

Tehillim / Psalms 58 | ספר תהילים נח

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Remaining Strong in our Faith

This week's study is from *Tehillim / Psalms 58:1-11*, the psalm opens saying, א לְמַנְצֵחַ אֱלֹהֵי-תַשְׁחֶתֶת לְדָוִד הַ חֲמַת-לְמוֹת מִכְתָּם: *For the choir director; set to Al-tashheth. A Mikhtam of David. (NASB)* David asks, ה חֲמַת-לְמוֹת מִכְתָּם: *58:1 Do you indeed speak righteousness, O gods? Do you judge uprightly, O sons of men? (NASB)* The question David has is do the gods of the nations speak righteousness? What is unrighteous about an idol god and how does an idol god promote unrighteousness? What does “sons of men” mean in relation to David’s question regarding judging uprightly? Is his question rhetorical? He answers his question saying, ב הָאֱמָנִים אֵלִים צָדֵק תִּדְבְּרוּן מִיִּשְׁרָיִם תִּשְׁפֹּטוּ בְּנֵי אָדָם: ג אֶף-בָּלָב עוֹלֹת תִּפְעֲלוּן בְּאָרְץ חַמְס יִדְיָכֶם תִּפְלְסוּן: ד זָרוּ רִשְׁעִים מִרְחֹם תְּעוּ מִבֶּטֶן דְּבָרֵי כָזָב: ה חֲמַת-לְמוֹת מִכְתָּם-נִחַשׁ: *58:2 No, in heart you work unrighteousness; On earth you weigh out the violence of your hands. 58:3 The wicked are estranged from the womb; These who speak lies go astray from birth. 58:4 They have venom like the venom of a serpent; Like a deaf cobra that stops up its ear, 58:5 So that it does not hear the voice of charmers, Or a skillful caster of spells. (NASB)* David says that he knows the heart of those who serve the idol gods, they work unrighteousness in the heart which manifests itself in violence in one’s hand. David appears to parallel Jacob and Esau, according to the Torah, to the wicked who are estranged from the womb. The wicked speak lies being full of venom and they do not listen which is parallel to the snake that doesn’t listen to the charmer. David seeks the Lord’s help saying, ז אֱלֹהִים הֲרֹס-שִׁנֵּימוּ בְּפִימוּ מִלְתַּעוֹת כְּפִירִים נִתֵּן | יְהוָה: ח יִמָּאֲסוּ כְמוֹ-שִׁמְשׁ: *58:6 O God, shatter their teeth in their mouth; Break out the fangs of the young lions, O Lord. 58:7 Let them flow away like water that runs off; When he aims his arrows, let them be as headless shafts. 58:8 Let them be as a snail which melts away as it goes along, Like the miscarriages of a woman which never see the sun. (NASB)* He continues saying, ט בְּטָרָם יִבִּינוּ סִירְתֵיכֶם אֲטֹד כְּמוֹ-חַי כְּמוֹ-חַרוֹן יִשְׁעֲרָנוּ: יא יִשְׁמַח צַדִּיק כִּי-תִזְהַר נָקָם פְּעַמָּיו יִרְחַץ בְּדַם הַרְשָׁע: יב וַיֹּאמֶר אָדָם אֶף-פָּרִי: *58:9 Before your pots can feel the fire of thorns He will sweep them away with a whirlwind, the green and the burning alike. (NASB)* David concludes his psalm saying, יג לְצַדִּיק אֶף יִשְׂ-אֱלֹהִים שִׁפְטִים בְּאָרְץ: *58:10 The righteous will rejoice when he sees the vengeance; He will wash his feet in the blood of the wicked. 58:11 And men will say, ‘Surely there is a reward for the righteous; Surely there is a God who judges on earth!’ (NASB)*

עברית	Hebrew	ארמי	Aramaic	ελληνικός	Greek
	ספר תהלים פרק נח		ספר טוביה פרק נח	ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 58	
א לְמַנְצֵחַ אֱלֹהֵי-תַשְׁחֶתֶת לְדָוִד מִכְתָּם:		א לשבחה על עקתא בזמן די אמר דוד		58:1 εις το τέλος μη διαφθειρης τῶ	
ב הָאֱמָנִים אֵלִים צָדֵק תִּדְבְּרוּן מִיִּשְׁ-		לא תחביל על יד דוד מכיך ושלים: ב		Δαυιδ εις στηλογραφίαν ει ἀληθῶς ἄρα	
רִים תִּשְׁפֹּטוּ בְּנֵי אָדָם: ג אֶף-בָּלָב		הברם הא ברם בקושטא שתיקין שת-		υιοι των ανθρωπων 58:2 και γαρ εν	
עוֹלֹת תִּפְעֲלוּן בְּאָרְץ חַמְס יִדְיָכֶם		קין צדיקי בעידן מצו חמי לכוון דצדקתא		καρδια ανομίας εργαζεσθε εν τη γῆ	
תִּפְלְסוּן: ד זָרוּ רִשְׁעִים מִרְחֹם תְּעוּ		תמללון תריצותא תדנון ית בני נשא: ג		ἀδικίαν αι χεieres ὑμων συμπλεκουσιν	
מִבֶּטֶן דְּבָרֵי כָזָב:		ברם אוף רשיעי מה דין בליבא עילא		58:3 ἀποηλωτριώθησαν οι ἁμαρτωλοι	
		תעבדון בארעא חטוף אידיכון ידיכון		ἀπο μητρας ἐπλανήθησαν ἀπο γαστρος	
		יתקנון:		ἐλάλησαν ψεύδη	

