

PSALMS

Chapter 60

You have rejected us, O God, and burst forth upon us; you have been angry—now restore us! ² You have shaken the land and torn it open; mend its fractures, for it is quaking. ³ You have shown your people desperate times; you have given us wine that makes us stagger. ⁴ But for those who fear you, you have raised a banner to be unfurled against the bow. *Selah* ⁵ Save us and help us with your right hand, that those you love may be delivered. ⁶ God has spoken from his sanctuary: “In triumph I will parcel out Shechem and measure off the Valley of Succoth. ⁷ Gilead is mine, and Manasseh is mine; Ephraim is my helmet, Judah my scepter. ⁸ Moab is my washbasin, upon Edom I toss my sandal; over Philistia I shout in triumph.” ⁹ Who will bring me to the fortified city? Who will lead me to Edom? ¹⁰ Is it not you, O God, you who have rejected us and no longer go out with our armies? ¹¹ Give us aid against the enemy, for the help of man is worthless. ¹² With God we will gain the victory, and he will trample down our enemies.

Ps 60 A national prayer for God’s help after suffering a severe blow by a foreign nation, presumably Edom (see v. 9). The prayer leader may have been the king (the “me” in v. 9), as in 2Ch 20. The lament that God has “rejected” (v. 1) his people and no longer accompanies their armies links the psalm with Ps 44. Verses 5–12 appear again in 108:6–13. As for its structure, the prayer is framed by three verses lamenting God’s rejection of his people (vv. 1–3) and three verses expressing confidence that the God who has rejected them will yet give them victory (vv. 10–12). This transition from lament to confidence constitutes the overarching movement of the prayer. Verses 4–8 contain the plea for help (v. 5) and the grounds for confidence (vv. 4, 6–8). (CSB)

Israel faced many enemies throughout her long history. During David’s reign, wars were fought with Syria to the north and with Edom to the southeast (as well as other countries). Of course, biblical writers do not record every battle or even every war. Apparently a hostile nation defeated Israel (Edom?), and David turned to the Lord for help. 2Sm 8 and 1Ch 18 record God’s gracious answer and the victorious outcome. Though God has seemingly turned a deaf ear to His people (vv 1–3), David prays for God’s help in battle (vv 4–8) and ends this psalm on a note of confidence (vv 10–12). *Shushan Eduth*. May mean “The Lily of the Testimony.” A tune or a type of musical accompaniment for the psalm. *for instruction*. Hbr *lamad*, “to teach.” Probably means that the reader should use this psalm to encourage and uplift when suffering defeat or another type of setback. Songs were also used to instruct the young and the nation. (TLSB)

Format: Vv 1–3, the Lord rejects Israel; vv 4–5, Israel’s banner; vv 6–8, Israel is the Lord’s chosen army; vv 9–12, plea for victory. (TLSB)

The circumstances which lie behind this psalm are described in 2 Samuel 8 and 10. The Arameans were the inhabitants of the country we today call Syria. The

exact time and circumstances of the battles mentioned in the heading of this psalm were uncertain, but it may refer to the resurgence of the Arameans against Israel later in David's reign when they came to help the Ammonites in their defiance of Israel (2 Samuel 10). (PBC)

60 title See note on Ps 56 title. (CSB)

The Lily of the Covenant. See Ps 80 title and note on Ps 45 title. (CSB)

For teaching. Only here in the psalm titles. For other songs that Israel was to learn see Dt 31:19, 21; 2Sa 1:18. That it was intended for a variety of uses, especially to convey confidence in times of national threat, is illustrated by its use in Ps 108. *When.* For the events referred to see 2Sa 8; 1Ch 18 (perhaps also 2Sa 10). If the tradition that assigns the prayer to these events is correct, it must be supposed that our knowledge of the events is incomplete, since these accounts do not mention Edom. The Israelite war against Edom at this time of great northern battles may have been occasioned by an attack on the part of Edom trying to take advantage of Israel's preoccupation elsewhere, an attack in which Edom succeeded in overrunning the garrisons that guarded Judah's southern borders. (CSB)

60:1–3 Lament over God's rejection of his people (see 44:9–16; 89:38–45) and prayer for restoration. (CSB)

60:1 *rejected us.* At least momentarily (see 30:5). Defeat by the enemy is interpreted as a sign of God's anger (though no reason for that anger is noted, and the bond between Israel and God is not broken). (CSB)

