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When the Ziphites Had Gone to Sha'ul
Psalm 54: 1-7

For the leader. With stringed instruments. A *maskil* of **David**,
When **the Ziphites** came and told **Sha'ul, "David is hiding with us."**

DIG: What strangers attack David (First Samuel 23:19-20)? Why do they betray the man who saved them from the Philistines? How does David feel? How do you account for the switch in tone in verses 6 and 7?

REFLECT: How would you feel or react if you had been in David's shoes? Has your faith been attacked? Was the attack intellectual, theological, emotional or social? How did you respond? Have you seen evil recoil back on those who promote it? Explain.

To be betrayed by Doeg the Edomite (**to see link click Be – When Doeg the Edomite Had Gone to Sha'ul**) was hardly a surprise, but now **David** found **himself** rejected by **men** of **his** own **tribe (First Samuel 23:19-24** and **26:1)**, in spite of **his** rescue of one of **their** border towns from the Philistines (see **Bf – David Saves Keilah**). In this dangerous and disillusioning situation **David**, once again, turned to **Ha'Shem**.



A. Prayer for Deliverance: Only **YHVH** could deliver **David**, so **he** prayed: **God,**

deliver me by Your name; in Your power, vindicate me. David not only wanted to be saved from **his enemies**, **he** also wanted **his** righteousness to be established by **the LORD's** judgment. What's more, salvation and vindication come from **the Name** and **the power of God**. So when Abram camped between Bethel and Ai he built an altar and called on **the name of ADONAI (Genesis 12:8).** Notice that **he** didn't merely call on **ADONAI**, but **he** called on **His name**. To know **God's name** is to be able to contact **Him**.[126] Consequently, **David** prayed: **Elohim, hear my prayer; listen to the words from my mouth (Psalm 54:1-2 CJB).**

B. Occasion of the Prayer: The need for intercession is now stated: **For ruthless men** (MSS and the Targum) **are rising against me, violent men are seeking my life. If the ruthless men were the Ziphites, or possibly the inhabitants of Keilah who were of Canaanite origin, violent men would be Sha'ul and his followers. They** do not worship **God** because **they give no thought to YHVH (Psalm 54:3 CJB).** This suggests that **the insolent men** were idolaters.

C. Declaration of Faith, Trust, and Belief: Surely God is helping me. In **Psalm 30:1-3 God's** help is **His** mercy in **healing** and **deliverance**, and in **Psalm 28:7 God** helps us because **He** is **David's strength** and **shield**. **The psalm** shifts from worry **over the ruthless men** to a confident trust in **YHVH**. **Adonai** (literally, **my Lord**, a word used in the Hebrew Bible used to refer to **God**) **is the sustainer of my soul (Psalm 54:4 CJB).** Here, **ADONAI** helps **David** arm for battle, and protects **his** life.[127]

B. Resolution of the Prayer: May He repay the evil to those who are lying in wait for me. In Your faithfulness, destroy them (Psalm 54:5 CJB)! The resolution of the prayer lies in the conviction that **YHVH** is just. **He** will not permit **His** children to suffer without vindication. **David's** statement here is not vindictive, but expressive of trust in divine justice. Evil must be repaid. The faithlessness of **his enemies** stands in stark contrast to **God's faithfulness**. **ADONAI** is faithful in **His** relationship to **His** people; therefore, **David** is trusting that **Ha'Shem** will protect **him** from **his enemies**.[128]

A. Fellowship and Deliverance: In full confidence that **God** had heard **his** prayer and would deliver **him** from all the trouble brought on by **his enemies**, **David** promised to praise **God** with **a fellowship offering** that accompanied and expressed praises for deliverance. **It** was offered voluntarily by the righteous of the TaNaKh (see my commentary on **Exodus Fg – The Peace Offering**).[129] **Then I will**

sacrifice a fellowship offering to you; I will praise Your name, ADONAI, because it is good, because he rescued me from all trouble, and my eyes look with triumph at my enemies (Psalm 54:6-7 CJB). The verbs here are all in the prophetic perfect. **David** was not fleeing from the reality of **Sha’ul’s** wish to have **him** killed. **He** must deal with **his enemies**, but only after **he** had dealt with **YHVH**. **David** expected that **the LORD** would hear **his** prayers and answer them by going into battle on **his** behalf. Consequently, **the fugitive king** meets **Ha’Shem** in the crisis, knowing that it is only **God** who can save and vindicate **him**.

When life’s problems come crashing down upon us, we can either flee from **God** or run to **Him**. The promise of the gospel is that **He** will meet us right where we are and be there as we go through it, no matter the outcome.[130] With **Yeshua** by our side, we can go from near-despair to freedom.