

# *PSALM 56*

A composite image of a landscape. In the center, a small wooden bridge spans a waterfall that flows into a pond. The waterfall is surrounded by lush green grass, pink flowers, and several trees. The background features a sunset sky with warm orange and yellow tones, transitioning into a darker, cloudy sky on the right. The overall scene is peaceful and scenic.

**WHEN UNWISE DECISIONS CREATE  
TROUBLE FOR YOU**

**PASTOR:  
CHARLES SADAPHAL**

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**[REFERENCE SOURCE OF THIS PSALM IS 1 SAMUEL 21 WHERE DAVID FLEES TO THE PHILLISTINE ARMY TO ESCAPE SAUL'S RELENTLESS ASSAULT ON HIS LIFE].**

**To the chief Musician upon *Jo'-nath-e'-lem-re-cho'-kim, Mich'-tam* of David, when the Phi-lis'-times took him in Gath.**

**KJV**

**56 [ESV] 1 Be gracious [MERCIFUL IN KJV]  
to me, O God, for man tramples on me; all  
day long an attacker oppresses me;**

**2 my enemies trample on me all day long,  
for many attack me proudly.**

**3 When I am afraid, I put my trust in you.**

**4 In God, whose word I praise, in God I  
trust; I shall not be afraid. What can flesh  
do to me?**

**5** *All day long they injure my cause; all their thoughts are against me for evil.*

**6** *They stir up strife, they lurk; they watch my steps, as they have waited for my life.*

**7** *For their crime will they escape? In wrath cast down the peoples, O God!*

**8** *You have kept count of my tossings; put my tears in your bottle. Are they not in your book?*

**9** *Then my enemies will turn back in the day when I call. This I know, that God is for me.*

**10** *In God, whose word I praise, in the Lord, whose word I praise,*

**11** *in God I trust; I shall not be afraid. What can man do to me?*

**12** *I must perform my vows to you, O God; I will render thank offerings to you.*

**13** *For you have delivered my soul from death, yes, my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of life.*

*At times, however, we encounter affliction **because we find trouble**. To state it plainly, **many of our problems are of our own making**. This was the case with David when he wrote Psalm 56.*



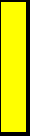
*David was in the throes of a perilous situation. Although David was innocent of any wrongdoing toward Israel's king, Saul was viciously seeking his life. However, an unwise decision made David's bad situation even worse. Desperate to escape the murderous Saul, **he foolishly fled to Gath, home of Goliath. As if that were not bad enough, he was carrying the sword of the monstrous giant whom he had***

***recently slain!***

***At first glance, we might wonder what possessed David to do such an ill-advised thing; but he did have a plan in mind: David thought Saul would never suspect him of fleeing to Gath, a major city of Philistia.***



- *The Philistines were Israel's sworn enemy.*
- *Saul had declared David to be his enemy.*
- *Because he and the Philistines were both Saul's enemies, David hoped that Achish, king of Gath, would embrace him as an ally.*



- *Under the intense pressure of a threatening situation, David made an unwise decision that placed his life in even greater peril. Psalm 56 is one of two psalms (along with Psalm 34) that were born from this predicament. He prefaced this psalm with the phrase **jonath-elem-rechokim**. Most commentators understand this term to be the name of a song to the tune of which Psalm 56 was to be performed. It is translated as “the silent dove in far away places,” or “the silent dove on distant oaks,” or something similar. Classic commentator Matthew Poole offered a different perspective:*

*“Jonath-elem-reehokim” is supposed to be the name of a song; but many render it, as the words signify, concerning the dumb dove afar off; all which agrees very well to David in his present circumstances. He calls himself a dove for his innocency, and folly (which is ascribed to the dove, Hos. 7:11) in casting himself into this snare”.*

***Preacher's Outline and  
Sermon Bible -  
Commentary - The  
Preacher's Outline &  
Sermon Bible – Psalms II.***

*Like David, we might also make some foolish decisions that result in our situation becoming worse instead of better. Thankfully, our Divine Helper, the Holy Spirit, has given us Psalm 56 for just such times. This psalm is so important that David designated it as one of six michtam psalms— meditations worthy of remembrance. Bible teacher John Phillips explained: “The word ‘michtam’ literally means ‘to cut’ or ‘to engrave.’ The thought is that this is a permanent writing, that it partakes of the nature of Job’s great cry, ‘Oh that my words were written with an iron pen and graven in the rock forever.’” As human beings who are prone to create trouble for ourselves, we should engrave it on our own hearts. This is, When Unwise Decisions or Actions Create Trouble for You, 56:1-13.*

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Sermon Bible -  
Commentary - The  
Preacher's Outline &  
Sermon Bible – Psalms II.***



• ***POUR YOUR HEART TO GOD: CRY OUT  
FOR HIS MERCY [vv..1-6 MERCY =#2603***

***“CHANAN”***

***Because people harass, slander and boldly  
attack you***

***Because people strike fear in you, still you  
trust in God***

***Because twist your words and plot against  
you***



- ***ASK GOD TO EXECUTE JUSTICE [vv 7-9]***

*The request made [vv 7-9]*

*The confidence expressed [vv9]*

- ***PRAISE GOD AND GIVE THANKS TO HIM***

*[vv10-13]*

*Your reaffirmation [vv 10-12]*

*Your reason for praising Him [vv 13]*