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# Psalm 118

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## Psalm 118:1–22

## Celebrate God for His Eternal Grace

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**Introduction:** Psalm 118 is a psalm about grace and a psalm about God's direct dealings with man in this life. Luther names this as his favorite psalm, adding, *[it] had helped him out of troubles out of which neither emperor nor king, nor any other man on earth, could have helped him.*<sup>1</sup> Although, to the casual reader, this psalm appears to jump from topic to topic, the key to each stanza is God's everlasting grace. Now, how can you speak of grace with mentioning Jesus Christ? Therefore, as we would expect, there will be a portion of this psalm which is Messianic.

Psalm 118 is one of the many psalms without an inscription. To me, it sounds so Davidic, that I want to call it a psalm of David; unfortunately, we do not know that to be true. No translation of this psalm gives us an inscription with David's name. This does not mean that David did not write the psalm; but it does mean that we cannot unequivocally call Psalm 118 Davidic.

I write a great deal of the commentary before I ever look at what another commentator has written. However, concerning authorship, Barnes writes: *Of the authorship of this psalm, and the occasion on which it was composed, nothing can now be ascertained with certainty. The common opinion has been that it is a psalm of David, and that it was composed when his troubles with Saul ceased, and when he was recognized as king. Some, however, have referred it to Hezekiah on the occasion of his restoration from sickness; others to the time of the return from the Babylonian exile; and others to the time of the Maccabees. It would be useless to examine these opinions, as they are all of them mere conjecture, and as no certainty can now be arrived at.*<sup>2</sup> For me, it is somewhat comforting to find that I have both identified the author and placed the psalm where others have done so in the past.

By the way, Barnes goes on to further state that this was a psalm designed to be used in the Temple prior to a sacrifice, based upon v. 27. Certainly, it may have been adapted and used for that purpose; and possibly not. One verse alone does not necessarily determine the final use of a psalm.

Several people weigh in on authorship and the time that the psalm is written, so I might as well organize this into an easy to follow format.

<sup>1</sup> Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Psalm 118 introduction.

<sup>2</sup> Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 118 introduction.

Differing Views on Who Authored Psalm 118 and When	
Theologian	Viewpoint
Albert Barnes	<i>Most see this psalm as having been written by David shortly after his troubles with Saul had ceased.<sup>3</sup> However, Barnes later writes: It would seem from this that the psalm [based upon v. 10] was composed by someone who was at the head of the government, and whose government had been attacked by surrounding nations. This would accord well with many things that occurred in the life of David; but there were also other times in the Jewish history to which it would be applicable, and there is nothing that necessarily confines it to the time of David.<sup>4</sup></i>
Adam Clarke	<i>Clarke also sees this as a psalm of David, although he adds that some place this psalm after the captivity.<sup>5</sup> This [v. 10] is by some supposed to relate to David, at the commencement of his reign, when all the neighboring Philistine nations endeavored to prevent him from establishing himself in the kingdom. Others suppose it may refer to the Samaritans, Idumeans, Ammonites, and others, who endeavored to prevent the Jews from rebuilding their city and their temple after their return from captivity in Babylon.<sup>6</sup></i>
John Gill	<i>Gill tells us that this psalm is commonly attributed to David, but after the Ark was brought to Jerusalem.<sup>7</sup></i>
Matthew Henry	<i>It is probable that David penned this psalm when he had, after many a story, weathered his point at last, and gained a full possession of the kingdom to which he had been anointed. He then invites and stirs up his friends to join with him, not only in a cheerful acknowledgment of God's goodness and a cheerful dependence upon that goodness for the future, but in a believing expectation of the promised Messiah, of whose kingdom and his exaltation to it his were typical.<sup>8</sup></i>
Keil and Delitzsch	<i>[A] festival psalm at the dedication of the new Temple...It is without any doubt a post-exilic song....[this psalm belongs in] the history of the period after the Exile, without any necessity for our coming down to the Maccabean period.<sup>9</sup></i>

<sup>3</sup> Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 118 introduction.

<sup>4</sup> Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 118:10.

<sup>5</sup> Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 118 introduction.

<sup>6</sup> Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 118:10.

<sup>7</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 118 introduction.

<sup>8</sup> Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 118 introduction.

<sup>9</sup> Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Psalm 118 introduction. They offer more specifics as to when this psalm was used, but I leave that to you, if it interests you. Their speculations are also found in the introduction to this psalm.

Differing Views on Who Authored Psalm 118 and When	
Theologian	Viewpoint
Spurgeon	Spurgeon presents, <sup>10</sup> perhaps, the most reasoned position, and backs it up with Scripture. This psalm was sung at the building of the second Temple after the exile because we find the first and last line quoted in Ezra 3:11: <b>And they sang, praising and giving thanks to Jehovah, because He is good, for His mercy endures forever toward Israel. And all the people shouted with a great shout when they praised Jehovah, because the foundation of the house of Jehovah was laid.</b> Furthermore, he suggests that this psalm is Davidic, as the people were following David's directions, as Ezra 3:10 reads: <b>And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of Jehovah, they set the priests in their robes with trumpets, and the Levites the sons of Asaph with cymbals, to praise Jehovah, according to David king of Israel.</b> That this psalm and/or Psalm 136 were sung at the building and completion of the Temple, I have no doubt. However, a careful reading of v. 10 does not indicate that David is definitely the author.  Bear in mind that all of this is just speculation, despite the dogmatism of some.

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This naturally leads us to...

Arguments which Favor David as the Author of Psalm 118	
1.	This just <i>seems</i> to be a Davidic psalm.
2.	Even though David's name is not affixed to this psalm, this does not mean that he did not author the psalm.
3.	Some say that this must be a post-exilic psalm, quoting Ezra 3:10–11. Just because this psalm was probably sung at the building of the new Temple does not mean that it was written during that time.
4.	We find half of this first verse quoted in a David psalm, Psalm 52:1.
5.	Probably the strongest argument that David wrote this psalm is that we find an unusual word in v. 5: mer <sup>e</sup> châb (מֶרְחָב) [pronounced mer <sup>e</sup> -KHAWB <sup>v</sup> ]. We find this same word used in a very similar fashion in Psalm 18:19 31:8, both Davidic psalms. This is not a completely rare word—it is also found in 2Sam. 22:20 Hosea 4:16 Habak. 1:6—but it only occurs thrice in the psalms, two of those psalms being Davidic.
6.	Psalm 118:6 expresses the same sentiment as we find in Psalm 56:4, 9, 11 (a Davidic psalm). However, other writers of Scripture have expressed the same sentiments (Psalm 146:5 Isa. 51:12 Jer. 20:11 Mic. 7:8-10 Heb. 13:6).
7.	In vv. 10–12, it is clear that the man speaking is a man of great power in Israel. This, combined with the use of the name <i>Israel</i> in v. 2 (without a reference to Judah) indicates that the nation is not yet divided. This would make the psalm more than likely written during the united kingdom under a monarchy, with the most likely authors being Saul, David or Solomon. We can probably eliminate Saul, as we have no indication that he wrote anything of spiritual value; and we can eliminate Solomon, as Israel enjoyed great peace under his rule (contrary to <b>vv. 10–12</b> ). Given the large number of psalms that we know are written by David, this further suggests that David is the author.
8.	V. 13 sounds so much like a personal attack, one of great intensity and repetition, and is very reminiscent of Saul's many assaults upon David.

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And, of course...

<sup>10</sup> Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *A Treasury of David*; e-Sword, Psalm 118 introduction.

## Arguments Against David Being the Author of Psalm 118

1. Psalm 118:1 is almost exactly the same as Psalm 106:1 107:1 136:1; and none of these psalms are attributed to David (no author is named for any of those psalms).
2. This psalm was certainly read during the rebuilding of the Temple (Ezra 3:10–11).

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And, of course...

## Which Arguments are Without Merit?

1. That Psalm 118:1 is almost exactly the same as Psalm 106:1 107:1 136:1; and none of these psalms name their authors is not a good argument for or against Davidic authorship.
2. That this psalm was read during the rebuilding of the Temple (Ezra 3:10–11) does not mean that it was written at that time.
3. Even though we find the Psalm 118:1 repeated in 1Chron. 16:36, it is unclear whether David or Asaph wrote this psalm which is written there (see 1Chron. 16:7).
4. The fact that we find the phrase [His grace \[is\] forever](#) in a Davidic psalm (Psalm 52:1) does not mean that David wrote every psalm with that line in it.
5. Even though it is clear that the verse Psalm 118:1 was commonly used during the time of David (1Chron. 16:36, 41) and shortly thereafter (2Chron. 5:13), this does not mean that David wrote that line; and, even if he wrote that line, it does not mean that he wrote the psalm.
6. Bear in mind, **God the Holy Spirit is properly the author of all of the psalms; so we know that this psalm is God-breathed—the fact that we cannot nail down the human author is immaterial, as it is the message, not the man, which is important.**

As you see, there are surprisingly few arguments for or against David writing this psalm, making the very strong opinions of some theologians without merit. The few arguments which favor David as the author are, at best, moderately persuasive. The key here is the last point: it is not the man, but the message.

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There are those who have listened to both R. B. Thieme Jr. and his son teach, and they definitely have different personalities; however, what is more striking is their different teaching styles. Bob is strongly authoritative and he presents every subject with great dogmatism, whereas Bobby sometimes offers an array of possibilities. Some may be confused by this; some may have rejected Bob's ministry because of his dogmatism and others may not be able to adjust to Bobby because he sometimes seems *wishy-washy*. The key is, dogmatism is appropriate when we are dealing with a key element in theology. For instance, is Jesus Christ God? Absolutely and unequivocally yes! Can works be a factor in our salvation? Absolutely and unequivocally no! Did David write this psalm? Well, we don't know for certain. So, about some things, we will speculate; however, whether David wrote this psalm or not is not going to effect any essential doctrine.

## Why Do We Speculate at All?

1. Speculation is fun (for some).
2. Speculation tests one's powers of logic; there is nothing wrong with approaching Scripture logically.
3. Speculation can lead us to an historical perspective which enriches our understanding of a passage.
4. Speculation can sometimes help to implant other doctrinal principles more firmly in our minds.
5. With this particular psalm, our speculation may help to determine when this psalm should be taught.
6. Sometimes, speculation combined with logic can lead to important doctrinal principles.

Here is what is important: it is always right to use your brain when examining and studying Scripture. You do not go to sleep with your head resting on a Bible, hoping for great theological points to seep into your mind; you do not ask yourself, *how do I feel about* this passage or that. God gave us a mind and there is nothing in Scripture which indicates that we should shut our brains down after we believe in Jesus Christ. If you ever walk into a church and they suggest that you slip your brain into neutral, then quickly and immediately walk toward the door, walk out and do not look back. You may think I am kidding here, but the first thing charismatic groups will ask you to do when they want you to get the ghost and speak in tongues is to *stop thinking so much and open your mouth and make some sounds and let it happen to you*.

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According to the NIV Study Bible, there are 3 general interpretations of this psalm: in general, this psalm is a *hymn of thanksgiving for deliverance from enemies*.<sup>11</sup>

### Three General Interpretations as per the NIV Study Bible

Theory	Commentary, Pro and Con:
<i>A Davidic king leads the nation in a liturgy of thanksgiving for deliverance and victory after a hard-fought battle with a powerful confederacy of nations.</i> 2Chron. 20:27–28 describes such a situation with Jehoshaphat.	The problem with this interpretation is a reference to Israel in v. 2; we would expect to read <i>Judah</i> instead, as that is the name of the southern kingdom over which Jehoshaphat ruled (the same criticism could be applied to any king after the time of Solomon). <sup>12</sup>
<i>Israel celebrates—probably the Feast of Tabernacles—her deliverance from Egypt and victory over the Canaanites.</i> The speaker, according to the NIV Study Bible, would have to be a Levitical or priestly leader <i>speaking (representatively) on behalf of the people</i> .	There is good support for this: the mention of Aaron (v. 3) as well as the protrusions (horns) of the altar (v. 27). The problem is, who would the author be? In vv. 10–12, this has to be written by a military leader of Israel—yet we find in v. 18 severe discipline laid upon this same person, almost to the point of death. We know nothing of this sort of experience with Moses, Joshua or Caleb, our only real possible authors from this time period. Furthermore, suggesting that Aaron or another priest wrote this ignores the military leadership indicated by vv. 10–12 and the severe discipline of v. 18—which we are unable to match up with any Levite of that time period.
<i>The postexilic Jews celebrate deliverance from their enemies, either at the dedication of the second temple (see Ezra 6:16) or at the dedication of the rebuilt walls of Jerusalem (see Neh. 12:37–43).</i> Again, the NIV Study Bible says that the writer is a Levite or a priestly leader.	All of this would properly take place in Judah, and therefore, the reference to <i>Israel</i> in v. 2 would not fit. Secondly, we do not know of an author from this time period who would have been under the severe discipline of v. 18. And again, a military leader is what we find in vv. 10–12, not a Levite or priestly leader.

<sup>11</sup> *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 905. Anything in italics in this table have the same source unless otherwise noted.

<sup>12</sup> By the way, Solomon could not be the writer as there was peace during his reign.



### Three General Interpretations as per the NIV Study Bible

Theory	Commentary, Pro and Con:
A 4 <sup>th</sup> interpretation, not found in the NIV Study Bible is, this is a Davidic psalm celebrating victories against Israel's many enemies which surrounded her.	David fits the bill as the author quite well. He is a military leader, which fits with vv. 10–12. He was severely disciplined, which fits with v. 18. David did lead the united nation known as Israel, which fits with v. 2. And, although we find few references to the family of Aaron during the time of David, he does gather them in 1Chron. 15:4.

I know that I have kicked the authorship of David around for some time, before we have even begun this psalm, and I think it is clear that, the alternatives to Davidic authorship do not stand up to scrutiny. I have spent about a month so far on this psalm, and have finally convinced myself of its Davidic authorship.

Everything found in this introduction might make more sense after you have studied the psalm in its entirety.

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As is quite obvious, so far, this psalm is filled with tables. For me, I insert tables for two similar reasons: (1) some information just organizes better if put into a table. It is easier to read, easier to remember, and the points made are more clearly made (as compared to the same points being made within a paragraph of explanation. (2) Tables break up the monotony of paragraph after paragraph of text. In a novel, this may not be as important; however, in works of nonfiction, a table not only helps to organize information, but it draws your attention to that information in a way that simple text would not.

This psalm seems to be able to be easily broken down into 6 sections of uneven length—besides and opening and a closing—and, in many ways, what appear to be almost completely unrelated topics. It is as though one sat down, wrote a few verses; then came back to this psalm a year or two later, and added a half dozen verses, and continued that way over a decade or so. That was at first glance. Upon a more careful read, this psalm appears to be, in some ways, a history of Israel, leading up to the first advent of Jesus Christ, with the continued theme of God's eternal grace applied in all situations.

I think the psalmist knew that we might have trouble tying everything together; therefore, he begins and closes with the same lines, exhorting us to praise and celebrate God because He is absolute good and because His grace is forever. If we keep this in mind, then each section of this psalm will present that common theme, but from a different point of view or situation. It is as though the psalmist takes us by the hand and says, "In case you don't get it, this is what this psalm is all about." As to its disparate sense, Keil and Delitzsch comment: *each verse has of itself its completed sense, its own scent and hue; one thought is joined to another as branch to branch and flower to flower.*<sup>13</sup> May I add, the trunk of this plant is grace and God's dealings in our lives, and each section is an offshoot of these two things.

This psalm is clearly written in the Age of Israel, as the psalmist calls to Israel, to the house of Aaron and to those who fear/respect God to acknowledge that God's grace is forever (vv. 2–4). Again, the theme of this psalm is beat into our heads, in case we don't get it at first.

The psalmist himself has been in a spot of trouble, which is not clearly defined at first. He calls out to God and God hears and answers him. The psalmist finds out firsthand that one may trust God more than one can trust man (vv. 5–9). In v. 10, the problems of the psalmist are defined, and it becomes clear that this psalmist is not just some Joe Schmo selling squash at the local farmer's market. Nations surround him, which has always been the case for little Israel, and, even though these nations surround him like bees, because of God's faithfulness and character,

<sup>13</sup> Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Psalm 118 introduction.

the psalmist will cut them off (which would make him probably a king-general, which suggests that this is David) (vv. 11–12). Even though there were times when the psalmist felt he was knocked down, God then became his strength (vv. 13–14).

The psalmist celebrates what God has done. Those who have been justified shout with joy that God's right hand (His strength—one might even refer here to Jesus Christ) has accomplished His will (vv. 15–16). The psalmist was in a place where it appeared that he might die, but he praises God because he will live. Then he admits that he has been under severe discipline, which he responded to (vv. 17–18).

In vv. 19–21, the psalmist enters in through the gates of righteousness, because he has been justified and God has become his salvation.

Then we come to an incredible place in this psalm where the psalmist begins to speak of the stone, Jesus Christ, which the builders rejected—that that stone has because the chief cornerstone, the essential component to God's salvation (v. 22). The psalmist calls out to the Lord to deliver him and to give him prosperity (vv. 23–25).

Interestingly enough, Dr. Kennicott places vv. 22–27 with the chorus.<sup>14</sup> This is an interesting thought which I will have to ponder. Perhaps if this psalm were sung, this would be sung by the choir, whereas the rest of the psalm would be sung by a solo performer. It is a thought; but I don't know whether I agree, or whether it makes a difference when it comes to interpreting the psalm.

In the final section, the psalmist blesses God for what He has done, that God has enlightened them and this is associated with the animal sacrifice, which, again, is Jesus Christ. Again, gratitude is expressed, and God is exalted in all of this. Vv. 26–28. Then the psalmist closes, exhorting us to give thanks to God, because God is absolute good and because God's grace lasts forever (v. 29).

What stands out in this psalm is the continual repetitions:

### The Repetitions of Psalm 118

Scripture	Text
Psalm 118:1–3	O give thanks to Jehovah; for He is good; because <b>His mercy endures forever</b> . Let Israel now say that <b>His mercy endures forever</b> . Let the house of Aaron now say that <b>His mercy endures forever</b> .
Psalm 118:6–7	[Because] <b>Y<sup>e</sup>howah [is] for me</b> , I am not afraid; what can man do to me? <b>Y<sup>e</sup>howah [is] for me</b> in helping me, that I look upon the one hating me.
Psalm 118:8–9	<b>It is better to trust in Jehovah</b> than to trust in man. <b>It is better to trust in Jehovah</b> than to trust in princes.
Psalm 118:10–12	All the nations <b>surround me</b> , but in the name of Jehovah I will destroy them. They <b>surround me</b> ; yea, they <b>surround me</b> , but in the name of Jehovah I will destroy them. They <b>surround me</b> like bees; they are put out like the fire of thorns; for in the name of Jehovah I will cut them off.
Psalm 118:14, 21	Jehovah is my strength and song, and <b>He is my salvation</b> . I will praise You; for You have heard me, and <b>You are my salvation</b> .

<sup>14</sup> Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 118 introduction. Clarke, in his introduction, also includes a long skeletal interpretation done by Bishop Horsley, which was interesting, but not necessarily worth repeating. It is a case of an interesting approach which does not necessarily provide any insight into the psalm itself.



## The Repetitions of Psalm 118

Scripture	Text
Psalm 118:15–16	The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tents of the righteous; <b>the right hand of Jehovah</b> does mighty things. <b>The right hand of Jehovah</b> is lifted up; <b>the right hand of Jehovah</b> does mighty things.
Psalm 118:1, 29	<b>O give thanks to Jehovah; for He is good; because His mercy endures forever.</b> <b>Oh give thanks to Jehovah; for He is good; for His mercy endures forever.</b>

Because this is a psalm, we should expect some repetition; repetition lends itself to music much more than does a collection of disparate verses. However, I think we find more repetition here than in the average psalm.

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The key which unlocks Psalm 118 is grace; therefore, we should examine...

### A Few Points on Grace

1. Grace is God's unmerited favor.
  - a. Although this is accurate, this is also an anemic definition.
  - b. That God gives us what we do not deserve is grace; but this definition tells us little or nothing about grace. That is, we have no idea where it comes from, or why it is given to us.
2. Grace is all that God is able to do for us based upon the cross.
  - a. God is perfect and His character is perfect. All that can be depended upon depends upon His perfect character and consistency.
  - b. Man is imperfect and inconsistent. What is against the law one day, is not against the law the next. What is considered obvious in the realm of right and wrong one day is questioned the next. There is no one person that you can depend upon in all instances; there is nothing devised by man which can be depended upon in all instances.
  - c. We depend upon God's perfection for our very existence; therefore, we would not want God to be anything other than perfect.
  - d. Because God is perfect, He cannot have a relationship with imperfection. God cannot have fellowship with those who are in rebellion against Him. God cannot heap eternal rewards upon those who violate His perfect norms and standards again and again.
  - e. It is God's very perfection and perfect righteousness and perfect dependability which makes it impossible for us to have an eternal relationship with Him. Therefore, it is God's character, on the one hand, is the only thing in this life upon which we can depend; but, His perfection, is the one thing which prevents us from enjoying a relationship with Him.
  - f. Therefore, we are dependent upon the cross.
3. Why the cross of Jesus Christ is the basis of grace:
  - a. There are three things which stand between us and God.
    - i. First of all, at birth, we have Adam's imputed sin. Adam, as the federal head of the human race, sinned, and, therefore, he sinned for all of us. When the Declaration of Independence was approved and signed, the people of the United States were officially declared independent from England, the motherland; and most certainly, there were those in the United States who opposed this decision. Apart from joining the other side, this placed all Americans against England. Those who signed the Declaration of Independence acted as federal heads for Americans and plunged us into war against England. Adam, as our federal head, plunged us into war against God. We were all *in* Adam when he sinned; therefore, his sin was imputed to all of us. God cannot have fellowship with those who are at war with Him.
    - ii. We are all born with an old sin nature. That is, we all have a genetic propensity to sin. We each have our own individual weaknesses, and there are some Christians who manage to parlay their

## A Few Points on Grace

- weaknesses into what appear to be a Christian life (e.g., self righteousness); but we all have a propensity to sin. There are dozens of sins in Scripture which we can usually point to and admit that we are tempted to commit those sins. God cannot have fellowship with one, who, by his very nature, is prone to sin.
- iii. We have all commit personal sins. From the earliest years, when we first have the slightest inkling of right and wrong, have done things which are against God. This is something which we continue to do, every day, each and every day of our lives. God cannot have an eternal relationship with those who do that which is abhorrent to His nature.
  - b. Therefore, God, not man, did something about these problems; God did something about the natural barrier between man and Himself. That is the cross.
  - c. On the cross, as Jesus hung between heaven and hell, God took the punishment which all men deserve for their rebellion against Him and poured this punishment upon Jesus Christ. We would each deserve eternal separation from God in a place of judgment (the Lake of Fire). This is what we deserve. Therefore, because God's justice is perfect, He demands that of us. Jesus Christ stood between God and man and took this punishment upon Himself.
    - i. Jesus Christ did not endure the suffering for the sins of one person. God took all of the punishment due every single person who has ever lived and who will live and poured those sins out on Jesus Christ.
    - ii. God administered judgment for those millions of millions of sins on Jesus Christ.
    - iii. In mathematics, we learn to take the sum of an infinite number of things so that they add up to equal a finite sum. For instance,  $0.1 + 0.01 + 0.001 + 0.0001 + \dots = 1/9$ . Even though it is impossible to actually sit down and add these continual series of numbers together individually, as we are adding an infinite number of numbers together, mathematics allows us to add them up in a matter of seconds, as though we have spent an infinite amount of time adding them together. God has the ability to take the sins of billions of people, the punishment which these people deserve, which would last into eternity for each person, and add that punishment together and pour it all upon Jesus Christ for 3 hours of the cross.
    - iv. Because God's perfect justice was satisfied on the cross, there is no longer anything which stands between us and God in eternity.
    - v. At this point, God gives us the choice of spending eternity with Him or without Him. That is what life is all about. We get to make this choice in life. It is a choice and we all make this choice (apart from those who die to young to have any real concept of God or fellowship with Him).
    - vi. Because of what Jesus Christ did on the cross, we can choose, in time, what will happen to us in eternity. The work of Jesus Christ on the cross removed all barriers between God and us, so once we are separated from our body of sin at death, our choice in life determines our eternal relationship with God—that is, whether we have a relationship or not.
  - d. This is the very essence of grace. The fact that, even though we spend our lives doing that which God has told us is wrong, we are still allowed fellowship with Him—based upon the cross. Because Jesus Christ took upon Himself the punishment for our sins, God's perfect justice and righteousness are satisfied. In the human realm, if there is a fine assessed against someone by a court, the court could care less who pays that fine—if it gets paid, then the offense of that person is forgiven. When someone is convicted of a crime, whether he committed the crime or not, all investigations of that crime cease, because the crime is being paid for (this is an analogy, so don't push it; all analogies break down if you push them too far).
  - e. Because Jesus Christ took upon Himself the punishment for our sins, the three things which stood between ourselves and God—Adam's imputed sin, our old sin nature, and our personal sins—are no longer issues. But, because we have freewill and because God is a gentleman, at that point, we get to choose between eternity with God or eternity without God. God made that choice simple: believe in Jesus Christ, and we have eternal life; reject Jesus Christ, and God's wrath is upon us for rejection of Him (John 3:16, 18, 36). What we believe in, is a choice. However, that is the topic of a whole other set of points.

## A Few Points on Grace

4. Because of the cross, God is no longer at enmity with us. Jesus Christ is the mediator between God and man (1Tim. 2:5 Heb. 8:6). Jesus Christ mediated peace between God and man (Luke 2:14 John 14:27 16:33 Acts 10:36 Rom. 1:17 5:1 10:15). *Peace*, by the way, is one of the great words of theology, which is rarely studied and rarely given the time it deserves. The fact that there is peace between God and man is a matter of grace.
5. Because there is nothing theoretically which stands between man and God, God blesses us on the basis of the cross. God has given me great blessing and has shown great faithfulness to me; and I guarantee you that I would never hold myself up at the epitome of what a believer should be. I do not deserve anything which God has given me. I have not earned anything which God has given me. I have received multifarious blessings, and I do not deserve them. This is grace.
6. God's grace in eternity and in time is available to all men (and women, of course). It begins by believing in Jesus Christ. This is your non-meritorious act of positive volition. If you depend upon what Jesus Christ did for you on the cross; if you are willing to accept that as the basis of your relationship to God, then you will become a recipient of grace in time and in eternity. Bear in mind, the alternative is standing upon your own works and good deeds in order to deserve God's favor (I don't know about you, but no way do I present God with my meager set of accomplishments and good deeds and say, "Yep, here I am, God. I am pretty damn good, don't You think?").
7. God's grace in time:
  - a. God allows us to live on this earth after salvation because God has a plan for us.
  - b. Let's go to the analogy: Team A is going to win a football game, no matter what. God gives us the opportunity to be on Team A, and to run this or that play. Now, we can sit on the bench and watch the game and know we are going to win, and share in that win; or we can play a quarter of the game and enjoy playing the game. That is God's grace—He gives us the opportunity to participate in His plan or the choice not to.
  - c. There are certain basics in this life. First of all, after salvation, after you believe in Jesus Christ, you are going to sin. You might sin within 1 minute of being saved. This breaks up your relationship with God in time. God has provided a simple and easy way to restore that fellowship: you name your sin to God (1Cor. 11:31 1John 1:9). You might feel good about the sin; you might even want to do it again. You might feel ashamed and despondent. You might not have any emotional reaction to having committed this sin. These things are not issues. You simply acknowledge that sin to God; you simply name that sin to God. Like salvation, this takes a few seconds, it involves no works and no actual effort on your part. There is no penance, there is nothing you must do which is meritorious in order to restore your fellowship with God. You simply name your sin to Him, and God forgives you for that sin and for any other sin that you have committed which you did not realize was a sin (1John 1:9). That is grace. This allows us to function in God's plan; to play our quarter of the game.
  - d. The second basic in life is Bible doctrine. You must have some idea as to what is going on. God has made it possible for you personally to get all of the good Bible teaching that you need. What you do in life depends upon what you know. You can be in fellowship with God, but not have a clue as to what to do. That is the believer who has no doctrine. That sort of believer often imitates other Christians he admires; or he does his very best to not sin; or he does what he believes to be nice and good things. At best, what this kind of a believer does is neutral. Not good, not bad; simply neutral, with no eternal repercussions. With doctrine, you have some initial training; you have an idea as to what you can do. Let's go back to the analogy of the football game. Without doctrine, if you are sent out on the field, you have no idea what to do. At best, you can stand there in the middle of the field and watch what everyone else does, or you can imitate those on your team, who may or may not be executing the correct game plan. However, the more you know about football, the more you are able to participate. The more you have trained, the more help you are to your team. So it is in time with God's plan for your life. The more you know about God's plan and God's purpose, the more of a contribution you can make. Now, don't misunderstand me. You can get saved and never get back into fellowship after that first sin. You can never learn an iota of God's Word. This will not affect your eternal salvation. It simply affects your life in time; and your life in time is merely a drop in the bucket when

## A Few Points on Grace

- it comes to eternity. In any case, it is God's grace which allows you the opportunity to get Bible doctrine; and it is God's grace which allows you to participate in the *game*. It is your choice as to what you will do in time.
- e. A third basic is the application of doctrine. You learn God's Word, so now you get to apply God's Word. This can be extremely simple: naming your sins to God is an application of doctrine. Dropping a dollar (or whatever) in the collection plate can be an application of doctrine. When someone unleashes a verbal tirade against you, and you maintain your composure and choose not to respond in kind; that can be an application of doctrine. When someone gossips about you and maligns you behind your back you don't respond with thoughts of bitterness or hatred; you don't run around and find everyone they speak to, and give your side of the story. This can be an application of doctrine.
  - f. A fourth basic is training. God trains you in life. We face testing, so that we can strengthen our faith in Him. For anyone who has trained in any sport, this is easy to understand. The first time you run a mile, you might run and walk that distance and do it in 10 minutes (or, who knows, maybe 30 minutes). However, as you train more and more, you might bring it down to 8 minutes, and then to 6. It takes training, doing the same thing over and over, in order to get better. God gives us the opportunity to train in this life. We will find our faith tested again and again. God starts out simple and progressively increases the pressure. The idea is, we get better and better at it. We get to learn how to apply our faith. We get to learn how to apply principles of doctrine. All of this glorifies God and all of this is His grace. Again, we get to participate if we so choose.
  - g. God has also given us basic problem solving devices. I will cover these at another time, but they are taught at Berachah as being the faith-rest technique, personal and impersonal love, etc. Again, the opportunity to use these problem solving devices is God's grace.
8. Grace in eternity:
    - a. No matter what kind of a life you lead here as a believer; no matter how lame it is—even if you spend your entire Christian life out of fellowship—God will provide for you in eternity and you will live in perfect blessing and prosperity in eternity. That is grace. It is completely undeserved.
    - b. Even though an eternal relationship with God is promised to all of us in eternity, something which in itself is beyond our imagination, God gives even more to other believers. That is, going back to the analogy of the football team: we all share in the glory of winning; however, some of us will be in the victory parade; some of us will get to ride in convertibles in this parade; and some of us will be carried on the shoulders of our teammates in victory. That is, **God gives even greater grace to the humble (grace-oriented).**
  9. As this psalm says, God's grace is everlasting; it endures forever. It is an essential part of God's character, just as justice and righteousness.
  10. To sum up, grace is all that God is able to do for us on the basis of the cross. We are, by our very nature and our actions, at enmity with God—and Jesus Christ is able to establish peace between God and us and to give us an eternal relationship with God, even though we have not earned or deserved that relationship.

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## Opening—the Theme of Psalm 118

Slavishly literal:

**Give thanks to Y<sup>e</sup>howah  
for [He is] good;  
for to perpetuity [is] His grace.**

Moderately literal:

Psalm  
118:1

**Give thanks to Y<sup>e</sup>howah  
because [He is] good;  
[and] because His grace [is] forever.**

**Give thanks to Jehovah, for He is good;  
His grace endures forever.**

Here is how others have handled this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text	Give thanks to Yehowah for [He is] good; for to perpetuity [is] His grace.
Peshitta	O, give thanks to the LORD; for <i>He is</i> good and His mercy <i>endures</i> forever.
Septuagint	Alleluia. Give thanks to the Lord; for He is good: for His mercy endures forever. [This is Psalm 117 in the Septuagint].

Significant differences: None.

#### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV	Tell the LORD how thankful you are, because he is kind and always merciful.
The Message	Thank GOD because he's good, because his love never quits.

#### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

<i>God's Word™</i>	Give thanks to the LORD because he is good, because his mercy endures forever.
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#### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

HCSB	Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good; His faithful love endures forever.
<i>Young's Updated LT</i>	Give thanks to Jehovah, For [He is] good, for to the age is His kindness.

**What is the gist of this verse?** The opening and closing lines of this psalm invoke us to give thanks to Jehovah God for two reasons: He is good and His grace lasts forever.

Psalm 118:1a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
yâdâh (יָדָה) [pronounced yaw-AWH]	<i>give thanks, praise, celebrate; confess</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine plural, Hiphil imperative	Strong's #3034 BDB #392
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly yoh-WAH]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y<sup>e</sup>howah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217

**Translation:** Give thanks to Y<sup>e</sup>howah... The psalm begins like a prayer; the writer begins his prayer by thanking Jehovah, the God of Israel, which is the most reasonable beginning for any prayer.

### Psalm 118:1b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced <i>kee</i> ]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
ṭôwb (טוֹב) [pronounced <i>toh<sup>b</sup>v</i> ]	<i>pleasant, pleasing, agreeable, good, better; approved</i>	masculine singular adjective which acts like a substantive	Strong's #2896 BDB #373

**Translation:** ...because [He is] good;... There are actually only two words here; however, attributing good to Jehovah God is the most reasonable interpretation here. The idea is, God's plan and purposes are for absolute good, something which is difficult for our finite minds to comprehend, given what we find in this world. However, in the light of eternity, it will become clear to us that God is good, and are His purposes, motives, and plan.

### Psalm 118:1c

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
lâmed (ל) (pronounced <i>l</i> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
ʿôwlâm (עוֹלָם) [pronounced <i>ô-LAWM</i> ]	<i>long duration, forever, perpetuity, antiquity, futurity</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #5769 BDB #761
ʿôwlâm together with the lâmed preposition mean <i>forever</i>			
cheçed (חֶסֶד) [pronounced <i>KHEH-sed</i> ]	<i>grace, benevolence, mercy, kindness</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #2617 BDB #338

**Translation:** ...[and] because His grace [is] forever. This verse frames the psalm; it is the first and final verse; God's grace is eternal; it is a part of His nature forever. We only His grace as sinners. It is impossible to even begin to fathom what His grace will mean to us when we are completely cleansed. However, this psalm tells us that His grace is forever. That would indicate that we be beneficiaries of that grace forever as well.

This psalm may be closely associated with Psalm 136: in the first half of the first 3 verses of Psalm 136, we are told, in various ways, to give thanks to God. In the second half of every verse of Psalm 136, we are told that God's grace is eternal. Psalm 136:1 = Psalm 118:1 = Psalm 118:29; and the second half of every verse in Psalm 136 exactly matches the second half of Psalm 118:1, 29. Both psalms may be associated with Ezra 3:10–11, as it is clear that either or both of these psalms were sung at this time. Apart from the similarity of theme, these psalms diverge greatly in subject matter. Psalm 136 is an historical perspective beginning with God's creation of the earth and taken to the Jews' trek through the desert toward the Land of Promise. Psalm 118 is a more personal psalm, written by one man, concerning his own experiences (although he takes the subject matter beyond his direct experience).



I should also mention that, Psalm 118:1 is almost identical to Psalm 106:1 107:1 136:1, 26 1Chron. 16:34, 41 2Chron. 5:13 7:3, 6 20:21 Jer. 33:11 and part of it may be found in Psalm 52:1 136:2–25 138:8. That we should be thankful to God on the basis of His grace, which lasts forever, is certainly a sentiment worth repeating throughout Scripture. I've spoken earlier that this could perhaps be a Davidic psalm—well, none of the psalms named have David's name attached to them.

We have a better understanding of God's grace today than David did; however, even from our perspective, it is not by any means a complete and full understanding. However, we see God's grace in salvation. To God, we are completely unlovable. Take the human being from this earth, living or dead, whom you see as the worst, most absolute hateful human you can imagine. Some may choose a recent serial killer-rapists; others may choose Hitler—and repulsive as we find that person, God finds us even more repulsive. As far apart from that person we have chosen as our moral opposite, God finds us even further away from His perfect character. And yet, even with all of this, God took on the form of a man, suffered every indignity possible as a man, never sinned, never even had a mental attitude sin, and, not only did He endure all of this, but then He took upon Himself the punishment that we deserve for the sins that we have committed. Everyone of us deserves eternal damnation—eternal separation from God—it is in our nature to be against God; it is a part of our daily choice to be against God. And yet, **while we were sinners, Christ died for us.** I don't think there is a person alive who even has a clue as to how far we are from God and how undeserving we are. On the other hand, this world is filled with millions of people who see themselves as standing at the gates of heaven, and God looking them over and saying, "Oh, yeah; Charlie Brown—you're alright; come on in and let's hang!" Do you see how blissfully arrogant that is? And yet, even with us being filled with such arrogance, **Christ died for us.** That's grace; and that is only grace with regards to salvation—that is but the tip of the iceberg.

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## The Psalmist Exhorts those in the Age of Israel to Recognize God's Grace

**Says, I pray, Israel, that,  
"For to perpetuity His grace."**

Psalm  
118:2

**Let Israel proclaim,  
"His grace [is] forever."**

**Let Israel also proclaim,  
"His grace is forever."**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text

Says, I pray, Israel, that,  
"For to perpetuity His grace."

Septuagint

Let now the house of Israel say, that *He is good: for his mercy endures for ever.*

Significant differences:

In the LXX, in both the 2<sup>nd</sup> through 4<sup>th</sup> verses, *that God is good* is repeated; however, we do not find this in the MT or the Peshitta. Interestingly enough, in the Latin, we find this addition in v. 2 but not in v. 3 or v. 4.

### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV

Let Israel shout, "God is always merciful!"

The Message

Tell the world, Israel, "His love never quits."

NLT

Let the congregation of Israel repeat:  
"His faithful love endures forever."

**Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):**

God's Word™ Israel should say, "His mercy endures forever."  
 JPS (Tanakh) Let Israel declare,  
 "His steadfast love is eternal."

**Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**

HCSB Let Israel say, "His faithful love endures forever."  
 MKJV Let Israel now say that His mercy endures forever.  
 Young's Literal Translation I pray you, let Israel say, That, to the age is His kindness.

