

# (How to Understand the KJV Bible) 38 Psalm 55

by Keith Simons

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*Keith Simons explores Psalm 55, highlighting themes of betrayal, sorrow, and the importance of trusting in God's deliverance amidst personal trials.*

**Duration:** 31:36

**Scripture:** Psalm 55:1-2, Psalm 55:4-5, Psalm 55:12-14, Psalm 55:16-18, Psalm 55:22-23

**Topics:** "KJV Bible", "Trust in God", "Betrayal"

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## Description

Keith Simons explores Psalm 55, reflecting on the betrayal of King David by his trusted advisor Ahithophel, paralleling it with Judas Iscariot's betrayal of Jesus. The psalm expresses David's deep anguish and calls for God's intervention against his enemies, emphasizing the pain of betrayal from someone once close. Simons highlights the importance of casting our burdens on the Lord, as David did, and trusting in God's justice and protection. The sermon serves as a reminder of the emotional turmoil that comes with betrayal and the assurance of God's support in times of distress.

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## Transcript

Welcome. A Bible question to start off with today. I want you to think of someone who betrayed their friend.

Well, if you're thinking about Judas Iscariot and how he betrayed Jesus, well, I'm not, not really. I'm thinking about a man called Ahithophel and how he betrayed his friend King David. Today we're looking at Psalm 55, which may well be about that incident, but at the same time, it's a prophecy about how Judas Iscariot betrayed Christ.

So welcome. My name is Keith Simons. I'm a Bible teacher from England and you're listening to the next in our series of weekly talks on the Psalms entitled, How to Understand the King James Bible.

Today, as I say, we're looking at Psalm 55. Psalm 55. The ancient title of Psalm 55 is, To the chief musician Oneginot, Maskil, a Psalm of David.

Okay, this is a Psalm of David, which almost certainly means it was written by King David. He's written it for the chief musician, for the leader of the music in God's house, the temple and before that the tabernacle. So we, we know this is a musical thing.

And the first of those words, which the King James translators have not translated, Neginot, also means a song. So we're expecting music. We're expecting a song, but what sort of song? As we'll soon see, this is not a joyful song.

It's a very painful song, a very difficult song for David and for the musicians to sing. Maskil is the other word in the title. That means a teaching Psalm.

So there are lessons to learn from David's experience here, as he writes about his sufferings at the hands of Ahithophel, and about Christ's sufferings at the hands of one of his disciples in prophecy. So the Psalm begins, verse one, Give ear to my prayer, O God, and hide not thyself from my supplication. Give ear means turn your ear towards me, listen to me, listen to my prayer, O God, and hide not thyself from my supplication.

Don't hide away from the requests I have for you. I need your help. I need your mercy.

I need your kindness in this situation. So when I'm calling to you and requesting your help, if you turn away from me and hide, I've nowhere to turn to. So listen to me and be present as I make this request.

And he continues like that in verse two. He says, Attend unto me and hear me. I mourn in my complaint and make noise.

Attend unto me, be aware of what I'm saying and act that hear me could be translated answer me, answer my request, because I'm mourning, I'm deeply sad, and I'm making a noise. I'm not keeping my prayer silent. I care not who else hears as long as you hear, O God, as long as you hear and answer this desperate prayer.

King David is obviously in great trouble. And at the time we're referring to when Adhitophel turned against him, you can read about it in 2 Samuel 16 15, all the way up through the next chapter to chapter 17 verse 23. This was a time when King David's son Absalom tried to make himself the king of Israel.

He turned against his father. He tried to kill his father. And they're supporting him in that situation, supporting Absalom, who turned against his father was David's wisest advisor, Adhitophel.

Let me read to you what 2 Samuel chapter 16 and verse 23 says about Adhitophel. And the counsel or advice of Adhitophel, which he counseled in those days, was as if a man had inquired at the oracle of God. So was all the counsel of Adhitophel, both with David and with Absalom.

In other words, David valued Adhitophel's advice so much he considered it equal to as if he'd inquired of God at God's holy place. Why was that? Because Adhitophel came to him with advice which came inspired by God. That seems to be the implication here.

Just as God gave to Solomon great wisdom, so God gave to Adhitophel great wisdom. And I connect Solomon and Adhitophel deliberately there because they were from the same family. Adhitophel was King Solomon's great grandfather.

