

**SBC – March 2, 2025**  
**Psalm 60 (NKJV)**  
**“An Urgent Plea for Help”**

Psalm 60 is a Psalm of David and it has a rather uncharacteristically long heading. But apart from this heading, we would have no idea that David is addressing a temporary military setback experienced at the height of his power.

**Psalm 60 (NKJV)**  
**To the Chief Musician. Set to “Lily of the Testimony.” A Michtam of David. For Teaching. When He Fought Against Mesopotamia and Syria of Zobah, and Joab Returned and Killed Twelve Thousand Edomites in the Valley of Salt.**

Once again, this Psalm is directed to the Chief Musician, indicating it was intended to be used corporately in regard to the music life of Israel. Set to the **“Lily of the Testimony”** was evidently the tune it was intended to be sung by. A **Michtam of David** may simply be **“a writing of David”** although there are other ideas as well. This is the last of the Psalms in which it is found in the title (see Psalms 16, 56–60).

It says here it was **“For Teaching”**. There are key lessons intended to be communicated through the Psalm – particularly about relying upon God ALONE in the midst of defeat and overwhelming circumstances.

The occasion in view is when David fought against Mesopotamia and Syria, with Zobah being an area connected with Syria. Apparently, while David had his army up north in this area, he was then attacked by Edom from the south, which temporarily was a great setback for the nation until Joab (David’s commanding officer) was able to gain the victory over them down in the Valley of Salt, which is down in the area near Edom.

**Slide # 1**



Even though the official record in 2 Samuel 8 and 1 Chronicles doesn't deal with this military setback, it would appear the most likely time frame for this event (see 2 Sam. 8:3-13; 10:6-19; 1 Chron. 18:11-13).

*The victories described in 2 Samuel and 1 Chronicles do not mention the kind of setbacks lamented in this psalm. It reminds us that the historical record often condenses events, and that the successes were real, yet not always immediate. – David Guzik*

## **Slide # 2**

### **Outline – Psalm 60**

#### **“An Urgent Plea for Help”**

- vv. 1-3 Lament of the People over Defeat
- vv. 4-5 Expression of Confidence – Prayer for Deliverance
- vv. 6-8 The Assuring Voice of God
- vv. 9-12 Expression of Confidence in God

**1 O God, You have cast us off; You have broken us down; You have been displeased; Oh, restore us again!**

Apparently, this is how David interpreted the temporary defeat they experienced at the hands of the Edomites. It felt as if God had rejected them and that they were broken. David's conclusion is that God was displeased and he pleaded for restoration.

Although David thought God was displeased, there is no hint at what He may have been displeased about.

But ONE thing David fully believed, and you see it everywhere in his writings, is that whatever was happening God was sovereign. In defeat God was sovereign in that He had cast them off – which is to say He had not been there for them. It was because God let this happen. In victory David constantly saw that it was God behind the scenes who made it happen.

Whatever was happening, David always traced it back to God – which is to say he had a strong theology of God's sovereignty. And we will see that again and again in this Psalm as well.

This is a description of an otherwise unknown defeat of the armies of Israel and it came at the peak of David's power when he might least have expected it. He was on a roll, now why this??

**2 You have made the earth tremble; You have broken it; Heal its breaches, for it is shaking.**

David apparently speaks in figurative language here as though the whole country has been torn apart by a tremendous earthquake. It really shook them. And he appeals to God for healing.

**3 You have shown Your people hard things; You have made us drink the wine of confusion.**

This was a HARD time. Wine clouds the mind and makes one stagger, thus he speaks of their confusion as "the wine of confusion."

The reason they were so confused is because God had been blessing David in a great way with victory after victory, and then suddenly here was this military setback. It threw the people. They couldn't understand it – after all, they had been championing the truth of their great God – and now this. It was all so confusing.

Sometimes BAD things happen and we have no idea why. Sometimes when people are walking with God the bottom seems to fall out. Why? Often, we are left in confusion without answers.

And where do we go in our confusion? ... We need to go back to the BANNER God has given us as His people – which is a rallying TRUTH.

**4 You have given a banner to those who fear You, That it may be displayed because of the truth. Selah**

In a state of being perplexed, the people of God who reverence Him are called to rally to His truth. Even though we don't understand, we rally around the banner of God's truth.

### Slide # 3

**Exodus 17:15 (NKJV)**

**15** And Moses built an altar and called its name, The-LORD-Is-My-Banner;

**Selah** (Stop and let that sink in).

Banners were used as rallying points for troops in preparation for battle and for leading them into action. *-NIV Study Bible*

Even though they had suffered a very troubling military defeat, God has given God-fearing people TRUTH to buoy them up.