<p>ה חמת-למו פדמות חמת-נחש פמו- פתי חרש יאטם אוננו: ו אשר לא- ישמע לקול מלחשים חובר תברים מחכם: ז אלהים הרס-שנימו בפיי- מו מלתעות כפירים נתן יהוה: ח ימאסו כמו-מים יתהלכו-למו ידרף חצו [חציו] כמו יתמללו: ט כמו שבלול תמס יהלף נפל אשת בל- חזו שמש: י בטתם יבינו סירתיי- כס אטד כמו-חי כמו-חרון ישערנו: יא ישמח צדיק פי-תזה נקם פעמיו ירחץ בדם הרשע: יב ויאמר אדם אד-פרי לצדיק אד יש-אלהים שפ- טים בארץ:</p>	<p>ד איתעבידו נוכראין רשיעיא מן מען תען מן כריסא ממללי כדבותא כדכובא: ה אירסא להון כגוון איר- סא דחויא היך חורמנא חרשא דמ- טמטם אדניה: ו די לא יקבל מילי חרשיא אסירי נחשיא ומן רטוני רטן הוא חכים: ז אלהא תרע ככיהון בפומהון וניבי וככי בני אריון תתרע יהוה: ח יתמסון בחוביהון היך מיא יזלון להון ונגיד גיררוי אמטולהון ויהון מתגזרין: ט היך זחיל תיבללא די מאיס אורחיה היך נפולא ואשותא די סמיין ולא חמון שמשא: י עד לא יתעבדן רשיעיא רכיכי אקושן היך אטדא עד דהינון רטיבין עד דהינון כבוסרא בעלעולא ישיצינון: יא יחדי צדיקא ארום חמא פורענותא מנהון אסתורין ישזוג באדם רשי- עא: יב ויימרון בני נשא ברם אית אגר טב לצדיקא ברם אית אלהא דדינוי מתיחן בארעא:</p>	<p>58:4 θυμὸς αὐτοῖς κατὰ τὴν ὁμοίωσιν τοῦ ὄφεως ὡσεὶ ἀσπίδος κωφῆς καὶ βουούσης τὰ ὦτα αὐτῆς 58:5 ἥτις οὐκ εἰσακούσεται φωνὴν ἐπαδόντων φαρμάκου τε φαρμακευομένου παρὰ σοφοῦ 58:6 ὁ θεὸς συνέτριπεν τοὺς ὀδόντας αὐτῶν ἐν τῷ στόματι αὐτῶν τὰς μύλας τῶν λεόντων συνέθλασεν κύριος 58:7 ἐξουδενωθήσονται ὡς ὕδωρ διαπορευόμενον ἐντενεῖ τὸ τόξον αὐτοῦ ἕως οὗ ἀσθενήσουσιν 58:8 ὡσεὶ κηρὸς ὁ τακεῖς ἀνταναιρεθήσονται ἐπέπεσε πῦρ καὶ οὐκ εἶδον τὸν ἥλιον 58:9 πρὸ τοῦ συνιέναι τὰς ἀκάνθας ὑμῶν τὴν ράμνον ὡσεὶ ζῶντας ὡσεὶ ἐν ὄργῃ καταπίεται ὑμᾶς 58:10 εὐφρανθήσεται δίκαιος ὅταν ἴδῃ ἐκδίκησιν ἀσεβῶν τὰς χεῖρας αὐτοῦ νίψεται ἐν τῷ αἵματι τοῦ ἁμαρτωλοῦ 58:11 καὶ ἐρεῖ ἄνθρωπος εἰ ἄρα ἔστιν καρπὸς τῷ δικαίῳ ἄρα ἔστιν ὁ θεὸς κρίνων αὐτοὺς ἐν τῇ γῆ</p>
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This week's study is from *Tehillim / Psalms 58:1-11*, the psalm opens saying, א למנצח אל-תשחת לדוד *Al-tashheth*. For the choir director; set to *Al-tashheth*. A Mikhtam of David. (NASB) Here we find the words “*Al-tashheth*” (אל-תשחת) transliterated into the English language similar to *Tehillim / Psalms 57*. The word “*Al*” (אל) is an adverb meaning “*don't, it is forbidden to; not, no,*” and the word “*tashheth*” (תשחת) is from the root word “*Shakhat*” (שחת) meaning “*destruction.*” The opening phrase in the Psalm from the MT appears to be related to “*not causing destruction*” which is the wisdom of David (a Mikhtam of David). The Aramaic Targum states, א לשבחא על עקתא בזמן די אמר דוד לא תחביל על יד דוד מכיך ושלמים: 58:1 For praise; concerning the distress in the time when David said, “*Do no harm*”; composed by David, humble and innocent. (EMC) The opening words from the MT do not provide any additional information regarding the phrase “*not causing destruction*” as the previous psalm did with regard to David being in the cave when Saul went to relieve himself, David chose not to do harm to the man who was seeking his life. This psalm says simply do not cause destruction, the wisdom of David. The Aramaic Targum adds that this is concerning a time of distress when David said to do no harm, and this is considered humble and innocent lifestyle. The Apostle Paul said to the *Romans 13:10 Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.* (NASB) What does it mean to fulfill the law (Torah)? The phrase “*fulfill the Torah*” is actually a rabbinic idiom that is still in use today. The word “*law*” or “*Torah*” is understood from the sense of teaching, guidance, and instruction, rather than the “*legal regulation.*” Commentators have often understood the Torah to refer to the first five books of the Bible but tend to look at the Torah purely from the perspective of being a legal regulation rather than a loving God giving His children instructions for living. According to the Scriptures, we also know that the word Torah may be used as a reference to the Scriptures in general. In Yeshua's time, and amongst Jews today, the Torah is a very positive thing, the Lord God gave