So this advisor was also David's friend. He was a friend who David trusted. In those days, your advisor would sit with you at your meals because it was at meal times that your advisor would listen to your problems and give you the advice that you needed.

He would sit in that honored place as a close friend of the king and he would give his advice. And David trusted him. David trusted him totally.

But Adhitophel, as we've already heard, turned against David. Listen to what David says about him. I make a noise, he said in verse two, because of the voice of the enemy, because of the oppression of the wicked, for they cast iniquity upon me and in math they hate me.

In the Hebrew, that word enemy is singular. It's one enemy. And the wicked is also singular.

It's one wicked person who is opposing him and opposing him with such great cruelty. In math, they hate me. It's anger that they have against me.

Math means anger. And there they are doing these terrible things. That's why I'm calling to God, says David.

That's why I'm praying so desperately. And how terrible are my troubles. Verse four.

My heart is sore pained within me and the terrors of death have fallen upon me. Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me and horror hath overwhelmed me. A point I often like to remind you about in these talks is that David was a soldier.

He understood that his life was constantly in danger. He understood that he was taking great risks. But what happens to a soldier when fearfulness and trembling are come upon him? He's shaking with fear.

A soldier who is shaking with fear is no good in a battle. He can't fight his enemy. Fighting requires precision.

If you're using an arrow or a sword or a spear, you must use it with precision. Whatever fear you feel must be suspended in the battle. So for David to confess that fearfulness and trembling have come upon him and that horror has overwhelmed him, this is very terrible.

It's not fear of death. It's something much worse that has upset him. And that much worse thing we won't discover until verse 13.

But I'll tell you it now. But it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide and my acquaintance who turned against David. That was a very terrible thing.

The person who he trusted most had turned and become his enemy and had become a wicked man. The person who he sought counsel from, God from, was now turning against him with an evil scheme. So what could David do? What would anyone do? If you try to frighten a bird away, what does it do? Well it flaps its wings and it flies far off.

David says, I wish it were like that for me, verse 6. And I said, oh that I had wings like a dove, for then I would fly away and be at rest. If only I could escape my troubles. If only I could get away.

If only I could go far from these troubles, then I would be at rest. Verse 7. Lo, look, then would I wander far off and remain in the wilderness. Selah.

He would go into the wild country if he were a bird. He would go far from these people who are accusing him and who are putting together their bitter schemes against him, far from their ungodly and evil

behaviour. And he would stay away from them.

And with that thought David pauses with the word Selah. And after his little pause, he continues, verse 8. I would hasten my escape from the windy storm and tempest. Really in this verse in the Hebrew, you've got three different words for wind.

We've translated them windy, storm, tempest. And the word translated windy, it probably especially refers to the power of the wind. And the word for storm especially refers to the speed of the wind.

And the word for tempest, the anger of the wind. I would hasten my escape. I would move quickly away from the power, the speed and the anger of the wind.

But that wind is just a word picture for the evil that his enemies are carrying out. And especially for the evil that Ahithophel, his friend, is responsible for. And so he calls on God.

He says, verse 9, destroy, O Lord, and divide their tongues. In other words, they're speaking together against me, so separate them. Like happened at the Tower of Babel, when the people spoke a common language and rose against God.

But God confused their language and divided them. David prays, divide them, break up this conspiracy against me between my son Absalom and my friend Ahithophel and those who are supporting them. For I have seen violence and strife in the city.

I've seen the cruelty of the powerful. I've seen the arguments that are going on in the city, the strife. Verse 11, day and night they go about it upon the walls thereof.

The police or the guards of the city used to march round on the city walls. But David here describes how evil people are overrunning his city. Mischief also, and sorrow are in the midst of it.

That could be translated wickedness, and evil things, and wrong. And that's what's going on in Jerusalem, in the holy city, in God's city. Verse 11, wickedness is in the midst thereof.

That could be translated coveting, desire for other people's possessions, deceit and guile. In other words, fraud and treachery. Depart not from her streets.

The whole city is filled with evil things. But David had had many enemies. He fought the kings of the nations round about him, who tried to destroy him and his whole country.