And as part of that rallying TRUTH is touched on by David in verse 5.

**5 That Your beloved may be delivered, Save with Your right hand, and hear me.**

There may be a play on words here as the name David literally means "beloved", but here he speaks in reference to God's people corporately.

The call is to rally to the truth of who they are as God's beloved with the specific request that God save them from this desperate situation.

David often appeals to God on the basis of Who He is or His promises to God's people – or in this case for who they are to Him as His beloved.

No matter how BAD things may seem, never forget that as God's people who FEAR (reverence) Him, you are BELOVED!

**Romans 8:38–39 (NKJV)**

**38** For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come,  
**39** nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Continuing the theme of rallying to the BANNER of God's truth, David now reflects on what God has spoken. This BANNER truth is that which will steady them as a people.

In verses 6-8 it is made clear that God sovereignly chooses who will have the land and how it will be divided. God is in charge of the boundaries. What a great encouragement in the face of a full-out attack from Edom in the south. God is in charge of what happens to His people. This is the KEY point that is being brought out.

**6 God has spoken in His holiness: “I will rejoice; I will divide Shechem  
And measure out the Valley of Succoth.**

Verses 6-12 have their parallel in Psalm 108:7-13.

Verses 6-8 amount to a divine oracle or revelation which expresses that indeed God will have His way in the Promised Land over the Gentile peoples around that are threatening. God Himself is in charge of the land boundaries.

**Slide # 4**

**Deuteronomy 32:8 (NKJV)**

**8** When the Most High divided their inheritance to the nations, When He separated the sons of Adam, He set the boundaries of the peoples According to the number of the children of Israel.

**Slide # 5**

**Acts 17:26 (NKJV)**

**26** And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings,

God has spoken “in His holiness” is sometimes translated as “in His sanctuary”. But note that God celebrates what He is going to do saying, “I will rejoice”. He does not do this begrudgingly for Israel – but rather because He wants to do it. It is God’s good pleasure to grant His people possession of the land.

Shechem and the Valley of Succoth represent the regions both west and east of the Jordan River.

**Slide # 6**



God Himself would portion out this territory. No one else is going to do it. And according to what He promised Abraham all this land belongs to Abraham and his descendants as seen in Genesis 15:18-21.

### Slide # 7



**7 Gilead is Mine, and Manasseh is Mine; Ephraim also is the helmet for My head; Judah is My lawgiver.**

Both Gilead and Manasseh also represent territory on the east and west of the Jordan River.

### Slide # 8



Ephraim and Judah represent regions to the north and south.

### Slide # 9



Ephraim is said to be God's "helmet" meaning "protection". Ephraim was the primary source of defense to the north of Israel.

Judah is said to be His "**lawgiver**" which is more commonly translated as "**scepter**" which is rooted in Genesis 49:10.

### **Slide # 10**

#### **Genesis 49:10 (NKJV)**

**10** The **scepter shall not depart from Judah**, Nor a lawgiver from between his feet, **Until Shiloh comes**; And to Him shall be the obedience of the people.

The **scepter** is a symbol of royal power. Government and rulership belong to the tribe of Judah. This is the tribe Jesus descended from.

Not a single good king ever came out of the Northern Kingdom. The **scepter belongs to Judah**. This truth will culminate in Jesus, the Messiah.

The word **Shiloh** means "**to whom it belongs**". The sense is that the scepter – the right to rule, belongs to the tribe of Judah. It will remain there until the One comes to Whom it ultimately belongs; namely, the Lord Jesus Christ.

What we have in verses 6-7 is what God has spoken representing the whole of the Promised Land. This was certainly a BANNER of TRUTH to rally around. This land isn't going anywhere other than what God has purposed and determined. God is in charge of the land boundaries.

Note God repeatedly saying, "**Mine**" and "**My**" indicating that this does not belong to the Gentiles. In fact, I would point out to the squatters on this territory right now that there is a very special Bible verse that has a target on them.

### **Slide # 11**

#### **Joel 3:2 (NKJV)**

**2** I will also gather all nations, And bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; And I will enter into judgment with them there On account of My people, My heritage Israel, Whom they have scattered among the nations; **They have also divided up My land.**

To this day God is not happy with the Gentile world for dividing up what He calls “**My land**” that He gave to the Jews. Mess with the Holy Land and you are messing with God Himself. It is uniquely His turf by designation!

God assures them that He who apportions the land is still in control of it. – **Charles Ryrie**

But God also has something pointed to say about the surrounding Gentile nations that hated Israel.