us His instructions for how to live. Therefore, the rabbis made it their goal to understand these instructions and to teach people to live by them just like we read in *Ezra 7:10*.

<p>Tehillim / Psalms 58 For the choir director; set to Al-tashheth. A Mikhtam of David. 58:1 Do you indeed speak righteousness, O gods? Do you judge uprightly, O sons of men? 58:2 No, in heart you work unrighteousness; On earth you weigh out the violence of your hands. 58:3 The wicked are estranged from the womb; These who speak lies go astray from birth. 58:4 They have venom like the venom of a serpent; Like a deaf cobra that stops up its ear, 58:5 So that it does not hear the voice of charmers, Or a skillful caster of spells. 58:6 O God, shatter their teeth in their mouth; Break out the fangs of the young lions, O Lord. 58:7 Let them flow away like water that runs off; When he aims his arrows, let them be as headless shafts. 58:8 Let them be as a snail which melts away as it goes along, Like the miscarriages of a woman which never see the sun. 58:9 Before your pots can feel the fire of thorns He will sweep them away with a whirlwind, the green and the burning alike. 58:10 The righteous will rejoice when he sees the vengeance; He will wash his feet in the blood of the wicked. 58:11 And men will say, ‘Surely there is a reward for the righteous; Surely there is a God who judges on earth!’ (NASB)</p>	<p>Toviyah / Psalms Chapter 58 58:1 For praise; concerning the distress in the time when David said, “Do no harm”; composed by David, humble and innocent. 58:2 In very truth are you silent, O righteous ones, in the time of strife? It is fitting that you speak righteousness, that you judge uprightly the sons of men. 58:3 But, O wicked, wherefore do you commit iniquity in the heart, wherefore do your hands establish crime on the earth? 58:4 The wicked have become strangers from birth; those who utter falsehood have gone astray from the womb. 58:5 Poison is theirs like the poison of the serpent; like the deaf adder that stops up his ears. 58:6 Lest it should accept the words of the wizards, the charmers of snakes; he is wiser than those who cast spells. 58:7 O God, smash their teeth in their mouth; and shatter the fangs of the lions’ offspring, O Lord. 58:8 Let them dissolve in their sins; like water, let them flow away; and he draws arrows at them, and they will be cut in pieces. 58:9 Like the crawling snail whose path is disgusting, like the abortion and the mole who are blind and have not seen the sun; 58:10 Before the soft wicked become as hard as thorns, while they are moist, while they are like unripe fruit, may he destroy them by the storm wind. 58:11 The righteous will rejoice, for he has seen retribution on them; he will wash his feet in the blood of the wicked man. 58:12 And the sons of men will say, “Truly there is a good reward for the righteous, truly there is a God whose judgments extend to the earth.” (EMC)</p>	<p>Psalmoi / Psalms 58 For the end. Destroy not: by David, for a memorial. 58:1 If ye do indeed speak righteousness, then do ye judge rightly, ye sons of men. 58:2 For ye work iniquities in your hearts in the earth: your hands plot unrighteousness. 58:3 Sinners have gone astray from the womb: they go astray from the belly: they speak lies. 58:4 Their venom is like that of a serpent; as that of a deaf asp, and that stops her ears; 58:5 which will not hear the voice of charmers, nor heed the charm prepared skillfully by the wise. 58:6 God has crushed their teeth in their mouth: God has broken the cheek-teeth of the lions. 58:7 They shall utterly pass away like water running through: he shall bend his bow till they shall fail. 58:8 They shall be destroyed as melted wax: the fire has fallen and they have not seen the sun. 58:9 Before your thorns feel the white thorn, he shall swallow you up as living, as in his wrath. 58:10 The righteous shall rejoice when he sees the vengeance of the ungodly: he shall wash his hands in the blood of the sinner. 58:11 And a man shall say, Verily then there is a reward for the righteous: verily there is a God that judges them in the earth. (LXX)</p>
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Looking at the Hebrew translation of *Romans 13:10* (האהבה לא תרע לרע על כן האהבה קיום התורה כלה:) we can see the translation of “to fulfill” or “fulfillment” is taken from the word קיום which means לקיים “to fulfil, carry out; hold; save” not to destroy. This word means to uphold or establish as well as to fulfill, complete, or accomplish. In rabbinic thought, the phrase “fulfill the Law” is often used as an idiom to refer to the proper interpretation of the Torah so that people can follow in God’s ways in the way that He

