

# “PUT MY TEARS IN YOUR BOTTLE”

## Psalm 56

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### INTRODUCTION

The psalm has 3 divisions: vv. 1-4, 5-11, 12-13. The first two divisions end with the refrain (and a variation): “In God, whose word I praise, in God I have put my trust; I shall not be afraid. What can man do to me?” There are times when the believer will be afraid; in such times he must yield to faith, not fear: “What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee.”

### TRUST IN GOD—BE NOT AFRAID!

Title: “Dove of silence of far off people/places”; Contemplative psalm.

#### I. FOES AND FEARS FOLLOWED BY FAITH (1-4)

##### A. Foes

1. “Man”—in his weakness; God [Elohim] in His strength—9 times in the psalm
2. “A Fighter”—1b; “fighters” plural—v. 2, “many of them
3. Watchers—with evil intent—thus enemies (2a).
4. “Flesh”—v. 4
5. Gasping and snapping after David like wild animals (1, 2); oppressing him (1b).

##### B. Fears

1. Harassed all day long—3 times: 1. 1, v. 2, v. 5
2. Exalted and proud—height, proudly [not “O thou most high”]
3. “The day I fear” (3)

The mention of fear strongly supports the reference in the title to David’s time in Gath, for I Sam. 21:12 specifically states that when the servants of Achish accused David before Achish, David took the “words to heart and **greatly feared** Achish king of Gath.”

##### C. Faith (3-4)

1. Faith overcomes fear—“when I am afraid”; “I shall not be afraid.”
2. Faith looks to a powerful God
  - Elohim
  - His “word” that I praise.
3. Trust is resting oneself totally upon God.
4. Mere Flesh/man can really do nothing to me to ruin God’s purpose.

#### II. ATTACKS, ARITHMETIC, ASSURANCE (5-11)

##### A. Attacks of Opponents (5-7)

1. They injure my **cause**—fight against me and all that my words stand for (5)
2. Evil plans and purposes (5b).
3. They stir up strife, lurk secretly in their hiding places, carefully watching for an opportunity, lying in wait—instead of patiently waiting on the Lord! (6)
4. Shall they escape because of their wickedness (7a)?
5. Plea for God to cast them down—them and all wicked “peoples.” (7); they “will turn back in defeat (9)

##### B. Arithmetic of God (8)

1. God takes account—“numbers”—“my wandering”
  - “YOU” is very emphatic.
  - “Wandering” is only here; a place name “land of Nod” in Gen. 4:16 for place Cain went; verb “wander” used in Gen. 4:12, 14.

- David realizes that “each **day** of his wandering, “each **nook** in which he has found shelter, each **step** that he has taken, every **artifice** by which he has baffled his foes,—all have been numbered by his Heavenly Keeper.
  - His wanderings were not due to judgment such as Cain but due to the attacking and troubling of the wicked. The God who “counts” all the steps of men also has specially counted David’s wanderings.
2. God puts David’s tears in His bottle.
    - None of his tears have fallen to the ground when his eyes have been lifted toward Heaven—God will preserve them in his bottle.
    - “Bottle” refers to skins to preserve precious fluids in hot desert regions—such as water, wine, milk, etc.
    - David cried many tears so that a large receptacle was needed.
    - God preserves, takes note of and cares for and recompenses David’s tears.
  3. God puts his tears in His book of remembrance—cf. Mal. 3:16; Ps. 139:16—all his days.
- C. Assurance of David (9-11)
1. God answers—enemies turn back—“in the day when I call”; cf. v. 3—in the day I am afraid (9).
  2. “This I know, **because God is for me**; cf. Rom. 8:31—“If God is for us, who can be against us?”
  3. Cf. Ps. 118:6—combines this statement with words of v. 11 b—I will not be afraid; what can man do to me.
  4. His word of promise and truth is faithful and is fulfilled in David’s life. (10)
    - I praise his word.
    - In Him his word is true and is fulfilled.
  5. “In God I have put my trust” (11).
  6. I will not be afraid—cf. v. 3.
  7. What can “man” [here “adam,” not “flesh” as in v. 4] do to me?

### III. VOWS AND VICTORY (12-13)

Not as a form of “bribery,” but as an expression of sincere gratitude and faithfulness to his word will David worship the Lord in the presence of His people once all of God’s deliverance of David is complete.

- A. Vows (12)
  1. “Thy vows are upon me”—I am obligated to keep the vows I made unto you, O God.
  2. I will offer “thank offerings.”
- B. The Victory and deliverance is certain and sure (13).
  1. “My soul [person, being, life] from death
  2. “My feet from stumbling” [cf. 116:8 that adds “my eyes from tears”—David has already mentioned the tears].
- C. I will “walk before God”—accountable to Him and in fellowship with Him.
  - In the “light of the living”
  - Applies to natural life and life for which God has preserved David.
  - All of this depicts more than merely physical deliverance and life; when David mentions “before God” and speaks of his “soul” and his “walk” and “light” the spiritual realm must be included.
  - Life is the opposite of death in the deepest and most comprehensive sense; light of life is therefore the opposite of the night of Hades, of his seclusion from God and from His revelation in human history.

### CONCLUSION

What a psalm! Fear not—God is with you. Trust in Him, what can man do to you? Praise and trust his word—promises.

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