**What is the gist of this verse?** The psalmist calls for Israel to say that God's grace lasts forever.

**Psalm 118:2a**

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾâmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
nâ' (נָא) [pronounced naw]	<i>please, I pray you, I respectfully implore (ask, or request of) you, I urge you</i>	particle of entreaty	Strong's #4994 BDB #609
Nâ' is used to express a wish (Job 32:21: "Oh, that I may not respect any man's person"); to incite or to urge (Jer. 5:24); it is depreciatory when affixed to the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person with a particle of negation (do not, I implore you—see Gen. 33:10 19:18); with the it expresses a wish or request (Psalm 124 129:1 SOS 7:9), a challenge (Jer. 17:15), asking leave (Gen. 18:4), and depreciation with a negation (Gen. 18:32). In many of these examples, we would express this with the addition of the word <i>let</i> .			
Yisʿrâʾêl (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced yis-row-ALE]	transliterated <i>Israel</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3478 BDB #975
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced kee]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471

**Translation:** [Let Israel proclaim...](#) The nation Israel is to proclaim the same thing as we find in the previous verse. It is important to recognize that Israel is a part of this psalm. We need to bear that in mind when we get down to v. 22 when we speak of the stone which the builder's rejected.

**Psalm 118:2b**

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lâmed (ל) (pronounced l) [pronounced l]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
ʿôwlâm (עוֹלָם) [pronounced ô-LAWM]	<i>long duration, forever, perpetuity, antiquity, futurity</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #5769 BDB #761

## Psalm 118:2b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿôwlâm together with the lîmed preposition mean <i>forever</i>			
cheçed (חֶסֶד) [pronounced KHEH-sed]	<i>grace, benevolence, mercy, kindness</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #2617 BDB #338

**Translation:** ...“His grace [is] forever.” Israel is to proclaim that God’s grace is forever. God’s character is immutable; so there are things about God upon which we can depend, and one of those things is His grace. The fact that Israel is told to proclaim this should speak to Jews everywhere. If God the Holy Spirit calls upon Israel to proclaim that His grace is forever, then there must be something to that. That is, God is not going to abandon Israel and God is not going to abandon the Jew, even though that seems to be the case to some people.

Now, there is a lot of legalism associated with the Jew and God. The Jews have abandoned God; they have turned their back on Him. When Jesus came, they were instrumental in that day to his illegal trials and execution. So, of course, many say that we Christians are the true Jews. God ripped out all the Jewish branches, grafted in Christian branches, and that is the way it is. So, maybe this verse should read, *Let Israel proclaim, “His grace is for a pretty long time!”* Or, perhaps it should read, *Let Israel proclaim, “His grace is forever, as long as you don’t screw up too badly.”* But that is not how this verse reads; instead, it reads: **Let Israel proclaim, “His grace is forever!”** Do you understand? Are you so arrogant as to think, “I’m pretty hot stuff; God likes me; too bad about those Jews, with their failures and everything.” One of the reasons that we study David and Saul is we get a better understanding of their failures and how their failures impact their individual lives. David failed on several occasions, and still, he is known as *a man after God’s own heart*. Saul seemed to fail as well, and Saul was taken out by the sin unto death. Here is God grace: Samuel, from the Abraham’s bosom, tells Saul, “Tomorrow, you and your sons will be *with me*.” That is grace. God is not done with the Jew. The Jews have not fallen so far as to be out of the reach of God’s grace. **Let Israel proclaim, “God’s grace is forever!”** This is meaningful. The Jews were God’s people and they will be God’s people. Why do you think there are Jews today? There are no Philistines; no Amalekites, no real Romans even. But Jews? In every country. God is not done with His people. God’s grace is forever. In the book of the last days, in the book of Revelation, why do you think God is calling 12,000 out of this Jewish tribe, and 12,000 out of that Jewish tribe? Now maybe you are too damn perfect and you don’t grasp the need for God’s grace. I have do not have these illusions about myself. At the first and at the last, I will have to stand on God’s grace. When it comes to my salvation and my being face to face with Jesus Christ at death, that is completely based upon God’s grace. No matter what I do from hereon in, whether I act like a great Christian or act like a degenerate unbeliever, I depend upon God’s grace, and I will until the day I die.

Now, has Israel screwed up? Most assuredly. Has Israel turned away from God? Absolutely. Is Israel blind to her own sin? Of course. But, **let Israel proclaim, “God’s grace is forever!”** God is not done with Israel. We are not the new Israel. We are a different entity. Now, we picked up where Israel should have left off; but this was all in the power of God the Holy Spirit, as we model ourselves after Jesus Christ, who pioneered the Christian walk. And so that you are not confused, Israel does have a future with God; it is no accident that there are Jews scattered throughout the earth in almost every nation. Now, what has happened is, Israel has been set aside for a little time. They are not completely in the dark, as any Jews which believes in Jesus Christ is saved and becomes a part of the church. However, the Jews as a nation and the Jews as a people scattered throughout the earth in every nation will have a future with God.

Allow me a tangent which is related to all of this: in times when my grasp of theology was weak, I wondered about my freewill in the future. I know how tempted and how many times I fail now—what about in eternity? My freewill will still be in tact. What then? In eternity, we will be without the urging of the old sin nature, and we will not have the temptation of the world. How should I explain? There must be one or two sins which you do not ever do. You just do not have a temptation to do them. For some of you, you might not be prone to jealousy; for others, power

lust or materialism lust really don't grab you; some have no interest in getting drunk or taking drugs; and for others, you just do not have the urge to commit murder. Now, imagine the sin you are least likely to commit and then place yourself in an environment where committing that sin is even less of a temptation—that is akin to our eternal state with respect to all sin. Now, I am not saying that, in this world, in this life, that there are sins that you would not commit. I think for many, but not all, circumstances could be arranged to where you would commit sins that would shock even you. However, the eternal state is very far removed from that scenario. That is one minor aspect of God's grace in eternity—freewill, yet we will be without sin. Our lives would be a lot better if we could manage that now.

Say, I pray, a house of Aaron, that,  
“For to perpetuity His grace.”

Psalm  
118:3

Let the house of Aaron proclaim,  
“His grace [is] forever.”

Let the house of Aaron also proclaim,  
“His grace is everlasting!”

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text	Say, I pray, a house of Aaron, that, “For to perpetuity His grace.”
Septuagint	Let now the house of Aaron say, that <i>He is good</i> ; for his mercy <i>endures</i> for ever.

Significant differences: See comments with v. 2.

#### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV	Let the family of Aaron the priest shout, "God is always merciful!"
The Message	And you, clan of Aaron, tell the world, "His love never quits."
NLT	Let Aaron's descendants, the priests, repeat: “His faithful love endures forever.”

#### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™	The descendants of Aaron should say, "His mercy endures forever."
JPS (Tanakh)	Let the house of Aaron declare, “His steadfast love is eternal.”

#### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

ESV	Let the house of Aaron say, "His steadfast love endures forever."
HCSB	Let the house of Aaron say, "His faithful love endures forever."
WEB	Let the house of Aaron now say That his loving kindness endures forever.
Young's Literal Translation	I pray you, let the house of Aaron say, That, to the age is His kindness.

**What is the gist of this verse?** The house of Aaron, the priests to Israel, are to also proclaim that God's grace is forever.

### Psalm 118:3a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾâmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
nâ' (נָא) [pronounced naw]	<i>please, I pray you, I respectfully implore (ask, or request of) you, I urge you</i>	particle of entreaty	Strong's #4994 BDB #609
Nâ' is used to express a wish (Job 32:21: "Oh, that I may not respect any man's person"); to incite or to urge (Jer. 5:24); it is depreciatory when affixed to the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person with a particle of negation (do not, I implore you—see Gen. 33:10 19:18); with the it expresses a wish or request (Psalm 124 129:1 SOS 7:9), a challenge (Jer. 17:15), asking leave (Gen. 18:4), and depreciation with a negation (Gen. 18:32). In many of these examples, we would express this with the addition of the word <i>let</i> .			
bayith (בַּיִת) [pronounced BAH-yith]	<i>house, household, habitation as well as inward</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1004 BDB #108
ʾAhārôn (אַהֲרֹן) [pronounced ah-huh-ROHN]	transliterated Aaron	masculine proper noun	Strong's #175 BDB #14
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced kee]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471

**Translation:** *Let the house of Aaron proclaim, ...* The house of Aaron refers to the priests of the Age of Israel. These were the men who represented man to God, and were a shadow of our great High Priest to come. Like most psalms, this is firmly entrenched in the Age of Israel.

This has further application to us, as we are a nation of priests—we believers in the Church Age (1Peter 2:5). We are able to represent ourselves before God, because our true sacrifice, Jesus Christ, has gone to the cross and paid the debt for our sins. In Him, we have access to God. Furthermore, as priests, we should proclaim, "God's grace is forever!"

### Psalm 118:3b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lâmed (ל) (pronounced l̥)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
ʿôwlâm (עוֹלָם) [pronounced ô-LAWM]	<i>long duration, forever, perpetuity, antiquity, futurity</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #5769 BDB #761
ʿôwlâm together with the lâmed preposition mean <i>forever</i>			
cheçed (חֶסֶד) [pronounced KHEH-sed]	<i>grace, benevolence, mercy, kindness</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #2617 BDB #338

**Translation:** ...“His grace [is] forever.” Again, God’s grace is everlasting. This is a proclamation that the psalmist urges be made by the Aaronic priesthood.

I have read through several commentators who even ascribe this verse or that to a chorus, or to an individual soloist. I am not going to go through the entire, psalm, as this is really more appropriate to the interpretation of a choir leader.

How Psalm 118 Might be Sung	
Scripture	The Divisions of Labor
Psalm 117	The Conqueror and his attendants sing Psalm 117:1, an introductory hymn, inviting all, Jews and Gentiles, to share in the merciful kindness of God, and to sing his praises. It is a gathering together of all the Lord's people, to be witnesses and partakers of his glory.
Psalm 118:1–3	Psalm 118:1-3 are sung by single voices. As the procession moves along, the theme of rejoicing is announced. The first voice repeats, “O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good, because his mercy endures for ever.” Another single voice calls on Israel to acknowledge this great truth; and a third invites the house of Aaron, the priesthood. to acknowledge their share in Jehovah's love.
Psalm 118:4	Psalm 118:4 is a chorus; the whole procession, the living, and the dead who are raised to meet Christ (1Th. 4:16)

This was offered up by Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *A Treasury of David*; e-Sword, Psalm 118. However, the ultimate source appears to be R. H. Ryland, in “The Psalms restored to Messiah,” 1853. I quoted this almost verbatim. If you desire to see how the entire psalm was divided up in order to be sung to an audience, please see Spurgeon’s *A Treasury of David*.<sup>15</sup>

You may wonder, why I even bother to list something like this. Although we are assured that we can understand whatever doctrines we need to understand, keeping this in the forefront of our minds is not guaranteed to us. If that were the case, then there would be no reason for repetition. Everyone learns in a variety of ways as well as remembers in a number of ways—if one can picture a choir singing this psalm, with one set introducing it by singing Psalm 117; with three soloists out of the chorus singing vv. 1–3; and the entire choir singing v. 4, then the subject matter of what is being sung might be more clearly held in one’s mind. However, do not be confused into thinking that, this is the only way this psalm should be sung.

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**Saying, I pray, those fearing of Y<sup>e</sup>howah that,**  
**“For to perpetuity His grace.”**

**Psalm 118:4**

**Let those fearing Y<sup>e</sup>howah say,**  
**“His grace [is] forever.”**

**Let those who fear and respect Jehovah proclaim, “His grace is forever.”**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

**Ancient texts:**

Masoretic Text	Saying, I pray, those fearing of Y <sup>e</sup> howah that, “For to perpetuity His grace.”
Septuagint	Let now all that fear the Lord say, <i>that He is good; for his mercy endures for ever.</i>

<sup>15</sup> However, feel free to have your own vision here.



Significant differences: See v. 2.

### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV  
The Message  
Let every true worshiper of the LORD shout, "God is always merciful!"  
And you who fear GOD, join in, "His love never quits."

NLT  
Let all who fear the LORD repeat:  
"His faithful love endures forever."

### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™  
JPS (Tanakh)  
Those who fear the LORD should say, "His mercy endures forever."  
Let those who fear the LORD declare,  
"His steadfast love is eternal."

### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

HCSB  
Young's Literal Translation  
Let those who fear the LORD say, "His faithful love endures forever."  
I pray you, let those fearing Jehovah say, That, to the age is His kindness.

**What is the gist of this verse?** All believers of that Age (those who fear Jehovah) are to proclaim that God's grace is forever.

Psalm 118:4a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾāmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
nâ' (נָא) [pronounced naw]	please, I pray you, I respectfully implore (ask, or request of) you, I urge you	particle of entreaty	Strong's #4994 BDB #609
Nâ' is used to express a wish (Job 32:21: "Oh, that I may not respect any man's person"); to incite or to urge (Jer. 5:24); it is depreciatory when affixed to the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person with a particle of negation (do not, I implore you—see Gen. 33:10 19:18); with the it expresses a wish or request (Psalm 124 129:1 SOS 7:9), a challenge (Jer. 17:15), asking leave (Gen. 18:4), and depreciation with a negation (Gen. 18:32). In many of these examples, we would express this with the addition of the word <i>let</i> .			
yârê' (יָרֵא) [pronounced yaw-RAY]	to fear, to fear-respect, to reverence, to have a reverential respect	masculine plural construct, Qal active participle	Strong's #3372 BDB #431
YHWH (יְהוָה) [pronunciation is possibly yoh-WAH]	transliterated variously as Jehovah, Yahweh, Y <sup>e</sup> howah	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced kee]	for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time	conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471

**Translation:** Let those fearing Y<sup>e</sup>howah say,... In the Old Testament, this is the way a mature believer was referred to, as one who fears and respects God. You cannot fear and respect someone that you do not believe exists; and

you cannot fear and respect the character of a person that you do not know. Therefore, only a believer who knows some doctrine could be called one who feared Jehovah.

Psalm 118:4b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lâmed (ל) (pronounced <i>l</i> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	directional preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
ʿôwlâm (עולם) [pronounced <i>ô-LAWM</i> ]	<i>long duration, forever, perpetuity, antiquity, futurity</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #5769 BDB #761
ʿôwlâm together with the lâmed preposition mean <i>forever</i>			
cheçed (חסד) [pronounced <i>KHEH-sed</i> ]	<i>grace, benevolence, mercy, kindness</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #2617 BDB #338

**Translation:** ...“His grace [is] forever.” What the mature believer is to proclaim is, the grace of God is forever.

Since I cover each verse separately, it is easy to lose the rhythm and flow of these first few verses:

The Repetitions found in Psalm 118:1–4	
Psalm 118:1–4	Cœnotes
Give thanks to Yehowah because [He is] good; [and] because His grace [is] forever. Let Israel proclaim, “His grace [is] forever.” Let the house of Aaron proclaim, “His grace [is] forever.” Let those fearing Y <sup>h</sup> owah proclaim, “His grace [is] forever.”	This is known as a cœnotes [pronounced <i>CEE-noh-tees</i> ], which comes from a Greek word meaning <i>sharing in common</i> . A cœnotes occurs when two separate phrases are repeated, one at the beginning and one at the eend of successive sentences or paragraphs. In the Hebrew, this is even more pronounced, as each verse begins with <i>let proclaim</i> .

We will find such a repetition in vv. 8 & 9 as well as vv. 15 & 16.

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It is Better to Trust in Jehovah than in Man

From the distress I called Yah;  
answered me in a in the wide expanse Yah.

Psalm 118:5

When in [lit., from] distress, I called upon Yah;  
[and] Yah answered me from [lit., in] a wide  
expanse [or, from freedom].

I called upon Jehovah when in distress  
and He answered me from his place in the heavens.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Latin Vulgate	In my trouble I called upon the Lord: and the Lord heard me, and enlarged me.
Masoretic Text	From the distress I called Yah; answered me in a in the wide expanse Yah.
Peshitta	Out of my distress I called upon the LORD; the LORD answered me and relieved me.
Septuagint	I called on the Lord out of affliction: and he hearkened to me, <i>so as to bring me</i> into a wide place.

Significant differences: I think the problem is, the ancient texts did not really know how to understand and therefore translate the second sentence.

#### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV	When I was really hurting, I prayed to the LORD. He answered my prayer, and took my worries away.
The Message	Pushed to the wall, I called to GOD; from the wide open spaces, he answered.
NLT	In my distress I prayed to the LORD, And the LORD answered me and rescued me.

#### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™	During times of trouble I called on the LORD. The LORD answered me and set me free from all of them.
JPS (Tanakh)	In distress I called on the LORD; the LORD answered me and brought me relief.

#### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	Out of my distress I called upon the Lord; the Lord answered me, and set me free <i>and</i> in a large place.
<i>Updated Emphasized Bible</i>	<Out of a strait>, I called on Yah, He answered me with enlargement [so the Western School of Massorites in one early printed edition; the Eastern Massorites with many manuscripts, 9 early printed editions and the Aramaic have "the enlargement (= deliverance) of Yah."].
HCSB	I called to the LORD in distress; the LORD answered me and put me in a spacious place.
LTHB	I called Jehovah from the distress; He answered me in the large place of Jehovah.
MKJV	I called on Jehovah in distress; Jehovah answered me, and <i>set me</i> in a large place.
WEB	Out of my distress, I called on Yah. Yah answered me with freedom.
<i>Young's Literal Translation</i>	From the straitness I called Jah, Jah answered me in a broad place.

**What is the gist of this verse?** The psalmist has called upon God and God has answered him (the final word will require some explanation).

## Psalm 118:5a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>min</i> ]	<i>from, off, out from, out of, away from, on account of, since, than, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
mêtsar (מֵצָר) [pronounced <i>may-TSAR</i> ]	<i>distress, pain, straits</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4712 BDB #865
qârâ' (קָרָא) [pronounced <i>kaw-RAW</i> ]	<i>to call, to proclaim, to read, to call to, to call out to, to assemble, to summon</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #7121 BDB #894
This is a homonym; the other qârâ' means <i>to encounter, to befall, to meet, to assemble</i> .			
Yâh (יְהוָה) [pronounced <i>yaw</i> ]	an abbreviated form of YHWH, the proper name for God in the Old Testament	proper masculine noun	Strong's #3050 BDB #219

**Translation:** *When in* [lit., *from*] *distress, I called upon Yah;...* Although to my way of thinking, I would expect the psalmist to call upon God when *in* distress, the idea is, from this place, the place of distress and pain, the psalmist called upon God. This is the perfect tense, which indicates that this happened in the past; i.e., it is a done deal. The psalmist is not in pain and distress right now; or, if he is, this is not what he is indicating.

Now, in the past, I have knocked prayer, and for several reasons. It is but one tool in our toolbox, one weapon in our arsenal. We do not use a hammer to fix everything, but that is how some use prayer. Many people pray to God, because they would rather do all the talking and none of the listening. I experience a similar thing when I talk to someone else about the Bible; now, I know the Bible much better than the average person; in fact, much better than the average Christian (although there is a great deal which I do not know). However, in talking to many people about Scripture, they prefer to do 90% of the talking about a topic which they know little or nothing about. People pray the same way. No real interest in what God would have them know; no real interest in what God would have them do. They just want to pour out their troubles and fears on God and then expect God to make all of their problems suddenly disappear. I've known some who are not even Christians, and they will ask several people of various faiths to pray for them, figuring that one of them might be able to get through to God (which really is not too bad of a plan). I've named as the main problem with prayers from Christians, is that most of them pray while out of fellowship, and the Bible tells us that God does not listen and respond to those prayers (*if I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me*).

On the other hand, even though I do knock prayer—or, more correctly, the misuse of prayer, when a person prays, they are acknowledging the existence of God—which is not enough to save them, but a step in the right direction. For a believer, he is turning his attention, as limited as it might be, toward God. Furthermore, the Bible speaks of prayer often: Gen. 32:7–11 1Sam. 30:6-8 Psalm 18:6, Psalm 40:1-3 77:2 107:13, 19 116:3–4 120:1 130:1–2 Mark 14:31-36. We are even admonished to *pray without ceasing* (1Thess. 5:17). We covered the **Doctrine of Prayer** back in Psalm 78, if you would like to go back and re-examine it.

Now might be a good time to examine...

### A Few Points on Prayer

1. Prayer is encouraged by God for us to speak to Him. Gen. 32:7–11 1Sam. 30:6-8 Psalm 18:6, Psalm 40:1-3 77:2 107:13, 19 116:3–4 120:1 130:1–2 Mark 14:31-36

## A Few Points on Prayer

2. Prayer is man communicating directly to God.
3. Prayer should be addressed to God the Father in the name of Jesus Christ the Son. It is God the Father who deals with our prayer; it is because of Jesus Christ that we can communicate with God the Father. Matt. 6:9 John 14:13–14
4. All prayer must be done while in fellowship—in our dispensation, while being filled with the Holy Spirit.
5. Prayer does not reach God when we are out of fellowship.
  - a. Now for the 1%: God is omniscient, so God is everywhere. Therefore, God can hear my prayer, regardless.
  - b. Perhaps a better analogy should be given to the 1%: if you have children, you know that there are times when you call them, they hear you, but they ignore you. They are outside having fun, it's time for dinner, you call them, and they ignore you. They are watching TV, you tell them to take out the trash, they say, "Yeah, Mom" and 20 minutes later, they are still watching TV and they have not moved. It is not that they could not hear you; they simply chose not to hear you.
  - c. The key is, God of course can hear every person who talks to Him or talks to anyone else. God can also choose to respond to any prayer, whether initiated by a believer or unbeliever; by a believer in or out of fellowship. However, God does not have to listen to a believer out of fellowship. God does not have to have any contact with a believer out of fellowship. *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me* (Psalm 66:18).
  - d. Getting back into fellowship is a matter of grace—you simply name your sins to God; therefore, that should be the beginning of any and all prayers to God (assuming that you start while being out of fellowship). 1John 1:9
6. God hears us immediately in prayer, even though the Throne Room of God is millions of light years away. Isa. 65:24: *And it will be, before they call I will answer; and while they are still speaking, I will hear.*
7. Thanksgiving should be a part of prayer. After all, if you cannot find anything in your life for which you can be thankful, how do you think you will recognize God's answer to your prayer?
8. By the way, don't forget to listen to God—God speaks to us through His Word, and many times, the answers to our prayers are found in knowing His Word.
9. Public prayers should generally be short and to the point. You might go a little longer during a prayer meeting. However, long prayers are generally a part of private prayer. Matt. 6:5–7
10. Intercession should be a part of your prayers—that is, you need to be mindful of others and be willing to pray for others as well. Eph. 6:18
11. The final portion of your prayers, which is perhaps the only one that you are aware of, is petition on behalf of yourself. This is where you pray for your own needs.
12. Why your prayer is not heard (or, if you want to be picky about it, heard but not answered):
  - a. The primary reason is that you are out of fellowship. This is expressed in a number of ways in Scripture.
    - i. *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me* (Psalm 66:18).
    - ii. *You ask, but you do not receive, because you ask amiss, so that you may consume it on your lusts* (James 4:2–3). You've got to realize, you can pray till doomsday about that lotto ticket that you just bought, but that does not mean God is going to make it a winner.
    - iii. Marital problems can hinder prayer (and, essentially, the idea is, you are both out of fellowship because of mental attitude sins toward one another—1Peter 3:7).
    - iv. God does not listen because you are filled with pride (Job 35:12–13).
    - v. You ask God for blessing on the one hand, and disobey His commandments on the other. 1John 3:22.
    - vi. Simply speaking, you just need to be in fellowship, which is why confession of sin is at the top of the list when you pray to God. Eph. 6:18 1John 1:9
  - b. You pray to God without any faith. "I know you don't exist, but, just in case you do, this is what I want...I don't really think You answer prayer, but, just in case You do, here are the things I want." Matt. 18:19 21:22 Mark 11:24
  - c. You pray without compassion for others. Prov. 21:13

## A Few Points on Prayer

- d. You pray for that which is not in God's will (1John 5:14). There are a number of things which happened in my life that, quite frankly at the time, I wish that they had not happened—and I prayed often for deliverance from these things. It was God's will for me to go through these things; almost everything that God had me go through, I can look back and see why. At the time of the pressure, I often did not understand why. Therefore, sometimes when you pray and you don't get what you want, you have to wait and have a little faith in God—He knows exactly what He is doing. When His answer to your prayer is *no*, there is a reason for that.

\* Several of these points were taken from R. B. Thieme, Jr., *Prayer*; ©1973 by R. B. Thieme, Jr. (taken from the 1961 Basic Series, Lesson 19). Many others were taken from memory, mostly from Bible class at Berachah.

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### Psalm 118:5b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿânâh (עָנָה) [pronounced gaw-NAWH]	<i>to answer, to respond; to speak loudly, to speak up [in a public forum]; to testify; to sing, to chant, to sing responsively</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	Strong's #6030 BDB #772
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced b <sup>e</sup> h]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
mer <sup>e</sup> châb (מֶרְחָב) [pronounced mer <sup>e</sup> -KHAWB <sup>h</sup> ]	<i>broad or roomy place, wide expanse, large and open area; [metaphorically] freedom, liberty, welfare</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4800 BDB #932

The Western School of Massorites, along with one early printed edition lacks the definite article. However, the Eastern School along with many manuscripts, 9 early printed editions, and the Aramaic all have the definite article.<sup>16</sup>

These latter meanings refer to having many options in a large area. Mer<sup>e</sup>châb can be used in a negative sense, as a lamb in a large area, insofar as the lamb may stray from the herd (Hosea 4:16).

By the way, we have two unusual nouns in this verse; this particular one is found in two Davidic psalms (Psalm 18:19 31:8). The other word, *distress*, is only found thrice in Scripture, and not in any Davidic psalm.<sup>17</sup>

Yâh (יְהוָה) [pronounced yaw]	an abbreviated form of YHWH, the proper name for God in the Old Testament	proper masculine noun	Strong's #3050 BDB #219
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<sup>16</sup> Joseph Bryant Rotherham's *The Emphasized Bible*; ©1971 by Kregel Publications; p. 591.

<sup>17</sup> I mention this because I am looking for clues which would either suggest that this psalm was written by David or make it more likely that this psalm was not. Finding unusual words which are used by David elsewhere suggests that David wrote this psalm. Finding common words, but words not used by David, would suggest that this was not written by David.



**Translation:** ... [and] Yah answered me from [lit., in] a wide expanse [or, from freedom]. God, in His heaven, in his wide expanse, answers the psalmist. The idea is, God is in an area so huge that we cannot comprehend it. We cannot even comprehend space; and yet, God in heaven, is even beyond space. However, even from there, God answered the psalmist. Do you recall the continuous mention of grace? This is grace—the psalmist is in trouble, he calls to God, and even from heaven, God answers him.

Now, the words *distress* and *wide expanse* are arranged to be in opposition to one another—as polar opposites, possibly. They describe the place of the psalmist as opposed to the place of God; both words as masculine singular nouns with definite articles; both are used in parallel portions of this verse. Therefore, we may reasonably assume that one is almost the direct opposite of the other. That is, the psalmist is in a place on constraints, where there is little freedom, where he has few if any choices, where he is backed into a corner, and he appears to have no options. God, on the other hand, answers from a place of great freedom and expanse.

I don't know how to quite grasp the use of the prepositions here. I would have expected them to be switched. That is, I would expect for the psalmist to call upon God when he (the psalmist) is *in* distress; similarly, I would expect God to answer the psalmist *from* the great expanse (i.e., heaven, which is even greater than space itself). However, the prepositions are set up in the opposite manner, meaning that I am not necessarily convinced of my own interpretation.

What the KJV, the MKJV and the NKJV do is insert the words *set me*; the psalmist calls to God from a place of distress, a place of constraints, a place where his options seem to have been limited; God *places him* in a place where his choices are seemingly unlimited; God *sets him in* a place of freedom. So the psalmist calls from a place of constraint and God places him in a place of freedom. This interpretation would explain the prepositions; however, the problem is, the words *and set me* are not there and are difficult to infer from the *bêyth* preposition. Therefore, I must side with my explanation instead.

We do find this word used in a couple of other psalms: Psalm 18:17–19: *He delivered me from my strong enemy, and from those who hated me; for they were too strong for me. They went before me in the day of my calamity; but Jehovah was my stay. He brought me forth also into a large place; He delivered me because He delighted in me.* Psalm 31:7–8: *I will be glad and rejoice in Your mercy; for You have looked on my affliction; You have known my soul in troubles; and have not shut me up into the hand of the enemy; You have set my feet in a broad place.* In all three instances, the psalmist is in a bad place, either under the attack of an enemy or in distress (which is, reasonably, the attack of an enemy). God delivers him<sup>18</sup> from his enemy to a large place, indicating that he has more options than he had before. An enemy limits your options and your freedom; being placed in a large area indicates that you suddenly have a great many options and a great deal of freedom. This understanding of our own passage, and allowing for the insertions which we find in the various King James Versions is probably the most reasonable way to interpret this passage.

I had hoped that Keil and Delitzsch would shed some light on this, offer some alternatives, and, it appears as though they do discuss this verse, but, to be quite frank with you, I don't know what the hell they are saying this time.<sup>19</sup>

### Keil and Delitzsch Explain Psalm 118:5?

In Psalm 118:5, Israel too then begins as one man to praise the ever-gracious goodness of God יְהוָה, the Jod of which might easily become inaudible after קראתי, has an emphatic Dagesh as in Psalm 118:18, and הפצר has the orthophonic stroke beside צר (the so-called מקל), which points to the correct tone-syllable of the word that has Dechî.

(Note: Vid., Baer's Thorath Emeth, p. 7 note, and p. 21, end of note 1.)

<sup>18</sup> By the way, David is the writer of Psalms 18–31.

<sup>19</sup> Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Psalm 118:1–18.

## Keil and Delitzsch Explain Psalm 118:5?

Instead of עֲנִי it is here pointed עֲנִי, which also occurs in other instances not only with distinctive, but also (though not uniformly) with conjunctive accents.

[Note: Hitzig on Pro. 8:22 considers the pointing עֲנִי to be occasioned by Dechī, and in fact עֲנִי in the passage before us has Tarcha, and in 1Sam. 28:15 Munach; but in the passage before us, if we read בַּמַּחְבִּיָּה as one word according to the Masora, עֲנִי is rather to be accented with Mugrash; and in 1Sam. 28:15 the reading עֲנִי is found side by side with עֲנִי (e.g., in Bibl. Bomberg. 1521). Nevertheless צִרְפָּתִי Psalm 17:3, and הֲרִי Job 30:19 (according to Kimchi's Michlol, 30a), beside Mercha, show that the pointing beside conjunctive as beside disjunctive accents wavers between a& and a4, although a4 is properly only justified beside disjunctive accents, and צִנִּי also really only occurs in pause.]

The construction is a pregnant one (as in Psalm 22:22; Psalm 28:1; Psalm 74:7; 2Sam. 18:19; Ezra 2:62; 2Chron. 32:1): He answered me by removing me to a free space (Psalm 18:20). Both lines end with יָהּ; nevertheless the reading בַּמַּחְבִּיָּה is attested by the Masora (vid., Baer's Psalterium, pp. 132f.), instead of בַּמַּחְבִּיָּה. It has its advocates even in the Talmud (B. Pesachim 117a), and signifies a boundless extent, יָהּ expressing the highest degree of comparison, like מַאֲפִלִּיָּה in Jer. 2:31, the deepest darkness. Even the LXX appears to have read מחביה thus as one word (εἰς πλατυσμόν, Symmachus εἰς εὐρυχωρίαν). The Targum and Jerome, however, render it as we do; it is highly improbable that in one and the same verse the divine name should not be intended to be used in the same force of meaning. Psalm 56:1-13 (Psalm 56:10; Psalm 56:5, Psalm 56:12) echoes in Psalm 118:6; and in Psalm 118:7 Psalm 54:1-7 (Psalm 54:6) is in the mind of the later poet. In that passage it is still more clear than in the passage before us that by the *Beth* of בַּעֲזָרִי Jahve is not meant to be designated as *unus e multis*, but as a helper who outweighs the greatest multitude of helpers. The Jewish people had experienced this helpful succour of Jahve in opposition to the persecutions of the Samaritans and the satraps during the building of the Temple; and had at the same time learned what is expressed in Psalm 118:7-8 (cf. Psalm 146:3), that trust in Jahve (for which בָּ is the proper word) proves true, and trust in men, on the contrary, and especially in princes, is deceptive; for under Pseudo-Smerdis the work, begun under Cyrus, and represented as open to suspicion even in the reign of Cambyses, was interdicted. But in the reign of Darius it again became free: Jahve showed that He disposes events and the hearts of men in favour of His people, so that out of this has grown up in the minds of His people the confident expectation of a world-subduing supremacy expressed in Psalm 118:10.

Normally, I can sort through Keil and Delitzsch and figure out what it is they are saying. At this point, I am pretty sure that they are mostly talking about v. 5, and that the final word and its meaning and maybe some other things are in question, but that is about all I can get out of this. I have included this for whoever else can read this and make sense of it.

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Y<sup>e</sup>howah [is] for me,  
I do not fear;  
what can do to me man?

Psalm [Because] Y<sup>e</sup>howah [is] for me, I am not afraid;  
118:6 what can man do to me?

Because Jehovah is for me, I am not afraid;  
what can man do to me?

Here is how others have translated this verse:

**Ancient texts:**

Masoretic text	Y <sup>e</sup> howah [is] for me, I do not fear; what can do to me man?
Peshitta	The LORD is my help, I will not fear; what can man do to me?
Septuagint	The Lord is my helper; and I will not fear what man can do to me.

Significant differences: None, apart from the MT states a question.

#### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV	The LORD is on my side, and I am not afraid of what others can do to me.
The Message	GOD's now at my side and I'm not afraid; who would dare lay a hand on me?
NJB	With Yahweh on my side I fear nothing; what can human beings do to me?

#### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™	The LORD is on my side. I am not afraid. What can mortals do to me?
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#### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

LTHB	Jehovah <i>is</i> for me; I will not fear; what can man do to me?
WEB	Yahweh is on my side. I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?
Young's Updated LT	Jehovah <i>is</i> for me, I do not fear what man does to me.

**What is the gist of this verse?** There is no reason to fear man because God is with us.

Psalm 118:6a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly <i>yhoh-WAH</i> ]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y<sup>e</sup>howah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
lâmed (ל) (pronounced <i>l</i> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	directional preposition with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510

**Translation:** [Because] Y<sup>e</sup>howah [is] for me,... It is normal for a psalm to be elliptical; that is, there will be verbs missing now and again, because the psalmist is excited or speaking from great emotion, or making a strong emphasis. Generally speaking, when a verb is missing, it is often the verb *to be*, which is what we have inserted here. God is for the psalmist; the idea is, God is on the side of the psalmist.

Psalm 118:6b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lô' (לֹא or לֹא־) [pronounced <i>low</i> ]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518

### Psalm 118:6b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
yârê' (יָרֵא) [pronounced yaw-RAY]	<i>to fear, to fear-respect, to reverence, to have a reverential respect</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3372 BDB #431
mâh (מָה) [pronounced maw]	<i>what, how, why; what [thing]; anything, something, whatever</i>	interrogative; exclamatory particle; indefinite pronoun; relative pronoun	Strong's #4100 BDB #552

**Translation:** ...I am not afraid;... The psalmist indicates here and in vv. 10–14 that the straits he was in involved fear; he was not only in a tight spot, but, very likely, his life and that which he held dear was in jeopardy. That is, he had good reason, from human viewpoint, to be afraid of what could be done. However, because God is with him, the psalmist is not afraid of man or anything that man can do.

### Psalm 118:6c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
mâh (מָה) [pronounced maw]	<i>what, how, why; what [thing]; anything, something, whatever</i>	interrogative; exclamatory particle; indefinite pronoun; relative pronoun	Strong's #4100 BDB #552
'âsâh (עָשָׂה) [pronounced gaw-SAWH]	<i>to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form, to prepare</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #6213 BDB #793
lâmed (ל) (pronounced l')	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	directional preposition with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
'âdâm (אָדָם) [pronounced aw-DAWM]	<i>a man, a human being, mankind, Adam</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #120 BDB #9

**Translation:** ...what can man do to me? The psalmist asks, “What can man do to me?” Note the repetition of the lâmed preposition with the 1<sup>st</sup> person singular suffix. The psalmist does this for contrast. God is for us, so how can man do anything to us? When studying poetry, expect there to be a great many words and phrases which are in apposition to one another, or which compliment one another, or which parallel one another. This is the essence of poetry.

In Psalm 56 (a Davidic psalm), this same thought is expressed several times: In God I will praise His Word; in God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do to me (Psalm 56:4). When I cry, then my enemies will be turned back. This I know, for God is with me (Psalm 56:9). In God I have put my trust; I will not be afraid of what man can do to me (Psalm 56:11). David also wrote: I am not afraid of ten thousands of people who have set against me all around (Psalm 3:6). And: Jehovah is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? Jehovah is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? When the wicked, my enemies and my foes, came on me to eat my flesh, they stumbled and fell. Though an army should camp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war should rise against me, in this I am trusting (Psalm 27:1–3). Paul gives us a New Testament update on this point of doctrine:

Rom. 8:31: **What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?** Of course, other writers of Scripture have expressed the same sentiments (Psalm 146:5 Isa. 51:12 Jer. 20:11 Mic. 7:8-10 Heb. 13:6).

God is in control; God is sovereign. There is nothing that anyone does to you without the express permission of God. Does that mean that everyone you meet is going to be nice to you and tell you ten nice things about yourself? Certainly not! Here's the deal: God will not test us beyond what we can endure, and people are often put in our periphery as tests. I could give you a long list, if you wanted, from my own life—and I am not a contrary or difficult person to get along with. I don't go out of my way to get into someone else's way—however, I could still give you a long list from my own personal experience of people who have tried to do evil to me in one way or another. God does allow this; but there is nothing that they can do to me—not with God on my side; because God is for me. So, the damage that some intend to do, the cheating and financial evil which some perpetrate against me, their personal attacks, their plots and machinations—their effects upon me are temporary at best. Now, sometimes I pass the test and sometimes I don't; but, when all is said and done, I have walked away from evil again and again untouched.