had intended. The difficulty today is that there are some interpretations that are designed to undermine the meaning of the Torah by misinterpreting it. Take for example, the mitzvah concerning adultery. One could interpret this command to say that this is specifically against one's spouse, and not about pornography, thus, looking at pornography is OK. When Yeshua declared lust as also being a violation of the command, he was clarifying the true intent of the Torah, looking at pornography is also adultery, thus, Yeshua clarified the true intent of the law in the sense of the rabbinic understanding of "to fulfill the Law." In a similar manner, the rabbinic understanding of "fulfilling the Law" is within this context. Another example of this is found in *Mishnah, Horayot 1:3*. (Note that the *Mishnah* is a composition of Jewish law that contains sayings from 200 BC to 200 AD.)

Mishnah, Horayot 1:3

If the Sanhedrin gives a decision to abolish (uproot) a law, by saying for instance, that the Torah does not include the laws of Sabbath or idolatry, the members of the court are free from a sin offering if they obey them; but if the Sanhedrin abolishes only one part of a law but fulfills (lekayem) the other part, they are liable.

Mishnah, Pirke Avot, 4:14

Go away to a place of study of the Torah, and do not suppose that it will come to you. For your fellow disciples will fulfill it in your hand. And on your own understanding do not rely. (Here "fulfill" means to explain and interpret the Scripture.)

Here we find another sense of the phrase "fulfill the Law," is given which means "to carry out a law," to actually do what it says. In the rabbinic rulings near Yeshua's time, we can find many examples of this usage, such as from *Mishnah, Sukkot 2:7*, "If this is how you act, you have never in your whole life fulfilled the requirement of dwelling in a sukkah!" Here, one rabbi is criticizing another's interpretation of the Torah, which caused him not to do what it really intends. Teaching that Christians are not obligated to obey the Torah is a gross error if the Apostolic writings are written from the rabbinic point of view of doing what the Torah really intends in the fulfillment of the Torah as opposed to its being destroyed or done away with. Another example from *Mishnah, Pirke Avot 4:9*, reads, "Whoever fulfills the Torah when poor will in the end fulfill it in wealth. And whoever treats the Torah as nothing when he is wealthy in the end will treat it as nothing in poverty." Again, the rabbis discuss "to obey" as opposed to the modern mindset that "fulfill" was meant to do away with.

In the Apostolic Writings, these two usages of "fulfill" appear to be key to understanding Yeshua's words in the passage in *Matthew 5* that begins with him speaking about "fulfilling the law."

Matthew 5:19

Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. (NASB)

Ἦός ἐάν οὖν λύσῃ μίαν τῶν ἐντολῶν τούτων τῶν ἐλάχιστων καὶ διδάξῃ οὕτως τοὺς ἀνθρώπους, ἐλάχιστος κληθήσεται ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τῶν οὐρανῶν: ὃς δ' ἂν ποιήσῃ καὶ διδάξῃ, οὗτος μέγας κληθήσεται ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τῶν οὐρανῶν.

לכן מי אשר יפר אחת מן המצוות הקטנות האלה וכן ילמד את בני האדם קטון יקרא במלכות השמים ואשר יעשה וילמד אותן הוא גדול יקרא במלכות השמים:

Here we find two actions (i) "practicing" and (ii) "teaching others to do the same." These two are a parallel to the two idiomatic senses of "fulfill," while the words "break" and "teach others to break" are the idiomatic senses of "abolish." Yeshua's statement about fulfilling and abolishing the Torah is a parallel to

this sentence. Remember that parallelism was also a very common rabbinic method for emphasizing an idea in the Bible. By understanding the idiom we see that Yeshua was emphatically stating his intention, which was to explain God’s word and live by it, and not to undermine it. Based upon this analysis, to teach that the Torah is abolished or done away with is to undermine the true meaning of God’s word.

The question then is if the Torah is God’s instructions for how to live, then are Gentiles entirely excluded from its wonderful truths? In both Romans and Galatians, following Paul’s having spent time arguing over the halachah regarding how to observe the Torah and its relationship to salvation in Yeshua the Messiah, he answers this question by speaking about how the Gentiles can “fulfill the Law” according to *Romans 13:8-10* and *Galatians 5:14*.

Romans 13:8-10

13:8 Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law 13:9 For this, ‘You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet,’ and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ 13:10 Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law. (NASB)

Galatians 5:14

5:14 For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ (NASB)

The question “is Paul using the idiomatic sense of ‘fulfill the Torah?’” If Paul is using the idiomatic sense of “fulfill the Torah,” he is reiterating Yeshua’s key teaching about loving God and neighbor that says “All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments” (*Matthew 22:40*). These two commands are the summation of all the Torah. Love is the overriding principle that shapes how all laws should be obeyed, we obey God’s law because we love Him. Paul also seems to be using the idiomatic sense of “fulfill the Torah” to say that loving your neighbor is actually the living out of the Torah. When we love our neighbor, it is as if we have done everything God has asked of us. The point is that a person who is honest and praiseworthy in all his dealings with others has truly hit God’s goal for how he should live. He didn’t cancel the Law, he actually lived it to the utmost! Similarly, Paul is saying that when we love our neighbor, we have truly achieved the goal of all the mitzvot. The motivation for obeying God’s commands should be out of love, this is why the Apostle John wrote in his epistle in *1 John 5:1 Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and whoever loves the Father loves the child born of Him. 5:2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments. 5:3 For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome. (NASB)*