Why should David be so disturbed in this situation, David tells us. Verse 12, for it was not an enemy. He means not a foreign enemy that reproached me.

It's not a foreigner who's stirring up trouble against him. It's not someone who he knew was a troublemaker. If it were then, I could have borne it.

I can stand against an enemy. I've often stood against an enemy in battle. Neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me.

It wasn't someone who hated me who made himself so great as to oppose me. If it was someone greater than me who was opposing me, then I would have hid myself from him. I would have run away.

But what do I do in this situation? Because, verse 13, it was thou. He speaks direct to a hitter pal. He speaks direct to this friend who's turned against him.

It was thou, a man mine equal, my guide and my acquaintance, the one who I made my closest friend, the one who was my truest advisor, the one I trusted absolutely and trusted with my life. It was you who turned against me. It was you who chose to oppose me.

It was you who wanted to destroy me and take my life. And yet I remember. I remember how happy our conversations were together as we discussed the affairs of Israel and of the kingship.

Oh, we took sweet counsel together. I remember those meals, those happy times together when, as one, we would discuss the problems and work out what to do to support the needs of the people and of the nation. And I remember how we prayed together.

We walked into the house of God in company. In David's day, the house of God was a tabernacle, the special tent that Moses made. But David built a special tent, another special tent, for God in Jerusalem where he placed the Ark of the Covenant.

And there he would go with his friend, a hitter pal, to pray together and to seek God's guidance. Yet this friend, who he so trusted, had turned against him. And so David prays and he prays some very severe words now.

He's not praying this because he wants his friend to suffer. He's praying this because he knows that he is the judge of Israel and he knows that he is a prophet and that he must declare God's judgment upon people who do evil things. We're not prophets or we're not kings or we're not rulers who have to declare judgment on other people.

Jesus urges us to forgive others who've done wrong things against us or at least to turn the matter over to God for God's judgment. But David has a solemn duty to declare God's judgment in this situation. And so he speaks, verse 15.

Let death seize upon them and let them go down quick into hell, for wickedness is in their dwellings and among them. Let death take hold of them. Let them go into the grave suddenly.

Don't let them die slowly. No, do something extraordinary. That's what God did to Korah when the ground swallowed him up.

If you've not read about that, you can find it in Numbers chapter 16. And he fell alive into his grave and into hell. And David prays a fearful prayer that such a thing will happen to Ahithophel because Ahithophel is not going to turn back to God.

He's chosen the way of deliberate wickedness. He's given himself over to evil, verse 16. David thinks about himself.

As for me, as for me, I'm not going to fear these enemies. As for me, I'm not going to let their evil overcome me. I will call upon God and the Lord shall save me.

God will rescue me, verse 17. Evening and morning and at noon will I pray and cry aloud. And when, what will all these prayers achieve? He shall hear my voice.

David has confidence. He speaks in prophecy about what God will do for him, that his rescue is going to happen. Verse 18, he hath delivered my soul in peace from the battle that was against me.

He's brought peace. God has brought peace to my soul, to me deep inside. This terrible battle, this terrible action against me, God has defended me.

For there were many with me, David adds. Does that mean God's given David many people to support him? There seem to be about 3,000 soldiers who remained loyal to King David against the tens of thousands who took the side of Absalom, his enemy. Does he mean those 3,000 when he says there were many with me? Or does he have a totally different meaning? Does he mean there were many who were striving with me? The number of my opponents were many, but God has rescued my soul in peace.

Verse 19, God shall hear and afflict them. God will act against my enemies. Even he that abideth of old.

He is the God who has always been God. He is a powerful one whose power is without limit. It's him who will hear my prayer that I be rescued from this terrible trouble.

He is the God who is always God. And with that, David pauses with another cella, and then he continues. He continues with a comment about these enemies and about his friend who's turned against him.

Because they have no changes, therefore they fear not God. Oh, if they would change. If they would change, they could turn back to God.

If they could change, then God would still have mercy upon them. It is their determination not to change that is the trouble. It is a determination not to turn back to God.

They refuse to change. They refuse to show respect to God. And that is what is bringing about such terrible destruction against them.

This evil man, this evil friend who, verse 20, hath put forth his hands against such as be at peace with him. He hath broken his covenant. The covenant is a promise of peace.

