

The second verb, while formally ambiguous, should also be understood as cohortative here.

A **TM** The prefixed verb with *vav* (ו) consecutive normally appears in narrative contexts to indicate past action, but here it continues the anticipatory (future) perspective of the preceding line. In Ps 77:6 one finds the same sequence of cohortative + prefixed verbal form with *vav* (ו) consecutive. In this case as well, both forms refer to future actions.

B **TM** *Heb* “my voice.” **C** **TM** The perfect verbal form is here used rhetorically to indicate that the action is certain to take place (the so-called perfect of certitude).

D **TM** *Heb* “he will redeem in peace my life from [those who] draw near to me.”

E **TM** Or “for.”

F **TM** *Heb* “among many they are against me.” For other examples of the preposition *נגד* (*immaḏ*) used in the sense of “at, against,” see *HALOT* 842 s.v.; *BDB* 767 s.v.; *IBHS* 219 §11.2.14b.

G **TM** *Heb* “God will hear and answer them, even [the] one who sits [from] ancient times.” The prefixed verbal form with *vav* (ו) consecutive carries on the anticipatory force of the preceding imperfect. The verb appears to be a Qal form from *ענה* (*ʾanah*, “to answer”). If this reading is retained, the point would be that God “answered” them in judgment. The translation assumes an emendation to the Piel *וַיַּעֲנֵם* (*vayʿannem*; see 2 Kgs 17:20) and understands the root as *ענה* (*ʾanah*, “to afflict”); see also 1 Kgs 8:35).

H **TM** *Heb* “[the ones] for whom there are no changes, and they do not fear God.”

I **SM** *He*. This must refer to the psalmist’s former friend, who was addressed previously in vv. 12–14.

J **TM** *Heb* “stretches out his hand against.”

K **TM** The form should probably be emended to an active participle *שֹׁלֵם*, *shol* “*mayy*” from the verbal root *שָׁלַם* (*shalam*, “be in a covenant of peace with”). Perhaps the translation “his friends” suggests too intimate a relationship. Another option is to translate, “he attacks those who made agreements with him.”

L **TM** *Heb* “he violates his covenant.”

M **TM** *Heb* “the butter-like [words] of his mouth are smooth.” The noun *מַחְמַת* (*makhmaʾot*, “butter-like [words]”) occurs only here. Many prefer to emend

and he will hear^A me.^B

18 He will rescue^C me and protect me from those who attack me,^D even though^E they greatly outnumber me.^F

19 God, the one who has reigned as king from long ago, will hear and humiliate them.^G *Selah* They refuse to change, and do not fear God.^H

20 He^I attacks^J his friends;^K he breaks his solemn promises to them.^L

21 His words are as smooth as butter,^M but he harbors animosity in his heart.^N His words seem softer than oil, but they are really like sharp swords.^O

22 Throw your burden^P upon the LORD, and he will sustain you.^Q He will never allow the godly to be shaken.^R

23 But you, O God, will bring them^S down to the deep Pit.^T Violent and deceitful people^U will not live even half a normal lifespan.^V But as for me, I trust in you.

*For the music director, according to the yonath-
elem-rekhoqim style;^W a prayer^X of David, written
when the Philistines captured him in Gath.^Y*

56^Z Have mercy on me, O God, for men are attacking me.^a All day long hostile enemies^b are tormenting me.^c 2 Those who anticipate my defeat^d attack me all day long. Indeed,^e many are fighting against me, O Exalted One.^f 3 When^g I am afraid, I trust in you. 4 In God—I boast in his promise^h—in God I trust; I am not afraid.

the form to *מַחְמַת* (*mekhemʾah*, from [i.e., “than”] *but*”), cf. NEB, NRSV “smoother than butter.” However, in this case “his mouth” does not agree in number with the plural verb *חָלְקוּ* (*khalʿqu*, “they are smooth”). Therefore some further propose an emendation of *פִּי* (*piy*, “his mouth”) to *פָּנָיו* (*panayy*, “his face”). In any case, the point seems to be that the psalmist’s former friend spoke kindly to him and gave the outward indications of friendship.

N **TM** *Heb* “and war [is in] his heart.”

O **TM** *Heb* “his words are softer than oil, but they are drawn swords.”

P **TM** The Hebrew noun occurs only here.

Q **TM** The pronoun is singular; the psalmist addresses each member of his audience individually.

R **TM** *Heb* “he will never allow swaying for the righteous.”

S **TM** The pronominal suffix refers to the psalmist’s enemies (see v. 19).

T **TM** *Heb* “well of the pit.” The Hebrew term *שֵׁחַת* (*shakhat*, “pit”) is often used as a title for Sheol (see Pss 16:10; 30:9; 49:9; 103:4).

U **TM** *Heb* “men of bloodshed and deceit.”

V **TM** *Heb* “will not divide in half their days.”

W **TM** The literal meaning of this phrase is “silent dove, distant ones.” Perhaps it

refers to a particular style of music, a tune title, or a type of musical instrument.

X **TM** The precise meaning of the Hebrew word *מִקְתָּם* (*miktam*), which also appears in the heading to Pss 16 and 57–60 is uncertain. *HALOT* 582–83 s.v. defines it as “inscription.”

Y **SM** According to the superscription, David wrote this psalm when the Philistines seized him and took him to King Achish of Gath (see 1 Sam 21:11–15).

Z **SM** *Psalm* 56. Despite the threats of his enemies, the psalmist is confident the Lord will keep his promise to protect and deliver him.

a **TM** According to *BDB* 983 s.v. II *שָׁאַף*, the verb is derived from *שָׁאַף* (*shaʾaf*, “to trample, crush”) rather than the homonymic verb “pant after.”

b **TM** *Heb* “a fighter.” The singular is collective for his enemies (see vv. 5–6). The Qal of *לָחַם* (*lakham*, “fight”) also occurs in Ps 35:1.

c **TM** The imperfect verbal form draws attention to the continuing nature of the enemies’ attacks.

d **TM** *Heb* “to those who watch me [with evil intent].” See also Pss 5:8; 27:11; 54:5; 59:10.

e **TM** Or “for.”

f **TM** Some take the Hebrew term *מָרוֹם* (*marom*, “on high; above”) as an adverb modifying the preceding participle and translate, “proudly” (cf. NASB; NIV “in their pride”). The present translation assumes the term is a divine title here. The Lord is pictured as enthroned “on high” in Ps 92:8. (Note the substantival use of the term in Isa 24:4 and see C. A. Briggs and E. G. Briggs (*Psalms* [ICC], 2:34), who prefer to place the term at the beginning of the next verse.)

g **TM** *Heb* “[in] a day.”

h **TM** *Heb* “in God I boast, his word.” The syntax in the Hebrew text is difficult. (1) The line could be translated, “in God I boast, [in] his word.” Such a translation assumes that the prepositional phrase “in God” goes with the following verb “I boast” (see Ps 44:8) and that “his word” is appositional to “in God” and more specifically identifies the basis for the psalmist’s confidence. God’s “word” is here understood as an assuring promise of protection. Another option (2) is to translate, “in God I will boast [with] a word.” In this case, the “word” is a song of praise.