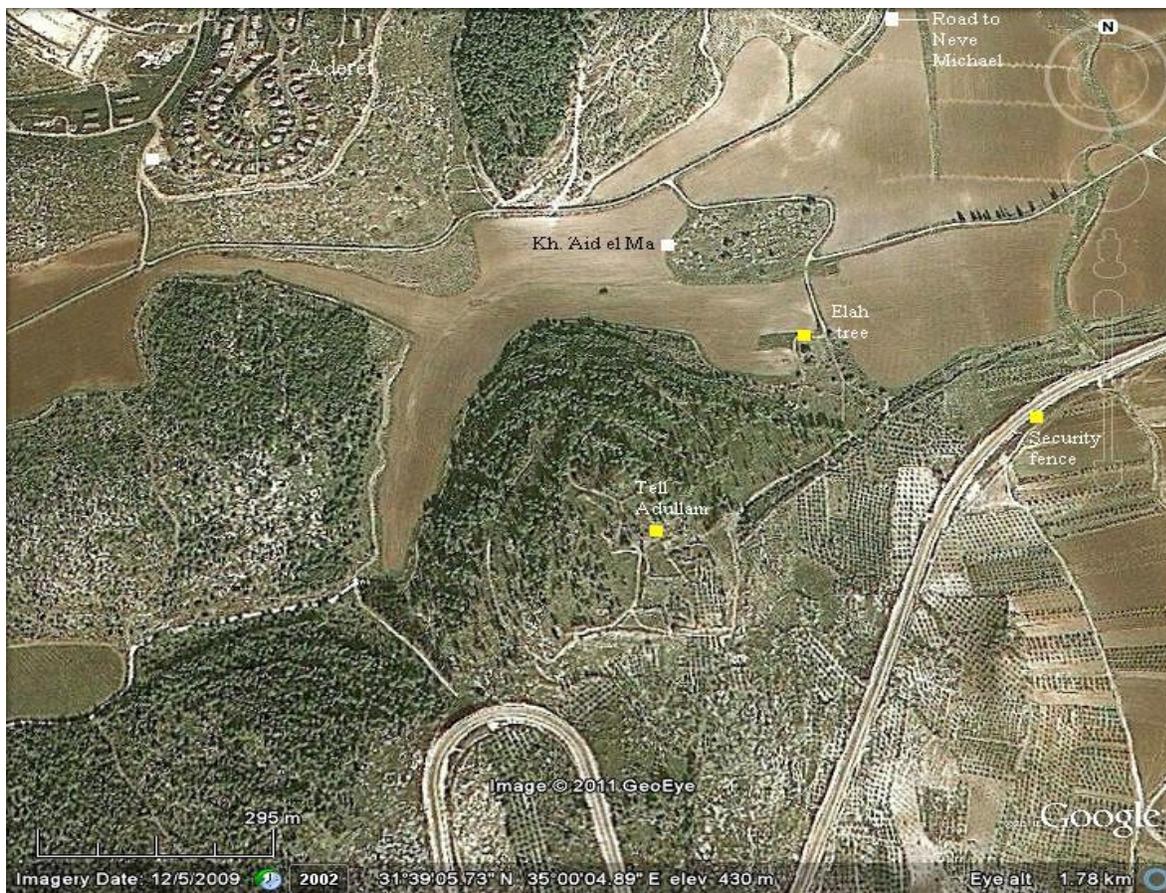


1. **INTRODUCTION** – the Cave of Adullam is mentioned in a number of places in the Old Testament, and especially in context with David when he sought refuge from those hunting him. According to an article written by J. M. Houston in Zondervan’s Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible, Adullam “was situated near a Canaanite town that was on the route via Azegah and Soko that controlled one of the principal passes into the hill-country of Judah from the northern Shephelah. It is first mentioned in Genesis 38:1, 2, when Judean clans spread out by establishing friendly relationships with the Canaanite cities of this district. Such is the context of the affair of Judah and Tamar with the intermarriage of the clan of Judah and the residents of Adullam. It is mentioned as a Canaanite royal city in Joshua 15:35. Adullam is usually associated with the cave nearby where David fled for refuge when he was refused protection by Achish, king of Gath (1 Sam 22:1). Adullam is mentioned in the list of fortresses that Rehoboam reinforced on the western approaches to the Judean hills (2 Chronicles 11:7). Adullam is mentioned by Micah in the description of Sennacherib’s invasion of Judah (Mic 1:15), and Nehemiah refers to it as one of the inhabited towns after the Exile (Nehemiah 11:30). The site of Adullam is usually identified with Tell esh-Sheikh Madhkur, near Khirbet ’eld el-Ma, half-way between Lachish and Jerusalem.” **Adullam is located on a steep hillside in the middle of the picture below... (yellow dot at lower center):**



The picture below was taken from the inside of the Cave of Adullam.