Jesus Christ, Who operated in the power of the Holy Spirit during His time on earth, also behaved without fear of men. Gill: *He was not afraid of Herod when He was told he would kill Him; nor of the high priests, Scribes and Pharisees, though He knew He should fall into their hands, and they would deliver Him to the Gentiles, to be scourged and crucified; nor of Judas and his band of men, who came to take Him; nor of Pilate His judge, who had no power against Him but what was given him.*<sup>20</sup>

**Application:** Satan is after us to make us sin, to get us out of fellowship, to provoke us to anger. When someone does wrong to you, you need not respond in kind. There is no reason to get angry, no reason to gossip about them, no reason to plot revenge against them, no reason for hatred. Since God is on our side, the easiest thing to do is to allow God to take care of it. By the way, when do you want God to take care of it? Next month? Next year? No, you want God to take care of it now; or, awhile ago. So, at what point do you need to back off and let God take care of it? Immediately. If you want God to deal with something, then hand it over to him. Do not sin against your enemy, don't plot their revenge, don't carry mental attitude sins against them—back off and let God take care of them. The sooner you back away, the sooner God can go to work. Now, I cannot guarantee that God is going to take care of them right then and there—that you will see a bolt of lightning, and then all that remains are their smoking shoes—but God is not going to deal with the problem while you are in the way.

**Y<sup>e</sup>howah for me in helping me;  
and I see in [the] one hating me.**

Psalm  
118:7

**Y<sup>e</sup>howah [is] on my side [lit., to me] in helping  
me,  
that I look upon the one hating me.**

**Jehovah is on my side, helping me;  
and I look upon those who hate me.**

You will note that I display more translations than usual here; that is because, of course, this is a more difficult verse to exegete, and therefore, to interpret. Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### **Ancient texts:**

##### **Dead Sea Scrolls**

**The LORD is on my side among those who help me; I will look in triumph on those who hate me.** [Unfortunately, I do not have the Dead Sea Scrolls hanging around my

<sup>20</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 118:6. I capitalized the pronominal references to Jesus Christ in this quotation.

house, but simply an English translation of them; which translation is probably reasonably literal].<sup>21</sup>

Latin Vulgate	The Lord is my helper: and I will look over my enemies.
Masoretic Text	Yehowah for me in helping me; and I see [the] one hating me.
Peshitta	The Lord is my helper; there I will see my desire upon them that hate me.
Septuagint	The Lord is my helper; and I shall see <i>my desire</i> upon mine enemies.

Significant differences: We have the addition of *to me* in the Hebrew, which is not found in the Greek. It is not clear whether this is found in the Aramaic or not, as I work from an English translation which may not always be literal. Apart from this, these are identical. There are some problems with the Hebrew which I will discuss in the exegesis.

#### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV	With the LORD on my side, I will defeat all of my hateful enemies.
The Message	GOD's my strong champion; I flick off my enemies like flies.
NJB	With Yahweh on my side as my help, I gloat over my enemies.
NLT	Yes, the LORD is for me; he will help me. I will look in triumph at those who hate me.
REB	With the LORD on my side, as my helper, I shall see the downfall of my enemies.
TEV	It is the LORD who helps me, and I will see my enemies defeated.

#### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™	The LORD is on my side as my helper. I will see the defeat of those who hate me.
JPS (Tanakh)	With the LORD on my side as my helper, I will see the downfall of my foes.

#### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	Yahweh   is on my side [or, <i>is mine</i> ], with them who help me,   I   therefore will gaze upon them who hate me. When you examine the exegesis, you will note that only Rotherham followed the Hebrew completely and consistently.
LTHB	Jehovah is for me among those who help me, and I shall see <i>my desire</i> on those who hate me.
WEB	Yahweh is on my side among those who help me. Therefore I will look in triumph at those who hate me.
<i>Young's Updated LT</i>	Jehovah <i>is</i> for me among my helpers, And I—I look on those hating me.

**What is the gist of this verse?** Jehovah is on the side of the psalmist as his helper; and the psalmist looks over his enemies.

<sup>21</sup> Unfortunately, I do not even know if the book is written in the Hebrew or the Greek; and, bear in mind, most of the Old Testament are very incomplete, due to the deterioration of the manuscripts.



## Psalm 118:7a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly yohoh-WAH]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y<sup>e</sup>howah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
lâmed (ל) (pronounced l <sup>e</sup> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	directional preposition with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced b <sup>e</sup> h]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88

I must say, I am having quite a difficult time with this short verse. Most translators completely ignore the bēyth preposition here, which is found twice in this verse.

There are a couple of ways the bēyth preposition might be understood here: it can be taken as a causal preposition, meaning *through, on account of*; or it may be taken as a concessive conjunction, and rendered *when, though*.<sup>22</sup> Neither of these uses is common.

ʿāzar (עָזַר) [pronounced gaw-ZAHR]	<i>helper, one who aids; an ally</i>	Qal active participle with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	Strong's #5826 BDB #740
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Owen lists this as a masculine plural, but I believe that is a typo. See remarks in the next exegesis table.

**Translation:** Y<sup>e</sup>howah [is] on my side [lit., to me] in helping me,... Zeroing in on the exact translation, as you can see from what I have written above, was difficult for me. I think it is clear that Jehovah God is on the side of the psalmist and that He aids the psalmist—God is an ally of the psalmist.

## Psalm 118:7b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʾānîy (אֲנִי) [pronounced aw-NEE]	<i>I, me; in answer to a question, it means I am, it is I</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular, personal pronoun	Strong's #589 BDB #58
râʾâh (רָאָה) [pronounced raw-AWH]	<i>to see, to look, to look at, to view, to behold; to perceive, to understand, to learn, to know</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7200 BDB #906
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced b <sup>e</sup> h]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88

<sup>22</sup> The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon; Hendrickson Publishers; ©1996; pp. 90–91.

## Psalm 118:7b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
The bēyth preposition here is easier to understand than the one in v. 7a. Here, with a verb of perception, it simply means <i>to look upon</i> . <sup>23</sup> This gives us the exact same grammatical construction for the two participles at the end of each line; but, apparently, with very different uses.			
sânê' (אֲנִי) [pronounced saw-NAY]	<i>hating one, the one hating, the hater</i>	Qal active participle with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	Strong's #8130 BDB #971

Again, Owen lists this verb as a *masculine plural*, Qal active participle with the 1<sup>st</sup> person singular suffix. I have several books on Hebrew grammar and not a single one of them clearly listed a masculine singular, Qal active participle with a 1<sup>st</sup> person singular suffix next to one which was masculine plural. This simply appears to be the participle with the 1<sup>st</sup> person singular suffix. Both of these verbs are in the exact same form; that is, whatever you want to say about one, is also true of the other.

Another option, which is apparently the one which every single translator took, is the masculine singular and the masculine plural are a matter of interpretation here; so, even though the verbs are identical in form, the first one is generally interpreted as a masculine singular and the second as a masculine plural. For a mathematical mind like mine, I find this completely unsatisfactory.

**Translation:** ...that I look upon the one hating me. As you can see, there are two primary ways in which this phrase was understood. One school of thought understands the psalmist to see *his desire* [done] against the one (s) who hate him. This would mean, no matter what the psalmist wants done to his enemies (taking the psalmist to be a mature believer), this is essentially granted to him. Now, for me, this is reading far too much into the translation. I think it is more accurate for the psalmist *to look down upon those who hate him*. Not in the sense of feeling all superior and much cooler than his enemies, but more in the sense of being at a safe vantage point, safety not necessarily meaning a far proximity from. That is, God is the helper and aid of the psalmist. He can look upon those who hate him with confidence and in safety, even if that person stands right next to him. This is completely inline with doctrine, that God is the ultimate source of our safety and salvation, and I believe is the proper way to understand what we have here.

I need to tell you that I examined the comments of a dozen commentators and not one of them understood this verse and therefore, not one of them properly explained it. The key is, this verse is parallel to the previous verse. You understand v. 7b (difficult to understand) by comparing it to v. 6b (much easier to understand).

The Proper Interpretation of Psalm 118:7		
Psalm 118:6	Psalm 118:7	Comments
[Because] Y <sup>e</sup> howah [is] for me, I am not afraid;...	Y <sup>e</sup> howah [is] on my side [lit., to me] in helping me,...	The parallelism is obvious; both of these verses begin exactly the same way: Y <sup>e</sup> howah to me... Many translators render this <i>Jehovah [is] for me</i> or <i>Jehovah is on my side</i> ; both understandings are reasonable. We will find a similar parallelism in vv. 8–9.

<sup>23</sup> The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon; Hendrickson Publishers; ©1996; p. 90.

The Proper Interpretation of Psalm 118:7		
Psalm 118:6	Psalm 118:7	Comments
...what can man do to me?	...that I look upon the one hating me.	In v. 6, Jehovah is on the side of the psalmist, so he knows that man can do nothing to him apart from God's allowance. Therefore, the psalmist is safe and secure from enemy attacks—that is, God will regulate those attacks; therefore, he can look upon his enemies from a position of safety and security.
Although understanding the latter half of v. 7 is not easy; carefully comparing it to its parallel verse clears up the meaning for us.		

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Another interpretation is, the psalmist simply sees his enemies; the psalmist recognizes his enemies. I had problems at one job, and one of those involved in causing me those problems, I would have never known. In fact, apart from her, my problems would have simply been no more than a personality conflict with another employee. The psalmist is able to clearly recognize those who are against him. There are some benefits in knowing who your enemies are. However, even though I offer this interpretation, I stand by the previous interpretation.

In either case, we have several verses which are very similar to this verse: [For He has delivered me out of all trouble; and my eye has gazed upon my enemies](#) (Psalm 54:7). [My faithful God will come to meet me; God will let me look down on my adversaries](#) (Psalm 59:10). [And my eye shall look on my enemies; my ears shall hear the evildoers who rise up against me](#) (Psalm 92:11). [His heart is upheld; he shall not be afraid though he looks on his foes](#) (Psalm 112:8). I want you to notice something here: it is easier to understand Psalm 118:7b by taking it in context and comparing it to its parallel verse than it is to line up similar passages and determine its meaning from them. Both are valid approaches and sometimes they complement each other enough to determine the meaning of a difficult verse. However, in this case, the parallelism is the key which unlocks the door.

[Good to take refuge in Y<sup>e</sup>howah  
from a putting of trust in a man.](#)

Psalm  
118:8

[\[It is\] better to take refuge in Y<sup>e</sup>howah  
than \[to\] put trust in man.](#)

[It is better to take refuge in Jehovah  
than it is to put your trust in man.](#)

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text	Good to take refuge in Y <sup>e</sup> howah from a putting of trust in a man.
Septuagint	Better to trust in the Lord than to trust in man.

Significant differences: None.

#### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV	It is better to trust the LORD for protection than to trust anyone else,...
The Message	Far better to take refuge in GOD than trust in people;...
NLT	It is better to trust the LORD than to put confidence in people.

REB It is better to seek refuge in the LORD  
than to trust in any mortal,...

TEV It is better to trust in the LORD  
than to depend on man.

**Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):**

*God's Word™* It is better to depend on the LORD than to trust mortals.

**Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**

ESV It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in man.  
*Young's Literal Translation* Better to take refuge in Jehovah than to trust in man.

**What is the gist of this verse?** It is better to trust in Jehovah God than it is to trust in any man.

### Psalm 118:8a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ṭôwb (טוֹב) [pronounced toh <sup>b</sup> ṽ]	<i>pleasant, pleasing, agreeable, good, better; approved</i>	masculine singular adjective which acts like a substantive	Strong's #2896 BDB #373
Here, the adjective is used in its comparative sense.			
lâmed (ל) (pronounced l <sup>e</sup> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	directional preposition with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
châçâh (חָצָאָה) [pronounced khaw-SAW]	<i>to take refuge, and hence to trust [in]</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #2620 BDB #340
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced b <sup>e</sup> h]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
YHWH (יְהוָה) [pronunciation is possibly yhoh-WAH]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y<sup>e</sup>howah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217

**Translation:** [It is] better to take refuge in Y<sup>e</sup>howah... These verses are all related; that is, what we find in this verse is related to what we find in the previous verse. However, this verse and the next are paired, just as vv. 6–7 are paired. The meaning is quite simple: it is better to trust in Jehovah God than it is to trust in any man.

### Psalm 118:8b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
min (מִן) [pronounced min]	<i>from, off, out from, out of, away from, on account of, since, than, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577

## Psalm 118:8b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
bâṭach (בטח) [pronounced baw-TAHKH]	to trust, to rely upon, to have confidence in, to be secure in	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #982 BDB #105
bē (בְּ) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
ʾādām (אָדָם) [pronounced aw-DAWM]	a man, a human being, mankind, Adam	masculine singular noun	Strong's #120 BDB #9

**Translation:** ...than [to] put trust in man. I have translated this as a comparative, and that is more or less correct. Actually, the deal is, it reads, *It is good to take refuge in Jehovah; more than [to] put trust in man.* There is actually no comparative in the Hebrew. Bullinger explains: *The use of the positive declares that the one case is so, rather than the other, which is not so.*<sup>24</sup>

It is common to look to those around you, friends, family members, loved ones, and even business associates, and to depend upon them. The Bible tells us quite clearly, again and again, that it is better to depend upon God than it is to depend upon man.

**Application:** I had what I felt was a good relationship with a previous boss. He gave me a certain amount of freedom generally supported me. However, this man later cut me off at the knees, so to speak. Now, was I shocked and surprised? Not in the least. Did I feel my life is over or that I had been betrayed? Well, certainly, I felt betrayed; however, God took care of all of the resultant problems. Did I need to seek revenge against this person? Not at all; my clumsy attempts to take vengeance would have been a waste of my time, and without satisfactory results. It was a simple object lesson for me—God is trustworthy and God has my back; and that this person, someone I would have considered to be a friend, was not a person that I could trust or depend upon.

**Application:** You will be betrayed by someone close to you. It might be a lifelong friend; it might be a co-worker who has always taken your side; it might be a close family member—but someone that you trust will violate that trust. I can pretty much guarantee that is in your future (and I am not even a psychic). *Don't fear, don't be upset, don't fall into mental attitude sins. This person can do nothing to you which God has not allowed; God is at your side, so you can look upon this person from a place of ultimate safety and security; it is better to trust God than it is to trust man.* Quite obviously, I simply paraphrased the last three verses.

**Application:** This is one form of people testing and we all face it. Some of us might face it bit by bit; a close friend says something untoward behind our backs. We walk away without anger or disappointment. Later, someone even closer costs us our job, a huge financial investment, something big—you deal with this problem the same as the other—with vindictiveness and without rancor. As Thieme used to describe it, the first is the example of the attack of the mosquito and the second is the charge of the elephant. One gets you prepared for the other. In some cases, when you have doctrine, you go right into the charge of the elephant. However, do not think that you are going to exit this life without facing this sort of testing. When you do, go back, reread vv. 6–8; if need be, reread the exegesis of these verses. God has taken care of this problem in eternity past, *for his grace is everlasting.*

**Application:** Trusting in God rather than man has another application: do not look to any Christian that you know as the epitome of what a believer should be. The more you know about that person, the more you will realize just how flawed they are. Every believer is flawed, so to depend upon another believer as your spiritual model is a

<sup>24</sup> *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*; E. W. Bullinger; ©originally 1898; reprinted 1968 Baker Books; p 526.

mistake (except in the basics of naming your sins to God and pursuing the Word of God—this is what Paul meant when he said we should imitate him).

Although commentators made a mess of v. 7, they did a much better job with this verse. Barnes' comments<sup>25</sup> are below:

### Barnes Explains Psalm 118:8

**It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man**—This is stated apparently as the result of his own experience. He had found people weak and faithless; he had not so found God. Compare Psalm 40:4 (**How happy is the man who has put his trust in the LORD and has not turned to the proud or to those who run after lies!**); Psalm 62:8-9 (**My salvation and glory depend on God; my strong rock, my refuge, is in God. Trust in Him at all times, you people; pour out your hearts before Him. God is our refuge. Selah**). Literally, "Good is it to trust in Yahweh more than to confide in man." This is the Hebrew form of comparison, and is equivalent to what is stated in our version, "It is better," etc. It is better,

- (1) because man is weak - but God is Almighty;
- (2) because man is selfish - but God is benevolent;
- (3) because man is often faithless and deceitful - God never;
- (4) because there are emergencies, as death, in which man cannot aid us, however faithful, kind, and friendly he may be - but there are no circumstances in this life, and none in death, where God cannot assist us; and
- (5) because the ability of man to help us pertains at best only to this present life - the power of God will be commensurate with eternity.

Other comments:

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Allow me to add the comments of other exegetes:

### Other Exegetes Comment on Psalm 118:8

Commentator	Comments
Calvin <sup>26</sup>	<i>"It is better to trust in the Lord." All make this acknowledgment, and yet there is scarcely one among a hundred who is fully persuaded that God alone can afford him sufficient help. That man has attained a high rank among the faithful, who resting satisfied in God, never ceases to entertain a lively hope, even when he finds no help upon earth.</i>
Clarke <sup>27</sup>	<i>Man is feeble, ignorant, fickle, and capricious; it is better to trust in Jehovah than in such.</i>
Gill <sup>28</sup>	<i>It is not good to put confidence in man at all; it is trusting to a broken staff, to a mere shadow, which can yield no support or relief: it is best to trust in the Lord; he is able to help, as well as willing; he is faithful to his word, and unchangeable in his promises; whereas man, though he may have a will to help, oftentimes has it not in his power; and when it is in his power, and has promised it, he disappoints, being changeable or unfaithful.</i>

<sup>25</sup> Taken from Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 118:8. I did insert the verses which Barnes referenced.

<sup>26</sup> Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *A Treasury of David*; e-Sword, Psalm 118 introduction; v. 8 (I do not exactly follow why, but under the introduction, there is a great deal of material gathered by Spurgeon which covers other verses).

<sup>27</sup> Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 118:8.

<sup>28</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 118:8.



## Other Exegetes Comment on Psalm 118:8

Commentator	Comments
Spurgeon <sup>29</sup>	<i>It is better in all ways, for first of all it is wiser: God is infinitely more able to help, and more likely to help, than man, and therefore prudence suggests that we put our confidence in him above all others. It is also morally better to do so, for it is the duty of the creature to trust in the Creator. God has a claim upon his creatures: faith, he deserves to be trusted; and to place our reliance upon another rather than upon himself, is a direct insult to his faithfulness. It is better in the sense of safer, since we can never be sure of our ground if we rely upon mortal man, but we are always secure in the hands of our God. It is better in its effect upon ourselves: to trust in man tends to make us mean, crouching, dependent; but confidence in God elevates, produces a sacred quiet of spirit, and sanctifies the soul. It is, moreover, much better to trust in God, as far as the result is concerned; for in many cases the human object of our trust fails from want of ability, from want of generosity, from want of affection, or from want of memory; but the Lord, so far from failing, does for us exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or even think. This verse is written out of the experience of many who have first of all found the broken reeds of the creature break under them, and have afterwards joyfully found the Lord to be a solid pillar sustaining all their weight.</i>

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And, as we would expect, there is a myriad of Scripture related to this exact same principle:

## Parallel Passages to Psalm 118:8

Scripture	Quotation
Psalm 40:4	How happy is the man who has put his trust in the LORD and has not turned to the proud or to those who run after lies! Notice here that happiness is part of having trust in God rather than in man.
Psalm 62:8	Trust in Him at all times, you people; pour out your hearts before Him. God is our refuge.
Psalm 62:9	Men are only a vapor; exalted men, an illusion. On a balance scale, they go up; together they weigh less than a vapor.
Jer. 17:5-7	This is what the LORD says: Cursed is the man who trusts in mankind, who makes human flesh his strength and turns his heart from the LORD. He will be like a juniper in the Arabah; he cannot see when good comes but dwells in the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land where no one lives. Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, whose confidence indeed is the LORD.
Micah 7:5-7	Do not rely on a friend; don't trust in a close companion. Seal your mouth from the woman who lies in your arms. For a son considers his father a fool, a daughter opposes her mother, and a daughter-in-law is against her mother-in-law; a person's enemies are the people in his own home. But as for me, I will look to the LORD; I will wait for the God of my salvation. My God will hear me.

Now, I know what you are thinking—I have said the same thing over and over again; first with the comments of several exegetes and then with this list of Scripture. You are very perceptive. I want you to recognize that this is not some minor doctrine of moderate importance; this is a principle which must guide our lives.

<sup>29</sup> Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *A Treasury of David*; e-Sword, Psalm 118:8.

However, I do not want you to misapply this. There are many cults out there who isolate you from friends and family and quote passages like these. They go to Jesus and distorts His words, “A man's enemies will be those of his own household.” Let me make this clear: you do not declare war on every person you know after becoming a Christian. You do not isolate yourself from every person that you know after becoming a believer. You do not hook up with some cult, call them your new family, and do whatever they socially intimidate you into doing. That is a complete and total misapplication of Scripture (for which Satan is legend). The last thing that you should be a part of is some cult wherein everyone who ever knew you as an unbeliever now thinks you are a freak (and they are right, by the way).

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**Application:** There are several common characteristics of a cult is a leader who has a strong personality that, apart from this leader (or a very similar replacement), it is unlikely that this cult will exist. The second characteristic is, this cult will determine your behavior, generally through social pressures. Thirdly, much of your behavior will be guided by imitation rather than by principles. Or, if there are principles involved, then they are based upon a few *proof* texts, which are often repeated again and again, always out of context. A fourth characteristic is, *everyone else is wrong; you, in this very small, select cult, has it right*. Or, this cult has a very small number of theologians upon whom they draw (like 2 or 3 at the most). So, yes, you depend and trust in God rather than man; but, no, you do not become some kind of a freak and separate yourself socially from everyone that you have ever known in the past. Furthermore, you cannot separate yourself from historical Christian doctrine. Never ever think that suddenly, you have the truth, 2000 years after our Lord. Do you have any clue as to just how arrogant that is? In fact, any group, denomination or church organization which has just popped up in the past 100–200 years, with doctrines which, essentially, have no historical foundation beyond a few decades (or a couple of centuries) is probably a cult. But, it is even easier to pin this down: if the organization to which you belong adds anything to faith; or, if they tell you that, as a Christian, you are going to automatically act better (otherwise, your faith did not really take); then you belong to an apostate organization. Salvation is by faith alone in Christ alone; everything else is bullcrap.

And one more thing—let me offer this more as a matter of interest than anything else:

### Psalm 118:8 is the Middle Verse of the Bible

*It may perhaps be considered beneath the dignity and solemnity of our subject to remark, that this Psalm 118:8 of this Psalm is the middle verse of the Bible. There are, I believe, 31,174 verses in all, and this is the 15,587<sup>th</sup>. I do not wish, nor would I advise you to occupy your time in counting for yourselves, nor should I indeed have noticed the subject at all, but that I wish to suggest one remark upon it, and that is, that though we may generally look upon such calculations as only laborious idleness, —and they certainly have been carried to the most minute dissection of every part of Scripture, such as to how many times the word “Lord,” the word “God,” and even the word “and,” occurs, —yet I believe that the integrity of the holy volume owes a vast deal to this scruple-weighting of these calculators. I do not say, nor do I think, that they had such motives in their minds; but whatever their reasons were, I cannot but think that there was an overruling Providence in thus converting these trifling and apparently useless investigations into additional guards and fences around the sacred text. —Barton Bouchier*

In the Tanakh, the Psalms is near the end of the Bible, so in the original Hebrew arrangement, this would not be the middle verse. However, in the Greek arrangement, this is, I assume, the center verse of the Old Testament. There is nothing inspired or magic about the arrangement of the books of the Bible.

This is taken from Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *A Treasury of David*; e-Sword, Psalm 118 introduction; he is quoting Barton Bouchier.

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Good to take refuge in Y<sup>e</sup>howah  
from a putting of trust in princes.

Psalms  
118:9

[It is better to take refuge in Y<sup>e</sup>howah  
than [it is] to put [your] trust in rich [and  
successful] ones.

It is better to take refuge in Jehovah  
than it is to put your trust in the rich and successful.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text	Good to take refuge in Y <sup>e</sup> howah from a putting of trust in princes.
Septuagint	Better to hope in the Lord, than to hope in princes.

Significant differences: No significant differences.

#### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV	...including strong leaders.
The Message	Far better to take refuge in GOD than trust in celebrities.
NJB	...better to take refuge in Yahweh than to rely on princes.

#### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™	It is better to depend on the LORD than to trust influential people.
JPS (Tanakh)	It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in the great.

#### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

HCSB	It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in nobles.
Young's Literal Translation	Better to take refuge in Jehovah, Than to trust in princes.

**What is the gist of this verse?** Our dependence should be upon God, not upon those with power or influence.

### Psalm 118:9a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ṭôwb (טוּב) [pronounced toh <sup>b</sup> ŵ]	<i>pleasant, pleasing, agreeable, good, better; approved</i>	masculine singular adjective which acts like a substantive	Strong's #2896 BDB #373
Here, the adjective is used in its comparative sense.			
lâmed (ל) (pronounced l <sup>e</sup> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	directional preposition with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510

### Psalm 118:9a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
châçâh (חָצָאָה) [pronounced <i>khaw-SAW</i> ]	<i>to take refuge, and hence to trust [in]</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #2620 BDB #340
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b<sup>eh</sup></i> ]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
YHWH (יְהוָה) [pronunciation is possibly <i>yhoh-WAH</i> ]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y<sup>e</sup>howah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217

**Translation:** *[It is] better to take refuge in Y<sup>e</sup>howah...* This verse is clearly parallel with the previous verse; the first several words are exactly the same. It is much better for one to take refuge in Jehovah God; it is much better to trust in Him.

### Psalm 118:9b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>min</i> ]	<i>from, off, out from, out of, away from, on account of, since, than, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
bâṭach (בָּטַח) [pronounced <i>baw-TAHKH</i> ]	<i>to trust, to rely upon, to have confidence in, to be secure in</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #982 BDB #105
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b<sup>eh</sup></i> ]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
nâdîyb (נָדִיב) [pronounced <i>naw-DEE<sup>v</sup></i> ]	<i>a noble [person], a noble race [or station]; a prince; an aristocrat</i>	masculine plural noun (also used as an adjective)	Strong's #5081 BDB #622

There is another word often rendered *prince* or *leader*, and that is nâgîyd (נָגִיד) [pronounced *naw-GEED*], which focuses more on the virtues of a prince. Strong's #5057 BDB #617. Our word looks more at the richness of a noble person. *Aristocracy* might be a good rendering of the noun.

**Translation:** *...than [it is] to put [your] trust in rich [and successful] ones.* The alternative to putting one's trust in God, is to put it in those who are rich and successful. Although the words used in 9a and 9b for *trust* are different; it is not clear which one is stronger (although some commentators have claimed that the verb used in 9a is weaker than the one use in 9b).

**Practical application:** Here, *aristocrats* or *those who are rich and successful*, can refer to a huge number of people; this could be your boss; this could be those who are the higher echelon of your company; this can refer to political leaders; this can refer to those who are wealthy and help to fund this charity or that. This is anyone to whom you look up to; your trust in God is far better placed, than in those men whom you admire and look up to.

**Practical application:** I see people with connections to all different kinds of political parties and persuasions get all worked up over an election, or a movement, this bill or that bill, or this initiative or that initiative. Since we live in a democratic society, it is okay to vote; it is okay to be behind this candidate or that; it is okay to be enthusiastic and to even debate your positions with someone else. However, when your candidate gets elected, do not think that the Millennium has suddenly been ushered in; or, when the opposition gets a foothold that it is time to wear sackcloth and to sit on ash heaps. The reactions I heard from liberals when George W. Bush came into office, and the reactions of conservatives prior to this with Bill Clinton were impassioned and heartfelt, but often way too extreme. I've known people who even remarked when Bush was elected, "I just don't know if I can continue living in America any more." It was almost laughable, if these people were not so sincere (the people who made these statements, of course, never took even the first step to actually move).

Let me see if I can approach this a different way: any man with money or with power or with political power also has an old sin nature and also has a lust pattern. They are damaged goods, just as we are. There are times they will give in to their old sin nature, and times when they won't. But, they are not God. These men do not have God's character. They are not perfect righteous; they are not perfectly just. You cannot depend upon them to be fair and not to play favorites. They are fallen men, just as we are. Therefore, we can respect the office and even respect the man in office; but, when it comes to depending upon man or God, you depend upon God. When it comes to character and power, no man can even approach God. Therefore, we are foolish to depend upon any person.

We live in a society, and God deals with this society in a number of ways—God looks at whether there is spiritual regeneration taking place and whether or not spiritual growth is taking place. God looks to see how the missionary activity is going. Now, certainly, God takes an interest in the morality of a society, but that is often more of a reflection of that society's spiritual condition rather than what God deals with directly. Immorality is going to have certain results, just as morality will result in certain things—this will be automatic, even if God is hands off entirely. That is easy to trace with individuals. When someone is cut-throat and dishonest in business, greedy, sexually promiscuous, unfaithful, hateful, and vindictive, then there will be natural results which come with that behavior. God does not even have to step in and do anything.

The constraints of society and individual freedom is a delicate balance. Society or religion or an organization might be able to get Charlie Brown off drugs, and, as a result, Charlie Brown is going to have a better life on this earth. However, this does not guarantee that Charlie Brown will believe in Jesus Christ; and this, therefore, does not insure that Charlie Brown will not spend eternity in the Lake of Fire. What happens in this life is just a drop in the bucket compared to eternity. In the New Testament, things have changed from the Old Testament. Israel had been a Theocracy, a nation ruled by God. However, this is no longer the case; and in the New Testament, there are no patterns for government. We are not told that we need to have a socialistic society where everyone is promised a minimal subsistence; we are not told to have a completely free enterprise system where anything goes. We are not told what kind of a government should be in control. There are no political views espoused and no economic systems recommended. To my way of reading, if the government allows for evangelization and for believers to meet and to learn, that is great. If the government does not, then that is the only area where a believer may disobey the law, as we ought to obey God rather than man.

*Barnes: Even in the most mighty of the human race; in those who of all people may be supposed to have the most ability to aid us; in those whose favor is often sought more than the favor of God. Princes are only men; often as faithless and deceitful as other men; often less reliable in their character than those in more humble life. and in the great matters where we most need aid - in sickness, in danger, in death, in the eternal world - as absolutely powerless as men in the lowest condition of poverty, or in the most humble rank.<sup>30</sup> Clarke: Men of high estate are generally proud, vainglorious, self-confident, and rash: it is better to trust in God than in them. Often they cannot deliver, and often they will not when they can. However, in the concerns of our salvation, and in matters which belong to Providence, they can do nothing.<sup>31</sup> Robert Bellarmine "It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes." David knew that by experience, for he confided in Saul his king, at another time in Achish, the Philistine, at*

<sup>30</sup> Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 118:9.

<sup>31</sup> Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 118:9.

*another time in Ahithophel his own most prudent minister, besides some others; and they all failed him; but he never confided in God without feeling the benefit of it.*<sup>32</sup>

We find an illustration of this principle in Isa. 36. Sennacherib is about to invade Israel and the Rabshakeh is sent ahead to shake up the Israelites. One of Israel's options is to turn to Egypt for assistance, however, even the Rabshakeh, of all men, correctly counsels against this: "Look, you are trusting in Egypt, that splintered reed of a staff, which will enter and pierce the hand of anyone who leans on it. This is how Pharaoh king of Egypt is to all who trust in him" (Isa. 36:6).

I have heard again and again from people who really do not know, who suggest that the Bible is an outdated book with no practical application to today. It was written too long ago to have an impact. This is said by people who are negative and who have no actual basis for their thoughts. They are simply expressing and rationalizing their own negative volition. Since the invention of the printing press, the Bible has been the top-selling book, month after month, year after year. At no time has any book during any month ever outsold the Bible. Yet, people will look you straight in the eye and say with all due sincerity, "The Bible is just some old book, a collection of myths which have no application to today's world."

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Okay, I just have to add this quotation, and file it under...

### Just what the Hell is he Talking About?

"Than to put confidence in princes." Great men's words, said one man, are like dead men's shoes; he may go barefoot that waits for them. —John Trapp\*

\* Taken from Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *A Treasury of David*; e-Sword, Psalm 118 introduction. I updated the comment into modern English, and still don't quite have a clue as to what he is saying. Who is waiting on these shoes, the dead man or some friend of the dead guy?

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## God Delivers the Psalmist in National Disaster

**All gentiles [or, nations] have surrounded me  
in a name of Y<sup>e</sup>howah, that I will cut them off.**

Psalm  
118:10

**All the nations have surrounded me;  
by the name of Y<sup>e</sup>howah, I will cut them off [or,  
cause them to be circumcised].**

**All the nations have surrounded me;  
I will cut them off by Jehovah's name.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

### Ancient texts:

#### Masoretic Text

All gentiles [or, nations] have surrounded me  
in a name of Yehowah, I will cut them off.

#### Peshitta

All nations surrounded me; but in the name of the LORD I will destroy them.

#### Septuagint

All nations compassed me about: but in the name of the Lord I repulsed them.

<sup>32</sup> Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *A Treasury of David*; e-Sword, Psalm 118 introduction; v. 8 (I do not exactly follow why, but under the introduction, there is a great deal of material gathered by Spurgeon which covers other verses).



Significant differences: None which are significant.

### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV	Nations surrounded me, but I got rid of them by the power of the LORD.
The Message	Hemmed in by barbarians, in GOD's name I rubbed their faces in the dirt;...
NAB	All the nations surrounded me; in the LORD's name I crushed them.
NLT	Though hostile nations surrounded me, I destroyed them all in the name of the LORD.

### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™	All the nations surrounded me, but armed with the name of the LORD, I defeated them.
JPS (Tanakh)	All nations have beset me; by the name of the LORD I will surely cut them down. [The meaning of this final verb is uncertain in this verse and the next two].

### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Updated Emphasized Bible	All nations have surrounded me, <In the Name of Yahweh> surely I will circumcise them;... [or, cut them down].
LTHB	All the nations surround me; but surely I will destroy them in the name of Jehovah.
Young's Literal Translation	All nations have compassed me about, In the name of Jehovah I surely cut them off.

**What is the gist of this verse?** The writer says that he is surrounded by nations, and that he will cut them down by the name of Jehovah.

Psalm 118:10a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced koh]	with a plural noun, it is rendered <i>all of; any of</i>	masculine singular construct with a masculine plural noun	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
gôwyîm (גוֹיִם) [pronounced goh-YEEM]	Gentiles, [Gentile] nation, people, peoples, nations	masculine plural noun	Strong's #1471 BDB #156
çâbab (בָּבַב) [pronounced saw <sup>b</sup> - VAH <sup>b</sup> V]	to turn oneself, to go around, to surround, to encompass	3 <sup>rd</sup> person plural, Qal imperfect with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	Strong's #5437 BDB #685

**Translation:** All the nations have surrounded me;... This is a sudden change; the writer is surrounded by Gentile nations, indicating barbaric, godless men. However, I think it is this key which may help to pull the psalm together. We seem to jump from topic to topic, almost randomly; however, the psalm's first 4 verses sets us up for that. The first 4 verses of this psalm appear to give us an outline for the 4 sections of the psalm which follow those verse.

At this point, I am going to suggest a structure for this psalm, which I have not found anywhere else. Although it does fit together to some degree, there are places (e.g., in the third section) where it feels a little forced.

## The Structure of Psalm 118

Psalm 118:1–4	Summary of Next 4 Sections of Psalm 118
Give thanks to Y <sup>e</sup> howah because [He is] good; [and] because His grace [is] forever (v. 1)	vv. 5–9: This is an individual who knows to put his trust in God rather than in God.
Let Israel proclaim, “His grace [is] forever” (v. 2)	vv. 10–14: Israel is surrounded by other nations—they are like a swarm of bees surrounding Israel—and God will deliver Israel (either personified or led by the psalmist).
Let the house of Aaron proclaim, “His grace [is] forever” (v. 3)	vv. 15–18: The house of Aaron refers to the priesthood of Israel (the term <i>Levitical priesthood</i> is a misnomer, as only a small subset of the Levites were actually priests). The priests actually represent all believers, who will have, at some point future from this psalm, access to God. That is, believers will be able to go to God directly—something which was not generally true in the Old Testament (the purpose, by the way, was not simply restrictive, but to better give us a shadow of the good things to come). So, we speak of the <i>tents of the righteous</i> in vv. 15–18, who are believers spawned by being evangelized by the house of Aaron, which represents them.
Let those fearing Y <sup>e</sup> howah say, “His grace [is] forever” (v. 4)	vv. 19–21: Those who fear Jehovah are the mature believers, and they will enter in through the gates of righteousness—and my thinking here is, this refers more to those who are experientially righteous (that is, post salvation).

As I mentioned, the third and fourth sections feel a little forced; and, I must admit that nothing bothers me more than to come across a commentator who gets this bug up his butt (I meant to say, *an idea in his head*) that this is how a psalm should be outlined, and then he forces that psalm into the mold, even though there is little justification for that.

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If this is David writing the psalm, then there is no significant change of topic. He is still speaking of God's grace; he is just looking at it from the perspective of a king. In vv. 5–9, the psalmist could pretty much be any man (or woman) who is a believer. He belongs to God, therefore, what can man do to him. He has enemies, but he is able to observe his enemies from a place of safety and security. He knows that he is better off trusting in God than trusting in man. Then, as the king of Israel and as Israel's commander-in-chief, David goes from his personal and political enemies to his enemies on a larger scale—Israel's enemies. For King David to write this, it is not a great jump in topics—he has gone from personal and political enemies to national enemies. For someone else—even Asaph—to write this, such a change of topics would seem out of place.

Barnes makes a similar comment, but with a caveat: *They surrounded me; they hemmed me in on every side, so that I seemed to have no chance to escape. It would seem from this that the psalm was composed by someone who was at the head of the government, and whose government had been attacked by surrounding nations. This would accord well with many things that occurred in the life of David; but there were also other times in the Jewish history to which it would be applicable, and there is nothing that necessarily confines it to the time of David.*<sup>33</sup> Clarke makes some similar comments: *All nations compassed me about - This is by some supposed to relate to David, at the commencement of*

<sup>33</sup> Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 118:10.

his reign, when all the neighboring Philistine nations endeavored to prevent him from establishing himself in the kingdom. Others suppose it may refer to the Samaritans, Idumeans, Ammonites, and others, who endeavored to prevent the Jews from rebuilding their city and their temple after their return from captivity in Babylon.<sup>34</sup> However, what Barnes and Clarke fail to mention is, the writer of this psalm does not appear to refer to Israel as divided, and uses the name which is applied to the nation of the people of God prior to the division: *Israel*. This would indicate that this psalm is probably written during the monarchies of Saul, David or Solomon. Given that Saul probably wrote no Scripture and that things were relatively peaceful under Solomon, David appears to be the most likely writer.

