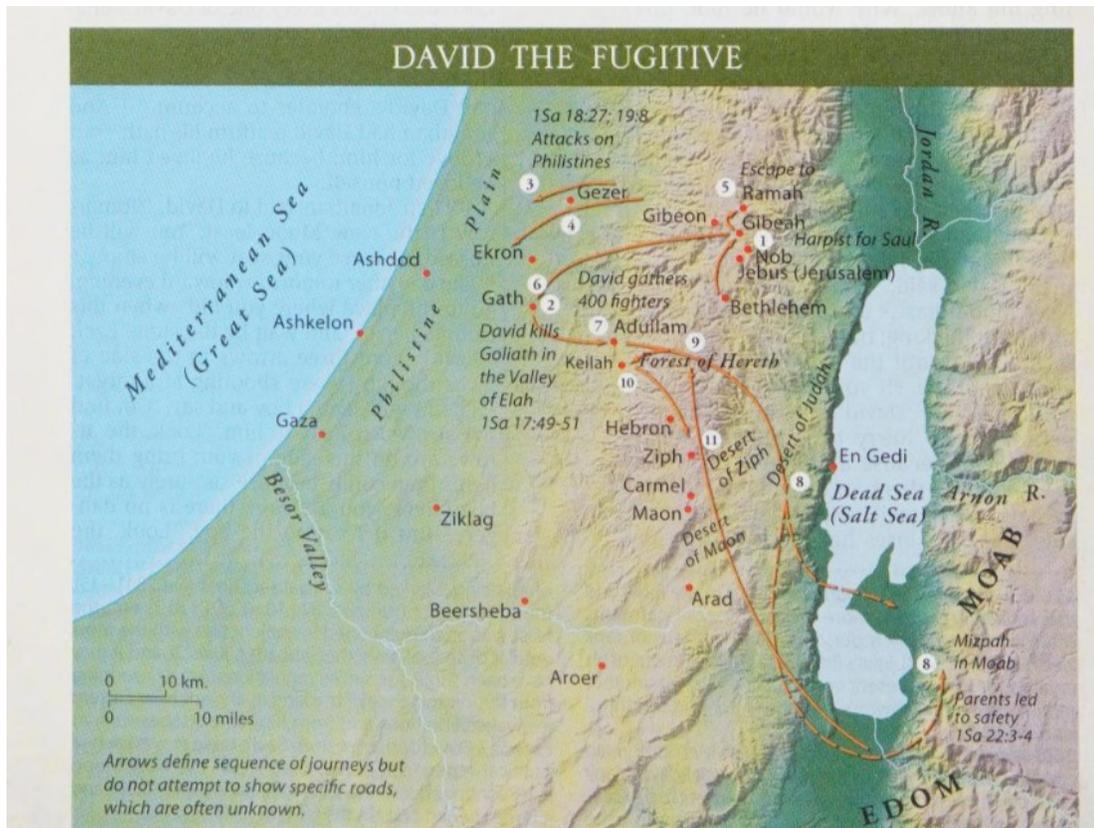
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…. No suggestion in any of them that the psalmist either said any of these things to his adversary or ever intended to take vengeance into his own hands. The imprecatory psalms are full of longing for the vindication of the Lord's good name. Over and over this almost desire was not personal relief but that the Lord should be seen in his goodness and holiness.

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When making an imprecation, a psalmist appeal to God's justice in a tacit acknowledgment that God punishes only because it is the right thing to do - not simply in response to a psalmist's anger.

DAVID THE FUGITIVE

Arrows define sequence of journeys but do not attempt to show specific roads, which are often unknown.

Ziph (place). zif (Heb. *zip H2335*, derivation unknown; gentilic *zipi H2337*, "Ziphite") (1) One of the "southernmost towns of the tribe of Judah in the Negev toward the boundary of Edom" (Josh. 15:24). Possibly this town was named after ZIPH (PERSON) #2 or ZIPHAH (1 Chr. 4:16). Its precise location is uncertain, but some scholars have tentatively identified it with modern Khirbet ez-Zeifeh, some 19 mi. (31 km.) SE of BEERSHEBA.

(2) A town in the hill country within the tribal territory of JUDAH (Josh. 15:55). The open area E of this town was known as the Desert of Ziph, and it was here that DAVID hid from SAUL twice (1 Sam. 23:14-15, 24; 26:2); on both of those occasions the inhabitants of the town, the Ziphites, alerted the king regarding David's whereabouts (2 Sam. 23:19; 26:1; Ps. 54 title [KJV, "Ziphims"]). Ziph was one of the cities fortified by REHOBOAM after the secession of the northern kingdom (2 Chr. 11:8). It is generally identified with modern Tell Zif, 4 mi. (6 km.) SE of HEBRON on a hill some 2,890 ft. (880 m.) above sea level commanding the open country around. Because the Calebites were associated with Hebron, it seems probable that this Ziph was named after ZIPH (PERSON) #1.

Ear

ear. The vital organ of hearing. The Bible often refers to the ear in the physical sense. For example, we read that the tip of the right ear of the priests was touched with blood during their consecration (Lev. 8:23-14). A servant who spurned freedom to continue in the service of his master had his ear bored with an awl to signify his continual subservience (Exod. 21:6). Cutting off ears was a feared practice of the enemy (Ezek. 23:25). More frequently, however, the use of the term involves understanding and obedient response. "To incline the ear" means "to give attention" (Ps. 88:2). "To uncover someone's ear" denotes "to reveal to someone" (1 Sam. 20:2; 2 Sam. 7:27). "Uncircumcised" ears are deaf to moral and spiritual instruction, not delighting whatever in the word of God (Jer. 6:10; Acts 7:51). "Ears that hear" is an expression that indicates obedience (Prov. 20:12; 25:12), whereas one who "stops his ears" from listening to an evil plot declares that he wants no part of it (Isa. 33:15). At the hearing of disastrous news, ears tingle (1 Sam. 3:11; 2 Ki. 21:12). While idols cannot hear (Ps. 135:17), God's ears are not heavy (Isa. 59:1-2). God is said to open ears with the result that people gain understanding (Job 29:11) and display obedience (Isa. 50:4-5).

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