In *Tehillim / Psalms 58*, David opens with a question saying, הַ תְּהִלַּת-לְמוֹת בְּדַמּוֹת הַמֵּת-נִהְיֶה כְּמוֹ-פֶתַח 58:1 Do you indeed speak righteousness, O gods? Do you judge uprightly, O sons of men? (NASB) The question David has is “do the gods of the nations speak righteousness?” What is unrighteous about an idol god and how does an idol god promote unrighteousness? What does “sons of men” mean in relation to David’s question regarding judging uprightly? Is his question rhetorical? The Apostle Paul says the following in *2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1*.

2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1

6:14 Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? 6:15 Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? 6:16 Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, ‘I will dwell in them and walk among them; And I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 6:17 ‘Therefore, come out from their midst and be separate,’ says the Lord. ‘And do not touch what is unclean; And I will welcome you. 6:18 ‘And I will be a father to

you, And you shall be sons and daughters to Me,' Says the Lord Almighty. 7:1 Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. (NASB)

The point that Paul is trying to make is an exhortation to pious persons to be weary of those who are deceitful and who are unrighteous (not obeying the command of God). Paul asks the question, of what agreement has the temple of God with idols? Nothing could be more of an abomination to a Jew than an idol in the temple of God. Here, no agreement is possible, the worship of two is incompatible. An idolater never worships the true God. Paul exhorts the believer to cleanse himself of all defilement of both flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord (7:1). The point is how could one keep the profession of faith and be under the influence of the Holy Spirit, while at the same time joining one's self to unrighteousness having communion with darkness, concord with Belial and with infidels? Paul quotes from Parashat Bekhukotai saying, "just as God said, 'I will dwell in them and walk among them; And I will be their God, and they shall be My people'" drawing upon the Torah to make his emphasis on the importance of who we are in the Messiah Yeshua, the Temple of God. In addition to this, righteousness is defined as believing in the Lord, in His Word, and obeying His commands (see *Revelation 12:17*). The Torah tells us to be careful to observe God's commands in the land which God has given us as we live on this earth. Notice how this applies to each of us, we have been given land to live upon, we are to live in the righteous ways of God as long as we are here on this earth. We read this in *Devarim / Deuteronomy 12:1-5*.

Devarim / Deuteronomy 12:1-5

12:1 'These are the statutes and the judgments which you shall carefully observe in the land which the Lord, the God of your fathers, has given you to possess as long as you live on the earth. 12:2 'You shall utterly destroy all the places where the nations whom you shall dispossess serve their gods, on the high mountains and on the hills and under every green tree. 12:3 'You shall tear down their altars and smash their sacred pillars and burn their Asherim with fire, and you shall cut down the engraved images of their gods and obliterate their name from that place. 12:4 'You shall not act like this toward the Lord your God. 12:5 'But you shall seek the LORD at the place which the Lord your God will choose from all your tribes, to establish His name there for His dwelling, and there you shall come. (NASB)

These Scriptures tell us that we are to destroy the places the nations served their gods, on the high mountains, and under every green tree. We are to destroy the sacred pillars, the Asherim, the graven images, and utterly remove the name of their gods from the land. In addition to this, we are told that we are not to act in the way the nations do to serve our God. We are to serve God the way He wants us to. *Devarim / Deuteronomy 12* goes on to say the following:

Devarim / Deuteronomy 12:30-32

12:30 beware that you are not ensnared to follow them, after they are destroyed before you, and that you do not inquire after their gods, saying, 'How do these nations serve their gods, that I also may do likewise?' 12:31 'You shall not behave thus toward the Lord your God, for every abominable act which the Lord hates they have done for their gods; for they even burn their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods. 12:32 'Whatever I command you, you shall be careful to do; you shall not add to nor take away from it. (NASB)

Devarim / Deuteronomy 12:30-31 states explicitly we are not to serve the Lord our God the way the nations served their gods. The unrighteousness of an idol god is that the idol is not the Lord God in heaven. Serving an idol god is a violation of the command of God and consequentially unrighteousness and sin. Serving God in the way the nations served their gods is also considered unrighteousness and sin.