### Psalm 118:10b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced b <sup>e</sup> h]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
shêm (שֵׁם) [pronounced shame]	<i>name, reputation, character</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #8034 BDB #1027
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly yohh-WAH]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y<sup>e</sup>howah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced kee]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
mûl (מול) [pronounced mool]	<i>to cause to be circumcised; to cause to be cut off; to destroy</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular, Hiphil imperfect with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person plural suffix	Strong's #4135 BDB #557

Most of the time that we find this verb, in its various stems, it means *to circumcise*. In fact, apart from Psalm 58:7 90:6, we might have assumed this meant *to circumcise* in every case. However, this does mean *to cut down* in the Polel, so we may assume it means that here as well. The Polel, by the way, is an intensive stem; and the Hiphil is a causative stem (and this word in the Hiphil is found only in this psalm).

**Translation:** ...by the name of Y<sup>e</sup>howah, I will cut them off [or, cause them to be circumcised]. Rotherham, in the Emphasized Bible, renders the latter portion of this and the next two verses as *surely I will make them be circumcised*. However, bear in mind, the meaning of a verb is determined by its stem in the Hebrew. The Piel and Hiphil stems can be somewhat different from the Qal stem. Furthermore, the meaning of a verb is often determined by its context; therefore, *to cut off* is appropriate in some instances; *to circumcise* is appropriate in others. It goes against God's nature to force us into salvation (which is what circumcision often represents). Salvation is something which we must appropriate from our own freewill. However, Israel had two approaches to the unbelieving heathen—to cut them down or to convert them.

It is quite reasonable that the psalmist took this verb because of its double meaning. There were two approaches to the vicious Gentile; one is to convert them, which is conveyed by the idea of circumcising them (circumcision is not a requirement for salvation; it is indicative of salvation—the circumcised Gentile is one who has believed in Jesus Christ, the God of the Jews). The other approach to the antagonistic Gentile is to cut them off. It is not abnormal in poetry to sometimes say two different things in the same sentence.

<sup>34</sup> Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 118:10.

I should mention that there is no little discussion as to the meaning of this verb: Dr. Kennicott renders *אֶמְלִימָם* *ʾāmīlam*, “I shall disappoint them;” Bishop Horsley, “I cut them to pieces;” Mr. N. Berlin, *repuli eas*, “I have repelled them.” “I will cut them off;” Chaldee. *Ultus sum in eos*, “I am avenged on them;” Vulgate. So the Septuagint.<sup>35</sup> I should add that Keil and Delitzsch call this and the next couple verses hypothetical rather than factual<sup>36</sup> (the psalmist is not really surrounded by Gentile nations, but if he were, then he would cut them off?). No matter what meaning is taken for the verb, this just doesn’t make sense to me.

At least one commentator (Spurgeon) tries to make this verse personal—the psalmist is surrounded by his personal enemies;<sup>37</sup> but this does not really seem to fit with the ones who are surrounding him, which are Goyim—Gentiles nations (e.g., Philistines, Syrians, Ammonites, Moabites). There are several words used for *enemies*, but this is not generally used for a personal enemy. Furthermore, this would make little sense, apart from a scenario where David lived in a Gentile nation (e.g., Gath) where he would be surrounded by Gentiles who are his personal enemies. However, in our study of David’s two trips to Gath, this was not the case. In the first case, he came into town, acted crazy, and left. In the second case, he was given a place to live apart from the Philistines of Gath; and, even though he did go out and wipe out several Gentiles groups, as we noted in our study, David spent a great deal of this time out of fellowship—which means, he is not going to be writing any divinely inspired psalms.

Israel, the nation, has already been mentioned (v. 2); this particular section seems much more suited to a leader of Israel, the nation, as surrounded by Gentile nations who are filled with hatred toward Israel. This is a much better fit than calling these verse hypothetical or treating this as a bunch of personal enemies who just happen to be Gentile. Okay, let’s explore another option: these are personal enemies of the psalmist and he calls them Gentiles, meaning they are negative unbelievers. Now for some people, this is the light at the end of the tunnel—they are surrounded by personal enemies, so they are going to cut them down. That is quite a deal! However, God is not giving us permission here to cut down our personal enemies.

Please allow me to go off on a tangent here: there is nothing wrong with applying logic to Scripture in order to determine what the meaning of a passage is. In fact, one of the biggest problems with many pastor teachers is, they (1) are not filled with the Holy Spirit when they study (so many pastor-teachers have no idea even how to be filled with the Spirit; and (2) they use no logic whatsoever. The logic which I used in the previous two or three paragraphs is known as indirect logic—we make an assumption and then follow this assumption out until it leads us to a conclusion which is clearly false. This indicates that the assumption was wrong. For instance, we made the assumption, *Gentiles here simply is a general term for negative unbelievers who surround the psalmist*. Well, in the second half of the verse, we have the psalmist saying he’s going to cut these Gentiles down. Does God give us permission to wipe out our personal enemies? Of course not; we are to **love our enemies and do good to them who despitefully use us**. God does not give us permission to wipe out our personal enemies. Therefore, taking that approach to this verse leads us to a conclusion which does not match what we know. Now, God does allow for Israel, as a nation, to destroy her enemies, and specifically requires her to do so. So, you see how one fits and one does not?

Despite the difficulties with this verb, our conclusions as to who the Gentile nations are tells us that the psalmist here is not simply some Joe Schmo who has a job at McDonald’s in downtown Ramah sweeping the floors and policing the parking lot. This is a man with great power, as he speaks of cutting off the Gentile nations which surround him. At the very least, this is a soldier—probably a general—and more than likely, this psalm is written by a king—and probably by David (refer back to **Arguments which Favor David as the Author of Psalm 118**). Although this is not necessarily an argument which unequivocally determines that David is the author, it is, nevertheless, a strong argument in favor of Davidic authorship. When we get into the second half of the book of Samuel, we will find that David successfully battles Philistines (2Sam. 5:17–6:1); Moabites, Syrians and others (2Sam. 6:2–18); Ammonites and Syrians (2Sam. 10); and Ammonites (David had more than one major war against some of these people—2Sam. 12:26–31).

<sup>35</sup> From Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 118:10. From Dr. Kennicott on is a quotation; however, because of the Hebrew, I did not italicize it. I also added in the vowel points for the Hebrew.

<sup>36</sup> Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Psalm 118:1–18.

<sup>37</sup> Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *A Treasury of David*; e-Sword, Psalm 118:10.

**Application:** Bear in mind that we are in the Old Testament, and there was a special relationship between God and the nation Israel. There were times when God required Israel to cut down specific groups of people, whose degeneracy had reached a point of no return. We are not a nation with these same specific commands by God. We will engage in war now and again, and it is proper to support our nation in this way; but we, as a nation, have not received direct commands from God to destroy this or that nation. You, as a believer, have not received any direct commands from God to destroy this or that person. That is not the urging of God, but psychosis or demon-influence (like Saul was under).

**Application:** You will notice that *Christianity* is more often associated with vicious and violent behavior more than other religions (although, as of late, Islam has come into its own when it comes to hatred and vicious attacks on those they do not like). Satan needs to discredit Christianity; therefore, many psychos and fanatics who kill their families, kill abortion doctors, or kill whoever else they don't like (e.g., the famous witch trials of Salem) are often associated with Christianity. These people are not necessarily believers (although some might be); but they are certainly under demon influence (and, in some cases, possession). We have seen how Saul suddenly will get a little crazy and go after David—and we are told that he is demon-influenced (1 Sam. 16:23 18:10)—we have people here and now whose behavior is similar (I am thinking of Andrea Yates who killed her children and attributed this to saving these children from going to hell, as she was killing them at a young age). We have recently had the Branch Davidians, a cultic offshoot of the 7<sup>th</sup> Day Adventist (which is another Christian cult) who were willing to die in a standoff against the FBI. People who read and hear about this—particularly unbelievers—think to themselves that this is just another group of crazy Christians. They do not see the demonic influence.

Now, I have mentioned radical Islam—why would Satan influence this group, since he would rather discredit Christianity? Through this group, Satan can militarily attack a client nation<sup>38</sup> to God. Let me be prophetic here, for a moment. There are several nations which are outright antagonistic toward the US—North Korea and Iran for instance. Even though neither of these nations will probably never directly attack us, once they develop nuclear capabilities, then they will very likely sell these to Islamic terrorists who will, in turn, use them against the US (as long as these terrorist groups are able to put together the funding to make such a purchase). In this way, Satan can wipe out thousands, if not millions, of believers, and severely disrupt missionary activity.

**Application:** That being said, does this mean you need to become actively involved in conservative politics in order to stave off this threat? Not necessarily; and, in most cases, *no*. This is spiritual warfare. No matter which faction in government chooses to take aggressive action against military Islam factions, that will not necessarily stave off such an attack. God is in control. As a believer, your primary focus should be upon the Word of God; spiritual growth. You need to stay in fellowship and you need to grow spiritually. The influence of one mature believer who prays on behalf of our nation is much greater than ten immature believers who are heavily involved in US politics.

**Application:** Now you may ask, *what about David? Wasn't he a mature believer? Was he not the king of Israel?* Absolutely; and, there may be times when a mature believer may hold high office in the United States (although this is tragically difficult). The difference is, David lived in the Age of Israel; we live in the Church Age. Not only was Israel a client nation in those days, but it was a theocracy—a nation ruled by God. Therefore, what occurred in Israel then is much different than what we have today. During the Age of Israel, we had a small percentage of believers who were empowered by God the Holy Spirit. These believers led notable lives, had direct communication with God at times, and their actions are recorded in history for us. We live in an age where every believer's life counts. Every believer can potentially be filled with God the Holy Spirit. Every believer can potentially have a spiritual impact. Do you grasp just how different that is? You might have the most menial job there is, so far detached from political power that your individual political influence is nil. However, what counts is your spiritual impact, not your political influence. God is going to look out for a city with a dozen or so mature believers. He may not be as protective of a city where there are believers, but only a small handful are mature. Jesus Christ controls history. Whether the candidates you voted for are in office or not has very little impact. As I write this, George W. Bush, a believer, is president. He has a number of good ideas which he is attempting to put into law. This does

<sup>38</sup> This is a term coined by R. B. Thieme Jr.; a *client nation* is closely associated with Christianity: many of its citizens are believers; doctrine is freely taught; and the nation often sends out missionaries to other countries. Client nations often are safe havens for Jews as well.

not mean that, our focus should be on vigorously supporting everything that Bush does. There is graft and corruption in politics; and, whereas I believe that Bush is sincere, this does not mean that this graft and corruption cannot be found even in the upper echelon of those in Bush's cabinet. Since bills go through the Congress, a bill can be passed which appears to model Bush's ideals, but its end result is something which is grossly corrupted. The key is the spiritual condition of the nation; not how many great ideas that George Bush comes up with. He could be the greatest president of all time with the greatest agenda ever seen; and all of this could result in an even more corrupt system than we have now—because the key is not politics, but the spiritual maturity of the citizens of the United States.

**Application:** Let me give you an example of a good idea that has become corrupted. There is nothing wrong with a nation which takes care of its sick, poor and helpless. That part of our budget is spent to keep a certain segment of our population from dying of starvation and disease is admirable. However, what we actually have nowadays is a voting block paid for by our taxes. Women in the past were much more careful about the men that they associated with. It was not to a woman's benefit to carry on a relationship with a man who could not be trusted or a man who was lazy and indigent. That is no longer the case. Women today will breed with anyone and, no matter what the status of the man, the government will take care of them. They do not have to think about whether this man has integrity or not because the government will up the slack for the husband/father/boyfriend who lacks personal integrity and responsibility. Some factions of our government do not necessarily want to move these women out of welfare, because, they lose their votes if they do. There is a huge voting block of those who collect some sort of subsistence from the government; and, whomever they associate favorably with this subsistence, they will vote for. This is why, even though a large number of Blacks are Christian and the Republican party is seen as the party of the Christian right, the majority of Blacks will vote democratic, even though many Democrats are legislatively antagonistic toward Christianity. Their vote has been bought and paid for. There is absolutely no motivation for a Democrat politician to make a person on welfare more self-sufficient. There is no motivation for them to break the cycle of welfare mothers having daughters who become welfare mothers. So, on the one hand, it is admirable when a nation supports those who cannot support themselves; however, in our nation, this has become a voting bloc for the Democratic party—a voting bloc of many who have the ability to be self-sufficient—however, there is no motivation to make them self-sufficient.

**Application:** One thing which is lacking in the New Testament is an ideal political system or a systematic approach to one's political environment. Although in recent history, we have the great Athenian democracy, we do not find Paul extolling the virtues of democracy in the New Testament. We do not find Paul suggesting that the state take care of it indigent and helpless (although, this might be arguably a possible characteristic of a client nation).

I've certainly gone off on a series of tangents, haven't I?

**They have surrounded me,  
also, they have surrounded me;  
in a name of Yehowah, that I will cut them off.**

Psalm  
118:11

**They have surrounded me;  
yea, they have surrounded me!  
I will cut them off in the name of Y<sup>e</sup>howah.**

**These Gentile nations have indeed surrounded me;  
but I will cut them off in Jehovah's name.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

##### Masoretic Text

They have surrounded me,  
also, they have surrounded me;  
in a name of Yehowah, that I will cut them off.

##### Septuagint

They completely compassed me about: but in the name of the Lord I repulsed them.

##### Significant differences:

No significant differences.



**Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:**

CEV	They attacked from all sides, but I got rid of them by the power of the LORD.
The Message	Hemmed in and with no way out, in GOD's name I rubbed their faces in the dirt;...
NLT	Yes, they surrounded and attacked me, but I destroyed them all in the name of the LORD.

**Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):**

God's Word™	They surrounded me. Yes, they surrounded me, but armed with the name of the LORD, I defeated them.
JPS (Tanakh)	They beset me, they surround me; by the name of the LORD I will surely cut them down.

**Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**

Updated Emphasized Bible	The have surrounded me, yea, they are all around me, In the Name of Yahweh> I will surely make them be circumcised [or, I will cut them down].
LTHB	They surround me; yea, they surround me; I surely will destroy them in the name of Jehovah.
Young's Literal Translation	They have compassed me about, Yea, they have compassed me about, In the name of Jehovah I surely cut them off.

**What is the gist of this verse?** The psalmist claims emphatically that he is surrounded, and emphatically says that he will cut them off.

Psalm 118:11a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
çâbab (בָּבַב) [pronounced saw <sup>b</sup> -VAH <sup>b</sup> V]	to turn oneself, to go around, to surround, to encompass	3 <sup>rd</sup> person plural, Qal imperfect with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	Strong's #5437 BDB #685
gam (גַּם) [pronounced gahm]	also, furthermore, in addition to, even, moreover	adverb	Strong's #1571 BDB #168
çâbab (בָּבַב) [pronounced saw <sup>b</sup> -VAH <sup>b</sup> V]	to turn oneself, to go around, to surround, to encompass	3 <sup>rd</sup> person plural, Qal imperfect with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	Strong's #5437 BDB #685

**Translation:** They have surrounded me; yea, they have surrounded me! The psalmist is being very emphatic and dramatic at this point; these Gentile nations that he spoke of have surrounded him; and again, they have surrounded him. As has been thoroughly discussed in the previous verse, these are not simply personal enemies or unbelievers, but these are national enemies and heathen. It is very much like Israel today.

Barnes comments: *The sentiment and the language of the previous verse are here repeated, as if to give force to what he had said, or to deepen the impression. His own mind dwelt upon it, and the events to which he referred came so vividly to his recollection, and were so important, that he dwells upon them. The subject was worth more than a passing remark.*<sup>39</sup> Gill: *Which is repeated not only for the*

<sup>39</sup> Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 118:11.

confirmation of, it, but to denote the frequency and fury of their attacks, and their obstinate persisting therein.<sup>40</sup>

### Psalm 118:11b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
shêm (שם) [pronounced shame]	<i>name, reputation, character</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #8034 BDB #1027
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly yohoh-WAH]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y<sup>e</sup>howah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
kîy (כי) [pronounced kee]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
mûl (מול) [pronounced mool]	<i>to cause to be circumcised; to cause to be cut off; to destroy</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular, Hiphil imperfect with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person plural suffix	Strong's #4135 BDB #557

Most of the time that we find this verb, in its various stems, it means *to circumcise*. In fact, apart from Psalm 58:7 90:6, we might have assumed this meant *to circumcise* in every case. However, this does mean *to cut down* in the Polel, so we may assume it means that here as well. The Polel, by the way, is an intensive stem; and the Hiphil is a causative stem (and this word in the Hiphil is found only in this psalm).

**Translation:** I will cut them off in the name of Y<sup>e</sup>howah. And again, the psalmist tells us that he will cut these nations off. We do not have permission to cut off personal enemies; however, we may cut off national enemies.

Gill: [This] is repeated to show the strength of his faith, and the continuance of it, notwithstanding his numerous enemies, and their violent efforts against him.<sup>41</sup>

<p><b>They have surrounded me like bees; they were extinguished like a fire of thorns; in a name of Y<sup>e</sup>howah that I will cut them off.</b></p>	<p>Psalm 118:12</p>	<p><b>Like bees, they have surrounded me; like a fire of thorns, they are burned up [or, destroyed]; [it is] by the name of Y<sup>e</sup>howah that I cut them off.</b></p>
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**Just like a swarm of bees, they surrounded me;  
however, they will burn up like dried thorns,  
and in Jehovah's name, I will cut them down.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

<sup>40</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 118:11.

<sup>41</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 118:11.

Masoretic Text	They have surrounded me like bees; they were extinguished like a fire of thorns; in a name of Y <sup>e</sup> howah that I will cut them off.
Septuagint	They compassed me about as bees do a honeycomb, and they burst into flame as fire among thorns: but in the name of the Lord I repulsed them.

Significant differences: I don't know that there is a difference between the Greek and Hebrew. It is probably more a matter of interpretation which accounts for the differences between the Greek and Hebrew (as was discussed in great detail in v. 10).

#### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV	They swarmed around like bees, but by the power of the LORD, I got rid of them and their fiery sting.
The Message	Like swarming bees, like wild prairie fire, they hemmed me in; in GOD's name I rubbed their faces in the dirt.
NLT	They swarmed around me like bees; they blazed against me like a roaring flame. But I destroyed them all in the name of the LORD.

#### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™	They swarmed around me like bees, but they were extinguished like burning thornbushes. So armed with the name of the LORD, I defeated them.
JPS (Tanakh)	They have beset me like bees; they shall be extinguished like burning thorns; by the name of the LORD I will surely cut them down.

#### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Updated Emphasized Bible	They have surrounded me like wax bees, They have blazed up like the fire of thorns, <In the Name of Yahweh> I will surely cause them to be circumcised [or, I will cut them down].
HCSB	They surrounded me like bees; they were extinguished like a fire among thorns; in the name of the LORD I destroyed them.
LTHB	They surround me like bees; they are quenched like the fire of thorns; for surely I will cut them off in the name of Jehovah.
NRSV	They surrounded me like bees; they blazed [Greek; Hebrew: <i>were extinguished</i> ] like a fire of thorns, in the name of the LORD I cut them off!
Young's Updated LT	They compassed me about as bees, They have been extinguished as a fire of thorns, In the name of Jehovah I surely cut them off.

**What is the gist of this verse?** The enemies of the psalmist surround him like bees. It appears as though they will burn up as quickly as thorn bushes (although that is not clear). And the psalmist repeats that he will cut them off, but this time in the name of Jehovah.

## Psalm 118:12a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
çâbab (בָּבַב) [pronounced saw <sup>b</sup> -VAH <sup>B</sup> V]	<i>to turn oneself, to go around, to surround, to encompass</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person plural, Qal imperfect with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	Strong's #5437 BDB #685
kaph or k <sup>e</sup> (כ) [pronounced 'k <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>like, as, according to; about, approximately</i>	preposition of comparison or approximation	No Strong's # BDB #453
d <sup>e</sup> bôwrâh (הַבֹּרָה) [pronounced d <sup>eb</sup> -voh-RAW],	<i>bee</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #1682 BDB #184

**Translation:** *Like bees, they have surrounded me;...* The nations of the middle east surrounded the psalmist, threatening the existence of Israel. Again, this sounds more like a nation crisis than a personal one; something spoken by a man of high rank, but of circumstances which threaten the nation of Israel.

Bees, as an image, are used here to signify (1) their large number; (2) their irritation factor; (3) the difficulty of getting away from them.

This might be a good time to turn to an actual encounter with some nasty bees.

### An Account of a Bee Attack

"They compassed me about like bees." Now, as the north-east wind of course was adverse to any north-east progress, it was necessary that the boat should be towed by the crew. As the rope was being drawn along through the grass on the banks it happened that it disturbed a swarm of bees. In a moment, like a great cloud, they burst upon the men who were dragging; everyone of them threw himself headlong into the water and hurried to regain the boat. The swarm followed at their heels, and in a few seconds filled every nook and cranny of the deck. What a scene of confusion ensued may readily be imagined.

Without any foreboding of ill, I was arranging my plants in my cabin, when I heard all around me a scampering which I took at first to be merely the frolics of my people, as that was the order of the day. I called out to enquire the meaning of the noise, but only got excited gestures and reproachful looks in answer. The cry of "Bees! bees!" soon broke upon my ear, and I proceeded to light a pipe. My attempt was entirely in vain; in an instant bees in thousands are about me, and I am mercilessly stung all over my face and hands. To no purpose do I try to protect my face with a handkerchief, and the more violently I fling my hands about, so much the more violent becomes the impetuosity of the irritated insects. The maddening pain is now on my cheek, now in my eye, now in my hair. The dogs from under my bed burst out frantically, overturning everything in their way. Losing well nigh all control over myself, I fling myself into the river; I dive down, but all in vain, for the stings rain down still upon my head. Not heeding the warnings of my people, I creep through the reedy grass to the swampy bank. The grass lacerates my hands, and I try to gain the mainland, hoping to find shelter in the woods. All at once four powerful arms seize me and drag me back with such force that I think I must be choked in the mud. I am compelled to go back on board, and flight is not to be thought of.... I felt ready, in the evening, for an encounter with half a score of buffaloes or a brace of lions rather than have anything more to do with bees; and this was a sentiment in which all the ship's company heartily concurred.

I found this in Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *A Treasury of David*; e-Sword, Psalm 118 introduction; he took it from George Schweinfurth, *The Heart of Africa*, 1873.

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)[Return to the Chart and Map Index](#)**Psalm 118:12b**

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
dâ'ak <sup>e</sup> (דָּאָךְ) [pronounced daw-GAHK]	<i>to go out, to be extinguished</i> when speaking of a lamp; <i>to be made extinct, to dry up</i> when used of a torrent; <i>to be destroyed, to be wiped out</i> when speaking of assailants	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Pual imperfect	Strong's #1846 BDB #200
The <b>Pual</b> is the passive of the Piel (intensive) stem and likewise emphasizes an accomplished state.			
kaph or k <sup>e</sup> (כּ) [pronounced k <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>like, as, according to; about, approximately</i>	preposition of comparison or approximation	No Strong's # BDB #453
`esh (עֵשׂ) [pronounced aysh]	<i>fire, lightening, supernatural fire; presence of Y<sup>e</sup>howah, the attendance of a theophany</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #784 BDB #77
qôwts (קִנְיָן) [pronounced kohls]	<i>thorns; used collectively for thorn bushes, thorns, briers</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #6975 BDB #881

**Translation:** ...like a fire of thorns, they are burned up [or, destroyed];... The exact meaning of the words is a little difficult, although you may not get why at first. When you extinguish a fire, then there is something left. So, are we speaking of the complete destruction of Israel's enemies here, or do we have remnants remaining because the fire which engulfed them was extinguished? Furthermore, this is an analogy; Israel's enemies are like thorns on fire which have been extinguished. Are there thorns left as the fire is extinguished? Or are the thorns completely destroyed? The way it reads here, is the fire itself is extinguished, which means there are remnants of the briers which remain.

Another interpretation, which is a little less literal, but quite likely, is that they burn up (are destroyed) as dried thorns burn up. This would indicate that their destruction is quick and thorough.

Barnes appears to agree with my latter interpretation, writing: *The Septuagint and the Vulgate render this, "They burn as the fire of thorns." The connection would seem to demand this, but the Hebrew will not bear it. The figure is changed in the Hebrew, as is not uncommon. The mind of the psalmist at first recalls the number and the malignity of his foes; it then instantly adverts to the rapid manner in which they were destroyed. The illustration from the "fire of thorns" is derived from the fact that they quickly kindle into a blaze, and then the flame soon dies away. In Eastern countries it was common to burn over their fields in the dry time of the year, and thus to clear them of thorns and briars and weeds. Of course, at such a time they would kindle quickly, and burn rapidly, and would soon be consumed. So the psalmist says it was with his enemies. He came upon them, numerous as they were, as the fire runs over a field in a dry time, burning everything before it.*<sup>42</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 118:12.

## Psalm 118:12c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
b <sup>e</sup> (בֵּ) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
shēm (שֵׁם) [pronounced shame]	<i>name, reputation, character</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #8034 BDB #1027
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly yohoh-WAH]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y<sup>e</sup>howah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced kee]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
mûwl (מול) [pronounced mool]	<i>to cause to be circumcised; to cause to be cut off; to destroy</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular, Hiphil imperfect with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person plural suffix	Strong's #4135 BDB #557

**Translation:...** *[it is] by the name of Y<sup>e</sup>howah that I cut them off.* Again, by the name of Jehovah, the psalmist cuts off his enemies, which indicates, as I have said, that he is more than just some Joe Schmo—most likely, this is written by a general/king—and, very likely, this is David writing this psalm.

In case your interested, we have similar images found in Homer's Iliad. The following is from Clarke's commentary,<sup>43</sup> which he took from Dr. Delaney. I offer this up as a matter of interest, rather than an exegetical point. I found the name *Pope* occurring several times, so I am assuming that he made the English translation which Delaney uses.

### The Iliad Borrows from Scripture?

Source	Quotation
Clarke	I shall refer to Dr. Delaney's note on this passage. The reader has here in miniature two of the finest images in Homer; which, if his curiosity demands to be gratified, he will find illustrated and enlarged,
Iliad ii., ver. 86.	Επεσσευοντο δε λαοι. Ηύτε εθνεα εισι μελισσων αδιων, Πετρης εκ γλαφυρης αιει νεον ερχομενων, Βοτρυδον δε πετονται επ' ανθεσιν ειαρinoισιν, Αί εν τ' ενθα ἄλις πεποτηται, αί δε τε ανθα Ὡς των εθνεα πολλα νεων απο και κλισιαων Ηίνονος προπταροιθε βαθειης εστιχωντο Ιλαδον εις αγορην

<sup>43</sup> Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 118:12.



The Iliad Borrows from Scripture?	
Source	Quotation
Pope's Translation	The following host, Poured forth by thousands, darkens all the coast. As from some rocky cleft the shepherd sees, Clustering in heaps on heaps, the driving bees, Rolling and blackening, swarms succeeding swarms, With deeper murmurs and more hoarse alarms: Dusky they spread a close embodied crowd, And o'er the vale descends the living cloud; So from the tents and ships a lengthening train Spreads all the beach, and wide o'ershades the plain; Along the region runs a deafening sound; Beneath their footsteps groans the trembling ground.
Clarke	The other image, the fire consuming the thorns, we find in the...
Iliad ii., ver. 455	Ηύτε πυρ αἰδηλον επιφλεγει ασπτετον ύλην, Ουρεος εν κορυφης έκαθεν δε τε φαινεται αυγη Ώς των ερχομενων, απο χαλκου θεσπτεσιοιο Αιγλη παμφανωσα δι' αιθερος ουρανον ίκεν.
Pope's Translation	As on some mountain, through the lofty grove, The crackling flames ascend and blaze above; The fires expanding, as the winds arise, Shoot their long beams, and kindle half the skies; So, from the polished arms, and brazen shields, A gleamy splendor flashed along the fields.
Clarke	The arms resembling a gleaming fire is common both to the psalmist and Homer; but the idea of that fire being quenched when the army was conquered, is peculiar to the psalmist.

On the other hand, the similarities could certainly be coincidental. We are not dealing with obscure symbols.

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**Pushing down, you pushed me down to fall  
and Y<sup>e</sup>howah helped me.**

Psalm  
118:13

**You [violently] thrust me down [lit., *pushing*,  
*you pushed me down*] to fall [or, to die]  
but Y<sup>e</sup>howah helped me.**

**You violently [tried to] push me down in order to make me fall,  
but Jehovah helped me.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Latin Vulgate

Being pushed I was overturned that I might fall: but the Lord supported me.

Masoretic Text	Pushing down, you pushed me down to fall and Yehowah helped me.
Peshitta	I have been repelled that I might be overthrown and fall; but the LORD helped me.
Septuagint	I was thrust, and sorely shaken, that I might fall: but the Lord helped me.

Significant differences: Although there is a difference in the addition of a phrase in the Greek, I believe that it was added as a matter of interpretation of the doubling of the verb found in the Hebrew. There is also a difference in the person of the first verb. The Greek, Syriac and Latin all have the 1<sup>st</sup> person singular; the Hebrew has the 2<sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular. It is not unusual in the psalms for there to be a change of case now and again.

#### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV	Their attacks were so fierce that I nearly fell, but the LORD helped me.
The Message	I was right on the cliff-edge, ready to fall, when GOD grabbed and held me.
NLT	You did your best to kill me, O my enemy, but the LORD helped me.
REB	They thrust hard against me so that I nearly fell, but in the LORD's name I drove them off. [ <b>They:</b> compare Greek; Hebrew: You]. This is a problem with the REB footnotes. Even though it sounds as if the Greek reads <i>they</i> , it does not (the REB does not state that the Greek reads this way; but the casual reader may not really catch that).
TEV	I was fiercely attacked and was being defeated, but the LORD helped me.

#### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

<i>God's Word™</i>	They pushed hard to make me fall, but the LORD helped me.
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#### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

HCSB	You pushed me hard to make me fall, but the LORD helped me.
LTHB	Pushing, you pushed me to fall; but Jehovah helped me.
WEB	You pushed me back hard, to make me fall, But Yahweh helped me.
<i>Young's Updated LT</i>	You have sorely thrust me to fall, And Jehovah has helped me.

**What is the gist of this verse?** The enemy of the psalmist pushes the psalmist down, with the purpose of making them fall; Jehovah God helps the psalmist.

Psalm 118:13a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
dâchah (דָּחָה) [pronounced daw-KHAW]	to push, to thrust, to push violently, to throw down	Qal infinitive absolute	Strong's #1760 BDB #190
dâchah (דָּחָה) [pronounced daw-KHAW]	to push, to thrust, to push violently, to throw down	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	Strong's #1760 BDB #190

### Psalm 118:13a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
The Septuagint, Latin Vulgate and Peshitta all have a 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular, passive verb, and read <i>I was pushed</i> . The Hebrew has the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, although it is not clear to whom it refers.			
lâmed (ל) (pronounced <sup>l</sup> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	directional preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
nâphal (נָפַל) [pronounced <i>naw-FAHL</i> ]	<i>to fall, to lie, to die a violent death, to be brought down, to settle, to sleep deeply</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #5307 BDB #656

**Translation:** You [violently] thrust me down [lit., pushing, you pushed me down] to fall [or, to die]... Interestingly enough, the verb is now in the masculine singular (2<sup>nd</sup> person), which certainly could refer to just one nation; however, it sounds much more personal than that. Suddenly, we have gone from a national crisis and Gentiles surrounding Israel, to what appears to be a personal attack against the psalmist. The Qal infinitive construct with the lâmed preposition indicates a purpose or objective, but not necessarily one which has been reached. That is, the person referred to here in this verse attempted to push the psalmist down (not necessarily physically, but, for instance, to remove him from power or to attack his wealth or station in life); the intention was to make the psalmist fall.

The doubling of the verb and the changing to the 2<sup>nd</sup> person, brings an immediacy to this incident in the psalmist's mind. Barnes: *The psalmist, as it were, sees the enemy again before him, and addresses him as if he were present. Everything is vivid to the mind; the whole scene appears again to pass before him.*<sup>44</sup> We have spoken of authorship, and this sounds so much like David looking in retrospect to Saul's many attacks against him. At the same time, since there is no mention of an author, this could stand in for any believer under attack (and attacks come from believers and unbelievers both).

In being thrown down, there could be a number of purposes in the mind of the enemy, according to the intensification of the verb. For some Arab groups, there is nothing more they would like to see than Israel ejected from that postage stamp of a land-holding, to a state of complete homelessness and despair. For antagonistic co-workers, they may want more than to get you fired from your job; they may seek to ruin your career. An enemy in more want more than your death, but to see you suffer as well. As Jesus progressed further towards the cross, His enemies sought more than simple execution; their desire was to inflict as much pain upon Him as humanly possible.

### Psalm 118:13b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly <i>yhoh-WAH</i> ]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y<sup>e</sup>howah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217

<sup>44</sup> Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 118:13.

## Psalms 118:13b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿāzar (עָזַר) [pronounced <i>gaw-ZAHR</i> ]	<i>to help, to aid</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	Strong's #5826 BDB #740

**Translation:** ...but Y<sup>e</sup>howah helped me. No matter what the psalmist's enemy tried, the helper of the psalmist is God. God can counteract any sort of attack. We see a very similar theme reoccur in several of the Davidic psalms: Psalm 18:17–18: *He rescued me from my powerful enemy and from those who hated me, for they were too strong for me. They confronted me in the day of my distress, but the LORD was my support.* Psalm 56:1–3: *Be gracious to me, God, for man tramples me; he fights and oppresses me all day long. My adversaries trample me all day, for many arrogantly fight against me. When I am afraid, I will trust in You.*

I hope that you also notice that we have a second repetition of verbs here; the verb *to help* was found earlier as a Qal active participle, referring to God. There is an interlacing throughout this psalm, connection one section to the next.

**Application:** Part of your life, no matter what, is going to include people who will attack you; people who will try to bring you down. I ran into this on several occasions, and, in their minds, they may have felt that they prevailed; however, God has helped me; God has taken care of the problem. They have pushed against me with all of their strength, with the intention that I would fall, and I have never fallen. In your life, you will have those who attack you and, in many cases, it will appear as though they have won. You don't need to be mad at them, you don't need to talk behind their backs or verbally attack them; you do not need to plan revenge tactics. When it comes to your enemies, who do you want to deal with them? Do you think that you, as weak as you are, in the midst of the devil's world, will have any kind of chance against your enemies, who might be demonically influenced? That's doubtful. At best, you might enjoy some kind of revenge while being taken down to their level. Or would you rather let God take care of the situation? You may or may not observe God take care of your problems. I know of four people who became my enemies in two different places; in two cases, I know that they got knocked on their butts after I was gone; in the other two cases, I have no idea. However, it is not anything I need to worry about; when I walked away, they were in God's hands subject to His wishes. I have full assurances that they would be dealt with. You will face the same things. You will face injustices; there will be people who have a dislike for you, who have a grudge against you, and they will look to bring you down in any way possible. They might plan for years as to how to do this. You do not need to worry about it; you do your job as unto the Lord; you work as if working for Jesus Christ. Their plotting and subterfuge is not something you need to be involved in. I have had many situations which were difficult, and there were times I could barely see light at the end of the tunnel; but, once I came out of it, I could see that things were better, that God's timing was perfect, and that, even though sometimes I failed the test and sometimes I passed with a D -, I could always see God's hand in the process and I could always see that the situation was worked out for the best.

**Application:** You will face vicious personal enemies and there are times that you will call out to God for relief. Bear in mind that God may solve the situation in a way which might not be your particular choice. God may have an end result which is something that you had not really counted on. You simply have to allow God the room to work; do not try to manipulate things to an end that you see as best. You manipulation, at best, will delay God's conclusion to the matter.

**My strength and [my] song [is] Yah;  
and so He is to me for salvation.**

Psalms  
118:14

**Yah [is] my strength and [my] song;  
He is also my salvation [lit., for me to  
salvation].**

**Jehovah is both my strength and my song;  
He has also become my salvation.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

**Ancient texts:**

Masoretic Text	My strength and [my] song [is] Yah; and so He is to me for salvation.
Septuagint	The Lord is my strength and my song, and is become my salvation.
Significant differences:	None.

**Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:**

CEV	My power and my strength come from the LORD, and he has saved me. Although the CEV is very accurate in its doctrine, it often distorts the translation in order to simplify a verse. The problem here is, they lose half the meaning of this verse; God is the power and strength of the psalmist; but God is also the <i>song</i> of the psalmist.
The Message	GOD's my strength, he's also my song, and now he's my salvation.
NAB	The LORD, my strength and might, came to me as savior.
NLT	The LORD is my strength and my song; he has become my victory.
REB	The LORD is my refuge and defence, and he has become my deliverer.
TEV	The LORD makes me powerful and strong; he has saved me.

**Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):**

God's Word™	The LORD is my strength and my song. He is my savior.
JPS (Tanakh)	The LORD is my strength and might [others, <i>song</i> ]; He has become my deliverance.

**Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**

Updated Emphasized Bible	<My might and melody> is Yah, And He has become mine by salvation.
ESV	The LORD is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation.
Young's Literal Translation	My strength and song is Jah, And He is to me for salvation.

**What is the gist of this verse?** God is the strength and song of the psalmist; God is the One Who delivers the psalmist.

## Psalm 118:14a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿôz (עֹז) [pronounced <i>gohz</i> ]	<i>strength, might; firmness, defense, refuge, protection; splendor, majesty, glory praise</i>	masculine singular noun with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	Strong's #5797 BDB #738
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
zim <sup>e</sup> râth (זִמְרָה) [pronounced <i>zim-RAWTH</i> ]	<i>song; metonym for the object of song (or praise)</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #2176 BDB #274
We would expect to find the yodh at the end of this word, indicating a 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix.			
It is possible that this is equivalent to Strong's #2172 BDB #274, which is spelled zim <sup>e</sup> râh (זִמְרָה) [pronounced <i>zim-RAW</i> ], and which means <i>song, melody</i> .			
Yâh (יְהוָה) [pronounced <i>yaw</i> ]	an abbreviated form of YHWH, the proper name for God in the Old Testament	proper masculine noun	Strong's #3050 BDB #219

**Translation:** *Yah [is] my strength and [my] song;...* Most of us are well-aware that God, at least in theory, is our strength (for some people, this is strictly theory). However, God is also our song—this means, our joy. The Christian life is not necessarily a life of all difficulties and pain; God has designed the Christian way of life to be enjoyable as well.

