

The Attackers: The Mandate to Avoid Verbal Sins that Result in Evil & Deceit: the Lips Articulate What Volition Instructs; Its Content Is Deceptive If It Withholds Truth; Ps 34:13; Turn from Reversionism & Advance Spiritually inside the Bubble; Shalom: Seek Prosperity & Pursue It, v. 14

Psalm 34:13 - Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceit. (NASB)

1. David continues by using his own failures, and possibly those of Doeg, to illustrate the danger of Reverse Punitive Action.
2. The verse begins with the Qal imperative of the verb נָצַר (*nasar*): “to guard; to watch out as a guard walking a post.”
3. David is issuing a command to keep your tongue from evil. When your thoughts are dominated by mental attitude sins and these are verbalized, then you are not in fellowship, you are not inside the bubble, and you are not walking in wheel-tracks of righteousness.
4. Unconfessed, mental-attitude sins will always be expressed by verbal sins. They will be used to discredit, vilify, belittle, slander, or malign others; in other words, to judge.
5. Sins of the tongue are hurtful. They are designed to discredit, criticize, or malign another person or to magnify, authenticate, or justify yourself. You think it is all private and goes no further, but it does. It spreads like wildfire.
6. Eventually you are going to get caught and you will lie to cover-up the fact that you did gossip but do not want to fess up to it.
7. David’s imperative is a negative command to guard your tongue from evil: רָע (*ra’*). This word is multifaceted and context guides its specific application; here it emphasizes reversionism.
8. In verse 13 it makes reference to erroneous thinking that motivates bad decisions and wrong actions. David lied at Nob to Ahimelech the priest.
9. He was not honest about his circumstance and the ramifications of his comments there resulted in the execution of 85 priests and the genocide of Nob’s entire population.
10. David continues with the second mandate of the verse, this one prohibiting “your lips from speaking deceit.”
11. The word “lips” is the feminine noun שָׂפָה (*saphah*) and refers to the spoken word. Its feminine gender indicates that the lips respond to what the soul orders them to do.
12. “Deceit” is the noun מִרְמָה (*mirmah*): “deceit or fraud.” It “signifies the intentional misleading of someone else through distorting or withholding the truth”¹ which is exactly what David did to Ahimelech.

Psalm 34:13 - Guard your tongue from enunciating erroneous thoughts associated with reversionism and your lips from misleading someone by withholding the truth. (EXT)

Psalm 34:14 - Depart from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it. (NASB)

¹ *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament*, rev ed., ed. Spiros Zodhiates [Chattanooga: AMG Publishers, 1993], 671.

1. The verse opens with the word “depart.” This is the Qal imperative of the verb סִרַר (*sur*) and means “to turn from.”
2. This is exactly what David did following his expulsion from Gath. This is what was going on in verse 6 where David wrote, “The poor man cried.”
3. When David cried, “O God, help,” he indicated to God that he was turning from the evils associated with reversionism.
4. David issued a commandment to “see good” in verse 12. There he encourages believers to grow in grace in pursuit of the copacetic spiritual life.
5. In verse 14, David’s mandate is for the believer to “do good.” Here he emphasizes the process enabling a person to acquire the copacetic spiritual life: consistent Bible study utilizing the Grace Apparatus for Perception or Operation Z.
6. If you depart from the process that took you through the stages of reversionism, then you must take on a better process: the advance to maturity inside the bubble.
7. The last sentence of this paragraph begins with the Piel imperative of the verb בָּקַשׁ (*baqash*): In context it refers to a search for prosperity.
8. Prosperity is indicated by the noun שְׁלוֹמִים (*shalom*) which is often translated “peace,” although the word has many applications. We see this in all three of the languages we utilize in our studies.
9. Here are some examples from English, Hebrew, and Greek dictionaries:

Peace. A state of tranquility or quiet: as freedom from civil disturbance; a state of security or order with a community provided for by law or custom. Freedom from disquieting or oppressive thoughts or emotions; harmony in personal relations.²

שְׁלוֹמִים *shalom*: *Psalms and Wisdom Literature.* In the [Book of Psalms] *shalom* occurs in a wide variety of contexts. It can mean the security given by Yahweh (4:8), strength and power (29:11), a tranquil relationship with Yahweh (35:27), possession of the land and the opportunity to enjoy its abundance and fertility without hindrance (37:11), soundness and health (38:3), freedom from the threat of enemies (55:18), prosperity (73:3), protection from misfortune (119:165), the quintessence of blessing (147:14).

In the context of a didactic sapiential³ poem, 34:14 exhorts: “Depart from evil, and do good; seek *shalom* and pursue it.” Against the background of the correlation between actions and their consequences, this text says that doing what is right beings about the well-being of the righteous. Since the order of the world “is understood fundamentally as a beneficial whole, conduct pursuant to that order ... results in *shalom*, well-being.” Within a synthetic mode of thought, *shalom* thus implies right conduct.⁴

² Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 11th ed., s.v. “peace.”

³ “Expounding wisdom. Sapiential books; the didactic books of ancient Hebrew literature, the Proverbs of Solomon and Ecclesiastes of the Old Testament” (*Webster’s New Twentieth Century Dictionary: Unabridged*, 2d ed., s.v. “sapiential.”)

⁴ F. J. Stendebach, “שְׁלוֹמִים *shalom*” in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, eds. G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry, trans. David E. Green (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2006), 15:40.

εἰρήνη, *eirēnē*. In a civil sense, the opposite of war and dissension. Among individuals, harmony. Metaphorically peace of mind, tranquility. Peace, meaning health, welfare, prosperity, every kind of good. In Luke 1:79, “the way of peace” means the way of happiness. In the Old Testament the equivalent word *shalom* meant wholeness, soundness, hence health, well-being, prosperity.⁵

10. The Piel stem of *baqash* refers to an intensive search for prosperity while the imperative mood is a direct positive command.
11. The only way to successfully search for prosperity of soul is to inculcate biblical truth into it. Therefore the mandate is followed by the Qal imperative of the verb רָרַף (*rathaph*). Figuratively it describes chasing rewards, in this case those associated with prosperity.
12. If you pursue doctrine, prosperity pursues you. This is what David decided to do when the Lord set up a one-Man seminary in the Valley of Elah.
13. When David leaves seminary, prosperity is pursuing him since he has pursued doctrine. This is the prosperity of soul that only comes from knowledge of the Word of God.

Psalm 34:14 - Turn from evil and do the good of advancing spiritually; search for prosperity and pursue it while it pursues you. (EXT)

⁵ *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament*, rev. ed., s.v. “εἰρήνη.”