The Aramaic Targum states, **ב הברם הא ברם בקושטא שתקין שתקין צדיקי בעידן מצו חמי לכו דצדקתא**

:58:2 *In very truth are you silent, O righteous ones, in the time of strife? It is fitting that you speak righteousness, that you judge uprightly the sons of men.* (EMC) The Septuagint states, 58:1 εἰς τὸ τέλος μὴ διαφθείρης τῷ Δαυὶδ εἰς στηλογραφίαν εἰ ἀληθῶς ἄρα δικαιοσύνην λαλεῖτε εὐθεῖα κρίνετε οἱ υἱοὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων 8:1 *If ye do indeed speak righteousness, then do ye judge rightly, ye sons of men.* (LXX) The Targum and the LXX are speaking of the “sons of men” and judging rightly. Based upon the history of Israel and of the nations (*specifically, Greek and Roman history on idolatry*) the worship of the idol gods involved indulging in sexual sin, adultery, and included the involvement of both male and female prostitution (*1 Corinthians 6:9*). Paul says those who know that unrighteousness will not inherit God’s kingdom. Those “sons of men” who partook in idolatrous worship were unable to judge rightly for the very reason of committing these sins before God. In addition to this, the hearts of those who indulge in these kinds of sin are manifested in the corruptness of their interactions with one another, their hearts are caught up all the day long in lust, they seek to destroy the innocent, lay in wait to catch someone to kill them, to financially ruin the poor for the purpose of their own profit, etc. *Jeremiah 2:5* states “*This is what the LORD says: “What fault did your ancestors find in me, that they strayed so far from me? They followed worthless idols and became worthless themselves.”* (NIV) In their actions, in their knowledge and in their practice, the worshiping of idols, these men become utterly wicked, Jeremiah says they become worthless just like their idols are worthless.

ב האמנם אלים צדק תדבריו מישרים תשפטו בני אדם: ג אף-בלב עולת תפועלון בְּאֶרֶץ חַמְס יִדְיָכֶם תִּפְלְסוּן: ד זרו רשעים מרחם תעו מִכְּטָן דְּבָרֵי כָזָב: ה חמת-למו כדמות חמת-נחש כמו-פֶּתוּן: 58:2 *No, in heart you work unrighteousness; On earth you weigh out the violence of your hands.* 58:3 *The wicked are estranged from the womb; These who speak lies go astray from birth.* 58:4 *They have venom like the venom of a serpent; Like a deaf cobra that stops up its ear,* 58:5 *So that it does not hear the voice of charmers, Or a skillful caster of spells.* (NASB) David says that he knows the heart of those who serve the idol gods, they work unrighteousness in the heart which manifests itself in violence in one’s hand. David appears to parallel Jacob and Esau, according to the Torah, to the wicked who are estranged from the womb. According to the Torah, Esau was the first born and from the beginning he was red or ruddy, which interestingly is how the Scriptures describe David the son of Jesse when as a young man coming down from the mountain. It seems that being ruddy was an admired feature in the culture of the time since it was a sign of strength and health. This might also be why Isaac loved Esau over his son Jacob. Jacob was born second, and struggling with Esau to come out of the womb, he had his hand on Esau’s foot suggesting that the two brothers would be contentious with one another from the beginning. The point is that Esau was wicked from the beginning. He was unrighteous and sold his birthright for a bowl of soup. David says the wicked, their heart works unrighteousness, and the wicked in their unrighteousness measure out violence in their hearts with their hands. Esau was a hunter, he was a violent man trapping, hunting, and killing animals. (*Note, I’m not saying that hunting is wrong unless that is what consumes your life.*) The interesting point of the Psalm is that David says the wicked are estranged from the womb and speak lies from birth. Are the wicked made to be wicked from birth?

ד איתעבידו נוכראין רשיעיא מן מען תען מן כריסא ממללי כדבותא כדכובא: 58:4 *The wicked have become strangers from birth; those who utter falsehood have gone astray from the womb.* (EMC) The Septuagint states, 58:3 ἀπηλλοτριώθησαν οἱ ἁμαρτωλοὶ ἀπὸ μήτρας ἐπλανήθησαν ἀπὸ γαστρὸς ἐλάλησαν ψεῦδη 58:3 *Sinners have gone astray from the womb: they go astray from the belly: they speak lies.* (LXX) Both the Aramaic Targum and the Septuagint agree with the MT on the wicked going astray, the rabbis do not add any additional thoughts on the topic. These Scriptures reveal to us the seriousness of the problem of sin and the unrighteousness of man. We utterly need the Lord’s help to over come sin, to turn from sin and to turn towards the Lord and His ways. In *Tehillim / Psalms 25:4* David requested for the Lord to “*Make me know Your ways, O LORD; Teach me Your paths.*” (NASB) David says in *Tehillim / Psalms 58:4*, the wicked speak lies being full of venom and they do not listen which is parallel to the snake that doesn’t listen to the charmer, and this is paralleled to those who do so from birth. These Scriptures describe the nature of man, and the reason for our need to desperately seek the Lord God in heaven, and His

Messiah Yeshua, to save us from our sins. We desperately need a Savior, we need the Lord to change our hearts, our minds, our lives for His service and His glory.