Defeat in battle testified to a break in the covenant relationship between God and Israel. As a result of some sin, God had given victory to the enemy (cf Jsh 7). However, not all suffering is punishment for sin. (TLSB)

A severe defeat must have been suffered by the nation, a defeat that made it feel that God had cast it off. (Leupold)

burst forth. Like a flood (see 2Sa 5:20). (CSB)

RESTORE US – David prays for God to grant victory in battle. (TLSB)

60:2 *shaken the land.* As by a devastating earthquake—such as was occasionally experienced in ancient Canaan. (CSB)

Metaphor describing effect of defeat on national confidence. (TLSB)

60:3 *wine that makes us stagger.* God has made them drink from the cup of his wrath rather than from his cup of blessing and salvation (see note on 16:5 – A

metaphor referring to what the host offers his guests to drink. To the godly the Lord offers a cup of blessings (see 23:5) or salvation (see 116:13); he makes the wicked drink from a cup of wrath.). (CSB)

God's people are dazed and discouraged by the defeat they have suffered. (TLSB)

60:4–8 A plea for help, grounded in reasons for confidence. (CSB)

60:4 *those who fear you*. Your people, in distinction from the nations (see 61:5; see also note on Ge 20:11). (CSB)

have raised. Or “raise”—in which case v. 4 already begins the plea voiced in v. 5, rather than being an expression of confidence. (CSB)

banner. Banners were used as rallying points for troops in preparation for battle and for leading them into action. This practice is often alluded to in Isaiah (5:26; 11:10, 12; 13:2; 18:3; 30:17; 49:22; 62:10) and Jeremiah (4:21, “standard”; 50:2; 51:12, 27). It is possible to read v. 4 as a petition, in which case it pleads for God to rally the troops of Israel and lead them against the foe. If, however, it is an expression of confidence (as the NIV renders it), the “banner” must be the reassuring word from God recited in vv. 6–8 (see Ex 17:15). (CSB)

Flag or standard to rally retreating troops for a victorious counterattack. The Lord Himself raises such a flag for those who trust Him (cf Ex 17:14–16; Sg 2:4). (TLSB)

bow. The enemy armed with bows. (CSB)

SELAH – Hebrew; untranslatable. Mainly in the first two books of Psalms. Probably refers to the accompaniment of the harps during the psalm. (TLSB p. 993)

This often occurs in the middle of a psalm and which apparently signals an interlude. “The Sela indicates that one must be still and quickly think through the words of the psalm; for they demand a quiet and restful soul, which can grasp and hold to that which the Holy Spirit there presents and offers” (Luther). (Psalms – The Prayer Book of the Bible – Dietrich Bonhoeffer p. 23)

Selah may be a musical notation. It could also be a point where a pause is desirable for the singer or reader of the psalm in order that the statement last made or the thought as a whole just developed may be reflected upon before the next turn of the thought appears. (Leupold)

60:5 **RIGHT HAND** – In Israelite thought, the right hand was the favored one. As such, it symbolized the place of privilege or strength. The chief court official was seated at the king's right hand as a symbol of his power and authority. The term can describe God's chosen servant (e.g., King David). (TLSB p. 843)

those you love. The Hebrew for this expression is here a word of special endearment, as in 127:2; 2Sa 12:25; Jer 11:15. (CSB)

60:6–8 A comforting oracle from the Lord, perhaps recalling an already ancient word from the time of the conquest. If so, it may have been preserved in the “Book of the Wars of the LORD” (Nu 21:14). In any event, the Lord is depicted as Israel’s triumphant Warrior-King (see Ex 15:3, 13–18). (CSB)

60:6 FROM HIS SANCTUARY – ESV has HOLINESS – God keeps His promises and threats. He has promised all the land of Canaan to His people (Gn 15:18–21) and, despite this defeat, He will deliver it to them. (TLSB)

parcel out ... measure off. Divide his conquered territory among his servant people who were with him in the battles. (CSB)

Shechem ... Succoth. Places representative of the territory west and east of the Jordan taken over by the Lord and Israel (see Ge 33:17–18; 1Ki 12:25). (CSB)

From the west (Shechem) to east of the Jordan (Vale of Succoth), across the center of Israel. (TLSB)