We read about how David made a covenant with his friend Jonathan. And it was a peace agreement between the two of them. Ahithophel presumably made similar covenant or similar promise to King David.

But did he care about that promise? No. In the day when he turned against David, he destroyed that peace agreement. And he deceived David.

He gave David the impression that he was still supporting him when he turned against him. Verse 21, the words of his mouth were smoother than butter. So smooth, so easy.

I trusted them totally. But war was in his heart. Yes, his words were softer than oil.

That pleasant, smooth, easy feeling that oil has. Yet they were drawn swords. Yet they were like swords which someone's drawn or taken out of their protective guard, ready to use.

It's like someone who has a knife ready to stab you. And yet he's speaking soft and pleasant words to you. David has some advice in verse 22.

Maybe it's advice for those people who supported him through these troubles. Certainly it's advice for us today. Cast thy burden upon the Lord and he shall sustain thee.

He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved. When you've got deep troubles, troubles like mine, this is a teaching part of the psalm. When you've got troubles like those I've described, when your nearest and best friend, when the advisor you trust completely turns against you, take that burden, that weight, that trouble and place it upon God.

Because it's God who will then sustain or support you in that situation. Give to God your troubles. Let God support you.

If you are a good person, if you are truly serving God, if you are righteous, he will look after you. These troubles will not disturb you. The word suffer, he shall never suffer, means he shall never let.

He will never let the righteous be moved. He will never let the righteous be shaken and destroyed by the troubles that are against them. So place these matters in God's hands.

Leave them with God. David could have tried to take revenge against Ahithoel, his friend who turned against him. He could have tried to fight against him, to cause trouble for him, to arrange political battles against him.

But he gave the matter over to God. And God had shown him what would happen to that evil enemy. That friend would become an evil enemy, rather.

Verse 23, that thou, O God, shalt bring them down into the pit of destruction. Bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days. Deceitful men, liars, people like Ahithoel, who tried to give the impression that they were supporting their friend when in fact they turned against them.

Bloody men, people who live by cruelty. They shall not live out half their days. In other words, they won't even live for half the time that they would live otherwise.

They're causing great trouble to themselves. They're destroying their own knives. And even if they do live out that time, even if they live a long life and are successful, be sure that life will be half life.

Because, less than half a life, because God's judgment will in the end be against them. That David concludes, whatever happens to them, whatever God does in this situation, I will trust in thee. My trust in God will not be shaken by all these evil things.

In a moment, I'm going to read you the whole psalm, but first my email address. It's 333kjb at gmail.com. 333kjb at gmail.com. And now here's the whole psalm. Psalm 55 to the Chief Musician on Neginot, Maskil, a psalm of David.

Give ear to my prayer, O God, and hide not thyself from my supplication. Attend unto me and hear me. I mourn in my complaint and make a noise because of the voice of the enemy, because of the oppression of the wicked.

For they cast iniquity upon me, and in wrath they hate me. My heart is so pained within me, and the terrors of death have fallen upon me. Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and horror hath overwhelmed me.

And I said, O, that I had wings like a dove, for then would I fly away and be at rest. Lo, then would I wander far off and remain in the wilderness. Scylla, I would hasten my escape from the windy storm and tempest.

Destroy, O Lord, and divide their tongues, for I have seen violence and strife in the city. Day and night they go about it upon the walls thereof. Mischief also and sorrow are in the midst of it.

Wickedness is in the midst thereof. Deceit and guile depart not from her streets, for it was not an enemy that reproached me. Then I could have borne it.

Neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me. Then I would have hid myself from him. But it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide and mine acquaintance.

We took sweet counsel together and walked unto the house of God in company. Let death seize upon them, and let them go down quick into hell, for wickedness is in their dwellings and among them. As for me, I will call upon God, and the Lord shall save me.

Evening and morning and at noon will I pray and cry aloud, and he shall hear my voice. He hath delivered my soul in peace from the battle that was against me, for there were many with me. God shall hear and afflict them, even he that abideth of old.

Selah. Because they have no changes, therefore they fear not God. He hath put his hands against such as be at peace with him.

He hath broken his covenant. The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart. His words were softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords.

Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee. He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved. But thou, O God, shalt bring them down into the pit of destruction.

Bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days, but I will trust in thee.

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