2. **CONTEXT OF WRITING AND AUTHOR** – Psalm 142 was written by David who had not yet ascended to the throne, and was hiding out from King Saul who was determined to kill him. The companion Old Testament story that forms the background for this psalm is preserved in 1 Samuel 20:1-22:5.

3. **STRUCTURE:**

a. **Chiastic Outline of Strophes A, B, A' & B' – Translation – Professor Brian Morgan:**

**A** Vs 1 “I cry aloud with my voice to the LORD  
I make supplication to the LORD for mercy.

Vs 2 I pour out my complaint before him;  
I declare my trouble before Him,

Vs 3a When my spirit was overwhelmed within me.”

**In this first strophe, note the use of ‘I’ four times at the start the first four lines. David is revealing in this first-person declaration that he is self-consumed. David who has enjoyed such a close relationship with God, now feels distant from Him. However, he knows he can be honest with God and he pours his heart out to Him. This forms the opening plea of this “complaint” psalm.**

**B** Vs 3b-c “You knew my path.  
In the way where I walk  
They have hidden a trap for me.

Vs 4      Look to the right and see;  
            For there is no one who regards me.  
            There is no escape for me;  
            no one cares for my soul.”

**In the second strophe, David’s complaint or lament is made – “Hey, I’m following You and I know You are leading me, what’s going on here? What’s wrong with this picture?”**

**When David says he’s looking to the right (vs 4), this is where the strong side help is supposed to come from. His inference being that God should be there.**

**A’** Vs 5    “I cried out to you, O LORD;  
            I said, “You are my refuge,  
            my portion in the land of the living.

Vs 6 - Give heed to my cry,  
            For I am brought very low;  
            Deliver me from my persecutors,  
            For they are too strong for me.”

**In the third strophe, David’s crying out (vs 5a) reveals he is still confident in God, but David doesn’t know why God’s not acting. David may wonder if he’s doing something wrong, and he’s confused. David confirms God is his refuge (vs 5b) and only hope. The reference of David’s portion (vs 5c) usually has to do with an inheritance or meal portion. David is now homeless and without food – however he’s learning that God is his portion.**

**This leads him to a new petition (vs 6) – David cannot deliver himself, but he trusts that God can. David has come to the conclusion that by himself, he is inadequate.**

**B’**    Vs 7    “Bring my soul out of prison,  
            So that I may praise your name.  
            Then the righteous will surround me  
            For You will deal bountifully with me.”

**David makes a new petition (vs 7a) – God, please bring me out of prison – a reference to a new exodus. Where God brought his people out of captivity in Egypt, David asks for personal freedom from those who seek his life and from the bareness of the cave. David makes a new vow (7b) – David will give thanks in public for God’s actions on his behalf.**

**David finds a new family (7c) – the righteous of God will surround him, these are the oppressed and disenfranchised (1 Samuel 22:2). This is a prophetic glimpse into Jesus ministry as prophesized in Isaiah 61:1-3**

“The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,  
Because the LORD has anointed me  
To bring good news to the afflicted;

He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,  
To proclaim liberty to captives  
And freedom to prisoners;  
To proclaim the favorable year of the LORD  
And the day of vengeance of our God;  
To comfort all who mourn,  
To grant those who mourn *in* Zion,  
Giving them a garland instead of ashes,  
The oil of gladness instead of mourning,  
The mantle of praise instead of a spirit of fainting.  
So they will be called oaks of righteousness,  
The planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified.”

**b. Chiastic Thematic Outline of David’s story and Psalms:**

**A Psalm 142 – the voice of loneliness and rejection from God.**

**B Psalm 57 – the voice of fatherly rejection.**

**C 2 Samuel 1:1-12 – the voice of personal loss and desolation.**

**C’ Psalm 51 – the voice of personal failure and hope for restoration.**

**B’ Psalm 43 – the voice of deliverance and restitution.**

**A’ Psalm 63 – the voice of a thirsting soul finding joy and acceptance in God.**

**4. BIBLICAL EXEGESIS – Professor Brian Morgan preaching outline – “No One Cares for Me” – how Scripture can give me an authentic voice.**

**a. Introduction to Psalm 142:**

**i. The story behind Psalm 142 – the reality of the Cave of Adullam and its isolated geography. Note the pictures at the beginning of this article:**