60:7 Israel is the Lord’s kingdom—the land conquered and his people established within it. (CSB)

Gilead ... Manasseh. Half of Manasseh was established in Gilead, east of the Jordan, and half of it west of the Jordan, just north of Ephraim (see Jos 13:29–31; 17:5–11). This once again showed that the Lord’s kingdom included territory both east and west of the Jordan. (CSB)

Locations east, west, north, and south in Israel. God rules as sovereign over all of the Promised Land. (TLSB)

Ephraim ... Judah. The two leading tribes of Israel, the one representative of the Rachel tribes (Ephraim) in the north, the other of the Leah tribes (Judah) in the south; see Ge 48:13–20; 49:8–12; Nu 2:3, 18; Jos 15–16. Together they represented all Israel (Isa 11:13; Zec 9:13). (CSB)

helmet. As a powerful and aggressive tribe (Dt 33:17; Jdg 7:24–8:3; 12:1), Ephraim figuratively represents the Lord’s helmet. (CSB)

Ephraim and other tribes lay north of Judah, forming a protective buffer from invading armies. From Judah would come the Messiah, the eternal King, symbolized by the royal scepter. (TLSB)

scepter. Called such because from Judah would come (Ge 49:10)—and had now come (1Sa 16:1–13)—the Lord’s chosen earthly regent over his people (see 2Sa 7). (CSB)

60:8 *Moab ... Edom ... Philistia*. Perpetual enemies on Israel’s eastern, southern and western borders respectively (see Ex 15:14–15; see also Ex 13:17; Nu 20:14–21; 22–24). (CSB)

People southeast of Israel, related to God’s people (Moab from Lot, Abraham’s nephew; Edom from Esau, Jacob’s twin brother). Sadly, both were traditional enemies of Israel. (TLSB)

Philistia. Located west and south of Israel, also a traditional enemy (cf 1Sm 17). (TLSB)

is my washbasin. Is reduced to a household vessel in which the Lord washes his feet (Ge 18:4). The metaphor is perhaps suggested by the fact that Moab lay along the east shore of the Dead Sea. (CSB)

This becomes all the more humiliating when it is recalled that a vessel for the washing of the feet is very likely referred to. (Leupold)

toss my sandal. Perhaps refers to the conventional symbolic act by which one claimed possession of land (cf. Ru 4:7). (CSB)

Perhaps to step on the property as a claim to ownership or as a sign of redemption (cf Ru 4:7–9). (TLSB)

60:9 A rhetorical question following the reassuring oracle and leading to the confidence expressed in vv. 10–12. (CSB)

Humanly impossible to be achieved. (Leupold)

me ... me. Possibly referring to the king (see introduction), though the praying community may be referring to itself collectively (see note on Ps 30 title). (CSB)

FORTIFIED CITY – Capital city of Edom, Sela, was almost impregnable. (TLSB)

lead me. As God went before his people into battle in the desert (Ex 13:21) and during the conquest (Ex 23:27–28; 33:2; Dt 9:3; 31:8). (CSB)

60:10–12 Confidence of victory (see note on 3:8). (CSB)

60:10 *rejected*. See v. 1. (CSB)

NO LONGER GO OUT – Only God can accomplish the overthrow of Israel’s enemies, yet He has refused to do so. (TLSB)

60:11 *help*. Lit. “salvation” (see v. 5, “Save”). (CSB)

Human help is worthless against such enemies. Salvation comes only from God. (TLSB)

of man. See 33:17. (CSB)

60:12 *gain the victory*. Lit. “do mighty things.” With God’s help Israel will achieve in a manner similar to that of the Lord himself (see 118:15–16) and will triumph over Edom (see Nu 24:18, “grow strong”). (CSB)

trample down. Like a victorious warrior (see Isa 14:19, 25; Jer 12:10; Zec 10:5). (CSB)

Ps 60 God disciplines those He loves, and He tests His people to build their faith and strengthen the relationship of grace. Whether you experience victory or defeat, persist in prayer and service to your Lord. In His care, you “shall do valiantly” (v 12). • When we face defeat, O Lord, keep our eyes on Your promises. When we experience loss, keep our hearts filled with Your peace. When we don’t understand Your plan for us, keep the cross of Christ always before us—the depth and breadth and height of Your love for us. Amen. (TLSB)