I was a teacher for many years, and I observed something in the students: those students who were hedonistic—those who took drugs, drank to excess, were involved in pre-marital sex—these were the least happy of my students. That is, those who pursued pleasure seemed to have the least amount of pleasure in their lives. They were often surly, uncooperative, and very unhappy. Now, you might say, but once they got to the party they were okay, right? Not always. Many of them, when they would go to a party where they could indulge themselves, they would often get into fights, which is certainly not a sign of a person enjoying himself. On the other hand, those students who worked hard at academics (or sports or extra-curricular activities), those who had some self-discipline, those who were willing to forgo immediate gratification—these students were often the happiest, easiest to work with, and the most enthusiastic. You do not find pleasure necessarily by pursuing pleasure. You do not find happiness by pursuing happiness. God has a code of behavior that, when followed, results in people who are happier and better adjusted to life. Even the unbeliever can take these principles and incorporate them into his life, and end up a happier person for it.

I have heard the argument, *you might waste you entire life as a Christian, die, and find out that it was all wrong*. The implication is, of course, that, as a believer, you must forgo all of these pleasures and therefore, lose out on all of the happiness that you could have had. Given what I have observed in others, this is poppycock. You cannot find happiness by pursuing pleasure. Even if Christianity were completely wrong and false, a person who follows Christian principles is much more likely to be happy than one who does not.



## Psalm 118:14b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa or va (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, and then, then, and</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i> ]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
lâmed (ל) (pronounced <i>l</i> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	directional preposition with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
lâmed (ל) (pronounced <i>l</i> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	directional preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
y <sup>e</sup> shûw'âh (יְשׁוּעָה) [pronounced <i>y<sup>e</sup>shoo-GAW</i> ]	<i>deliverance, salvation</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #3444 BDB #447

**Translation:** ...*He is also my salvation* [lit., *for me to salvation*]. The literal construction here is somewhat difficult. We have two lâmed prepositions here, both with different functions. In fact, the second lâmed preposition is rather difficult to understand, and most translators ignore it. In any case, Jesus Christ is our deliverer; both for the most important thing, to be delivered from the penalty that we deserve for our sins; and for the day to day things of our lives.

Salvation, by the way, can refer to at least three different things: (1) Deliverance in time; that is, you are in a jam, you have some problems, you are under pressure, and God delivers you out of those problems. (2) Salvation in time—when we believe in Jesus Christ, we are saved, yet we still live in time. We continue to have an old sin nature, but we also have the means to quell it—the filling of God the Holy Spirit. (3) Eternal salvation: when we die, we spend eternity with God, on our plantation, sans the old sin nature, sans internal temptation, in a state of perfect happiness.

God is my strength and salvation can be found in a number of passages; among them: Psalm 18:2 Ex. 15:2-6 Isa. 12:2 45:17, 22-25 Matt. 1:21-23.

Augustine comments on this verse: *"And is become my salvation."* Not that He had become anything which He was not before, but because His people, when they believed on Him, became what they were not before. He began to be salvation to them when they turned towards Him; which He was not to them when they were turned away from Him.<sup>45</sup>

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## God Works in the Lives of Believers

<sup>45</sup> Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *A Treasury of David*; e-Sword, Psalm 118 introduction.

A sound, a shout for joy and salvation in tents  
of righteous ones;  
a right hand of Y<sup>e</sup>howah is doing [in] strength  
[and power].

Psalm  
118:15

A sound—a shout for joy and salvation [or,  
*deliverance*]—[are] in the tents of the justified  
ones;  
the right hand of Y<sup>e</sup>howah acts [lit., *does*]  
[with] strength [and power].

There is a noise—a shouting for joy and salvation—from the tents of those who have been justified;  
the right hand of Jehovah acts with great strength and power!

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text	A sound, a shout for joy and salvation in tents of righteous ones; a right hand of Yehowah is doing [in] strength [and power].
Septuagint	The voice of exultation and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous: the right hand of the Lord has wrought mightily.
Significant differences:	The translator took <i>voice</i> , <i>sound</i> to be in the construct state, which is probably the most reasonable interpretation here. So, there is no actual difference between the Greek and Hebrew.

#### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV	From the tents of God's people come shouts of victory: "The LORD is powerful!
The Message	Hear the shouts, hear the triumph songs in the camp of the saved? "The hand of GOD has turned the tide!
REB	Listen! Shouts of triumph in the camp of the victors; 'With his right hand the LORD does mighty deeds. [ <b>victors:</b> or righteous; see also v. 20].

#### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

<i>God's Word™</i>	The sound of joyful singing and victory is heard in the tents of righteous people. The right hand of the LORD displays strength.
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#### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

HCSB	There are shouts of joy and victory in the tents of the righteous: "The LORD's right hand strikes with power!
<i>Young's Literal Translation</i>	A voice of singing and salvation, is in the tents of the righteous, The right hand of Jehovah is doing valiantly.

**What is the gist of this verse?** Those who have been justified shout out in joy; God's actions (i.e., *His right hand*) reveal His strength.

## Psalm 118:15a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
qôwl (קוֹל) [pronounced <i>kohl</i> ]	<i>sound, voice, noise; loud noise, thundering</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #6963 BDB #876
This appears to be a masculine singular noun, even though it makes more sense for this word to be in the construct state. It seems less likely to have a list of three things if we lack the wâw conjunction between the first and second (Hebrews do not list a group of items without a wâw conjunction between each pair of them).			
rinnâh (רִנָּה) [pronounced <i>rin-NAW</i> ]	<i>shouting for joy; cry, loud cry, a mournful cry, wailing; a ringing cry [in an entreaty or supplication]</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #7440 BDB #943
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
y <sup>e</sup> shûw'âh (יְשׁוּ׳אָה) [pronounced <i>y<sup>e</sup>shoo-GAW</i> ]	<i>deliverance, salvation</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #3444 BDB #447
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b<sup>eh</sup></i> ]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
ʾohel (אֹהֶל) [pronounced <i>OH-heh</i> ]	<i>tent, tabernacle, house, temporary dwelling</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #168 BDB #13
tsaddîyqîym (צַדִּיקִים) [pronounced <i>tsahd-dee-KEEM</i> ]	<i>just ones, righteous ones, justified ones</i>	masculine plural adjective, often used as a substantive	Strong's #6662 BDB #843

**Translation:** *A sound—a shout for joy and salvation [or, deliverance]—[are] in the tents of the justified ones;...* In the previous section, even though we have Gentiles nations swarming around the psalmist like bees, as they do about the nation Israel, the psalmist spoke only in the first person singular. In this verse, he briefly speaks of believers, in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural (however, he will return to the 1<sup>st</sup> person singular in v. 17). God is victorious against the hostile gentile nations through the hand of the psalmist in the previous section (*I will surely cut them off!*); because God has been the deliverance of Israel, believers shout out for joy because of their salvation. I trust you can see how this fits so well with David as the author—he defeats the Gentile enemies which swarm about Israel with the strength of God, and the believers in Israel celebrate this deliverance.

We find similar sentiments expressed in Psalm 5:11 (*But let all who take refuge in You rejoice; let them shout for joy forever. May You shelter them, and may those who love Your name boast about You*); Psalm 68:3 (*But the righteous are glad; they rejoice before God and celebrate with joy*); Psalm 97:12 (*Be glad in the LORD, you righteous ones, and praise His holy name*); Psalm 98:4 (*Shout to the LORD, all the earth; be jubilant, shout for joy, and sing*). See also Deut. 12:12; 1Sam. 2:1 Ezra 3:11–13.

Luther renders this: *“They sing with joy for victory in the houses of the righteous.”* Again, the idea is happiness is a part of our relationship to God, and it extends to the entire household.

## Psalm 118:15b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
yâmîyn (יָמִיִן) [pronounced yaw-MEEN]	<i>the right hand, the right side, on the right, at the right; the south</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #3225 BDB #411
This word can be associated with blessing or prosperity.			
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly yohh-WAH]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y<sup>e</sup>howah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
ʿâsâh (עָשָׂה) [pronounced gaw-SAWH]	<i>to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form, to prepare</i>	feminine singular, Qal active participle	Strong's #6213 BDB #793
chayil (חַיִל) [pronounced CHAH-yil]	<i>army, strength, valour, power, might; efficiency; and that which is gotten through strength—wealth, substance</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #2428 BDB #298

**Translation:** ...the right hand of Y<sup>e</sup>howah acts [lit., does] [with] strength [and power]. The second half of this verse gives the reason for their excited cries—God acts with great strength and power. That is, God can be depended upon to deliver in all situations.

The phrase, *the right hand of Jehovah* is found throughout the Old and New Testaments; it refers to God's strength and His actions in the lives of believers—generally with respect to national deliverance, but also, the position of being *at the right hand of Jehovah* is a reference to a place of great honor. Ex. 15:6 Deut. 33:2 1Kings 22:19 2Chron. 18:18 Psalm 16:8 20:6 98:1 110:1 110:5 118:15, 16 Isa. 41:13 45:1 62:8 Matt. 22:44 Mark 12:36 16:19 Luke 20:42 Acts 2:34.

**A right hand of Y<sup>e</sup>howah raised me up [or, was raised up];  
a right hand of Y<sup>e</sup>howah is doing [in] strength [and power].**

Psalm  
118:16

**The right hand of Y<sup>e</sup>howah raised me up [or, is raised up];  
the right hand of Y<sup>e</sup>howah acts [lit., does] [with] strength [and power].**

**The right hand of Jehovah is raised up in victory;  
the right hand of Jehovah acts with great strength and power!**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

### Ancient texts:

#### Masoretic Text

A right hand of Yehowah was raised up;  
a right hand of Yehowah is doing [in] strength [and power].

#### Septuagint

The right hand of the Lord has exalted me: the right hand of the Lord has wrought powerfully.

#### Significant differences:

The first half of the verse is dramatically different; in the Greek, Latin and Aramaic, the right hand of God exalts the psalmist; in the Hebrew, it is His right hand which is exalted. The 1<sup>st</sup> person singular suffix in the Hebrew is a tiny yodh (י) which could easily be lost on a poor manuscript.

**Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:**

CEV	With his mighty arm the LORD wins victories! The LORD is powerful!"
The Message	The hand of GOD is raised in victory! The hand of GOD has turned the tide!"
NLT	The strong right arm of the LORD is raised in triumph. The strong right arm of the LORD has done glorious things!
REB	the right hand of the LORD raises up, with his right hand the LORD does mighty deeds.
TEV	His power has brought us victory— his might power in battle!"

**Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):**

God's Word™	The right hand of the LORD is held high. The right hand of the LORD displays strength.
JPS (Tanakh)	The right hand of the LORD is exalted! The right hand of the LORD is triumphant!"

**Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**

HCSB	The LORD's right hand is raised! The LORD's right hand strikes with power!"
Young's Literal Translation	The right hand of Jehovah is exalted, The right hand of Jehovah is doing valiantly.

**What is the gist of this verse?** Even though man has sought the downfall of the psalmist, God has exalted the psalmist; God's right hand acts with power.

**Psalm 118:16a**

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
yāmīyn (יָמִינִי) [pronounced yaw-MEEN]	<i>the right hand, the right side, on the right, at the right; the south</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #3225 BDB #411
This word can be associated with blessing or prosperity.			
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly yohoh-WAH]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Yehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
rûwm (רוּם) [pronounced room]	<i>to raise, to lift up, to make high; to build a house; to bring up children; to put in safety; to raise up, to exalt [in victory or with praise]</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Polel perfect; pausal form	Strong's #7311 BDB #926

The Latin, Aramaic and Greek all have the additional word *me*, which is a suffix in the Hebrew (the addition of a yodh indicates a 1<sup>st</sup> person singular suffix). On the side of the other languages, such a small letter could be lost on a poor manuscript. Furthermore, when a copyist is in doubt—particularly one with an ascetic bend—is unsure, then it might be his choice to go with the less egotistical approach.

On the other hand, I am not aware of any translation which follows the Greek, Latin and Aramaic here.

**Translation:** *The right hand of Y<sup>e</sup>howah raised me up* [or, *is raised up*];... Since we have two possible readings here, that means we have two possible interpretations. For the right hand of God to be raised up, it means that God's power is shown to be absolute. God's right arm (His power) is raised above all else.

However, what we have been speaking of in previous verses is the attack of others on the psalmist: *They have pushed me, to cause me to fall!* For God to raise up the psalmist would be the height of irony. This also fits in better with the theme—*it is better to take refuge in Jehovah than to trust in man*. The men around the psalmist try to bring about his downfall; God, on the other hand, raises him up.

By the way, it is not egotistical to use the 1<sup>st</sup> person pronoun; that is a normal recognition of your own existence. This does not mean that we hold ourselves in high regard (although, of course, many of us do); it simply means that we are aware of ourselves. Here, the contrast is between those who want to bring the psalmist down as versus God, who will raise the psalmist up. Who is going to win such a tug of war? God, of course.

### Psalm 118:16b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
yāmîyn (יָמִינִי) [pronounced yaw-MEEN]	<i>the right hand, the right side, on the right, at the right; the south</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #3225 BDB #411
This word can be associated with blessing or prosperity.			
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly yoh-WAH]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y<sup>e</sup>howah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
ʿāsâh (עָשָׂה) [pronounced gaw-SAWH]	<i>to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form, to prepare</i>	feminine singular, Qal active participle	Strong's #6213 BDB #793
chayil (חַיִל) [pronounced CHAH-yil]	<i>army, strength, valour, power, might; efficiency; and that which is gotten through strength—wealth, substance</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #2428 BDB #298

**Translation:** *...the right hand of Y<sup>e</sup>howah acts* [lit., *does*] *[with] strength [and power]*. God is effective in all that He does. When He chooses to do something, then He brings it to pass. Again, His right hand speaks of His power and His ability to bring to pass whatever He chooses.

We find this phrase, *the right hand of Jehovah*, three times in vv. 15–16; Gill suggests that this is for each member of the Trinity.<sup>46</sup>

### The Right Hand of Jehovah in Relation to the Trinity

Psalm 118:15–16	Incident
<i>A sound—a shout for joy and salvation</i> [or, <i>deliverance</i> ]— <i>[are] in the tents of the justified ones; the right hand of Y<sup>e</sup>howah acts</i> [lit., <i>does</i> ] <i>[with] strength [and power]</i> .	Jesus Christ justifies the unrighteous; He reveals great strength in dying for our sins.

<sup>46</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 118:16.



The Right Hand of Jehovah in Relation to the Trinity	
Psalm 118:15–16	Incident
The right hand of Y <sup>ehowah</sup> raised Me up [or, is raised up];	God the Holy Spirit raises Jesus Christ up from the dead.
the right hand of Y <sup>ehowah</sup> acts [lit., does] [with] strength [and power].	God the Father's plan is perfect and His actions accomplish what He chooses to do. He planned out our salvation, and He accomplished it.

One could interpret these verses in several ways in order to incorporate the Trinity. What I have offered here is simply a suggestion. One could interpret this as, the first right hand of Jehovah is God the Father, and executing His perfect plan. The second right hand of Jehovah is God the Son being raised up from the dead celebrating His victory over sin and death ([the right hand of Jehovah is raised up](#)). The third right hand of Jehovah is God the Holy Spirit functioning daily in our lives post-salvation.

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[I will not die, for I will live;  
and I will recount works of Yah!](#)

Psalm  
118:17

[I will not die,  
for I live  
and declare the works of Yah!](#)

[I will not die, but live;  
and I will declare to all the works of Jehovah!](#)

Here is how others have translated this verse:

**Ancient texts:**

[Septuagint](#) [I shall not die, but live, and recount the works of the Lord.](#)

Significant differences:

**Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:**

[CEV](#) [And so my life is safe, and I will live to tell what the LORD has done.](#)  
[The Message](#) [I didn't die. I lived! And now I'm telling the world what GOD did.](#)

**Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):**

[God's Word™](#) [I will not die, but I will live and tell what the LORD has done.](#)  
[JPS \(Tanakh\)](#) [I shall not die but live  
and proclaim the works of the LORD.](#)

**Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**

[HCSB](#) [I will not die, but I will live and proclaim what the LORD has done.](#)  
[NRSV](#) [I shall not die, but I shall live,  
and recount the deeds of the LORD.](#)  
[Young's Literal Translation](#) [I do not die, but live, And recount the works of Jah,...](#)

**What is the gist of this verse?** The psalmist will live and declare to works of Jehovah.

### Psalm 118:17a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lô' (ל' or לו') [pronounced low]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
mûwth (מוּת) [pronounced mooth]	<i>to die; to perish, to be destroyed</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #4191 BDB #559

**Translation:** *I will not die...* These enemies of the psalmist were not simply those who talked behind his back, but they were those who sought to kill him. His very life is in danger (from human viewpoint). However, we already know from the previous verse that God would exalt this psalmist, which is quite the opposite of allowing him to die.

### Psalm 118:17b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced kee]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
châyâh (חַי) [pronounced khaw-YAW]	<i>to live, to have life, to revive, to recover health, to be healed, to be refreshed</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #2421 & #2425 BDB #310

**Translation:** *...for I live...* God is infinitely more powerful than man. Therefore, it does not matter what man attempts to do to you; if men seek your life, but God wants you to live, you will live.

### Psalm 118:17c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wê (or vê) (וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
çâphar (צָפַר) [pronounced saw-FAHR]	<i>to recount, to enumerate, to tell with praise, to celebrate, to recall, to declare, to narrate, to tell or declare something from memory, to declare the facts or particulars of, to tell in a specific order</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular, Piel imperfect	Strong's #5608 BDB #707
ma'âseh (מַעֲשֵׂה) [pronounced mah-ğa-SEH]	<i>deeds, works, production, that which is done</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #4639 BDB #795

Psalm 118:17c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Ma'āseh is in the singular in one early printed edition. <sup>47</sup>			
Yāh (יָהּ) [pronounced yaw]	an abbreviated form of YHWH, the proper name for God in the Old Testament	proper masculine noun	Strong's #3050 BDB #219

**Translation:** ...and declare the works of Yah! What the psalmist is doing in this psalm is recounting the works of Jehovah. The very writing of this psalm accomplishes what he proposes to do. A good parallel verse to this is Psalm 71:18: *Even when I am old and gray, God, do not abandon me. Then I will proclaim Your power to another generation, Your strength to all who are to come.* Also Psalm 73:27–28: *Those far from You will certainly perish; You destroy all who are unfaithful to You. But as for me, God's presence is my good. I have made the Lord GOD my refuge, so I can tell about all You do.*

The literal rendering of this verse is different than is found in most translations: *I will not die, because I live and I declare the works of Yah!* The idea is, the psalmist is kept alive by God because he declares the works of God.

**Application:** Because of your hard heart, you may try to find just the right balance of Christianity in your life—that is, just enough to be considered by many a believer of reasonable faith, but not so much as to interfere with the desires of your old sin nature. Maybe you have decided to try to fly under the radar, so to speak, so that you receive the least amount of demonic attacks on your life—aiming for, perhaps, mediocrity, hoping that will keep you safe. If you desire a long life, flying under the radar here is not the way to get it—you must be willing to declare the works of Jehovah. Now, this does not mean that you need to do any public speaking or become an evangelist or a missionary; but your life should reflect the working of God the Holy Spirit from within. Now, if you get into fellowship and grow spiritually, declaring the works of Jehovah, whether it be vocal, written or by your life, will also be a natural occurrence, as will long life.

<b>Chastising, has chastise me Yah; and to the death He has not given me.</b>	Psalm 118:18	<b>Punishing, Yah punished me; but He has not given me [over] to death.</b>
<b>Jehovah punished me severely; however, He did not give me over to the sin unto death.</b>		

Here is how others have translated this verse:

**Ancient texts:**

Masoretic Text	Chastising, has chastise me Yah; and to the death He has not given me.
Septuagint	The Lord has chastened me sore: but he has not given me up to death.
Significant differences:	None.

**Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:**

CEV	He punished me terribly, but he did not let death lay its hands on me.
The Message	GOD tested me, he pushed me hard, but he didn't hand me over to Death.

<sup>47</sup> Joseph Bryant Rotherham's *The Emphasized Bible*; ©1971 by Kregel Publications; p. 591.

NJB                      Though Yahweh punished me sternly,  
he has not abandoned me to death.

**Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):**

God's Word™                      The LORD disciplined me severely, but he did not allow me to be killed.  
JPS (Tanakh)                      The LORD punished me severely,  
but did not hand me over to death.

**Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**

ESV                      The LORD has disciplined me severely, but he has not given me over to death.  
LTHB                      Chastening, Jehovah has chastened me, but He has not given me to death.  
Young's Updated LT                      Jah has sorely chastened me, And to death has not given me up.

**What is the gist of this verse?** The psalmist has apparently been under great discipline, but God has not taken him out of this world.

Psalm 118:18a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
yâçar (יָצַר) [pronounced yaw-Sahr]	to correct [by blows or stripes], to chastise; to correct [with words] to admonish, to exhort; to dissuade [from anything]; to instruct, to teach	Piel infinitive absolute	Strong's #3256 BDB #415
yâçar (יָצַר) [pronounced yaw-Sahr]	to correct [by blows or stripes], to chastise; to correct [with words] to admonish, to exhort; to dissuade [from anything]; to instruct, to teach	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Piel imperfect with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	Strong's #3256 BDB #415
Yâh (יְהוָה) [pronounced yaw]	an abbreviated form of YHWH, the proper name for God in the Old Testament	proper masculine noun	Strong's #3050 BDB #219

**Translation:** Punishing, Yah punished me;... Many unbelievers picture the believer as this goody two-shoes, never did nothing wrong but thinks a bad thought now and again. The psalmist, a man of God, a man chosen by God to write the Word of God has not just been punished, but he has been punished severely. The verb means to correct or punish by striking the person or by whipping them. Furthermore, the verb is in the Piel to intensify its meaning; and, furthermore, the verb is doubled to doubly intensify its meaning. This psalmist did a lot more than think a bad thought. God has beaten this man half to death for his infractions.

This again fits nicely with David's life, who was disciplined severely for his sin with Bathsheba. For this reason, we might reasonably place this psalm after 2Sam. 19.

## Psalm 118:18b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
lâmed (ל) (pronounced <i>leh</i> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	directional preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
mâveth (מָוֶת) [pronounced <i>MAW-veth</i> ]	<i>death, death [as opposed to life], death by violence, a state of death, a place of death</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4194 BDB #560
lô' (לֹא or לוֹא) [pronounced <i>low</i> ]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
nâthan (נָתַן) [pronounced <i>naw-THAHN</i> ]	<i>to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	Strong's #5414 BDB #678

**Translation:** ...but He has not given me [over] to death. However, God did not put him under the sin unto death. The psalmist is correctable. He is not filled with arrogance. He has done wrong, and, apparently, he has done very wrong. However, the punishment corrected him and God has restored him. God has not given him over to death, which is the sin unto death (the sin unto death is for the believer where no amount of punishment can turn him around). We find a similar statement in 2Cor. 6:9b: ...as dying and look—we live; as being chastened yet not killed.

By the way, the Bible is filled with statements about divine discipline. Psalm 94:12: LORD, happy is the man You discipline and teach from Your law. Job. 5:17–18: See how happy the man is God corrects; so do not reject the discipline of the Almighty. For He crushes but also binds up; He strikes, but His hands also heal. Prov. 3:11–12: Do not despise the LORD's instruction, my son, and do not loathe His discipline; for the LORD disciplines the one He loves, just as a father, the son he delights in. 1Cor. 11:32: When we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord, so that we may not be condemned with the world. Heb. 12:10–11: For they disciplined us for a short time based on what seemed good to them, but He does it for our benefit, so that we can share His holiness. No discipline seems enjoyable at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it yields the fruit of peace and righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

Part of the reason that this psalmist is kept alive is the statement of the previous verse: I will not die because I live and declare the works of Jehovah. Do you see how they are tied together?

**Application:** Again, you cannot fly under the radar with God; God has a purpose for your life and there is no getting around that. If you choose not to execute His plan, then your purpose on this earth is limited. God uses some believers to trip up other believers and He might keep you alive for that reason; however, realize that without a function, you don't have a reason for living. If you reported to your job and just sat there, how long would you have a job? God's plan for your life is similar; sometimes, God will keep you alive a long time, even if you do little or nothing worthwhile (e.g., King Saul).

**Application:** Don't mistake this as working for your salvation or working to, in some way, repay God. Once you have believed in Jesus Christ, your salvation is eternal and secure. You cannot lose that. As for God's purpose for your life after salvation, don't forget that happiness is a part of God's plan for your life. That is, yes, in God's plan, there is work involved; however, in God's plan, there is also happiness and peace and contentment. If you have

ever had a good, satisfying job, you will understand this concept. I recall one day, many years ago, driving too fast to get to work. I realized that I was driving too fast and had to slow down; but, I also realized that I could hardly wait to get there. I was excited about going to work; I was excited about being there; I was happy and grateful to work with the students there. I looked forward to it; and I missed them when summer came. So, yes, I worked hard; but I also greatly enjoyed it. If you have had this sort of experience at any time, then you understand functioning within God's plan: at times, there is some work involved; however, this is also happiness and contentment involved as well.

**Application:** Do not think that you need to become an evangelist, a pastor-teacher, a missionary, a deacon, or someone else who works in the church. Obviously, these positions require filling and God has the people for those positions. The positions may or may not be designed for you. God's plan for you life involves getting in fellowship, spending as much time in fellowship as possible; and learning God's Word. What God will have you do specifically is between you and Him. By the way, it will happen naturally; you won't receive some bolt of lightning which tells you to go left or right; you won't walk past a vacant lot someday and have a vision of a church there where you will pastor. God takes care of all things, including guidance.

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## God has Opened up the Gates of Righteousness

**Open to me gates of righteousness;  
I enter in them;  
I confess [or, *thank, praise*] Yah!**

Psalm  
118:19

**Open up the gates of righteousness—  
I will enter through them;  
I confess [or, *praise, thank*] Yah!**

**Open for me the gates of righteousness  
and I will enter through them.  
I profess Jah.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text	Open to me gates of righteousness; I enter in them; I confess [or, <i>thank, praise</i> ] Yah!.
Septuagint	Open to me the gates of righteousness: I will go into them, and give praise to the Lord.
Significant differences:	None.

### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV	Open the gates of justice! I will enter and tell the LORD how thankful I am.
The Message	Swing wide the city gates--the righteous gates! I'll walk right through and thank GOD!
REB	Open to me the gates of victory; I shall go in by them and praise the LORD. [ <b>victory:</b> or righteousness].

### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

<i>God's Word™</i>	Open the gates of righteousness for me. I will go through them and give thanks to the LORD.
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**Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**

MKJV

Open to me the gates of righteousness; I will go into them, and I will praise Jehovah.

Young's Updated LT

Open to me gates of righteousness, I enter into them—I thank Jah.

**What is the gist of this verse?** The psalmist calls to Jehovah to open up the gates of righteousness, and he walks through them, thanking God.

**Psalm 118:19a**

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
pâthach (פָּתַח) [pronounced paw-THAHKH]	<i>to open, to open up; to let loose</i> [as in, <i>to draw (a sword); to begin, to lead in</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperative	Strong's #6605 BDB #834
I am not sure whether I can explain the masculine plural here; I would have expected a masculine singular, in reference to God. This is also a masculine plural in the Greek. Perhaps, he is personifying the gates themselves, speaking to the gates, telling them to open for him.			
lâmed (ל) (pronounced <sup>l</sup> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	directional preposition with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
sha'ar (שַׁעַר) [pronounced SHAH-ğahr]	<i>gates</i> [control of city can be implied]; <i>entrance</i> [through the gates]	masculine plural construct	Strong's #8179 BDB #1044
tsedeq (צֶדֶק) [pronounced TZEH-dehk]	<i>righteousness, rightness, vindication</i>	masculine singular substantive	Strong's #6664 BDB #841

**Translation:** [Open up the gates of righteousness—...](#) The psalms commands that the gates of righteousness be opened—one might even call these the pearly gates. This is his entrance into eternal fellowship with God—this is the same psalmist whom God beat half to death for his infractions in the previous verse.

I mentioned the masculine plural above. The verb is in the 2<sup>nd</sup> person masculine plural. One might expect God to be the object, if this were the 2<sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular. My assumption is, he is referring to the gates; the psalmist is speaking to the gates.

Some have suggested that these *gates of righteousness* refer to entering through the gates of the Temple (or the Tabernacle). Although this is possible, the idea of salvation seems more apt. in the previous verse, the psalmist has been disciplined severely, but he has not died the sin unto death. In the verses which follow (vv. 22–27), we speak of our means of salvation, Jesus Christ. Now, often, particularly in poetry, there are parallel meanings; on one level, this could be a man who is still alive, even after being severely disciplined by God; and he enters into the Temple (or the Tabernacle) to thank God for his deliverance (and, afterward, speaks of the means of his deliverance). However, this more importantly refers to the larger issues of life, which are salvation, our means of salvation and our eternal relationship with God.

There are several interpretations here, so let's explore each of them.

## To What do the Gates of Righteousness Refer?

Interpretation	Comments
The <i>gates of righteousness</i> refer to any house where the principles of God are taught (Barnes <sup>48</sup> ).	This passage seems to imply more than simply walking through the front door of some believer's house.
The <i>gates of righteousness</i> are the doors to the Temple (Clarke <sup>49</sup> ; Spurgeon <sup>50</sup> ).	The Temple did not exist until the time of Solomon, even though David longs to build one. It is possible that David was speaking theoretically here of entering in through the doors of the Temple (which has not been built, but which he wanted to see built).
The <i>gates of righteousness</i> are the doors to the Tabernacle (Gill <sup>51</sup> ; Wesley <sup>52</sup> ).	<p>The Tabernacle is what Moses had built (according to God's instructions) in the desert-wilderness. First of all, the term <i>gates</i> is never used in relationship to the Tabernacle—not in its building and not in its use (not in the plural, anyway).</p> <p>Secondly, although we have a relatively clear history of the Tabernacle up until the time of Samuel, it is unclear as to what happened to it during the time of Saul. Before Saul became king, the Ark of God was removed from the Tabernacle, taken later by the Philistines and then returned back to Israel; but never placed back into the Tabernacle during the reign of Saul. It appears, also, that, at some time probably before Saul's administration, that Shiloh, the city where the Tabernacle of God was kept, was destroyed. This was all discussed in great detail in 1Sam. 10:3, when we examined the movement of the Ark and the Tabernacle. During the time of Saul and of David, we do not seem to have normal Tabernacle worship. When David does bring the Ark to Jerusalem, the idea appears to be to install it in a Temple, which he desired to build for Jehovah God (see above).</p>
The <i>gates of righteousness</i> refer to the Tabernacle or Temple as a concept.	Recall that Saul wiped out the High Priest and all priests in line for that position (which will result in two priestly lines for the High Priest). So, this is the idea that, if there were a Temple or a Tabernacle, that the psalmist would enter through them. Well, as a concept, the gates to the Temple or Tabernacle are analogous to the gate we go through for salvation (see below). Therefore, it makes little sense for this to be written with the idea that, if the Tabernacle (or Temple) were holding regular services, that the psalmist would walk through those doors.
The <i>gates of righteousness</i> are the gates to the New Jerusalem (Gill <sup>53</sup> ).	The problem with this interpretation is, there will be a literal New Jerusalem; however, we are not told about it until the book of Revelation (Rev. 3:12 21:2 22:14). Now, that this passage could refer to what the New Jerusalem represents to all believers is a possibility (which we explore below).

<sup>48</sup> Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 118:19.

<sup>49</sup> Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 118:19.

<sup>50</sup> Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *A Treasury of David*; e-Sword, Psalm 118:19–21.

<sup>51</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 118:19.

<sup>52</sup> John Wesley, *Explanatory Notes on the Whole Bible*; courtesy of e-sword, Psalm 118:19.

<sup>53</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 118:19.

## To What do the Gates of Righteousness Refer?

Interpretation	Comments
The <i>gates of righteousness</i> are the gates to heaven through which Jesus Christ will enter after procuring our salvation (Gill <sup>54</sup> ).	The entire verse reads: <a href="#">Open to me the gates of righteousness; I will enter through them; I will give thanks to Jehovah.</a> One could interpret the verse as follows: this is Jesus Christ after being resurrected from the dead, entering into the gates of heaven. The psalmist writes as if from our Lord's perspective ( <i>I will enter through them...</i> , etc.). In v. 21, the psalmist is again speaking from the 1 <sup>st</sup> person, and from himself. Therefore, this interpretation, albeit clever, is not in keeping with the context (v. 20b will have the <i>righteous ones</i> entering in through this gate). However, this does appear to be the correct understanding of Psalm 24:7: <a href="#">Lift up your heads, you gates! Rise up, ancient doors! Then the King of glory will come in.</a>
The <i>gates of righteousness</i> are the doors of salvation (that is, they are not literal doors)	There is nothing of formal worship mentioned in this passage. We do not have priestly activity, we do not find animals being sacrificed, we have nothing which indicates that we are speaking of a literal Tabernacle or Temple. Therefore, it seems more prudent to take this phrase in a less than literal sense. This is more in line with what Jesus said: <a href="#">"I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved, and he will go in and out and find pasture."</a> (John 10:9). Or, <a href="#">"I am the way, the truth and the life; no man comes to the Father but by Me."</a> (John 14:6).

The targum here reads: "open to me the gates of the city of righteousness." Gill offers up yet another possibility<sup>55</sup> that this is David walking through the gates of Jerusalem when he takes it from the Jebusites. However, the Jebusites would not be considered righteous, so Jerusalem, at that point, would not be considered the *city of righteousness*. Furthermore, there is nothing else in the immediate context of this verse to support Gill's position.

What appears to be the most like is, the gates of righteousness refer to an entrance into eternal salvation. This seems to be clearly supported by the next verse, which reads: [This \[is\] the gate \[or, entrance\] to Y<sup>e</sup>howah; the righteous \[or, justified\] ones enter into Him \[or, through it\].](#) What is surprising is the number of different positions which are taken on this issue, and that few commentators actually understood what was being said in this passage.

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## Psalm 118:19b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
bôw' (בֹּוֹא) [pronounced boh]	<i>to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #935 BDB #97
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural suffix	No Strong's # BDB #88

**Translation:** [...I will enter through them;...](#) The psalmist will walk right through these doors—whether we are speaking of the literal doors of the Temple (or Tabernacle), or the doors of salvation (which are every bit as real; just not a part of our physical realm). As per the discussion above, it seems most likely that these refer to the doors of our salvation—the gate we enter to have a relationship with God.

<sup>54</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 118:19.

<sup>55</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 118:19.

There are only a few passages which parallel this. The next verse reads: **This is the gate of the LORD; the righteous will enter through it.** This supports the idea that the gate we walk through is Jesus Christ, our entrance into fellowship with God. We also have Prov. 14:19: **The evil bow before those who are good; and the wicked [bow down] at the gates of the righteous.** This is along the lines of **Every knee will bow and every tongue will confess** (Rom. 14:11 Isa. 45:23). That is, at some point, all creation will acknowledge the Jehovah (Jesus Christ) is God. Isa. 26:2: **Open the gates so a righteous nation can come in—one that remains faithful.** The righteous nation is the nation of believers and their walking through the gates is fellowship with God (this passages goes on to say, **You will keep the faithful mind in perfect peace because he trusts in You. Trust in Jehovah forever, for in Elohim Jehovah is the everlasting Rock—vv. 3–4).**

Psalm 118:19c			
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>	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #3034 BDB #392
Yâh (יָה) [pronounced yaw]	an abbreviated form of YHWH, the proper name for God in the Old Testament	proper masculine noun	Strong's #3050 BDB #219

**Translation:** ...I confess [or, praise, thank] Yah! Although this verb can mean *to thank, to praise*; it also means *to confess, to profess*. The gates of righteousness are opened *because* the psalmist has confessed Yah, or Jehovah. Because the gates are opened, the psalmist thanks and praises Jehovah.

**This the gate to Yehowah;  
righteous ones enter into Him [or, it].**

Psalm  
118:20

**This [is] the gate [or, entrance] to Y<sup>e</sup>howah;  
the righteous [or, justified] ones enter  
through it [or, into Him].**

**This is the entrance to Jehovah;  
those who have been justified will enter into Him.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text      This the gate to Y<sup>e</sup>howah;  
righteous ones enter into Him [or, it].  
Septuagint      This is the gate of the Lord: the righteous shall enter by it.

Significant differences:      None.

#### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV      Here is the gate of the LORD! Everyone who does right may enter this gate.  
The Message      This Temple Gate belongs to GOD, so the victors can enter and praise.

#### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™      This is the gate of the LORD through which righteous people will enter.

**Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**

MKJV This is the gate of Jehovah into which the righteous shall enter.  
 Young's Literal Translation This is the gate to Jehovah, The righteous enter into it.

**What is the gist of this verse?** The psalmist further defines the gates from the previous verse: this is the entrance to Jehovah, through which the righteous will enter.

Psalm 118:20a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
zeh (זֶה) [pronounced zeh]	<i>here, this, thus</i>	demonstrative adjective	Strong's #2088, 2090 (& 2063) BDB #260
sha'ar (שַׁעַר) [pronounced SHAH-gahr]	<i>gate [control of city can be implied]; area inside front gate; entrance</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #8179 BDB #1044
lamed (ל) (pronounced l <sup>e</sup> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	directional preposition with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly yoh-WAH]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y<sup>e</sup>howah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217

**Translation:** *This [is] the gate [or, entrance] to Y<sup>e</sup>howah;...* This is a more difficult verse to interpret. In the previous verse, *gate* was in the plural; *the gates of righteousness were to open for him*. Here, we switch to the singular, and I would have thought maybe the word *entrance* might be better than *gate*; however, that is not a given meaning for the word in Gesenius or in BDB. Still, that seems to be a reasonable interpretation, here, as well as elsewhere. The gates which he asked to be open to him are the gates of righteousness, which is the entrance to Jehovah.

I don't think anything should be made of the change from plural to singular. After all, you may have a double-gate to your backyard which allows you enough room for a boat. Sometimes, you may refer to them as gates and sometimes in the singular—it is unlikely that anyone will object to you using the singular or plural. Furthermore, this verse begins with *This [is]...* The only logical thing for *this* to refer to would be the *gates* of the previous verse. The idea is, in case you did not really grasp what *gates* were being spoken on in the previous verse (see **To What do the Gates of Righteousness Refer?**); this verse straightens it out for you: *the gates of righteousness* in the previous verse are equivalent to *the entrance to Jehovah* in this verse.