David understands his need for God's help and seeks the face of the Lord in counsel and in prayer to deliver him from the unrighteous man who is seeking his life, **ז אלהים הרס-שנימו כפימו מלתעות כפירים**, **נתץ | יהוה: ה ימצאסו כמו-מים יתהלכו-למו ידרך תצו [תצו] כמו יתמללו: ט כמו שבלול תמס יהלך נפל אשת** **58:6 O God, shatter their teeth in their mouth; Break out the fangs of the young lions, O Lord.** **58:7 Let them flow away like water that runs off; When he aims his arrows, let them be as headless shafts.** **58:8 Let them be as a snail which melts away as it goes along, Like the miscarriages of a woman which never see the sun.** (NASB) David's description of how he wants the Lord to help him defeat his enemies is to break the fangs of the lions, to water that is lost by runoff, the arrows of the enemies being harmless, and the actions and lives of the wicked to be like miscarriages of a woman who never sees the sun. Anyone who has had a miscarriage understands the significance of David's words, miscarriage is an emotionally distressing situation. Miscarriage is a complex grief that leaves one particularly vulnerable and involves a number of other potentially significant losses and additional suffering which is not necessarily present with other types of bereavement, except a stillbirth which is a similar loss occurring after 20 weeks. Not only does one lose her baby, one also suffers from the effects of both a birth and a death. Miscarriage is unique in that there is very little remains to bury, because the baby's body has not formed properly or it is passed when using the toilet. Notice how this is paralleled to the wicked, the unrighteous, a thing that the Lord will do to those who refuse to be saved in His Messiah. Note also that when a miscarriage occurs, very often there is no identifiable body, thus, the loss is minimized and invalidated by others, which also leads to questions and feelings of grief. In the case of the wicked, nobody will grieve over their death. Their death will go unnoticed, paralleled to one who is passed in the toilet and invalidated, the reason being, they lived for themselves and they died for themselves, which is the very definition of unrighteousness. The Aramaic Targum and the Septuagint state the following:

Aramaic Targum

Toviyah / Psalms Chapter 58:7-9

58:7 O God, smash their teeth in their mouth; and shatter the fangs of the lions' offspring, O Lord. 58:8 Let them dissolve in their sins; like water, let them flow away; and he draws arrows at them, and they will be cut in pieces. 58:9 Like the crawling snail whose path is disgusting, like the abortion and the mole who are blind and have not seen the sun; (EMC)

ז אלהא תרע ככיהון בפומהון וניבי וככי בני אריון תתרע יהוה: ה יתמסון בחוביהון היך מיא יזלון להון ונגיד גיררוי אמטולהון ויהון מתגזרין: ט היך זחיל תיבללא די מאיס אורחיה היך נפולא ואשותא די סמיין ולא חמון שמשא:

Septuagint

Psalmoi / Psalms 58:6-8

58:6 God has crushed their teeth in their mouth: God has broken the cheek-teeth of the lions. 58:7 They shall utterly pass away like water running through: he shall bend his bow till they shall fail. 58:8 They shall be destroyed as melted wax: the fire has fallen and they have not seen the sun. (LXX)

58:6 ó θεός συνέτριψεν τοὺς ὀδόντας αὐτῶν ἐν τῷ στόματι αὐτῶν τὰς μύλας τῶν λεόντων συνέθλασεν κύριος 58:7 ἐξουδενωθήσονται ὡς ὕδωρ διαπορευόμενον ἐντενεῖ τὸ τόξον αὐτοῦ ἕως οὗ ἄσθενήσουσιν 58:8 ὡσεὶ κηρὸς ὁ τακεῖς ἀνταναιρεθήσονται ἐπέπεσε πῦρ καὶ οὐκ εἶδον τὸν ἥλιον

The Aramaic Targum parallels the wicked to the crawling snail whose path is disgusting and slimy, to an abortion, and to a blind mole who cannot see. The description of the unrighteous man who goes about like a lion to destroy; this is very similar to the Peter's description of Satan, the deceiver, in *1 Peter 5:8 Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.* (NASB) In both the MT and the Aramaic Targum, the context of *Tehillim / Psalms 58:7 (6)* has David asking the Lord to do something in a future tense (a future expectation). The Septuagint states that God “has crushed” their death in their mouth, and then shifts to a future expectation, “they shall utterly pass away like water running through.” The rabbis who translated the Septuagint consider the destruction of the enemy as a complete, and as being yet to come. They also parallel the wicked to wax melting where the shape or form of the wicked is destroyed.

