

**The Attackers: Those Who Hate Believers Are Guilty before the Justice of God, Ps 34:21; Knowledge of Doctrine inside the Bubble Provides Divine Protection During Historical Downtrends, John 17:14–17; David’s Fugitive Headquarters at the Caves of Adullam, Ps 34:22 cf. Pss 57 & 142’s Superscriptions; David’s Ragtag Recruits at Adullam Were in Distress, Indebtedness, & Discontent, 1 Sam 22:2**

12. Psalm 34:21 takes up the subjects of evil and hatred. Those who are motivated by evil are being systematically executed; those who are guided by wheel-tracks of wickedness.
13. In addition, the person that hates believers is guilty<sup>1</sup> before the justice of God. Here David uses another metonymy in which “guilty” identifies a group of people whose hatred of believers brings down upon them divine justice.
14. The system which God has incorporated into the divine decree is designed to protect believers from the assaults launched from the Dark Side.
15. There is no greater protection for a believer in this life than to have his soul filled with principles from the Word of God. God protects His own! Those with maximum doctrine are given top priority as far as protection is concerned.
16. The enemy is under indictment, discipline, and, if necessary, execution if he should turn his wrath unjustly toward the believer.
17. In a client nation, the corps of mature believers has maximum protection for it is up to them to preserve the nation in time of crisis.
18. If the nation falls, they become the diaspora that takes the Word to another area of the world and begins afresh.
19. Therefore, Psalm 34:21 is a promise to the advancing believer. It promises that those who perpetrate evil and remain so engaged are committing certain suicide.
20. Secondly, those who are engaged in the nine categories of the cosmic system of hatred fall under the judgment of God.
21. Like David’s circumstance in his generation similarly are we in ours: our person is protected and provided for provided we pursue truth and busy ourselves in the task of becoming loyal bond-servants of our Lord.
22. Do not be discouraged when the world hates you for our Lord promised divine protection by means of His Word:

**John 17:14** - “I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

**v. 15** - “I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one.

**v. 16** - “They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

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<sup>1</sup> NASB: “Condemned”; Hebrew אָשָׁם (*’asham*): Guilty before God, therefore to be judged or punished for the sin of hatred, in this case, directed toward believers.

**John 17:17** - **“Sanctify [ ἀγιάζω (*hagiázō*): aorist active imperative: to set apart ] them [ believers ] in the truth [ instrumental of means of ἀλήθεια (*aléthia*): by means of doctrine ]; Your word [ λόγος (*lógos*): doctrine ] is [ εἰμί (*eimí*): static present active indicative: a perpetually existing condition ] truth. (NASB)**

**Psalm 34:21** - Evil will systematically execute those who follow wheel-tracks of wickedness. Those in the cosmic system who express hatred of believers with capacity righteousness will fall under judgment from the Supreme Court of Heaven. (EXT)

**Psalm 34:22** - The Lord redeems the soul of His servants, and none of those who take refuge in Him will be condemned. (NASB)

1. The psalm’s final verse begins with the Lord redeeming the soul of His servants. The word “redeems” is the Qal active participle of the verb **פָּתַח (*pathah*)** which means, “to ransom, to redeem, to deliver, to set free.”
2. In this context there is a dual application of the term. First of all, there is deliverance from the danger imposed by Saul and the Philistines; secondly to be ransomed from the slave market of sin through faith alone in Messiah alone.
3. The place where these events occurred is said to be the “cave of Adullam” in 1 Samuel 22:1. It was at this location that four hundred men assembled to join him in his defense:

**1 Samuel 22:2** - Everyone who was in distress, and everyone who was in debt, and everyone who was discontented gathered to him; and he became captain over them. Now there were about four hundred men with him. (NASB)

4. Two psalms were composed by David that reveal his appeals to the Father for protection and provision in time of danger. The superscription of both Psalm 57 and 142 indicate they were prayed at the cave of Adullam but composed later:

**Psalm 57:Superscription** - For the choir director; set to Altachheth [ **Do not destroy!** ]. A Mikhtam [ a song of expiation or rebound ] of David, when he fled from Saul in the cave [ of Adullam ]. (NASB)

**Psalm 142: Superscription** - Miskil [ a contemplative poem. ] of David, when he was in the cave [ of Adullam ]. A prayer. (NASB)

5. The word cave is found in 1 Samuel 22:2 and in each of these superscriptions. It is the feminine noun **מְעָרָה (*me'arah*)**. This cave is said to be near the city of **עַדְלָם (*'Athullam*)**.
6. Archaeology indicates that what we have here is more than your garden variety cave, so a little research is needed. First of all, the lay of the land:

**The Shephalah.** East of the coastal plain, extending southward from the valley of Aijalon (Ā'-ja-lōn) toward Gaza, is the Shephelah, comprising a rocky plateau which reaches heights of fifteen hundred feet in the south, cut across by several parallel valleys. The Shephelah served as a buffer zone between the Israelites, who controlled the hill country of the central range, and the Philistines, who occupied the coastal plain.

The Philistines frequently overran the Shephelah, but seldom did they penetrate beyond its eastern border where many of their battles with Israel were fought.

The line between Judah and the Shephelah was marked by a series of fortified towns. The northernmost was Aijalon. Further south were Zorah \zō'-ra\ and nearby Eshtaol \ēsh'-ta-ōl\. Then came Zanoah \za-nō'-ah\. Adullam, the site of the cave in which David hid from Saul (1 Samuel 22:1). It has been identified with Tell *esh-Sheikh Madhkur*. Next was Keilah \ke-i'-la\ (and) Nezib \nē'-zīb\.<sup>2</sup>

7. Somewhere in the environs of Adullam are a number of caves and where David established his stronghold is suggested by this excerpt:

The cave of Adullam, David's headquarters during a part of the time when he was a fugitive from Saul: Hebrew syntax permits of the use of the word "cave" collectively; it may denote a group or a region of caves; it is not shut up to the meaning that there was one immense cave in which David and his 400 men all found accommodations at once. All reasonings based on this notion are futile.<sup>3</sup>

8. Those who have gathered with David at the caves of Adullam are described in:

**1 Samuel 22:2 -** Everyone who was in distress, and everyone who was in debt, and everyone who was discontented gathered to him; and he became captain over them. Now there were about four hundred men with him.

9. Here we see those who have become targets of Saul's because they befriended David. When leadership turns evil, there will inevitably be those who seek refuge with whom they trust.
10. These men who joined with David at Adullam are described as being in distress, debt, and discontent.
11. Loss of freedom is an unnatural state for the human soul. Those who live under totalitarian régimes suffer spiritual and mental oppression due to the abuse of power and authority.
12. Freedom can only function within the boundaries of a foundational system of order maintained by duly appointed authority.
13. But when that authority becomes oppressive it places mental and physical strain on the souls of the people resulting in distress.

<sup>2</sup> Charles F. Pfeiffer and Howard F. Vos, *The Wycliffe Historical Geography of Bible Lands* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1967), 110.

<sup>3</sup> Willis J. Beecher, "Adullam," in *The International Standard Encyclopaedia*, gen. ed. James Orr (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1956), 1:62.