**8 Moab is My washpot; Over Edom I will cast My shoe; Philistia, shout in triumph because of Me.”**

These were Israel's perpetual enemies surrounding them on the east, south, and west respectively.

### **Slide # 12**



**Moab** would be degraded to a menial servant position as God’s washbasin. In effect, they would be relegated to washing the feet of God’s people. It describes a subservient position.

Over **Edom** God would “**cast His shoe**”. Tossing a shoe in this ancient culture often related to claiming ownership (cf. Ruth 4:7). By stating that He tosses His shoe over Edom, God is asserting **His authority and ownership** over Edom, saying in effect He is going to have His way with them (cf. Gen. 25:30; Obadiah 1:10).

Both **Moab and Edom** were known for their PRIDE, but they are going down to servile positions (cf. Isa. 16:6; Obadiah 1:3).

When God tells **Philistia** to “*shout in triumph because of Me*” it is better translated as the NASB puts it, “***over Philistia I shout in triumph***” emphasizing God’s cry of victory over them.

By the time God is done with them, He would have His way with all of them, and they would all be under His dominion.



## 9 Who will bring me to the strong city? Who will lead me to Edom?

The strong city in Edom was its capital city of Petra (also known as Bozrah or Sela). This was the strong red stone fortified mountain city, which was the key stronghold in Edom. It was located about 125 miles south of Jerusalem. To overtake it would in effect be to conquer Edom.

### **Slide # 13**



### **Slide # 14**



Today this ancient capital city of Edom is for the most part deserted and is essentially a tourist attraction. But the Scriptures indicate that this is probably where the Jews will flee to for safety from the Antichrist in the Tribulation Period (cf. Dan. 11:40-45; Isa. 63:1-6; Jer. 49:13-14; Rev. 12:6, 14).

Here at verse 9, in view of verses 6-8, David presents a rhetorical question asking who is going to give him the victory over Edom. The obvious answer is forthcoming, in the form of another rhetorical question asked in verse 10.

## 10 Is it not You, O God, who cast us off? And You, O God, who did not go out with our armies?

David rhetorically asks, ***Is it not You, O God***, who previously abandoned us and did not go out with our Israeli armies? The assumed answer is YES! Yes, with God's help, David would yet overthrow Edom, he would yet overtake the strong capital city of Edom, and have his way with them.

He is still expecting God to come through for them – even though recently they had suffered a great defeat at the hands of Edom.

**11 Give us help from trouble, For the help of man is useless.**

David is very clear that his faith is in God alone! He is not depending on human resources, but looking to God alone to give them the HELP needed to conquer the enemy.

**12 Through God we will do valiantly, For it is He who shall tread down our enemies.**

This is great theology! God will do it but He works through His people. “Through God we will do.” How would they do it – through God alone!

David is depending on God alone, but at the same time he realizes human involvement has a part to play. However, it is only through God that they will get the victory.

David is very careful to give God all the glory, realizing it is really God working through them that is the cause of victory.

I say this is great theology because it puts the emphasis on God ALONE, and yet at the same time acknowledges human responsibility in the mix as well. “**Through God we will do valiantly.**” What a great truth this is.

“Divine working is not an argument for human inaction, but rather is it the best excitement for courageous effort.” - **Charles Spurgeon**

David the king and great warrior of Israel saw some great lessons in this Psalm.

God’s BANNER for the godly is the rallying reality of God’s TRUTH! We come back to the Word, to the truth of God and His promises. Note these applications.

- 1) When you are at the top of the mountain (so to speak - as David was) sometimes God allows you to be knocked down a notch. It refocuses us. It makes us anew recognize our total dependence upon God. Nothing like a lowly place to make you look UP! As David said, “**The help of man is useless. Through God we will do valiantly.**” If we are to do valiantly, we will only do so through God.

- 2) No matter what we are going through we need to come back to the BEDROCK truth that God loves us. Nothing can change this reality!
- 3) When things get desperate, it brings one back to the truth of God's sovereignty. In a time of national desperation, David recalled God's words concerning His control and sovereignty over the nations. God has a plan for His people and He is in charge. The godly always come back to the truth of God's sovereignty. Whatever we are going through "**God's got this" and He's got you!**

"The sovereignty of God is the pillow upon which the child of God rests his head at night, giving perfect peace." - **Charles H. Spurgeon.**

So keep the banner of God's truth flying high that rallies to the truth that He is sovereign over all and that it is only through God that we ultimately have the victory!

**1 Corinthians 15:57 (NKJV)**

**57** But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Indeed, thanks be to God WHO gives us the victory!**