David goes on to say, בְּטָרָם יִבְיִנוּ סִירֵי־תִיכֶם אֶטֶד כְּמו־חַי כְּמו־הָרוֹן יִשְׁעָרְנוּ: *58:9 Before your pots can feel the fire of thorns He will sweep them away with a whirlwind, the green and the burning alike.* (NASB) Previously David speaks of the teeth of lions, water runoff, arrows, snails, and miscarrying women, all in relation to the wicked. He then says “before your pots can feel the fire of thorns...” What is the fire of thorns? We also find this statement in *Tehillim / Psalms 118:12 They surrounded me like bees; They were extinguished as a fire of thorns; In the name of the LORD I will surely cut them off.* (NASB) The fire of thorns may be a description of the rapidity with which a fire made of thorns burns. Note how the LXX and the Vulgate provide the translation, “they burnt out like a fire in thorns.” This may be a description of the sudden collapse of their rage as it is compared to a fire of thorns which blazes up fiercely and then rapidly dies down. The form of the preceding verses and the following line lead us to expect a climax in the description of their hostility rather than a description of their extinction. In addition to this, there is an additional spiritual meaning of thorns where thorns denote the falsehoods of the human desires. Take for example, in *Isaiah 32:13* we read, *עַל אֲדָמַת עֲמִי קוֹץ שְׁמִיר תַעֲלֶה כִּי עַל-כָּל-בְּתִי מְשׁוֹשׁ קִרְיָה עֲלִיזָה: 32:13 For the land of my people in which thorns and briars shall come up; Yea, for all the joyful houses and for the jubilant city.* (NASB) Note how “land” is written as אֲדָמַת and not as הָאָרֶץ suggesting the land may denote man who is full of falsehoods and evils. Note also in *Isaiah 33:11-12*, we read *יֵא תִהְיוּ חֲשֵׁשׁ תִלְדוּ קֶשׁ רוֹחֲכֶם 33:11 Ye conceive chaff, ye bear stubble, Your spirit! -- fire devoureth you. 33:12 And peoples have been [as] burnings of lime, Thorns, as sweepings, with fire they burn.* (YLT) Here in *Isaiah 33*, thorns denote falsehoods which consume truth and righteousness and Isaiah describes this as consuming chaff and stubble which is burned as thorns are burned. This suggests by consuming falsehoods one is causing truth and life to be removed. The text also suggests that the wicked are worthless and their destruction shall be sudden and complete. The pot may be a reference to what the righteous are preparing for food (life) and the wicked who are set on taking our lives. David says the Lord will sweep them away, both the green and the burning alike. The translators of the NASB seem to use a little poetic license in this verse since the words “whirlwind, green, and burning alike” are not in Ginsburg’s MT. The point however is clear, the unrighteous, the wicked will perish and the Lord will be the one who does this for His people.

David concludes his psalm saying, יֵא יִשְׂמַח צְדִיק כִּי-תִזָּה נָקָם פְּעַמָּיו יִרְחֹץ בְּדַם הָרָשָׁע: יב וַיֹּאמֶר אָדָם *58:10 The righteous will rejoice when he sees the vengeance; He will wash his feet in the blood of the wicked. 58:11 And men will say, ‘Surely there is a reward for the righteous; Surely there is a God who judges on earth!’* (NASB) In this Psalm we read of the vengeance of God upon the enemies of His people. David says that the righteous will rejoice when he sees the vindication of God’s honor, exemplified by the deliverance the Lord has provided. The arrogance, power, prosperity, and success of the wicked, are often a discouragement to the righteous. However, when the righteous see the judgments of God taking away the wicked, and the Lord’s vengeance on them, the righteous will rejoice in the satisfaction that is found in their faith in God’s providence, and in his justice, mercy, and righteousness. David makes a troubling statement saying “He shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked,” which suggests there will be so great a slaughter of his enemies, that looking over the slain his feet will be washed

in the blood of the dead. The allusion is to a great slaughter of the unrighteous, those who seek to destroy God's people will in fact themselves be destroyed. The blood and the slaughter of the wicked reminds us of the Apostle John's words in the book of *Revelation 14* which says the following.

Revelation 14:18-20

14:18 Then another angel, the one who has power over fire, came out from the altar; and he called with a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, 'Put in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters from the vine of the earth, because her grapes are ripe.' 14:19 So the angel swung his sickle to the earth and gathered the clusters from the vine of the earth, and threw them into the great wine press of the wrath of God. 14:20 And the wine press was trodden outside the city, and blood came out from the wine press, up to the horses' bridles, for a distance of two hundred miles. (NASB)

Here again we find the future expectation of the victory of the Lord over the wicked. The book of Revelation tells us that in Yeshua the Messiah we have victory. Like the rendering of the Septuagint in *Tehillim / Psalms 58:6*, the Lord has crushed their teeth (past tense), he has bruised the head of the serpent, and we wait on a future expectation of deliverance in this world and in the world to come. These Scriptures assure us that we serve a great God who is able to overcome anything. In addition to this, David's words speak to us that we are to be patient, to wait upon the Lord for His victory and His deliverance, to remain strong in our faith in Yeshua the Messiah the Lord's Savior and King, and to not waver in our faith due to the unrighteousness of this world. Let's pray asking the Lord to strengthen our faith and to help us to endure troubling times when they come!

Heavenly Father,

We thank You for the insights from David's Psalms that help to strengthen our faith and remind us to stay on the straight and narrow path of righteousness and truth. Lord we ask that You would have mercy on us, forgive us for our sins, help us to live righteous lives, and remain true in our faith and consistent in our walk before us even in the midst of troubling times. Give us the strength to overcome sin, to have true hearts to seek Your righteousness, truth, and to have patience to wait upon Your deliverance. Help us to set out minds on those things that are wholesome and righteous with a desire to show mercy and love toward one another. We thank You Lord for sending Your son Yeshua that we may enter into the covenant of peace that You have promised to Your people. Help us to grow in our faith, to walk in the spirit, and apply these truths to our lives. We praise Your Holy Name and give You all of the honor, and the glory, and the praise forever and ever.

In Yeshua's (Jesus') Name we pray! Amen!

Be Blessed in Yeshua, Christ our Messiah!

הללויה לאדוננו מורנו ורבינו ישוע מלך המשיח לעולם ועד:
Hallelujah for our Lord, our Teacher, our Rabbi,
"Yeshua" King Messiah forever and ever