Psalm 118:20b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
tsaddîyqîym (צַדִּיקִים) [pronounced tsahd-dee-KEEM]	<i>just ones, righteous ones, justified ones</i>	masculine plural adjective, often used as a substantive	Strong's #6662 BDB #843

## Psalm 118:20b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
bôw' (בֹּוֹא) [pronounced boh]	<i>to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #935 BDB #97
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #88

**Translation:** *...the righteous [or, justified] ones enter through it [or into Him].* There are a couple of ways that this may be interpreted; and this being poetry, it is not unusual for more than one meaning to apply. That is, poetry is something which can often be taken in more than one way; and not incorrectly so. The first understanding is, the justified ones or righteous ones (righteous because we have been justified) enter through these gates, through the entrance, to Jehovah God. That seems to be the most basic and reasonable explanation.<sup>56</sup>

Since there is no neutral suffix in the Hebrew, whether this reads *we enter into Him* or *we enter through it* is uncertain; therefore, we will examine both translations and the possible interpretations which result.

### How Should we Translate Psalm 118:20b?

Translation	Commentary
<i>This [is] the gate [or, entrance] to Y<sup>e</sup>hovah; the righteous [or, justified] ones enter into Him.</i>	<p>One might understand this phrase to be taken this way as sort of a murky look into the Church Age. If those who have been justified enter into Him, this is positional truth, which is found only in the Church Age—something which is far future from the writing of this psalm (no matter who we see as the author).</p> <p>By the way, <i>positional truth</i> means that, when we believe in Jesus Christ, we are put <i>into Christ</i> (a very common New Testament phrase); so that all that He is, we share. We share His Sonship, His destiny, His righteousness, His sinlessness, His perfection. When God looks at us, He sees us <i>in Christ</i>; we share these things not because we have earned them in any way, but because of what Christ did for us on the cross.</p>
<i>This [is] the gate [or, entrance] to Y<sup>e</sup>hovah; the righteous [or, justified] ones enter through it.</i>	<p>This interpretation makes most sense from the standpoint of parallelism. In v. 19a, the psalmist writes: <i>Open the gates for righteousness for me and I will enter through them</i>; therefore, it makes most sense for his meaning here to be: <i>This is the entrance to Jehovah; those who are justified enter through it</i>. We have the same verb and preposition at the end of both of these verses; therefore, it seems reasonable that the simple understanding that we find here is the most reasonable approach.</p>

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With regards to the first interpretation: I don't think that we should look at this in the technical sense in which this is used in the New Testament. *In Christ* in the New Testament refers to a great many things; chiefly that, when God sees us, He sees us as being *in Christ*, where we share all that Christ has and all the Christ is. It is very

<sup>56</sup> Some of the commentators were out of their minds at this point. Spurgeon has the psalmist stopping under the arch of the gate and looking at it and expressing great affection for it. Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *A Treasury of David*; e-Sword, Psalm 118:19–21.



important to recognize that is something true only in the New Testament, as Jesus Christ had not died for the sins of man prior to that time. The Holy Spirit places us into Christ at the moment of salvation. In this passage, I think it more prudent that we understand this in a more general sense, of being *with God*.

Now, don't forget that this is a believer whom God has slapped around a lot because of his wrongdoing. So, don't get the idea that this is some perfect or nearly perfect person; he will enter into the gates of salvation; God will bring him in; but he did not earn or deserve this. We are *righteous*; we are *justified*; but this only because what Jesus Christ did for us on the cross. The psalmist admits to being disciplined severely, which indicates that he is, by no means, perfect in and of himself.

**I thank You for You answered me  
and so You are to me to deliverance [or,  
salvation].**

Psalm  
118:21

**I thank [or, praise] You because you answered  
me,  
and You are salvation [or, deliverance] to me.**

**I thank You and praise You, because You have answered me;  
You are my salvation.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text	I thank You for You answered me and so You are to me to deliverance [or, <i>salvation</i> ].
Septuagint	I will give thanks to You; because You hast heard me, and You have become my salvation.

Significant differences: None.

#### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV	I praise the LORD for answering my prayers and saving me.
The Message	Thank you for responding to me; you've truly become my salvation!
NJB	I thank you for hearing me, and making yourself my Saviour.
NLT	I thank you for answering my prayer and saving me!
TEV	I praise you, LORD, because you heard me, because you have given me victory.

#### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™	I give thanks to you, because you have answered me. You are my savior.
JPS (Tanakh)	I praise You, for You have answered me, and have become my deliverance.

#### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

HCSB	I will give thanks to You because You have answered me and have become my salvation.
MKJV	I will praise You; for You have heard me, and are my salvation.
Young's Updated LT	I thank You, for You have answered me, And are to me for salvation.

**What is the gist of this verse?** The psalmist praises or thanks Jehovah because He answers the psalmist and He is his salvation (or, deliverance).

This verse will be a summative phrase—although v. 21 is not separate from that which follows, it does sum up the psalmists thoughts and feelings of vv. 5–20. Now, how do we know this? First of all, the general tenor of this verse is summative—it does not appear out of thin air but stands upon what has come before. However, secondly, and more importantly, the psalmist here gives thanks (as in v. 1a) because God has heard him (v. 5) and God is his salvation (vv. 5–20).

Psalm 118:21a			
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>	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular, Hiphil imperfect with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3034 BDB #392
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced kee]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
ʿânâh (עָנָה) [pronounced gaw-NAWH]	<i>to answer, to respond; to speak loudly, to speak up [in a public forum]; to testify; to sing, to chant, to sing responsively</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	Strong's #6030 BDB #772

**Translation:** I thank [or, praise] You because you answered me,... Here, praise or thanksgiving is the proper understanding of this verb, as a reason is given—the reason is, God has answered the psalmist. How did God answer him? We have already been told; he was surrounded by his enemies, and God delivered him. The psalmist will restate that below. Furthermore, he was under severe discipline, and he no doubt called out to God to have this discipline removed—and it was.

Compare this to Psalm 22:24: For He has not despised or detested the torment of the afflicted. He did not hide His face from him, but listened when he cried to Him for help. Or, Psalm 116:1: I love the LORD because He has heard my appeal for mercy.

Psalm 118:21b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa or va (וּ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced haw-YAW]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
lâmed (ל) (pronounced ʿ)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	directional preposition with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
lâmed (ל) (pronounced ʿ)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	directional preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510

Psalm 118:21b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
יְשׁוּעָה (yeshûw'âh) [pronounced yeshoo-GAW]	deliverance, salvation	feminine singular noun	Strong's #3444 BDB #447

**Translation:** ...and You are salvation [or, deliverance] to me. God has delivered this psalmist in time (vv. 5–14) and He has delivered the psalmist eternally (vv. 19–20). The psalmist has complete trust in God.

Obviously, there are going to be many parallel verses here. In this psalm, we have v. 14: The LORD is my strength and my song; He has become my salvation. From the Law, we have Ex. 15:2: The LORD is my strength and my song; He has become my salvation. This is my God, and I will praise Him, my father's God, and I will exalt Him. And from the prophets, we have Isa. 12:2: Indeed, God is my salvation. I will trust Him and not be afraid. Because Yah, the LORD, is my strength and my song, He has become my salvation."

Even though I will begin a new section of this psalm below, that does not mean that we have completely left this topic and moved on to something else. Bear in mind, as we go to the next verse, that the psalmist is giving thanks to the Lord because He answered his prayer and is his salvation. What follows should be tied to this verse.

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Jesus Christ is the Lord God of Israel

<b>A stone rejected [despised, lightly esteemed] the builders has become for a head of a corner.</b>	Psalm 118:22	<b>The stone rejected [despised, lightly esteemed] [by] the builders has become the chief cornerstone [lit., head of the cornerstone].</b>
<b>The stone which the builders rejected and despised has become the chief foundation stone.</b>		

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text	A stone rejected [despised, lightly esteemed] the builders has become for a head of a corner..
Septuagint	The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner.
Significant differences:	No significant difference.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV	The stone that the builders tossed aside has now become the most important stone.
The Message	The stone the masons discarded as flawed is now the capstone!
TEV	The stone which the builders rejected as worthless turned out to be the most important of all.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™  
JPS (Tanakh)

The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.  
The stone that the builders rejected  
has become the chief cornerstone.

**Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**

ESV  
*Young's Updated LT*

The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.  
A stone the builders refused has become head of a corner.

**What is the gist of this verse?** The writer tells us that, the builders rejected a stone, which has become the chief foundation stone for the building they are building.

With this verse, we begin a Messianic section—that is, a section which refers to the coming Messiah. Therefore, we need to discuss...

### What Makes a Psalm (or Any Portion of Scripture) Messianic?

1. First of all, we have the testimony of Jesus Christ that there are Messianic passages: "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." (Luke 24:44).
2. Jews have historically considered a psalm to be Messianic. One example of this would be Isa. 9:6: For to us a Child is born, to us a Son is given; and the government shall be on His shoulder; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. About half of the Rabbins, at least in the day of Kimchi, interpret this portion of the psalm as being Messianic.\*
3. The Targums also indicate that the Jews interpreted specific passages as Messianic. We may argue whether Gen. 49:10–11 is Messianic or not—this is where Jacob identifies Judah as the line of the Messiah; but, he does not use the term *Messiah*. However, *Targum Jonathan* and *Targum Pseudo Jonathan* both use the term *Messiah* in reference to this passage.\*\*
4. Christians have historically considered a psalm to be Messianic. One example of this would be Zechariah 12:10: And I will pour on the house of David, and on the people of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of prayers. And they shall look on Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourns for his only son, and shall be bitter over Him, as the bitterness over the first-born.
5. Jesus Christ quotes a portion of a psalm and applies it to Himself. When speaking to the pharisees, the religious leaders of His day, Jesus said, "Did you not read in the Scriptures, 'The stone which the builders rejected, this One has become the head of the corner; this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes?'" (Matt. 21:42; also found in Mark 12:10 and Luke 20:17)
6. Paul or another writer quotes a portion of Scripture and applies it to Jesus. The writer of Hebrews quotes Psalm 110:1, making it very clear that this applies to Jesus Christ and cannot even be applied to an angel: "Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet." (Heb. 1:13).
7. Peter or another speaker in the gospels or in the book of Acts applies a psalm or other passage to Jesus. One example of this would be Acts 2:25–27: For David speaks concerning Him, "I foresaw the Lord always before me, because He is at my right hand, that I should not be moved. Therefore my heart rejoiced and my tongue was glad; and also My flesh shall rest in hope, because You will not leave My soul in Hades, nor will You allow Your holy One to see corruption."
8. The Scripture can be easily applied to Jesus Christ, even though this may not be the historical take on this or that passage. As I study Scripture word by word and verse by verse, I run in a number of passages which speak of Jesus Christ. Some commentators recognize these, but often, most do not.
  - a. Example #1: When Moses struck the rock twice, and God discipline him severely because of this minor transgression; this is because what Moses did no longer paralleled Jesus Christ. Originally, the Jews complained because they had no water. As per God's command, Moses struck the rock one time, and from it flowed *living waters*. The parallel is, of course, that Jesus Christ is the rock and striking the rock was God's judgment of our sins in Jesus Christ. The *living waters* which flowed from the rock represent salvation, which flows freely to all who believe in Jesus Christ.
  - b. Example #2: In 1Sam. 2:36, we went into great detail how Samuel is a type of Christ, and that there

## What Makes a Psalm (or Any Portion of Scripture) Messianic?

are over a dozen parallels between Samuel and Jesus Christ. This makes Samuel a Messianic figure and a type of Jesus Christ.

\* Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 118 introduction. By the way, David Kimchi was a famous grammarian born in 1160 (the date of his death is not known). See <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsourc/biography/Kimchi.html>.

\*\* A great quick reference on such passages is Josh McDowell, *The New Evidence that Demands a Verdict*; ©1999 by Josh McDowell; p. 168–192 where many of the prophecies about Jesus Christ are shown in the Targums to be clearly Messianic (that is, the Jews believed these passages to be Messianic long before the incarnation of our Lord).

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This also leads us to...

## Proper Interpretation of Messianic Passages\*

1. The passage applies both to David (or whomever the passage is dealing with in time) and to Messiah to come.
  - a. This is certainly true of the passage above, when Moses is disciplined for striking a rock twice instead of *speaking to the rock*, as God had commanded. This is a real and accurate historical narrative. God really gave that command to Moses and Moses really disobeyed the command and God disciplined Moses in time. However, the parallels to Jesus Christ and His being judged for our sins on the cross are obvious.
  - b. The problem with this interpretation is, some things found in Scripture cannot be historically applied to the writer or to those being written about. For instance, Psalm 22 and Isa. 53 both present very detailed and accurate views of our Lord on the cross. In fact, we learn more about what happened from these two passages than we do in the gospels themselves, the historical accounts which all include the cross. Neither Psalm 22 nor Isa. 53 are really applicable to David or to Isaiah or to anyone else (the interpretation that Isa. 53 is a reference to God's suffering servant Israel, a people who have suffered through the years is ridiculous and only the most superficial relationship can be drawn).
2. Another interpretation is, a Messianic passage really does not refer to the Messiah, but to the person the passage is written about (or, about the author).
  - a. Our biggest problem is, as just mentioned, Psalm 22 and Isa. 53—these passages have little or nothing to do with their writers or with any person who lived during their lifetime. You cannot read these passages and think that, for instance, Isaiah's thinking was, "Hey, I think I am going to write about my buddy Charlie Brown who has suffered a lot." If you view those passages in that way, they make no sense. They suddenly lose their force and purpose. When you apply them to Jesus Christ, suddenly, they make perfect sense, even though they were written hundreds of years prior to the Incarnation.
3. A third interpretation is, a Messianic passage refers to the Messiah only.
  - a. In the examples of Psalm 22 and Isa. 53, yes; this is the proper understanding of those two portions of Scripture.
  - b. However, there are passages which refer to the Messiah, or foreshadow the Messiah, and yet apply to the writer or are an actual historical incident. One example would be Abraham being ready to offer his only son (by Sarah). The parallels between that passage and God the Father judging God the Son for our sins are uncanny.
4. The key is simple: you let each passage, its context, and the number of parallels interpret the passage. You cannot just take a few verses here or there and forcefully apply them to the coming Messiah; nor can you arbitrarily decide that, because you do not believe in prophecy, that you can disregard or misinterpret passages like Isa. 53 or Psalm 22.

\*This was, in part, inspired by a footnote in *The Complete Word Study Old Testament*; Dr. S. Zodhiates; ©1994 AMG Publishers; p. 1410.

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C. I. Scofield is a genius when it comes to brevity; and in various versions of Scripture with his notes, we find more accurate information and commentary than we find in any other Bible commentary. Scofield also has a few points on Messianic Psalms.

### Scofield's Notes on Messianic Psalms

That the Psalms contain a testimony to Christ our Lord Himself affirmed ("**These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.**" Luke 24:44) and the New Testament quotations from the Psalter point unerringly to those Psalms which have the Messianic character. A similar spiritual and prophetic character identifies others.

(1) Christ is seen in the Psalms in two general attitudes: as suffering (for example Psalm 22), and as entering into His kingdom glory (for example Psalms 2; 24). Compare Luke 24:25-27: **And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.**

(2) Christ is seen in His person:

- (a) as Son of God: **I will tell of the decree: The LORD said to me, "You are my Son; today I have begotten you."** (Psalm 2:7)
- (b) as very God: **Your throne, O God, is forever and ever. The scepter of your kingdom is a scepter of uprightness. you have loved righteousness and hated wickedness. Therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions** (Psalm 45:6–7). **Of old you laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands** (Psalm 102:25). **The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool."** (Psalm 110:1).
- (c) as Son of man: **What is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him? Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet.** (Psalm 8:4-6).
- (d) as Son of David: **You have said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen one; I have sworn to David my servant: 'I will establish your offspring forever, and build your throne for all generations.' "** (Psalm 89:3–4). **And I will make him the firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth. I will establish his offspring forever and his throne as the days of the heavens.** (Psalm 89:27, 29).

(3) Christ is seen in His offices

- (a) as Prophet: **I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will praise you: From you comes my praise in the great congregation; my vows I will perform before those who fear him.** (Psalm 22:22, 25). **I have told the glad news of deliverance in the great congregation; behold, I have not restrained my lips, as you know, O LORD. I have not hidden your deliverance within my heart; I have spoken of your faithfulness and your salvation; I have not concealed your steadfast love and your faithfulness from the great congregation** (Psalm 40:9–10).
- (b) as Priest: **The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind, "You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek."** (Psalm 110:4).
- (c) as King: **"As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill."** **I will tell of the decree: The LORD said to me, "You are my Son; today I have begotten you."** (Psalm 2:6–7). **Lift up your heads, O gates! And be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD, strong and mighty, the LORD, mighty in battle!** (Psalm 24:7–8).

(4) Christ is seen in His varied work.

- (a) As Priest, He offers Himself in sacrifice: **Sacrifice and offering you have not desired, but you have given me an open ear. Burnt offering and sin offering you have not required. Then I said, "Behold, I have come;**



## Scofield's Notes on Messianic Psalms

in the scroll of the book it is written of me: I desire to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart." (Psalm 40:6–8; compare Heb. 10:5–12; also see Psalm 22).

(b) In resurrection, Christ is seen as the Priest-Shepherd, ever living to make intercession: The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me (Psalm 23:1–4). Compare Heb. 7:21–25: This One was made a priest with an oath by the one who said to him: "The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind, 'You are a priest forever.' " This makes Jesus the guarantor of a better covenant. The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office, but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever. Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them. Also Heb. 13:20: May the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant.

(c) As Prophet, He proclaims the name of Jehovah as Father: I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will praise you: You who fear the LORD, praise him! All you offspring of Jacob, glorify him, and stand in awe of him, all you offspring of Israel! (Psalm 22:22–23). Compare: Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" (John 20:17).

(d) As King, He fulfils the Davidic Covenant: You have said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen one; I have sworn to David my servant: 'I will establish your offspring forever, and build your throne for all generations.'" I will establish his offspring forever and his throne as the days of the heavens. (Psalm 89:3–4, 29). Furthermore, as King, He restores alike the dominion of man over creation: What is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him? Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas (Psalm 8:4–8). See also Rom. 8:16–21: The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs--heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

(e) Finally, as King, He restores the dominion of the Father over all: For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For "God has put all things in subjection under his feet." But when it says, "all things are put in subjection," it is plain that he is excepted who put all things in subjection under him. When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all (1Cor. 15:25–28 Psalm 8:6).

(5) The Messianic Psalms give, also, the inner thoughts, the exercises of soul, of Christ in His earthly experiences. See, e.g., Psalm 16:8–11: I have set the LORD always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices; my flesh also dwells secure. For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption. You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore. See also Psalm 22.

Since I am not under the same space restraints as Scofield was, I have written out many of the verses and I have changed some of his formatting slightly. I should add a comment: I have read a great many commentators, many of whom now and again lay out a set of points as we find here. When checking Scofield's references, they are almost always succinct and on point; this is not something I can say about most other commentators when they cite Scripture to back up their points.



Taken from *The New Scofield Reference Bible*; Dr. C.I. Scofield; ©1967 New York·Oxford University Press; p. 658. The version which I found in e-Sword was inaccurately quoted and made little sense in some places.

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One serious drawback of exegeting a passage verse by verse, and of spending so much time with each verse is, sometimes they are seen as separate from all else. That is, the verse is taken by itself, out of context, and what comes before and after is not examined *in relation* to the verse. We cannot do that. What we have here in v. 22 is amazing—it stands out, it jumps out at us—but we cannot separate it from what has come before. In the previous few verses, the psalmist is speaking to Jehovah God, giving thanks to Him for answering his prayers and for being his salvation. Therefore, this should be kept in view as we examine this verse. The context tells us Whom this verse is about. This is about Jehovah God, the One Who answers the prayers of the psalmist; the One Who is the salvation of the psalmist.

### Psalm 118:22a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿeben (אֶבֶן) [pronounced EH <sup>B</sup> -ven]	stone	feminine singular noun	Strong's #68 BDB #6
māʿaṣ (מָאַס) [pronounced maw-AHS]	to reject, to despise, to lightly esteem, to refuse	3 <sup>rd</sup> person plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #3988 BDB #549
bânâh (בָּנָה) [pronounced baw-NAWH]	to build, to rebuild, to restore	masculine plural, Qal active participle with the definite article	Strong's #1129 BDB #124

**Translation:** *The stone rejected [despised, lightly esteemed] [by] the builders...* For some, this would seem to be an abrupt change of subject. The psalmist was dealing with being justified and walking through the gates of righteousness through the entrance of Jehovah, and suddenly, he begins writing about a stone. However, we know this stone as the Lord Jesus Christ, Whom this psalm is about (vv. 1–20) and Whom the psalmist addresses directly (v. 21).

Now, those who felt they were building the religion of Jehovah were the high priests and the Sadducees, who, despite their contrary political stances, were quite agreed the Jesus Christ was not the Messiah. They rejected Him; they despised Him; they held Him in low regard. This verb perfectly describes those who, in the future, would see themselves as the architects of the Jewish faith; and yet would completely and totally reject the Lord Jesus Christ. They rejected the Rock of God. To those reading this psalm, at least during the time that it was written, may not know immediately who these builders are. They seem to come out of left field; however, the rejected stone is logically Jesus Christ (or, the Lord Jehovah).

An interesting question is, does the psalmist know who he is speaking about? I must say, I have no idea. Once and awhile, when I am sleeping, I have a dream, or a thought, and it seems clear and revelatory; but, when I wake up, I cannot recall the thought exactly, and it seems to fade quickly from my mind. Maybe for an instant, the psalmist is given the ability to see just exactly what he is writing about, even though this understanding might leave him just as quickly. We do not know exactly how God puts these things into our minds, apart from the influence of God the Holy Spirit. No matter what the case, we must recognize that this verse, which must have been confusing at the time, to at least those who read it, and possibly even to the one who wrote it—this verse is quoted several times in the New Testament; and, even had it not been quoted, its application is quite obvious.

A reasonable question is, *did this verse have any application or relation to the writer of the psalm?* Certainly, that is very likely. As we have seen in many Messianic psalms, they were written from the experience of the

psalmist—and, in some cases, from very difficult circumstances. The psalmist may have not understood why he found himself in such desperate straights as he did when writing Psalm 22, for instance; but this psalm stands out hundreds and hundreds of years later as if one were standing beneath the cross watching the tremendous humiliation our Lord endured in order to die on our behalf. This psalm too likely has a real-time application to the psalmist—for instance, if this is a psalm about David, then he is the stone which the builder's rejected. Saul and the army of Saul rejected David outright; however, David became the chief cornerstone for the Judaic dynasty. All kings of Judah came from David's loins.<sup>57</sup>

Psalm 118:22b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced haw-YAW]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
lâmed (ל) (pronounced l) <sup>59</sup>	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	directional preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
rô'sh (רֹאשׁ) [pronounced rohsh]	<i>head, top, chief, front, choicest</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #7218 BDB #910
phînâh (פְּנֵה) [pronounced pin-NAW]	<i>corner, cornerstone; figuratively for a chief, ruler, a cornerstone of a people.</i>	feminine plural noun	Strong's #6438 BDB #819

**Translation:** ...has become the chief cornerstone [lit., head of the cornerstone]. The verb here is in the feminine singular, meaning that the subject of this verb is *the stone [which the builders rejected]*. That stone which they rejected has become the head of the corner; or the chief cornerstone. The Lord Jesus Christ, rejected by the supposed architects of the Jewish faith, has become the very foundation of the building; the very rock upon which all else is measured and upon which all else depends.

Barnes: *Portions of the psalm are, in the New Testament, applied to Christ; and it has been made a question whether it had, or had not, an original reference to him. Thus in Matt. 21:42; Mark 12:11; Luke 20:17, it is quoted by the Saviour as illustrating a truth in regard to himself. In Acts 4:11, the twenty-second verse of the psalm is applied by Peter to the Saviour, as having been fulfilled in him - or, as meaning that the language of the psalm would properly describe the fact which had occurred in the treatment of Jesus of Nazareth. Many of the Jewish rabbins regarded the psalm as referring to the Messiah, and not a few Christian interpreters have supposed that it had such an original reference.*<sup>58</sup>

Being the *chief cornerstone*, Jesus acts as the basic founding stone for the entire building. He joins two walls, and, based upon the strength and rightness of this stone, the entire edifice depends. I don't know how literally we should take this and push this to mean that Jesus unites Jews and Gentiles, males and females, heaven and earth, God and man—however, Jesus does function in this way—so we can push the analogy to contain what we already know to be true.

<sup>57</sup> I should admit that, even though I have knocked many commentators in the exegesis of this psalm, it was a commentator who made this particular point clear to me. Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 118:19–29. The NIV Study Bible suggested a few interpretations; that the rejected stone is a king that the other nations rejected; or that it is Israel that the other nations (the *builders of worldly empires*) rejected. I have rejected these interpretations (found in *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 906), and have therefore placed them in a footnote.

<sup>58</sup> Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 118 Introduction.

Barnes later goes on to say that it is also obvious that there are portions of this psalm which do not apply to Jesus Christ. Of course this is true, and forcing a theological stance upon this psalm will not work. That is, there is no way that one can apply this entire psalm to the Messiah. However, that does not mean that this portion cannot be so applied, as we find it done on at least two occasions in the New Testament. Taking this stance does not mean that this psalm meanders off in every direction. A superficial reading of the psalm may yield that conclusion; however, upon closer inspection, the key to this psalm is the eternal grace of God (stated in the first and final verses). What we deal with in vv. 10–18 is the salvation/deliverance/redemption of the psalmist. Therefore, it is not improper to then discuss the means of his salvation/deliverance/redemption in the verses which follow. And this means of salvation will be rejected by the Jewish religion, those who believe themselves to be the architects of their religion (and who are, in all actuality, the perverters of God's truth).

I think it might be worthwhile just to see where this verse is quoted in the New Testament, and to see the context of its quotation as well:

### “The Stone which the Builders Rejected has become the Chief Cornerstone” — as found in the New Testament

Scripture	Context
<p>Mat 21:33–43: “Listen to another parable: There was a man, a landowner, who planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a winepress in it, and built a watchtower. He leased it to tenant farmers and went away. When the grape harvest drew near, he sent his slaves to the farmers to collect his fruit. But the farmers took his slaves, beat one, killed another, and stoned a third. Again, he sent other slaves, more than the first group, and they did the same to them. Finally, he sent his son to them. ‘They will respect my son,’ he said. “But when the tenant farmers saw the son, they said among themselves, ‘This is the heir. Come, let’s kill him and take his inheritance!’ So they seized him and threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those farmers?”He will completely destroy those terrible men,” they told Him, “and lease his vineyard to other farmers who will give him his produce at the harvest.” Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures: The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. This came from the Lord and is wonderful in our eyes? Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a nation producing its fruit.”</p>	<p>This occurs during the final week of Jesus’ life, after He has entered into Jerusalem on a colt, as royalty. The context of this quotation is a parable which Jesus spoke in the Temple to the chief priests and elders (Matt. 21:23), as well as to the people in the Temple at this time. He speaks of a landowner who arduously develops a vineyard and then puts this vineyard in the care of some vine-growers. When he sends his various representatives to see what is going on, the vine-growers kill these representatives. He even sends his son, and they kill him, hoping to seize this vineyard as their own. Jesus then asks, what should this landowner do, and they answer, “Kill the vine-growers and let someone else take over the vineyard.” Obviously, this parable is about these elders and chief priests who are listening to him. They are taking care of the vineyard of God; however, every time God sends one to check on the vineyard, they kill that person. The last person that God sends to them is His Son. The people in the Temple (and possibly even some of the elders and chief priests) say what must be done to the vine-growers who are leasing the property—they must be killed and the property leased to someone else.</p> <p>Then, suddenly, Jesus asks them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures: The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. This came from the Lord and is wonderful in our eyes? Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a nation producing its fruit.” They are the builders and architects and they have rejected Him, Who is the chief cornerstone—something told by a psalmist a thousand years earlier.</p>

## “The Stone which the Builders Rejected has become the Chief Cornerstone” — as found in the New Testament

Scripture	Context
<p>Mark 12:10–12: Haven't you read this Scripture: The stone that the builders rejected--this has become the cornerstone. This came from the Lord and is wonderful in our eyes?" Because they knew He had said this parable against them, they were looking for a way to arrest Him, but they were afraid of the crowd. So they left Him and went away.</p>	<p>We have the same context here, but we are told one more thing—the chief priests and elders knew that this parable was about them. For this reason, they looked for some way to have Jesus arrested.<sup>59</sup></p>
<p>Luke 20:13–19: "Then the owner of the vineyard said, 'What should I do? I will send my beloved son. Perhaps they will respect him.' "But when the tenant farmers saw him, they discussed it among themselves and said, 'This is the heir. Let's kill him, so the inheritance will be ours!' So they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. "Therefore, what will the owner of the vineyard do to them? He will come and destroy those farmers and give the vineyard to others." But when they heard this they said, "No--never!" But He looked at them and said, "Then what is the meaning of this Scripture: The stone that the builders rejected—this has become the cornerstone? Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, and if it falls on anyone, it will grind him to powder!" Then the scribes and the chief priests looked for a way to get their hands on Him that very hour, because they knew He had told this parable against them, but they feared the people.</p>	<p>Luke gives an even more detailed explanation of this incident. We have the same place, the same parable, but Jesus said more than just psalm 118:22. He also adds, "Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken into pieces, and if it falls on anyone, it will grind him into powder." It is unclear whether Jesus is quoting Scripture here, but He does make clear the result to those who do not believe in Him. In my opinion, what Jesus said was this: "The stone that the builders rejected—this has become the cornerstone? Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, and if it falls on anyone, it will grind him to powder! This came from the Lord and is wonderful in our eyes?" Jesus injects some commentary Himself.</p> <p>Now, we do not know if any of the chief priests or elders actually verbally responded to this psalm. My thinking is, most or all of them held back, looking for some reason to have Jesus arrested. They understood enough to know that Jesus was speaking about them; but they would not take what He said to heart.</p>
<p>Act 4:10–12: "Be it known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, in this name does this man stand before you whole. This is the Stone which you builders have counted worthless, and He has become the Head of the Corner. And there is salvation in no other One; for there is no other name under Heaven given among men by which we must be saved."</p>	<p>Again, this passage is quoted in the Temple, a great and marvelous structure which is a shadow of Jesus Christ. Peter and John are proclaiming Jesus to those who will hear them. Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, speaks these words. He correctly interprets the words of a psalmist from a millennium before, that Jesus is the One Whom the builders rejected. And, make no mistake about it, there is salvation in no one else—for there is no other name under heaven given among me by which we must be saved!</p>

<sup>59</sup> As a minor application of this, people today use the law to get their way as well. It may have nothing to do with right or wrong; the idea is often to legally steal money or to seek revenge on another. The law is just twisted in order to allow for this. That is not the key to this passage; but it is a behavior which we find with us today.

**“The Stone which the Builders Rejected  
has become the Chief Cornerstone” — as found in the New Testament**

Scripture	Context
<p>Eph. 2:13–22: But now in Christ Jesus you who were once afar off are made near by the blood of Christ. For He is our peace, He making us both one, and He has broken down the middle wall of partition between us, having abolished in His flesh the enmity (the Law of commandments contained in ordinances) so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, making peace between them; and so that He might reconcile both to God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity in Himself. And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off, and to those who were near. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. Now therefore you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom every building having been fitly framed together, grows into a holy sanctuary in the Lord; in whom you also are built together for a dwelling place of God through the Spirit.</p>	<p>Paul is writing to the Gentile believers of the church in Ephesus, how that Jesus Christ broke down a partition between Jews and Gentiles and between man and God. In this passage, Paul merely alludes back to Psalm 118:22, which would have been well-known and taught among the new believers.</p> <p>The Gentiles to whom Paul speaks are no longer strangers and no longer estranged from God, but God has brought them near.</p> <p>This makes me wonder if, God's relationship to the Jews and Gentiles shadows God's relationship to men and angels. God had originally created the angels, and a third of them fell and followed Satan. Therefore, God gave dominion over the earth to man (which man did give up). The Jews were like the angels—God went to the Jews first and gave all to them first; however, they rejected God (some did and some did not—just like the angels)—so God turned to the Gentiles.</p>
<p>1Peter 2:4–10: For having been drawn to Him, a living Stone, indeed rejected by men, but elect, precious with God; you also as living stones are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. Therefore also it is contained in the Scripture: "Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner Stone, elect, precious, and he who believes on Him shall never be ashamed." Therefore to you who believe is the honor. But to those who are disobedient, He is the Stone which the builders rejected; this One came to be the Head of the corner, and a Stone-of-stumbling and a Rock-of-offense to those disobeying, who stumble at the Word, to which they also were appointed. But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for possession, so that you might speak of the praises of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; you who then were not a people, but now the people of God, those not pitied then, but now pitied.</p>	<p>Peter wrote, of course, to believers (2Peter 1:1); but also to those Jews who were believers and scattered throughout the Roman Empire (1Peter 1:1). Peter, in this passage, is tying the Old Testament Scriptures to Jesus Christ, which indicates that he is still speaking to believing Jews (and possibly to some on the verge of believing) who are scattered. Every few words, Peter seems to takes something out of the Old Testament and apply it to those who are reading this epistle. He establishes Jesus Christ as the living Stone, the one rejected by men (which alludes to our passage). He then quotes Isa. 28:16 (more or less): "Therefore so says the Lord Jehovah, Behold, I place in Zion a Stone for a foundation, a tried Stone, a precious Cornerstone, a sure Foundation; he who believes shall not hurry."</p> <p>Peter differentiates between those who believe and those who do not (those he calls <i>disobedient</i>), and quotes Psalm 118:22 to apply to them.</p> <p>In the context of this quote, Peter makes additional allusions to Old Testament Scripture as well (Deut. 14:2 Psalm 33:12 Isa. 8:14 41:8 44:1 60:2 Hosea 1:9–10 2:23).</p>



To find a passage quoted so often in the New Testament lets you know just how important it is.

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Again, one can spend a great deal of time on this verse alone; however, do not completely take it out of its context. Realize that the context of this passage tells us that this is the Lord Jesus Christ—Jehovah Elohim.

**From with Y<sup>e</sup>howah has become this;  
she is extraordinary in our [two] eyes.**

Psalms  
118:23

**This is directly from Y<sup>e</sup>howah;  
it is marvelous in our eyes.**

**This plan is Jehovah's;  
it is extraordinary to see it come to pass.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text	From with Y <sup>e</sup> howah has become this; she is extraordinary in our [two] eyes..
Septuagint	This has been done of the Lord; and it is wonderful in our eyes.
Significant differences:	No significant differences.

#### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV	The LORD has done this, and it is amazing to us.
The Message	This is GOD's work. We rub our eyes--we can hardly believe it!
NJB	This is Yahweh's doing, and we marvel at it.
TEV	This was done by the LORD; what a wonderful sight it is!

#### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

<i>God's Word™</i>	The LORD is responsible for this, and it is amazing for us to see.
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#### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

<i>Updated Emphasized Bible</i>	<From Yahweh> this has come to pass,    The same    is marvelous in our eyes.
LTHB	This is from Jehovah, it is marvelous in our eyes.
<i>Young's Updated LT</i>	From Jehovah hath this been, It is wonderful in our eyes.

**What is the gist of this verse?** All of this comes directly from God and it is wonderful and amazing for us to observe.

## Psalm 118:23a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>min</i> ]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
`êth (עִתְּ) [pronounced <i>ayth</i> ]	<i>with, at, near, by, among, directly from</i>	preposition (which is identical to the sign of the direct object)	Strong's #854 BDB #85
Together, min `êth mean <i>from proximity with, from with, from close proximity to, to proceed from someone</i> . A good up-to-date rendering might be <i>directly from</i> .			
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly <i>yhoh-WAH</i> ]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y<sup>e</sup>howah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
hâyâh (הִיא) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i> ]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
zô`th (זאת) [pronounced <i>zoth</i> ]	<i>here, this, thus</i>	feminine singular of zeh; demonstrative pronoun, adverb	Strong's #2063 (& 2088, 2090) BDB #260

**Translation:** *This is directly from Y<sup>e</sup>howah;... This is a feminine singular pronoun, referring back to what has been discussed—the fact that **the stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone**. This is the choice of Jehovah God; this is the plan of Jehovah God. The idea is, this is His plan; this is exactly what He planned to happen. Jesus Christ knew He would be rejected by men as a whole. This does not mean that God made men reject Him—mankind did that on its own, just as mankind sinned against God on their own. God designed His plan around man's negative volition.*

Matthew Henry: *The hand of God in all this: **This is the Lord's doing; it is from the Lord; it is with the Lord; it is the product of his counsel; it is his contrivance. Both the humiliation and the exaltation of the Lord Jesus were his work: "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know—this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men (Acts 2:22–23); The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord and against his Anointed;" for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place (Acts 4:26–28).***<sup>60</sup>

<sup>60</sup> Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 118:19–29. I expanded on his Scriptural references and inserted the Scripture as well.



## Psalm 118:23b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
hîy' (הִי) [pronounced <i>hee</i> ]	<i>she, it</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, personal pronoun	Strong's #1931 BDB #214
pâlâ' (פָּלָא) [pronounced <i>paw-LAW</i> ]	<i>things done wonderfully; therefore, incredible works, miracles, extraordinary acts</i>	feminine singular, Niphal participle	Strong's #6381 BDB #810
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b<sup>eh</sup></i> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
ʿayin (עַיִן) [pronounced <i>ĠAH-yin</i> ]	<i>eyes, two eyes, literal eye(s), spiritual eyes</i>	feminine dual noun with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person plural suffix	Strong's #5869 (and #5871) BDB #744

Together, the bēyth preposition and ʿayin mean *in my eyes* is used, it means *in my opinion, to my way of thinking, as I see it*.

**Translation:** ...it is marvelous in our eyes. To see God's plan unfold is a marvelous, incredible sight. The word used here is too often associated with miracles—i.e., in the mind of some who are less than discerning. The Bible is incredible. In the Old Testament, God tells us what He is going to do. In the New Testament gospels, we see what God does. And in the epistles, we are told what God did and what it meant. This is how many teachers teach: you tell the students, you repeat it; and then you remind them that you told them. What is impressive is, this all took place over a 2000–4000 year period of time. That is, God began very early on telling man what He was going to do. In fact, God told Adam and the woman what He was going to do. God continues this through Moses, and then through His priests, prophets and psalmists. The kind of prophecy found here is quite incredible; so, of course, we marvel when it comes to pass.

The psalmist write that this is marvelous in our eyes. The implication appears to be that the psalmist actually saw this, but, of course, he did not. As pointed out in the exegesis, this could be understood to mean *in our opinion, to our way of thinking, as we see it*. No matter who wrote this psalm, they did not see Jesus Christ; they did not see Him rejected by the scribes and pharisees. In fact, only a small segment of human population ever actually saw what occurred. Even a much smaller group actually had some clue as to what was going on; that is, that Jesus was the stone that the builders rejected and yet became the chief cornerstone.