- 1. Adullam is on the margins between desolation of the wilderness and the wasteland that it comprised. In the beginning of the first millennium BC when David used this cave as a refuge, it was far off the beaten path and going any further put you into the harsh reality of the desert wasteland. This is not a place where you would want to stay if you didn’t have to – see 1 Samuel 22:1-5.**
- 2. This arid desert wilderness was a perfect simile for David’s state of mind and heart – see Psalm 63:1. The desolation of the land mirrored the desolation of David’s mind and heart, creating empathy for David’s loneliness, rejection, and need to belong.**
- 3. The cave itself was an unassuming hole in the ground off the beaten path; it was a perfect hideout because no one would want to go there and certainly not stay there unless they were compelled to do so.**

**ii. 142:1-3a – David’s Plea:**

- 1. Read this portion of the text in “Section 3 – Structure” above.**

2. Three observations about David's cry:
    - A. David's complaint is intense and personal – in the poem he used personal pronouns of "I", "me", and "my" ten times.
    - B. God seems far away and unresponsive – in the poem the references to God are third person "Lord" and "Him." David is isolated from other people and even more isolated from God.
    - C. The repetition of these terms allows David to become more clear and articulate about his emotional state.
  3. The dynamic movement within David's soul – in pouring out his heart before God, David bridges the relational distance he feels between God and himself. Intuitively God hasn't pulled away from David, instead David had pulled away from God. David is now ready to address God directly as the personal friend he knows and has loved.
  4. Application – David's voice becomes our own voice in similar circumstances – see Mark 9:20-25, and especially vs 24 – "I do believe; help my unbelief!"
- iii. 142:3b-4 – David's Lament:
1. Read this portion of the text above.
  2. Three Observations from David's lament:
    - A. The freedom David seeks is intensely personal. This is an amazing characteristic of David and undoubtedly why God referred to David as "a man after my own heart." This is not literary license; David knows and loves God personally. God is not an abstract thought or being; He is a personal and relational God who is connected and committed directly to David.
    - B. The freedom to express himself. David can boldly stand before God and voice his complaint... "no one else cares for me" and "there is no way out for me."
    - C. The basis for David's freedom and security is God's relational commitment to him. David's plea to God is "There is no other way... there is no other person... it is You alone" - and I know You love me.
  3. The dynamic movement within David's soul – how many of us feel free to approach God with the clarity David has in the midst of his problems and turmoil. David seems to stand before God like an insistent child – "Hey Daddy, I need you now! Where are you? Come help me!"
  4. Application – David voiced his lament of loneliness and desolation, which shapes Jesus' voice in Matthew 8:20 which in turn shapes our own voice – Hebrews 13:12-14.
- iv. 142:5-6 – David's Repeated Plea:
1. Read this portion of the text above.

2. Three observations about David's renewed cry, note the structure of strophes A B & A' B' above:
    - A. David has a new sense of confidence after giving voice to his lament. The wilderness cave is not David's refuge, but God Himself is and can be trusted.
    - B. David has a new understanding with a redefinition of what his "portion" actually is. David's future is understood as being in God Himself.
    - C. David has a new clarity of his own inadequacy and limitations, and he rests upon the adequacy and unlimited potential in God.
  3. The dynamic movement within David's soul – David has moved beyond himself into God Himself. When we get to the end of our self, only then we can rely completely in faith upon God – see Luke 23:39-43.
  4. Application – David's repeated plea shapes Jesus' plea in Gethsemane – see Matthew 26:38-39.
- v. 142:7 – David's Petition and Promise:
1. Read this portion of the text above.
  2. Three observations about David's petition and new confidence:
    - A. The petition to "bring out" is a verbal echo from the Old Testament:
      - i. Noah when the animals were brought out of the Ark and released into a cleansed yet still broken world – Genesis 8:17.
      - ii. Moses when he repeated God's order to Pharaoh to bring out the people of God – Exodus 8:26; 7:4.
      - iii. Isaiah's prophecy that Messiah would bring out God's people – Isaiah 42:7.
    - B. David's new confidence had to have been a surprise to him, which provided a glimpse into a hopeful future with the company of the righteous.
    - C. In the midst of this dilemma, David's family arrives and he is surrounded and encouraged by a new family comprised of the discontent and disenfranchised... a righteous group he didn't expect.
  3. The dynamic movement within David's soul – shapes both Jesus' voice and our voice:
    - A. From Adullam to Bethlehem – Jesus new family is born out of the discontented, the disenfranchised, and the afflicted of society. These who were rejected from the mainstream are given hope in eternity – Mark 3:33-35.
    - B. Our own stories of rejection and betrayal may also be the birth of a new family in Christ. This gives shape to our hope.

**4. Personal Application Exercise:**

- A. Write your own Adullam poem – how have you face your own Adullam and how did God show up for you?**
- B. Get away with a friend or two and share your stories.**
- C. What have you now learned about God’s faithfulness?**