Even His disciples fled when He was on the cross; so, even though Jesus uttered these words at the most apropos time, it is likely that few men, if any, actually understood at that time what was going on. So I can look back, and it is marvelous in my eyes; the psalmist can look forward into time, and it is marvelous in his eyes—and, what we would not have expected, those in the day of Jesus, for the most part, had little or no clue as to what was going on. Jesus did not die in the flesh circa 30 A.D. and rise from the dead, and a few days later, the disciples sat down and wrote the gospels. The impact of what they actually lived and saw eluded them—in fact, only at Pentecost did some of the disciples begin to get a clue. Then, a decade or more after the fact, they wrote their gospels. The most complete and well-researched gospel is Luke's and he wasn't even there to see any of it. Scofield estimates that John, an eyewitness to Jesus and His resurrection, wrote his gospel in 85–90 A.D. Matthew, Scofield estimates, wrote his gospel about 20 years after he walked with Jesus. Hmm, how do I explain this? Have you ever had a momentous even occur in your life, but when it happened, you did not recognize the import of it? For some of you, this could be your salvation. I can personally recall my 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday to some degree; but I cannot recall the day I was saved. What these disciples saw moved them, and got them doing things they could not imagine doing—but it took Matthew maybe 20 years to realize that maybe he should write some of this down. John decided

he should write these things down at the end of his life. If we study the gospels, we can look at the Apostles and think, “What a bunch of knuckleheads!” The things that they do and say—it is as if they have not even a clue. However, after Jesus is crucified and resurrected, then they change dramatically. And when they look back, they realize the importance of the events that they lived through and recorded these events. Ah, but I digress.

People are often impressed by miracles, signs and wonders. We think that, if God turns water into blood or into wine, that is the most incredible thing. Now, of course, that is incredible—but it is nothing compared to His Word. What we find here, in this context, is God telling us in His Word about the Messiah—what we should expect. Furthermore, this is written about 1000 years before it comes to pass; now that is incredible. Therefore, it might be good to examine...

The Messianic Passages	
Scripture	Incident
Gen. 3:15	“And I will put hostility between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He will bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.” After Adam and Eve sinned, God pronounced judgment—and His judgment was related to their different types of sins. The woman was deceived into sinning and the man chose to sin. The man looked at Eve and the fruit and knew the only way to keep her was to eat the fruit, even though he knew this was against God. God puts hostility between the serpent and the women (whom he deceived). Here, Messiah is the woman’s seed, as she will not pass on her old sin nature. Since the woman was deceived and did not sin knowingly, she does not pass on her sin nature; the man sinned knowingly, so his sin nature is biologically passed on to all of his children. The seed of the serpent is corrupted mankind; the seed of the woman is Jesus Christ (the only man to come from a virgin birth—therefore, without Adam’s sin nature). Jesus Christ would crush the head of Satan, while Satan would bruise Jesus’s heel (which is a reference to the cross and all that led up to the cross).
Gen. 49:10	“A scepter will never depart from Judah nor a ruler's staff from between his feet until Shiloh [the <i>Peacemaker</i> ] comes and the people obey him.” Jacob is speaking to his sons, and says that the leadership role of Judah (his 4 <sup>th</sup> -born, not his first) would be the dominant tribe until the coming of Messiah and obedience to Him. Judah was the dominant tribe of Israel from very early on, until the coming of Messiah, after which no tribe was dominant among the Jewish people. By the way, <i>obedience to Him</i> is believing in Jesus Christ.
Deut. 18:18	I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brothers, one like you, and will put My words in His mouth. And He shall speak to them all that I shall command Him. This was more than simply being a prophet from God—it was understood that Messiah would be <i>the Prophet</i> , as it were (see John 1:25 6:14 7:40).
1Chron. 17:11–14	God, through Nathan the prophet, told David: “And it will be, when your days have ended so that you must go to be with your fathers, I will raise up your seed after you, who shall be from your sons. And I will make his kingdom sure. He shall build Me a house, and I will establish his throne forever. I will be his Father, and he shall be My son. And I will not take My mercy away from him as I took it from him who was before you. And I will settle him in My house, and in My kingdom forever. And his throne shall be established forever.” This passage clearly applies to Jesus Christ, whereas a similar passage in 2Sam. 7:13–16 applies to Solomon, David’s son. <sup>61</sup>

<sup>61</sup> There is no contradiction here; these are both excerpts from the same communication from Nathan to David; what God had Nathan say was greater in length; and the portions concentrated on by the writer of Samuel and the editor of Chronicles simply shows the different approach of each book (Samuel is history from man’s perspective; and Chronicles is a history from God’s perspective).

The Messianic Passages	
Scripture	Incident
Job 19:25–27	For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last He will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God, Whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. My heart faints within me! Job knows that, at some point, he will see his Redeemer, Jesus Christ, even after his flesh is destroyed. A redeemer is one who will pay to purchase Job.
Psalms 2:2	The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against his Messiah. The chief priests and pharisees joined forces with the Romans to assault Jesus Christ.
Psalms 2:7	I will declare the decree of Jehovah. He has said to Me, "You are My Son; today I have begotten You." This was fulfilled in Matt. 3:17: <b>And lo, a voice from Heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."</b> See also Matt. 16:16 26:63 Mark 3:11 Luke 22:70 Acts 13:33.
Psalms 8:4–6	Who is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him? Yet you have made him a little lower than the angels and crowned him with glory and honor. You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet. This passage has a double-application. This is applied to mankind, those who are believers, and those who were originally given dominion over the earth, and those to whom dominion will be reestablished. We are made lower than the angels, yet we will be raised above them—however, all of this will be true because we are in Christ, to Whom this applies first (Heb. 2:6–8).
Psalms 16:10	For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption. Although Jesus Christ would physically and spiritually die on the cross, He would go down to Sheol to deliver a victorious proclamation; his flesh would not fall into putrification.
Psalms 22	The first 21 verses give a most detailed description of Jesus on the cross; more than what is found in the gospels. The final line of this psalm is, <b>It has been finished</b> (Jesus' final words on the cross).
Psalms 40:6–9	The writer of Hebrews applies this psalm to Jesus Christ in Heb. 10:5–7: <b>Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, "Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body have you prepared for me; in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure." Then I said, "Behold, I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the book." When he said above, "You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings" (these are offered according to the law), then he added, "Behold, I have come to do your will." He abolishes the first in order to establish the second.</b> Jesus Christ came to this world to fulfill the plan of God for His life, to offer Himself in our stead, to take upon his own body the punishment that we deserve for our sins.
Psalms 41:9	Although the bulk of Psalm 41 is not Messianic, there is one Messianic reference to Jesus Christ being betrayed by Judas: <b>Even my close friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted his heel against me.</b>
Psalms 45:6–7	The writer of Hebrews applies this passage to Jesus Christ: <b>But of the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness beyond Your companions."</b>

The Messianic Passages	
Scripture	Incident
Psalm 69:1–4, 7–12	Like many psalms, this has a double application, both to David (as his sins are mentioned in v. 5) and to Jesus Christ. <b>For it is for your sake that I have borne reproach, that dishonor has covered my face. I have become a stranger to my brothers, an alien to my mother's sons. For zeal for your house has consumed me, and the reproaches of those who reproach you have fallen on me</b> (vv. 7–9). Jesus Christ bore our sins, and the reproach rightfully belonging to us has fallen upon Him.
Psalm 98:2, 9	<b>Jehovah has made known His salvation; He has revealed His righteousness in the sight of the nations;...He is coming to judge the earth; He will judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with equity.</b> This refers to the 2 <sup>nd</sup> advent of Jesus Christ, when He returns to judge the earth (Rev. 20:11–15).
Psalm 102:1–10, 23	<b>Do not hide your face from me in the day of my distress! Incline your ear to me; answer me speedily in the day when I call! For my days pass away like smoke, and my bones burn like a furnace. My heart is struck down like grass and has withered; I forget to eat my bread. Because of my loud groaning my bones cling to my flesh</b> (vv. 2–5). <b>He has broken my strength in midcourse; he has shortened my days</b> (v. 23). This is both applied to psalmist when under great pressure (including physical maladies) and to Jesus Christ in relationship to the cross.
Psalm 103	This is a description of Jesus Christ as He would manifest the attributes of God in the flesh. <b>He pardons all of your iniquities, He heals all your diseases. He redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with grace and compassion</b> (vv. 3–4). <b>He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His grace toward those who fear/respect (and believe in) Him. As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us</b> (vv. 10–12).
Psalm 109:2–5, 24–25	<b>For wicked and deceitful mouths open against me; they speak against me with lying tongues. They surround me with hateful words and attack me without cause. In return for my love they accuse me, but I continue to pray. They repay me evil for good, and hatred for my love</b> (vv. 2–5). <b>I have become an object of ridicule to my accusers; when they see me, they shake their heads in scorn</b> (v. 25). Like many of the psalms, this again is a reference to Jesus on the day of His crucifixion.
Psalm 110:1, 4	A Psalm of David. The LORD says to my Lord: <b>"Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool"</b> (v. 1). The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind, <b>"You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek"</b> (v. 4). These couple verses speak of Jesus Christ, resurrected from the dead, a priest forever (see Heb. 3:1). In vv. 5–6 of this psalm, we have Jesus Christ destroying His enemies, which is the 2 <sup>nd</sup> advent.
Psalm 118:22–23	<b>The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. This is the LORD's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.</b> This is the passage we are studying. The builders are the Jewish religious establishment, and they reject Jesus Christ. However, Jesus Christ became the foundation of our faith.
Isa. 7:14	<b>Therefore, the Lord Himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive, have a son, and name him Immanuel.</b> This was, of course, fulfilled when the virgin Mary gave birth to Jesus (Matt. 1:18, 23–25 Luke 1:26–35). Immanuel means <i>God with us</i> .

The Messianic Passages	
Scripture	Incident
Isa. 9:6–7	For a child will be born for us, a son will be given to us, and the government will be on His shoulders. He will be named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. The dominion will be vast, and its prosperity will never end. He will reign on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish and sustain it with justice and righteousness from now on and forever. The zeal of the LORD of Hosts will accomplish this. This is an obvious reference to Jesus Christ in His incarnation.
Isa. 11:1–6	Then a shoot will grow from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots will bear fruit. The Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him--a Spirit of wisdom and understanding, a Spirit of counsel and strength, a Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD. His delight will be in the fear of the LORD. He will not judge by what He sees with His eyes, He will not execute justice by what He hears with His ears, but He will judge the poor righteously and execute justice for the oppressed of the land. He will strike the land with discipline from His mouth, and He will kill the wicked with a command from His lips. Righteousness and faithfulness will be a belt around His waist (vv. 1–5). This is one of the main places where we move from the 1 <sup>st</sup> to the 2 <sup>nd</sup> advents of our Lord. This passage also further identifies Messiah as coming in the line of Jesse.
Isa. 33:22	For Jehovah is our judge, Jehovah is our lawgiver, Jehovah is our king; He will save us. As Fausset points out, all 3 branches of government are found here: judicial, legislative and executive. There is no need for checks and balances for a government run by a perfect God.
Isa. 35:5–6	Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing; for in the wilderness waters shall break out, and streams in the desert (compare Isa. 32:3–4). Jesus Christ healed men of every disease and malady. When He was asked whether or not He was the Messiah, <b>Jesus replied, "Go and tell John what you have seen and heard; that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the gospel is proclaimed to the poor. And blessed is he who shall not be offended in Me"</b> (Luke 7:22–23). Jesus, in essence, replied that He was the Messiah, and told them why. See also Matt. 9:35 Mark 7:33–35 John 5:5–9.
Isa. 40:3–11	A voice of one crying out: Prepare the way of the LORD in the wilderness; make a straight highway for our God in the desert. And the glory of the LORD will appear, and all humanity will see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken. He protects His flock like a shepherd; He gathers the lambs in His arms and carries them in the fold of His garment. He gently leads those that are nursing (vv. 3, 5, 11). Much of this was uttered by John the Baptizer when in the desert wilderness.
Isa. 41:14	Do not fear, you worm Jacob, you men of Israel: I will help you—the LORD's declaration. Your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel. As often is found in the book of Isaiah, Jehovah God is differentiated from the Redeemer.
Isa. 42:1–5	"This is My Servant; I strengthen Him, this is My Chosen One; I delight in Him. I have put My Spirit on Him; He will bring justice to the nations (v. 1).
Isa. 48:16	Approach Me and listen to this. From the beginning I have not spoken in secret; from the time anything existed, I was there." And now the Lord GOD has sent me and His Spirit.
Isa. 49:26b	"All flesh will know that I, the LORD, am your Savior, and your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob."



## The Messianic Passages

Scripture	Incident
Isa. 53	<p>He was despised and rejected by men, a man of suffering who knew what sickness was. He was like one people turned away from; He was despised, and we didn't value Him. Yet He Himself bore our sicknesses, and He carried our pains; but we in turn regarded Him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted. But He was pierced because of our transgressions, crushed because of our iniquities; punishment for our peace was on Him, and we are healed by His wounds. We all went astray like sheep; we all have turned to our own way; and the LORD has punished Him for the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth. Like a lamb led to the slaughter and like a sheep silent before her shearers, He did not open His mouth (vv. 3–7). Yet the LORD was pleased to crush Him, and He made Him sick. When You make Him a restitution offering, He will see His seed, He will prolong His days, and the will of the LORD will succeed by His hand. He will see it out of His anguish, and He will be satisfied with His knowledge. My righteous servant will justify many, and He will carry their iniquities. Therefore I will give Him the many as a portion, and He will receive the mighty as spoil, because He submitted Himself to death, and was counted among the rebels; yet He bore the sin of many and interceded for the rebels (vv. 10–12). What happened on the cross is more clearly portrayed here and in Psalm 22 than anywhere else in Scripture.</p>
Isa. 61:1–3	<p>He was teaching in their synagogues, being acclaimed by everyone. He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. As usual, He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath day and stood up to read. The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to Him, and unrolling the scroll, He found the place where it was written: The Spirit of the Lord is on Me, because He has anointed Me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim freedom to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. He then rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. And the eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fixed on Him. He began by saying to them, "Today as you listen, this Scripture has been fulfilled" (Luke 4:15–21). Our Lord reads vv. 1–2 and then tells His audience, "Today, this Scripture has been fulfilled in your ears." This is easily one of the most dramatic moments of the gospels.</p>
Jer. 23:5–6	<p>Behold, the days come, says Jehovah, that I will raise to David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and act wisely, and shall do judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely. And this is His name by which He shall be called, JEHOVAH, OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. Here, the line of the Messiah is limited to the line of David. Furthermore, Jesus is called <i>Jehovah, our righteousness</i>—what could be more in line with soteriology? We are righteous because we are in Christ—we share His righteousness—He is our righteousness (see Rom. 3:22 1Cor. 1:30 2Cor. 5:21 Philip. 3:9).</p>
Micah 5:2–3	<p>"But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, little among the clans of Judah, but from you One will go forth for Me to be a ruler in Israel. His appearances are from long and, from the days of eternity" (v. 2). Messiah would come out of Bethlehem. As we see in John 7:40–43, many Jews understood this passage in this way. Furthermore, this passage tells us of Jesus' eternal existence (compare John 17:5, 24 Col. 1:17).</p>
Zech. 12:10	<p>"And I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me Whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him, like the bitter weeping over a firstborn." This is Israel in the second advent, when they come to the realization of what it was that they did as a nation against Jesus Christ.</p>

As has been mentioned, there is some disagreement as to which psalms are Messianic. The Jews historically saw many of these passages as being Messianic, but after our Lord came, some changed their minds about what were previously seen as Messianic. Also, in this study, I have no doubt left out some passages here and there as well (e.g., Psalm 34:20 35:11 38:11 68:18 78:2 Isa. 50:6 60:3 Amos 8:9 Mal. 3:1 Zech. 9:9 11:12–13 13:7). See Josh McDowell, *The New Evidence that Demands a Verdict*; ©1999 by Josh McDowell; pp. 168–192 for an well-organized, outstanding list of Messianic prophecies.

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Since we have covered Messianic passages, we should also look at situations and men who foreshadow our Lord as well.

### Christ is Foreshadowed in the Old Testament

Scripture	Incident
Gen. 4:2–7	The difference between the offerings of Cain and Abel tell us about the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Abel brought to God a blood sacrifice, the firstborn of his flock—an animal without spot or blemish. This spoke of Jesus Christ and His work on the cross. Cain brought God the works of his hands, the produce which he had grown.
Gen. 22	Abraham's firstborn son (through Sarah) is Isaac, a son born to them as a promise from God (she was 90 and he was 100 when God made this promise to them). The fact that they were able to have a child was miraculous. However, what God told Abraham to do was to sacrifice Isaac, his firstborn. This is something God had never asked for before or since. This is a unique event in history. Abraham took Isaac to a mountain of offer him up by cutting his throat (this was the plan). Yet, he expected to return with Isaac (v. 5 in the Hebrew). As Abraham is about to cut Isaac's throat, a substitute is provided for Isaac, a ram, which was offered up in place of Isaac. All of this shadows Jesus Christ and His sacrifice on the cross for our sins. Jesus Christ is the firstborn of God the Father, offered as a substitutionary sacrifice for our sins.
Ex. 1–2, 19–20, 32	Moses was a type of Christ. He is associated with women only from his birth (as the <i>seed of the woman</i> ); he was condemned to death even before his birth; and he was brought up among people who were hostile toward him (Moses was raised among the Egyptians). Moses acted as a mediator between God and His people, as does our Lord (see Ex. 19:16 20:18 1Tim. 2:5). Moses also made intercession for his people (Ex. 32:7–14, 33 Num. 14:11–20 Heb. 7:25).
Ex. 12	The Passover Lamb was a type of Christ. When death was going to fall upon all of the firstborn, each household of Israel was to take a young, but adult male sheep or goat, and <b>the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel is to kill it between the evenings</b> (v. 6b). God's judgment against all men (represented by Egypt) would pass over the Jews, as they would be under the blood of the sacrifice). The sacrificial animal which all the congregation of Israel would rise up and kill, of course, is Jesus Christ; and the blood of the animal covering the Jewish family is the blood of Jesus Christ which gives us protection from judgment. The sacrifice must be roasted only by fire, which speaks of the judgment of Jesus Christ (fire is generally used as a symbol for judgment throughout the Bible); and all family members must eat of the sacrifice (which is representative of believing in Jesus Christ—John 6:53–56).
Ex. 17:1–7	The no-water test of the Israelites was a foreshadowing of Jesus Christ. The Jews were thirsty and wanted water, and Moses struck the rock (punishment of Jesus Christ for our sins) and from the rock sprang living waters (John 4:10, 13–14).



## Christ is Foreshadowed in the Old Testament

Scripture	Incident
Ex. 36:8-38:20	The Tabernacle and its furniture speak of Jesus Christ. For instance, the Ark is wood overlain with gold, which speaks of our Lord's humanity and deity. The Ark was generally unseen by Israel, as it was kept in the Holy of Holies; just as Jesus Christ was veiled from the Old Testament Jew. In the Ark was the Law, Aaron's rod that budded, and a bowl of manna. The Law shows us where we have sinned against God; Aaron's rod that budded speaks of the resurrection of Jesus Christ after His death; the bowl of manna speaks of God's provision for us, even though we are completely undeserving.
Lev. 1–7	The Levitical offerings speak of Jesus Christ dying for our sins. The animals without spot and without blemish speak of Jesus Christ; their throats being slit is His death, and the burning of the flesh speaks of His dying for our sins.
Num. 20:8–13	The second no-water test was even more telling. The rock had already been struck (Jesus Christ is judged only once for our sins); and there is no need to strike the rock a second time. God told Moses to speak to the rock, and out from it would flow living waters. Moses struck the rock twice, which ruined the foreshadowing of Christ to come; and Moses was not let into the land because of this act of disobedience.
Ruth	Boaz acts as the kinsman-redeemer to Ruth, who was legally related to Ruth (as Jesus is legally related to man through Joseph); Boaz purchased Ruth out of love, just as Jesus purchased us from the slave market of sin out of love with His death on the cross. I listed 10 parallels between Boaz and Christ (see my exegesis of Ruth 4:17a). I listed 13 parallels between Boaz's redeeming of Ruth and Christ redeeming us (see my exegesis of Ruth 4:22).
1Sam. 1–2	Samuel is a type of Christ and there are about a dozen parallels between them. Among them, Samuel appears to come out of nowhere to become the High Priest of Israel (he did not come out of the tribe of Levites) as well as a prophet. Our Lord also appears to come out of nowhere and is a prophet and our High Priest. Neither Samuel nor Jesus were related to the fathers who raised them. They were both dedicated to their service at a very young age and began their ministries at very young ages. All of this is covered at the end of my exegesis of 1Sam. 2. I covered some additional parallels in the exegesis of 1Sam. 7:3.
1Sam. 16–29	David is also a type of Christ. In my exegesis of 1Sam. 22:2, I have listed a dozen parallels between Jesus Christ and David. Misfits flocked to David and Jesus; both were known as deliverers; neither one turned anyone away who sought them out; and they were both rejected by those who should have celebrated their coming. The remainder of parallels, as well as an expansion of what you find here, is found in my exegesis of 1Sam. 22:2.

No doubt I have left out some people and circumstances which parallel Jesus Christ come in the flesh. However, these 11 should be enough to illustrate the point.

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It is very difficult to know what I know and to be faithless—in fact, it is intellectually dishonest. Mathematically, the odds of Jesus Christ fulfilling the many prophecies which apply to Him are astronomical. Peter Stoner wrote a book called *Science Speaks* which deals with just a handful of those prophecies, showing that for one man to fulfill them is a statistical anomaly. Unfortunately, statistical probability eludes most people. They view 1 in a trillion probability just as they view 1 in a 100. It does not compute to most people's brains that there is a distinct difference. The latter is unlikely; the former is an impossibility. Furthermore, Stone's probability was actually 1 chance in  $2.8 \times 10^{28}$ . That is less likely than winning the top prize in 5 lotteries in a row without ever buying a ticket. It just is not going

to happen. Not unless God designed it in that way. By the way, this is the probability for fulfilling just 8 of the many promises concerning the Messiah.<sup>62</sup>

What we believe or don't believe with respect to Jesus Christ does not boil down to, what is most likely, what is reasonable, what is rational; it is a matter of volition—you choose to believe or you choose not to believe. If you want to check out the odds, then all logic rules in favor of Jesus Christ being the Messiah, the God Who created the universe, the God Who breathed life into you and me. And there are dozens—if not hundreds—of books out there (classified under *Christian Apologetics*) which make this clear. Anyone with an open mind cannot pick up, say, Josh McDowell's book *The New Evidence that Demands a Verdict* and walk away saying, "I do not believe in God and I do not believe in Jesus, because there is not enough evidence to believe." At best, they can say, "I do not believe in God and I do not believe in Jesus because I choose not to." However, very, very few people ever are willing to read books akin to this. The key is not what is reasonable and what is not; the key is positive and negative volition.

A reasonable question is, *why bother with apologetics? If no one will believe, even if they can be convinced that Christianity is reasonable, then why bother?* Apologetics help those who already believe in Jesus Christ. People like me—people who are concerned, *did I just choose something (or, Someone) that is illogical?* When my faith is tested, and I pass a test with a D- or I flunk that test; all I have to do is spend a little time in apologetics, and I kick myself for being such a hard-headed ass.

**Application:** When you doubt your faith; when you question Who Jesus Christ is, then pick up a copy of *The New Evidence that Demands a Verdict* and read a chapter or two in the first section—it almost doesn't matter which one you choose. And in a very short time, not only will you be convinced that believing in Jesus Christ is reasonable, but that any other alternative is unreasonable and illogical.

<p><b>This [is] the day made Y<sup>e</sup>howah; let us rejoice and let us be glad to Him.</b></p>	<p>Psalm 118:24</p>	<p><b>This is the day Y<sup>e</sup>howah made; let us rejoice and be glad with regards to it [or, Him].</b></p>
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**This is the day Jehovah has made; the time He has constructed;  
let us rejoice and be glad in it.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

<p>Masoretic Text</p> <p>Septuagint</p>	<p>This [is] the day made Y<sup>e</sup>howah; let us rejoice and let us be glad in it [or, in Him].</p> <p>This is the day which the Lord has made: let us exult and rejoice in it.</p>
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Significant differences: None.

#### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

<p>CEV</p> <p>The Message</p> <p>REB</p> <p>TEV</p>	<p>This day belongs to the LORD! Let's celebrate and be glad today.</p> <p>This is the very day GOD acted-- let's celebrate and be festive!</p> <p>This is the day on which the LORD has acted, a day for us to exult and rejoice. [on...acted: or the LORD has made].</p> <p>This is the day of the LORD's victory;</p>
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<sup>62</sup> There is actually more to the probability than you see here; if we were to take the entire population of man from creation until now, then the probability of some one in that group fulfilling this prophecy becomes 1 in 100,000,000,000,000,000. Still, very unlikely.

let us be happy, let us celebrate!

**Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):**

*God's Word™* This is the day the LORD has made. Let's rejoice and be glad today!  
*JPS (Tanakh)* This is the day that the LORD has made—  
 let us exult and rejoice on it.

**Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**

*Updated Emphasized Bible* This is the day which Yahweh has made,  
 We will exult and be glad therein [or, *in Him*].  
*NRSV* This is the day that the LORD has made;  
 let us rejoice and be glad in it. [Or, *in Him*].  
*WEB* This is the day that Yahweh has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it!  
*Young's Updated LT* This is the day Jehovah has made, We rejoice and are glad in it.

**What is the gist of this verse?** When the builders reject the Rock which became the chief cornerstone, this is the day that Jehovah made and we are to rejoice and be glad in it.

Psalm 118:24a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
zeh (זֶה) [pronounced zeh]	<i>here, this, thus</i>	demonstrative adjective	Strong's #2088, 2090 (& 2063) BDB #260
yôwm (יּוֹם) [pronounced yohm]	<i>day; time; today</i> (with a definite article)	masculine singular noun with a definite article	Strong's #3117 BDB #398
ʿāsâh (עָשָׂה) [pronounced gaw-SAWH]	<i>to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form, to prepare</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, pq	Strong's #6213 BDB #793
YHWH (יְהוָה) [pronunciation is possibly yohh-WAH]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y<sup>e</sup>howah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217

**Translation:** *This is the day Y<sup>e</sup>howah made;...* The word *day* does not always refer to a 24 hour period in the Scripture, no more than it means that today. One could therefore read this as, *this is the time Jehovah has pre-designed and brought into being*. What we are celebrating here is the *day* of the first advent of Christ—when He came to us and died for our sins, despite the fact that he was rejected by those who should have known Him. If the phrase *the day of the Lord* was not used in Scripture to refer to the second advent, when Jesus returns, it would be an excellent designation for what this passage refers to. The idea is, this is all the plan of God; God has known what would happen from the very beginning. Psalm 22 and Isa. 53 both refer to a Lord Who has been rejected by His own.

I don't want to spend a great deal of time on this, therefore, I am not going to give a complete listing below; however, I want to give enough examples to indicate that the word *day* can refer to more than a 24-hour period of time as well as less than a 24-hour period of time. Furthermore, there are a number of instances where time length is not even an issue when the word *day* is used.

How Long is a Day?	
Length	Scripture Reference
Less than a 24-hour period of time	<p>Gen. 1:5a: <b>God called the light "day," and He called the darkness "night."</b> Roughly half of a 24-hour day is what we find here. See also Gen. 1:14 8:22.</p> <p>Gen. 2:17: <b>"You must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for on the day you eat from it, you will certainly die."</b> The very instant that Adam ate from the tree, he died spiritually.</p>
A 24-hour period of time	Gen. 1:5b: <b>Evening came, and then morning: the first day.</b> In context, this is the first day of restoration. See also Gen. 1:8, 13.
More than a 24-hour period of time	Gen. 35:3: <b>We must get up and go to Bethel. I will build an altar there to the God who answered me in my day of distress. He has been with me everywhere I have gone.</b> Jacob had been stressed out over what his sons had done to the Hivites in the previous chapter for well over a day.
The length of the day is not really in view; the date is the issue.	<p>Gen. 8:5: <b>The waters continued to recede until the tenth month; in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains were visible.</b> See Gen. 7:11 8:4.</p> <p>Gen. 15:18: <b>On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, "I give this land to your offspring, from the brook of Egypt to the Euphrates River..."</b> See also Gen. 7:23, 26.</p> <p>Gen. 35:20: <b>Jacob set up a marker on her grave; it is the marker at Rachel's grave to this day.</b> Here, the time length is not an issue; the author is simply indicating that, at the time of writing, that marker is still there.</p>

Therefore, when you see the word *day* in Scripture, do not feel that the proper interpretation is a 24-hour period of time.

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This is God's plan. God does has a perfect plan, and this verse tells us that what we are seeing with our own two eyes tells us what He is doing. God designed His plan and he brings it to pass; much as an architect might design a building or a home for himself and then oversee its construction. It is like the scriptwriter who write a screenplay and then directs it. God designed His plan in eternity past; he brings that plan into being right in front of us, after telling us what He would do.

We have to take this in context. This refers back to vv. 22–23. We have the scribes, the High Priests, the pharisees and the Sadducees. Many of them are very learned in the Old Testament Scriptures and many of them know the Messianic passages. When is there a better time to call to God for His deliverance than during the time of our Lord? So these Jews were open to the Messiah—or so they thought. Here is the problem—and for many unbelievers today, it is there problem too—they wanted to make God in their own image. They saw the Messiah as a political leader who would destroy the Roman forces which controlled the Land of Promise. Jesus was not a political revolutionary; Jesus was not this man. They were religious; Jesus was not. They made certain that everyone had the chance to observe them being religious by doing various religious things—but Jesus did not approve of their legalistic religion. Any man in that time could have taken the Bible and said, "Okay, here are two dozen prophecies which we generally apply to Messiah, and Jesus fulfills those prophecies. Furthermore, we can see with our own eyes that He can heal the sick, make the lame walk and the blind see. How I personally feel about Jesus is not the issue—He is obviously the Messiah and I need to fall in line with His plan; He does not have to fit into my preconceived notions.

**Application:** We all have certain beliefs which we have been brought up, which deal with morality, religion and politics, and these beliefs are so etched in our souls that we have a hard time letting go of them. If you are taught the same thing, day after day, in your youth, you are going to believe it and it is going to be pretty tough to ever change your mind. However, God is not going to conform to your way of seeing the world. If you think to yourself, “Hmm, my god is going to be a little nicer and he’s going to reduce the suffering in this world,” do you think God is going to suddenly hop to and change to suit your perceptions? No; in fact, hell no! Let me make it clear that, whatever you believe, it is not going to necessarily line up 100% with the way that God is—especially if your parents are religious or unbelievers (or both). So, don’t expect that God will do a 180 for you in order to get you to believe in Him. It’s not going to happen. God is immutable; His character does not change. He is not perfect justice and righteousness one day, and almost perfect justice and righteousness the next. God does not adjust to our perception of Him; we must adjust our own perception to Who and What God is. We may not, for instance, think that we need to be forgiven by God; we may not believe that Jesus Christ needed to die on our behalf. But you see, it does not matter what you want to believe in; God is still not going to conform to your image of Him.

Similarly, when God appeared in the flesh to the religious types in the Land of Promise, many rejected Him because they had a different view of God. They saw the Messiah as their deliverer here on earth; they were ready to band together, grab a sword, and move against the Roman empire—led by the Messiah. When *this* Messiah did not show up, the religious types of that day refused to adjust their thinking.

Now, you may ask, *where did that thinking come from? Why did they think Messiah would lead them in their rebellion against Rome?* The passages which deal with the Messiah of God seem to be almost schizophrenic. We have Him as the conquering Hero; and as the suffering servant. The key is the advent: in the first advent, Jesus Christ is the suffering servant, because the cross must precede the crown. At the second advent, He will be the conquering Hero. In Scripture, these passages are sometimes mashed together—that is, Jesus Christ in His first advent is prophesied right next to Jesus Christ in His second advent. At this point in time, seeing these passages with some perspective, we can differentiate between them. However, at that time, it was more difficult to grasp the idea of two advents.

You may ask once more: *isn’t that just a little unfair? Don’t we have a better chance to believe and be saved now?* No, and this means you have not been paying attention. Here’s the deal: whether we believe or not in Jesus Christ is a *matter of volition*; men stood and watched Jesus cure person after person, without any failures, without Him blaming someone for their lack of faith; and they listened to His perfect teaching on the Word—and some believed and some did not. What could be a better opportunity to believe in Jesus or not than to actually observe Him perform miracle after miracle, curing diseases of all sorts? However, as I said, it is a matter of choice. Some observed these things and hardened their hearts and pondered instead, *how could they capture and kill Him?*

### Psalm 118:24b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s Numbers
gîyl (גִּיל) [pronounced <i>geel</i> ]	<i>to go in a circle; the leap for joy, to rejoice</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person plural, Qal imperfect with the voluntative hê	Strong’s #1523 BDB #162
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong’s # BDB #251
sâmach (סָמַח) [pronounced saw- MAHKH]	<i>to rejoice, to be glad, to be joyful, to be merry</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person plural, Qal imperfect with the voluntative hê	Strong’s #8055 BDB #970

## Psalm 118:24b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lâmed (ל) (pronounced <sup>P</sup> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	directional preposition with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510

**Translation:** ...let us rejoice and be glad with regards to it [or, Him]. We are to leap for joy and to be glad of His plan; of the day of His plan, or the time of His plan. For us, the plan encompasses several thousand years (in fact, hundreds of thousands of years, as pre-history is a part of His plan). To God, this is a drop in the bucket; this is barely a blip on His eternal radar. With Scripture, we see this plan presented as a whole. We are commanded here to celebrate that. Specifically, we are commanded to rejoice in the first advent, when Jesus is the Rock which the builders reject, and still becomes the chief cornerstone.

With regards to the interpretation, given that *day* is the nearest masculine singular noun, *it* probably refers back to *day*. It is used in such a way as to refer to the *era* or *time period* of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have the same use of *day* today (e.g., *the day of the horse and buggy*). Again, as in a previous verse, we could understand this to me that we rejoice and are glad in Him; although this is a legitimate translation, I don't believe this is the meaning intended by this author.

R. B. Thieme Jr. sometimes goes off on a tirade about commentaries and how useless they are. In many cases, he is right. Matthew Henry talks about how this probably describes the *Christian Sabbath*. First of all, there is no *Christian Sabbath*. Secondly, we are in the Old Testament, where the Church Age is veiled—which is why Paul refers to Church Age doctrine as mystery doctrine (1Cor. 2:7 Eph. 3:3–9 5:32 Col. 1:26–2:2). Therefore, there is going to be precious little revealed in the Old Testament about that which is specific to the Church Age.

Now, just how so many commentators jumped on the *Christian Sabbath* interpretation of this passage, I don't know; but the main thing I want you to recognize is, the time length of a day—a 24-hour period—is generally not what is in view when we find the word *day* in Scripture. Simply because we find the word *day* in a passage about Jesus Christ, that does not mean that we are speaking of the so-called *Christian Sabbath*.

Now, I do not know how much you know. If you are thinking, *isn't this psalm, in this portion, about Jesus?* Of course it is; Jesus' death on the cross rescues all men who believe across all dispensations and into all time periods. In one verse, I gave you a boat-load of examples of Scripture which Jesus fulfilled. Jesus did not come in the Church Age. Jesus came to us during the Age of Israel. Jesus came **not to abolish the Law but to fulfill the Law**. Jesus did all that the Law required. Because Jesus fulfilled the Law in the flesh, He was qualified to die on our behalf (as He did not have to pay for His own sins). The Church Age did not begin until after Jesus ascended and the Holy Spirit was sent.

**Oh now, Y<sup>e</sup>howah, deliver, please;  
oh now, Y<sup>e</sup>howah, prosper, please.**

Psalm  
118:25

**Oh now, Y<sup>e</sup>howah, deliver [us] please;  
oh now, Y<sup>e</sup>howah, prosper [us] please.**

**Deliver us, Jehovah, deliver us now;  
prosper us, Jehovah, give us prosperity today.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

### Ancient texts:

#### Masoretic Text

Oh now, Y<sup>e</sup>howah, deliver, please;  
oh now, Y<sup>e</sup>howah, prosper, please.

Septuagint O Lord, save now: O Lord, send now prosperity.

Significant differences: None.

### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV We'll ask the LORD to save us! We'll sincerely ask the LORD to let us win.  
 The Message Salvation now, GOD. Salvation now! Oh yes, GOD--a free and full life!.  
 NJB We beg you, Yahweh, save us,  
 we beg you, Yahweh, give us victory!  
 NLT Please, LORD, please save us.  
 Please, LORD, please give us success.  
 REB LORD, deliver us, we pray;  
 LORD, grant us prosperity.

### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™ We beg you, O LORD, save us! We beg you, O LORD, give us success!  
 JPS (Tanakh) O LORD, deliver us!  
 O LORD, let us prosper!

### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

WEB Save us now, we beg you, Yahweh; Yahweh, we beg you, now send prosperity.  
 Young's Updated LT I ask You, O Jehovah, save, I pray You, I ask You, O Jehovah, prosper, I pray You.

**What is the gist of this verse?** The psalmist calls to Jehovah to deliver them and to prosper them.

Psalm 118:25a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾānnâ (אָנָּה) [pronounced AWN-naw]	oh now; ah now; I [we] beseech [pray] you	Interjection of entreaty	Strong's #577 BDB #58
ʾĀnnâ is a contraction of the words Strong's #253 or #162 (an onomatopoetic interjection of lamentation, meaning <i>ah, alas</i> ); and Strong's #4994 (a particle used for a submissive and modest request, meaning <i>now; I pray you, I urge you</i> ).			
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly yohoh-WAH]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y<sup>e</sup>howah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
yâsha' (יָשָׁא) [pronounced yaw- SHAHG]	to deliver, to save; to set free, to preserve; to aid, to give relief	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Hiphil imperative; with the voluntative hê	Strong's #3467 BDB #446
nâ' (נָּ) [pronounced naw]	please, I pray you, I respectfully implore (ask, or request of) you, I urge you	particle of entreaty	Strong's #4994 BDB #609



**Translation:** *Oh now, Y<sup>e</sup>howah, deliver [us] please;...* Since we do not have a suffix here, it is unclear whether the psalmist is asking God to deliver him or to deliver Israel—however, there is no reason why it cannot be applied in both ways. Deliverance can be temporal (e.g., delivering Israel from her enemies) or eternal (delivering us from the bonds of sin).

In vv. 10–14, the psalmist is speaking of Israel and his place in Israel as a man of power (since he personalizes the encompassing of the Gentiles). He ends that section by saying that the Lord is his strength and deliverance; here, he asks for that deliverance to take place. In vv. 17–18, the psalmist indicates that he has been under great personal pressure—as well as discipline, and he indicates that God has not given him over to death. However, it is in this verse (v. 25) where the psalmist asks for personal deliverance.

### Psalm 118:25b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾānnâ (אָנָּא) [pronounced AWW-naw]	<i>oh now; ah now; I [we] beseech [pray] you</i>	Interjection of entreaty	Strong's #577 BDB #58
ʾĀnnâ is a contraction of the words Strong's #253 or #162 (an onomatopoetic interjection of lamentation, meaning <i>ah, alas</i> ); and Strong's #4994 (a particle used for a submissive and modest request, meaning <i>now; I pray you, I urge you</i> ).			
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly yoh-WAH]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y<sup>e</sup>howah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
tsâlach (תִּצַּח) [pronounced tsaw-LACH]	<i>to make successful, to prosper, to make prosperous; to accomplish prosperity, to finish well, to be successful</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Hiphil imperative with the voluntative hê	Strong's #6743 BDB #852
nâ' (נָא) [pronounced naw]	<i>please, I pray you, I respectfully implore (ask, or request of) you, I urge you</i>	particle of entreaty	Strong's #4994 BDB #609

**Translation:** *...oh now, Y<sup>e</sup>howah, prosper [us] please.* The psalmist not only asks for simple deliverance, but he asks God for prosperity as well. Too often, Christians act as if life is horrid, that we should just go along the best we can, giving all of our money to the church, and eat only rice and beans. Asceticism has always been a part of religious activity, Christian or otherwise. Our souls tend to lean toward asceticism or lasciviousness; therefore, we would expect religions to weave these concepts into their doctrine. This is why we find the phallic cults throughout history where sex with temple prostitutes is a part of worship; this is why we have the occasional flamboyant Black preacher who shows off his material prosperity and indicates that this should be the norm for all believers. On the other side of the coin, this is why we find Catholic monks taking a vow of poverty, and living with the barest of necessities. It is really all about the trend of the old sin nature. Whichever way your old sin nature points, that is the direction that many people go, believers or not.

**Application:** One of the great principles that we find in Scripture is balance. When you see a church whose emphasis is upon speaking in tongues, or Christian service, or missionary work among the community—that is, there is a great emphasis upon this or that, that congregation is generally out of kilter. Instead of the congregation being in fellowship and learning God's Word, they are doing something, and most of them are doing the same thing. If this is what is happening in your church, your church is out of balance. If this is what your life is about—it's all work, it's all play, it's all religious activity (I am speaking of an over-emphasis—I do not mean that you spend 24 hours a day on this or that)—then your life is out of balance. Or if all you live for is a specific time period (like weekends), your life is out of kilter. A believer who is spiritually growing is going to have balance in his life.

I found the following information to be moderately interesting:

### The Jewish Use of Psalm 118 in Ceremony

Let me append to this a few words from William Aidis Wright: [Save now, I ask You, O Lord](#), etc. Hosanna. The cry of the multitudes as they thronged in our Lord's triumphal procession into Jerusalem (Matt. 21:9, 18 Mark 11:9, 15 John 12:13) was taken from this Psalm, from which they were accustomed to recite Psalm 118:25–26 at the Feast of Tabernacles. On that occasion the great Hallel, consisting of Psalms 113–118, was chanted by one of the priests and at certain intervals the multitudes joined in the responses, waving their branches of willow and palm, and shouting as they waved them, Hallelujah, or Hosannah, or [“O Lord, I ask You, send now prosperity.”](#) This [the waving of the branches] was done at the recitation of the first and last verses of Psalm 118; but according to the school of Hillel, at the words [“Save now, we ask You.”](#) The school of Shammai, on the contrary, say it was at the words, [“Send now prosperity.”](#) Rabban Gamaliel and R. Joshua were observed by R. Akiba to wave their branches only at the words, [“Save now, we beseech thee”](#) (Mishna, Succah, Joshua 3:9). On each of the seven days during which the feast lasted the people thronged the court of the temple, and went in procession about the altar, setting their boughs bending towards it; the trumpets sounding as they shouted Hosanna. But on the seventh day they marched seven times round the altar, shouting meanwhile the great Hosannah to the sound of the trumpets of the Levites (Lightfoot, Temple Service, Joshua 16:2). The very children who could wave the palm branches were expected to take part in the solemnity (Mishna, Succah, Joshua 3:15; Matt. 3:15). From the custom of waving the boughs of myrtle and willow during the service the name Hosannah was ultimately transferred to the boughs themselves, so that according to Elias Levita (Thisbi. s. v.), “the bundles of the willows of the brook which they carry at the Feast of Tabernacles are called Hosannahs.”

Taken from William Aidis Wright, from *Smith's Dictionary of the Bible*, 1863.

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[Blessings to the One coming in a name of Y<sup>e</sup>howah;  
we have praised you \[plural\] from a house of Y<sup>e</sup>howah.](#)

Psalm  
118:26

[Blessings \[or, happinesses to\] to the One coming in the name of Y<sup>e</sup>howah;  
we praise \[or, celebrate\] you from the house of Y<sup>e</sup>howah.](#)

[Blessings to the One Who comes in the name of Jehovah;  
we celebrate You from the house of Jehovah.](#)

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text

[Blessings to the One coming in a name of Y<sup>e</sup>howah;  
we have praised you \[plural\] from a house of Y<sup>e</sup>howah.](#)

Septuagint

[Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord: we have blessed you \[plural\] out of the house of the Lord.](#)

Significant differences:

None.

#### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV

[God bless the one who comes in the name of the LORD! We praise you from here in the house of the LORD.](#)

The Message

[Blessed are you who enter in GOD's name-- from GOD's house we bless you!](#)

**Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):**

God's Word™	Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the LORD. We bless you from the LORD'S house.
JPS (Tanakh)	May he who enters be blessed in the name of the LORD; we bless you from the House of the LORD.

**Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**

NRSV	Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the LORD [or, <i>Blessed in the name of the LORD is the one who comes</i> ]. We bless you from the house of the LORD.
WEB	Blessed is he who comes in the name of Yahweh! We have blessed you out of the house of Yahweh.
Young's Updated LT	Blessed is he who is coming In the name of Jehovah, We blessed you from the house of Jehovah.

**What is the gist of this verse?** The psalmist calls for blessings for the One Who comes in the name of the Lord; and he says we bless You [plural] from the house of Jehovah.

This is a deceptively simple verse which requires great skill to explain properly.

Psalm 118:26a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
bârak <sup>e</sup> (בָּרַךְ) [pronounced baw-RAHK <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>blessed, blessed be [is], blessings to; happiness to [for], happiness [is]</i>	Qal passive participle	Strong's #1288 BDB #138
bôw' (בּוֹא) [pronounced boh]	<i>the one entering [coming, one going] [in]; he who enters [goes, comes (in)]</i>	Qal active participle with the definite article	Strong's #935 BDB #97
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
shêm (שֵׁם) [pronounced shame]	<i>name, reputation, character</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #8034 BDB #1027
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly yohh-WAH]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y<sup>e</sup>howah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217

**Translation:** Blessings [or, *happinesses to*] to the One coming in the name of Y<sup>e</sup>howah;... Although, one could simply understand this phrase to refer to a prophet or priest who comes in the name of Jehovah, that is not its meaning in context. In context, we are speaking of *the stone which the builders have rejected*; we are speaking of *the stone which has become the cornerstone* (v. 22). We are speaking of God, Who has become the salvation of the psalmist (v. 21). Since this previous portion of this psalm has been seen as Messianic, there is no reason to interpret the rest of this psalm differently. The One coming in the name of Jehovah is specifically Jesus Christ. This is, for most of you, fairly easy to grasp. That is, this interpretation is just what you would expect. This was also the interpretation given this verse by those who greeted Jesus when He entered into Jerusalem (Matt. 21:9).

They sang this verse as He road into the city upon a donkey (also a fulfillment of Scripture; compare Isa. 62:11 Zech. 9:9 Matt. 21:5).

Allow me to be a little more precise. As Jesus came into Jerusalem on a colt, the people sang, “**Hosanna to the Son of David; Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest!**” (Matt. 21:9b). This is not a direct quotation from our passage. However, there are very strong similarities. *Hosanna* is very similar to the word which begins both lines of v. 25. It is not an exact transliteration, nor do we find the line *the Son of David* in this psalm. What probably happened—and this is legitimate—someone wrote a hymn which was inspired by this passage in Scripture. The writer takes the Hiphil of *to save, to deliver* and adds to this *I pray, I ask you, now;* and we have the word *Hosanna! Save [us] now; deliver [us] please!* These people who greet Jesus as He enters into the city of Jerusalem during holy week have ignored, however, what comes before: **The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.** Those who are singing this to Jesus have taken their favorite part of this passage, but they are ignoring its context. This is the sort of approach which believers have often taken with regards to Scripture. However, what these Jews do recognize is, Jesus is the Son of David, which is one of the many ways to denote the Messiah.

Jesus quotes this verse again in Matt. 23:37–39: “**O, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling! Behold, your house is being left to you desolate! For I say to you, from now on, you will not see Me until you say, Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!**” To interpret this: Jesus is speaking to those who are negative toward Him (Scribes and pharisees—see Matt. 23:29). Jesus has desired to gather those Jews to Himself as a hen gathers her chicks, but these hard-hearted unbelievers are unwilling. People are so foolish when it comes to heaven and hell; most people in the US believe in heaven and hell, yet they somehow think that, they can reject God for every living moment, and then want to spend eternity with Him in heaven. You cannot reject God for you entire life and spend eternity with Him—it is illogical. You will not want that. If you don't want to spend a few minutes with God here on earth (enough time to hear and understand the gospel, and respond positively towards it), then you will not want to spend an infinite number of minutes with God in eternity. That makes no sense. Here, Jesus makes it clear how our volition enters into this picture: “**How I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks, but you were unwilling!**”

### Psalm 118:26b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
bârak <sup>e</sup> (בָּרַךְ) [pronounced <i>baw-RAHK<sup>e</sup></i> ]	<i>to invoke God, to praise, to celebrate, to adore, to bless [God]; to bless [men], to invoke blessings; to bless [as God, man and other created things], therefore to cause to prosper, to make happy; to salute anyone [with a blessing]; to curse</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person plural, Piel perfect with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #1288 BDB #138
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>min</i> ]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
bayith (בַּיִת) [pronounced <i>BAH-yith</i> ]	<i>house, household, habitation as well as inward</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1004 BDB #108
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly <i>yhoh-WAH</i> ]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y<sup>e</sup>howah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217

**Translation:** ...we praise [or, celebrate] You from the house of Y<sup>e</sup>howah. This is the section which is a little more difficult. We would have expected, *we praise You [Jesus Christ] from the house of Jehovah*. However, it doesn't say that. It says, *we will praise You [plural] from the house of Jehovah*. The psalmist is praising the Trinity. He is praising at least God the Son, Who was sent (vv. 22a, 26a); and God the Father (vv. 23a, 24a), Who sent Him. The psalmist celebrates the Trinity here—not just one member of the Trinity. Those who are in the house of God, the place of blessing, praise and celebrate the Godhead, for the provision of answered prayer and deliverance (v. 21).

In case you are wondering, how do most commentators interpret this verse? Many ignore the fact that this is a plural suffix—*we bless you [al]*—which is found here. The few who do acknowledge the plural, say these are the priests blessing the people. However, look at the context—at the point in time that Jesus comes into Jerusalem, the priests plot to kill Him (Matt. 21:15 Mark 11:18 Luke 19:47).

We know that a large number of people rejected our Lord outright when He came into Jerusalem. Matt. 21:14: *Then the lame and the blind came to Him in the temple, and He healed them. But when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonders which He did, and the children crying out in the temple and saying, "Hosanna to the Son of David," they became indignant. Jesus, the Stone which the builders rejected.*

<b>Y<sup>e</sup>howah [is] God; and so He gives light to us. Bind the festive sacrifice in cord as far as horns of the altar.</b>	Psalm 118:27	<b>Y<sup>e</sup>howah [is] God; and He enlightens us. Bind the festive [animal] sacrifice with cord even to the horns of the altar.</b>
<b>Jehovah is God and He enlightens us. Bind the sacrificial animal with cord to the horns of the altar.</b>		

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Dead Sea Scrolls	The LORD <i>is</i> God, and He has given us light. <i>The cords of the festal procession are with branches</i> up to the horns of the altar. It is unclear to me whether the phrase in italics is found in the Dead Sea Scrolls or not; it is a disputed phrase.
Latin Vulgate	The Lord is God, and he hath shone upon us. Appoint a solemn day, with shady boughs, even to the horn of the altar.
Masoretic Text	Y <sup>e</sup> howah [is] God; and so He gives light to us. Bind the festive sacrifice in cord as far as horns of the altar.
Peshitta	O LORD, our God, enlighten us; bind our festival processions as an unbroken chain, even to the horns of the altar.
Septuagint	God is the Lord, and he has shined upon us: celebrate the feast with the multitude even to the horns of the altar.

Significant differences:	I don't think there is a problem with the original text; I think the translators in all cases were trying to make sense of the original text, which results in the differences that we find here.
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#### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV	The LORD is our God, and he has given us light! Start the celebration! March with palm branches all the way to the altar.
The Message	GOD is God, he has bathed us in light. Festoon the shrine with garlands, hang colored banners above the altar!

**Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):**

<i>God's Word™</i>	The LORD is God, and he has given us light. March in a festival procession with branches to the horns of the altar.
JPS (Tanakh)	The LORD is God; He has given us light; bind the festal offering to the horns of the altar with cords. [The meaning of this final phrase is uncertain].

**Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**

LTHB	Jehovah is God, and He gives light to us. Tie the sacrifice with cords, to the horns of the altar.
WEB	Yahweh is God, and he has given us light. Bind the sacrifice with cords, even to the horns of the altar.
<i>Young's Updated LT</i>	God is Jehovah, and He gives to us light, Direct ye the festal-sacrifice with cords, Unto the horns of the altar.

**What is the gist of this verse?** Jehovah of Israel is the God of the Universe, and He makes us understand. The festive sacrifice is bound up with cords to the horns of the altar.

Psalm 118:27a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾēl (אֵל) [pronounced ALE]	<i>God, god, mighty one, strong, hero</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #410 BDB #42
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly yoh-WAH]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y<sup>e</sup>howah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217

**Translation:** Y<sup>e</sup>howah [is] God;... This emphatically states that Jehovah, the God of Israel, is the God of the Universe. It might be used here to point out an emphatic point of doctrine.

Psalm 118:27b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa or va (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and</i>	wāw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʾōwr (אֹוֹר) [pronounced ohr]	<i>to bring light, to cause to be light, to make light; to make shine; to enlighten; to refresh [gladden]; to kindle</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #215 BDB #21
lāmed (ל) (pronounced l <sup>e</sup> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	directional preposition with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person plural suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510



**Translation: ...and He enlightens us.** God brings light—that which is in the shadows, that which is hidden, that which we do not understand, God brings light to that matter. God enlightens us. He causes us to understand. I believe this applies to the next phrase, which I think confused many for a long time. Before we get into this, just keep in mind: context is the key; do not approach this next portion of v. 27 apart from its context.

### Psalm 118:27c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿâṣar (אָסַר) [pronounced aw-AWHR]	<i>bind, tie [up, together, to]; imprison, make captive, restrain</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperative	Strong's #631 BDB #63
chag (חַג) [pronounced khahg]	<i>festival gathering, feast, pilgrim feast; a metonym for the festive sacrifice, to victim, the animal to be slaughtered</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #2282 BDB #290
The word חַג means a <i>festival</i> or <i>feast</i> (Ex. 10:9 12:14); as well as <i>the festival-sacrifice, the victim</i> (Ex. 23:18 Mal. 2:3). The Septuagint and Vulgate render it, <i>Prepare a solemn feast</i> . <sup>63</sup>			
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
ʿăbôth (עֲבוֹת) [pronounced ġuh <sup>b</sup> -VOHTH]	<i>something interwoven [or intertwined]; a cord, rope, bonds; a braid; a wreath; a branch with thick foliage</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #5688 BDB #721
The word rendered cords, means properly <i>anything interwoven or interlaced</i> . Therefore, it means <i>a cord, a braid, a wreath; and then a branch with thick foliage</i> . <sup>64</sup>			

**Translation: Bind the festive [animal] sacrifice with cord...** The festive sacrifice, the animal sacrifice, is, of course, Jesus Christ. This was confusing to have this Messianic psalm, which speaks of rejection v. 22, and yet, at the same time, of blessings to the One coming in the name of Jehovah (v. 26). All of this is *tied to* the animal sacrifice, which is tied with a cord. However, the word used here ʿăbôth (עֲבוֹת) [pronounced ġuh<sup>b</sup>-VOHTH]—another word with a potent double meaning—is a *wreath*—which is what our Lord wore on His head. He was bound to the cross with a wreath of thorns on his head. Of course, Jesus Christ was not literally bound to the cross with a wreath; however, His wreath, the crown of thorns, was indicative of the hatred and the sins of those for whom He would die; it was indicative of the humiliation to which He was subjected. Are you beginning to see what great meaning is found here?

Unfortunately, the people of Jerusalem misinterpreted this passage, as they did our Lord's purpose in His incarnation. The Jews of Judah hated Rome and hated to be under Roman rule, and they looked to Jesus to free them from this rule. Some were not sure what to do here, so they threw branches on the ground before Jesus. The idea is taken from the word ʿăbôth (עֲבוֹת) [pronounced ġuh<sup>b</sup>-VOHTH] (which can mean *a branch with thick foliage*); and the purpose is that the colt that Jesus rode upon was walking on thick foliated branches instead of upon the ground (see Matt. 21:8). However, when they saw Jesus with the wreath of thorns upon His head; when they saw Him bound to the cross (his hands and feet were probably first fastened with cords) as a sacrificial animal

<sup>63</sup> Taken from Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 118:27. However, these definitions came from BDB and Gesenius as well.

<sup>64</sup> Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 118:27. Definitions also found in BDB and Gesenius.

on the altar—a sight these Jews had seen again and again—then this passage and our Lord’s rejection by the religious hierarchy should begin to make sense to them. It should all start to fall into place. Now do you see how the first part of this verse relates? [Jehovah is God and He enlightens us](#). None of this has anything to do with throwing branches in front of our Lord as He comes into Jerusalem. None of this has anything to do with the overthrow of Roman rule. Jesus Christ is [the Stone which the builders rejected](#); Jesus Christ is the festive sacrifice tied to the horns of the altar and sacrificed. [This is the Lord’s plan and it is marvelous in our eyes](#).

### Psalm 118:27d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s Numbers
ʿad (עד) [pronounced ʿahd]	<i>as far as, even to, up to, until</i>	preposition	Strong’s #5704 BDB #723
qeren (קֶרֶן) [pronounced KĒH-ren]	<i>horn</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong’s #7161 BDB #901
miz <sup>e</sup> bêach (מִזְבֵּחַ) [pronounced miz-BAY-ahkh]	<i>altar</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong’s #4196 BDB #258

**Translation:** [...even to the horns of the altar](#). We studied the **Doctrine of Horns** back in Lev. 4:18. However, briefly, *horns* refers to two somewhat antithetical things: *power and strength* as well as *arrogance and pride*. Now, are you surprised to find an image here with a double meaning? The altar is where the animal is sacrificed and he is bound to that altar with the cord at the horns (or protrusions) of the altar. We witness at the cross of Christ both the power and strength of Jesus Christ as well as our own arrogance and pride, which are among man’s chief sins. All of this speaks of our Lord Jesus Christ, His first incarnation, coming to die for our sins. He is our sacrifice, who willingly allowed Himself to be judged for our sins.

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You will note how few commentaries I cited with regards to this verse; very few of them seemed to even have a clue as to what this verse was all about. Most could connect it to Matt. 21, but only one person<sup>65</sup> seemed to even have a clue as to what this verse was all about. The commentary on this verse was some of the worst I have read in many cases. Oh, hell, why don’t I just show you?

### Lame Commentary on Psalm 118:27

Commentator	Comments
Thomas Adams	“Shewed us light:” “bind the sacrifice.” Here is somewhat received; somewhat to be returned. God hath blessed us, and we must bless God. His grace and our gratitude, are the two lines my discourse must run upon. They are met in my text; let them as happily meet in your hearts, and they shall not leave you till they bring you to heaven. <sup>66</sup>

<sup>65</sup> Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 118:19–29.

<sup>66</sup> Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *A Treasury of David*; e-Sword, Psalm 118 introduction.

## Lame Commentary on Psalm 118:27

Commentator	Comments
Henry Ainsworth	<p>"With cords." This word is sometimes used for thick twisted cords, Jdg_15:13; sometimes for thick branches of trees, used at some feasts, Eze_19:11, Lev_23:40. Hereupon this sentence may two ways be read; bind the feast with thick branches, or bind the sacrifice with cords; both mean one thing that men should keep the festivity with joy and thanks to God, as Israel did at their solemnities.<sup>67</sup></p>
Joseph Caryl	<p>How comfortable is the light! 'Tis so comfortable that light and comfort are often put for the same thing: "God is the Lord, which hath shewed us light." that is. the light of counsel what to do. and the light of comfort in what we do, or after all our sufferings. Light is not only a candle held to us to do our work by, but it comforts and cheereth us in our work. Eccles. 11:7.<sup>68</sup></p>
J. C. Philpot	<p>"God is the Lord, which hath shewed us light." The Psalmist was clearly possessed of light, for he says, "God is the Lord, which hath shewed us light." He was evidently, then, possessed of light; and this light was in him as "the light of life." This light had shone into his heart; the rays and beams of divine truth had penetrated into his conscience. He carried about with him a light which had come from God; in this light he saw light, and in this light he discerned everything which the light manifested. Thus by this internal light he knew what was good and what was evil, what was sweet and what was bitter, what was true and what was false, what was spiritual and what was natural. He did not say, This light came from creature exertion, this light was the produce of my own wisdom, this light was nature transmuted by some action of my own will, and thus gradually rose into existence from long and assiduous cultivation. But he ascribes the whole of that light which he possessed unto God the Lord, as the sole author and the only giver of it. Now, if God the Lord has ever showed you and me the same light which he showed his servant of old, we carry about with us more or less of a solemn conviction that we have received this light from him. There will indeed, be many clouds of darkness to cover it; there will often be doubts and fears, hovering like mists and fogs over our souls, whether the light which we have received be from God or not. But in solemn moments when the Lord is pleased a little to revive his work; at times and seasons when he condescends to draw forth the affections of our hearts unto himself, to bring us into his presence, to hide us in some measure in the hollow of his hand, and give us access unto himself, at such moments and seasons we carry about with us, in spite of all our unbelief, in spite of all the suggestions of the enemy, in spite of all doubts and fears and suspicions that rise from the depths of the carnal mind, in spite of all these counter-workings and underminings, we carry about with us at these times a solemn conviction that we have light, and that this light we have received from God. And why so? Because we can look back to a time when we walked in no such light, when we felt no such light, when everything spiritual and heavenly was dark to us, and we were dark to them.</p>

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

## Lame Commentary on Psalm 118:27

Commentator	Comments
J. C. Philpot continued	<p>Those things which the Spirit of God enables a man to do, are in Scripture sometimes called sacrifices. "That we may offer," we read, "spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." The apostle speaks of "receiving of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from the brethren at Philippi; an odour of a sweet smell; a sacrifice acceptable and well-pleasing to God." Phi_4:18. So he says to the Hebrew church: "But to do good and to communicate (that is, to the wants of God's people), forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." Heb_13:16. Well, then, these spiritual sacrifices which a man offers unto God are bound also to the horns of the altar. They are not well-pleasing in the sight of God, except they are bound to the horns of the altar, so as to derive all their acceptance from the altar. Our prayers are only acceptable to God as they are offered through the cross of Jesus. Our praises and thanksgivings are only acceptable to God as they are connected' with the cross of Christ, and ascend to the Father through the propitiation of his dear Son. The ordinances of God's house are only acceptable to God as spiritual sacrifices, when they are bound to the horns of the altar. Both the ordinances of the New Testament - baptism and the Lord's supper - have been bound by the hands of God himself to the horns of the altar; and no one either rightly went through the one, or rightly received the other, who had not been first spiritually bound by the same hand to the horns of the altar. Every act of liberality, every cup of cold water given in the name of a disciple, every feeling of sympathy and affection, every kind word, every compassionate action shown to a brother; all and each are only acceptable to God as they ascend to him through the mediation of his dear Son. And, therefore, every sacrifice of our own comfort, or of our own advantage, of our own time, or of our own money, for the profit of God's children, is only a spiritual and acceptable sacrifice so far as it is bound to the horns of the altar, linked on to the cross of Jesus, and deriving all its fragrance and odour from its connection with the incense there offered by the Lord of life and glory.<sup>69</sup></p>
Charles Spurgeon	<p>The word rendered "cords" carries with it the idea of wreaths and boughs, so that it was not a cord of hard, rough rope, but a decorated band; even as in our case, though we are bound to the altar of God, it is with the cords of love and the bands of a man, and not by a compulsion which destroys the freedom of the will. The sacrifice which we would present in honour of the victories of our Lord Jesus Christ is the living sacrifice of our spirit, soul, and body. We bring ourselves to his altar, and desire to offer him all that we have and are. There remains a tendency in our nature to start aside from this; it is not fond of the sacrificial knife. In the warmth of our love we come willingly to the altar, but we need constraining power to keep us there in the entirety of our being throughout the whole of life. Happily there is a cord which, twisted around the atonement, or, better still, around the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is our only Altar, can hold us, and does hold us: "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then all died; and that he died for all, that they that live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again." We are bound to the doctrine of atonement; we are bound to Christ himself, who is both altar and sacrifice; we desire to be more bound to him than ever, our soul finds her liberty in being tethered fast to the altar of the Lord.<sup>70</sup></p>

There are more; however, I'd be surprised if you read even this far. I was too bored to even update the language.

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *A Treasury of David*; e-Sword, Psalm 118:22–27.

## Closing—the Theme of the Psalm

<p><b>My God You [are]; and I confess [or, <i>give thanks to, praise</i>] You. My Elohim, I raise You up.</b></p>	<p>Psalm 118:28</p>	<p><b>You [are] my God and I confess [or, <i>give thanks to, praise</i>] You. I exalt you, my Elohim! I will [openly] confess [and celebrate] You because You have listened to me and You became to me salvation [deliverance and safety].</b></p>
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**You are my God and I confess, thank and praise You.  
I exalt you, my Elohim!  
I will openly confess and celebrate You because you have listened to my prayers  
and You have become my salvation, deliverance and safety.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text	My God You [are]; and I confess [or, <i>give thanks to, praise</i> ] You. My Elohim, I raise You up.
Septuagint	Thou art my God, and I will give thee thanks: thou art my God, and I will exalt thee. I will give thanks to thee, for thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation.
Significant differences:	The LXX adds an additional verse, which is found in the Latin, but not in the Greek or Aramaic. Even though this additional line is not found in the Dead Sea Scrolls, this does not mean that it does not belong, as most of the lines of this psalm are missing in the Dead Sea Scrolls (complete books and psalms did not survive).

### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV The Message NJB	The LORD is my God! I will praise him and tell him how thankful I am. You're my God, and I thank you. O my God, I lift high your praise. You are my God, I thank you, all praise to you, my God. I thank you for hearing me, and making yourself my Saviour. [This extra line comes from the LXX; see above].
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### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™ JPS (Tanakh)	You are my God, and I give thanks to you. My God, I honor you highly. You are my God and I will praise You; You are my God and I will extol You.
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### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

The Amplified Bible	You are my God, and I will confess, praise <i>and</i> give thanks to You; You are my God, I will extol You.
Updated Emphasized Bible	<My God> You are and I will thank You, — My Elohim, I will exalt You.
WEB	You are my God, and I will give thanks to you. You are my God, I will exalt you.

Young's Updated LT

My God You are, and I confess You, My God, I exalt You.

**What is the gist of this verse?** The psalmist begins to wrap up the psalm, thanking God and praising Him for having a personal relationship with him.

Psalm 118:28a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ֵל (אֱל) [pronounced ALE]	God, god, mighty one, strong, hero	masculine singular noun with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	Strong's #410 BDB #42
אַתָּה (אַתָּה) [pronounced aht-TAW]	you (often, the verb <i>to be</i> is implied)	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, personal pronoun	Strong's #859 BDB #61

**Translation:** You [are] my God... In the Hebrew, opposite from the English, the predicate nominative (or the direct object) often comes before the subject of the sentence; this is why these are turned around. The psalmist makes it clear that he is addressing the God of this psalm directly, and that this God is a personal God. I have heard nonsense floating around that the God of the Old Testament is a mean and vengeful God and that the God of the New Testament is a personal, loving God. This is poppycock perpetrated by people who know very little about the Old or New Testaments. The God of the Old Testament is also loving and personal, as we find here.

Of course, note the parallel between this and the previous verse: Jehovah is God;  
You are my God.

Psalm 118:28b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
וְ (or וּ) (ו) [pronounced weh]	and, even, then; namely	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
יִדְּאֵה (יִדְּאֵה) [pronounced yaw-AWH]	to profess, to confess; to show or point out [with the hand extended]; to give thanks, to praise, to celebrate	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular, Hiphil imperfect with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3034 BDB #392

**Translation:** ...and I confess [or, give thanks to, praise] You. It is difficult to determine which meaning is meant by the psalmist. His confession would be that of salvation; but his thanksgiving and praise would be that of a mature believer, which is more likely. It is reasonable that all three can be applied depending upon the person reading the psalm.



### Psalm 118:28c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾĒlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced <i>el-o-HEEM</i> ]	<i>gods or God; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	Strong's #430 BDB #43
rûwm (רוּם) [pronounced <i>room</i> ]	<i>to raise, to lift up, to make high; to build a house; to bring up children; to put in safety; to raise up, to exalt [in victory or with praise]</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular, Polel perfect with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #7311 BDB #926

**Translation:** *I exalt you, my Elohim!* The psalmist lifts up God, placing Him on the highest level. He recognizes God as something above and beyond what we could imagine.

Because we find another line in both the Greek and Latin, I will include that below, exegeted from the Greek. Bear in mind, this is not found in the Hebrew or the Aramaic. However, it seems to fit in well with this verse, and it is highly unlikely some copyist would decide, “Hey, I think I will add a little something something to this psalm; to give it some pizzaz.” It is more likely that a portion of this verse could have become obscured on an old manuscript and left out, since it was unreadable. Bear in mind that, at one time, we had barely a handful of manuscripts available.

### Psalm 118:28d from the Greek Septuagint

Greek/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	Strong's Number
This additional portion of v. 28 is found in the Latin and the Greek, but not in the Hebrew or the Aramaic.			
exomologeô (ἐξομολογέω) [pronounced <i>ex-o-mo-lo-GEH-oh</i> ]	<i>to confess; to profess, to acknowledge openly and joyfully; to praise, to celebrate; to promise or agree [to do something]</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular, future middle indicative	Strong's #1843
soi (σοι) [pronounced <i>soy</i> ]	<i>you; to you; in you; by you</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person singular pronoun; locative, dative or instrumental case	Strong's #4771
hóti (ὅτι) [pronounced <i>HOH-tee</i> ]	<i>that, because, since</i>	conjunction	Strong's #3754
epakouô (ἐπακούω) [pronounced <i>ep-ah-KOO-oh</i> ]	<i>to hear [listen to, hear something] first hand; to listen and do [when followed by a genitive]; to grant one's request</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person singular, Aorist active indicative	Strong's #1873
ἐμοῦ, μου	<i>me; of me; from me</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular pronoun, genitive/ablative case	Strong's #1473
καί (καί) [pronounced <i>kā</i> ]	<i>and, even, also</i>	conjunction	Strong's #2532

## Psalm 118:28d from the Greek Septuagint

Greek/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	Strong's Number
gínomai ( γίνομαι) [pronounced GIN-oh-mí]	<i>to become [something it was not before]; to be born; to arise, come about; to be made, to be created; to happen, to take place</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person singular, Aorist middle indicative	Strong's #1096
ἐμοί, μοι	<i>to me, of me, by me; my</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular pronoun; locative, dative or instrumental case	Strong's #1473
eis ( εἰς) [pronounced ICE]	<i>to, toward; into; unto, in order to, for, for the purpose of, for the sake of, on account of</i>	directional preposition	Strong's #1519
sôtêria (σωτηρία) [pronounced soh-tay-REE-ah]	<i>salvation; safety, deliverance [from present or eternal danger], preservation [from danger or destruction]; welfare, prosperity</i>	feminine singular noun; accusative case	Strong's #4991

**Translation:** I will [openly] confess [and celebrate] You because You have listened to me and You became to me salvation [deliverance and safety]. Whether what we have here belongs or not, it does express accurate sentiment. The psalmist confesses and celebrates God because God has listened to his prayers and has been to him salvation, both in time and for all eternity.

**Give thanks to Y<sup>e</sup>howah for [He is] good; for to perpetuity [is] His grace.**

Psalm  
118:29

**Give thanks to Y<sup>e</sup>howah, because [He is] good [and] because His grace [lasts] forever.**

**Give thanks to Jehovah, because He is good and because His grace lasts forever.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

### Ancient texts:

#### Masoretic Text

Give thanks to Yehowah for [He is] good; for to perpetuity [is] His grace.

#### Septuagint

Give thanks to the Lord; for he is good: for his mercy *endures* for ever.

Significant differences:

None.

### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

#### CEV

Tell the LORD how thankful you are, because he is kind and always merciful.

#### The Message

Thank GOD--he's so good. His love never quits!.

### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™  
JPS (Tanakh)

Give thanks to the LORD because he is good, because his mercy endures forever.  
Praise the LORD for He is good,  
His steadfast love is eternal.

**Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**

MKJV  
Young's Updated LT

Oh give thanks to Jehovah; for *He is* good; for His mercy *endures* forever.  
Give thanks to Jehovah, For good, for to the age, is His kindness!

**What is the gist of this verse?** The psalmist encourages the reader to give thanks to God, because His grace is forever and because God is good.

Psalm 118:29a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
yâdâh (יָדָה) [pronounced yaw-AWH]	<i>give thanks, praise, celebrate; confess</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine plural, Hiphil imperative	Strong's #3034 BDB #392
lâmed (ל) (pronounced l)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	directional preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
YHWH (יְהוָה) [pronunciation is possibly yohoh-WAH]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y<sup>e</sup>howah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced kee]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
ṭôwb (טוֹב) [pronounced toh <sup>b</sup> v]	<i>pleasant, pleasing, agreeable, good, better; approved</i>	masculine singular adjective which acts like a substantive	Strong's #2896 BDB #373

**Translation:** Give thanks to Y<sup>e</sup>howah, because [He is] good... We are to give thanks to God and to praise and celebrate Him; two reasons are given for this: here, it is because God is absolute good; He is the perfect good. All that He does is the epitome of good.

**Application:** Let me be frank with you—sometimes our lives can just suck. And we live in great prosperity here in the US. I occasionally have times when I am frustrated, mad, unhappy—and then I see almost any other person's life and think, *no way would I want to trade places with them*. I don't mean just people who are poorer than I am, but those who are richer, those who have more power, those who have married incredibly beautiful women. When I get discouraged or unhappy, or have any sort of negative response to my life, I realize that God is good; God can be trusted. There are times our lives may seem impossibly difficult, but we can trust God to come out of the other side fine. God has sustained our lives and He has sustained our lives for a purpose. Now, realize, that if you are under discipline, then your life is going to suck more. But even not being under discipline, your life can be difficult. Don't worry about it; God's plan for our life can be trusted because He is good.

## Psalm 118:29b

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
lâmed (ל) (pronounced <i>l</i> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
ʿôwlâm (עוֹלָם) [pronounced <i>ô-LAWM</i> ]	<i>long duration, forever, perpetuity, antiquity, futurity</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #5769 BDB #761
ʿôwlâm together with the lâmed preposition mean <i>forever</i>			
cheçed (חֶסֶד) [pronounced <i>KHEH-sed</i> ]	<i>grace, benevolence, mercy, kindness</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #2617 BDB #338

**Translation:** ...[and] because His grace [lasts] forever. God's grace is forever; it is what we can depend upon, and it is what we need. You will note that the first and final lines of this psalm are exactly the same. God's grace is the key to this psalm.

The theme of this psalm is God's grace, and it pervades each section.

### God's Grace in Psalm 118

Verses	Topic	Grace
1	<b>Opening—the Theme of Psalm 118</b>	We are to thank God because He is good and His <b>grace</b> lasts forever.
2–4	<b>The Psalmist Exhorts those in the Age of Israel to Recognize God's Grace</b>	The psalmist calls upon Israel, the Aaronic priesthood and all believers to recognize that God's <b>grace</b> is everlasting.
5–9	<b>It is Better to Trust in Jehovah than in Man</b>	God can be trusted and God can be depended upon, whereas man cannot. That is <b>grace</b> .
10–14	<b>God Delivers the Psalmist in National Disaster</b>	God delivers the psalmist and the nation Israel from their enemies. Knowing what we do about Israel's history, we know that God's deliverance is <b>grace</b> .
15–18	<b>God Works in the Lives of Believers</b>	The psalmist was under severe discipline, but God has allowed him to live; this is <b>grace</b> .
19–21	<b>God has Opened up the Gates of Righteousness</b>	The fact that we will have an eternal relationship and fellowship with God is based upon <b>grace</b> .
22–27	<b>Jesus Christ is the Lord God of Israel</b>	That God sent His Son to die for our sins is <b>grace</b> .
28–29	<b>Closing—the Theme of the Psalm</b>	We should thank God, because His <b>grace</b> endures forever.

**Application:** Okay, maybe you are thinking, *but my life really sucks; worse than you can imagine!* I wouldn't argue differently. So, are you in fellowship? Are you taking in God's Word? Do you even have a clue as to what God's plan is for your life? Does God's plan for your life fit anywhere into your plans? You can trust God, because He is good; you can depend upon Him, because His grace is eternal.

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By the way, we find this verse only twice in this psalm, but it occurs 26 times in Psalm 136.

Gill sums up: *And thus the psalm ends as it began; there having been given many instances of the divine goodness, in hearing and delivering the psalmist when in distress; saving him from his enemies, when compassed about with them; sparing his life, when in great danger; and especially in making the stone rejected by the builders the head of the corner; for his mercy endures for ever; the above instances are proofs of it; and still it continues, and will for evermore. Here ends the great "Hallel", or hymn, sung at the Passover and other festivals.*<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 118:29.