

Rhema Christian Center
Tuesday Night Bible Study
PSALM 60 – DEFEAT TO VICTORY IN GOD
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In the 60th Psalm, the nation of Israel goes from defeat to victory in God. They start out as a defeated people but end up praising God -- thanking him because He is the One who does valiantly and is the One who treads down their enemies.

The purpose of this Psalm is to instruct present and future generations about the importance of putting their trust in God.

Background

When David came to power in I Chron 11, Israel was in bad shape.

- Saul had successfully murdered the priests of God.
- Saul and his three sons were killed in the battle at Mt. Gilboa.
- The throne was divided between David and Ishbosheth, the son of Saul.
- Israel's military power had been scattered and shattered.
- The Philistines who defeated Israel were rising in power.
- Threats against Israel were coming from all directions. It was surrounded by adversarial countries.

The problem in this Psalm is that Israel knows that God is not with them in battle. It's not clear from the historical record exactly what the people had done but it was clear that God was not pleased. David is letting Israel know that their troubles are not that Philistia, Moab and Edom are against them; nor is it because Ishbosheth is reigning over a portion of Israel; but the problem is that God is against them. Isaiah, a prophet who later prophesied to future kings of Israel, described Israel's condition this way. ***There's nothing wrong with God; the wrong is in you. Your wrongheaded lives caused the split between you and God. Your sins got between you so that he doesn't hear.*** (Isa. 59:2)

A Troubled People 1-5

¹O God, thou hast cast us off, thou hast scattered us, thou hast been displeased; O turn thyself to us again.² Thou hast made the earth to tremble; thou hast broken it: heal the breaches thereof; for it shaketh.³ Thou hast shewed thy people hard things: thou hast made us to drink the wine of astonishment.
KJV

Msg bible says, ***“God! you walked off and left us, kicked our defenses to bits and stomped off angry. Come back. Oh please, come back! You shook earth to the foundations, ripped open huge crevasses. Heal the breaks! Everything's coming apart at the seams.”***

God is chastising Israel as a nation. David is speaking on behalf of the nation—he immediately turns to prayer. “. . . ***turn thyself to us again . . . restore us!*** The msg says ***“Come back. Oh please, come back!”*** David's prayer to God brought hope to the matter. II Chron. 7:14 says, ***“if my people, which are called by my name,***

shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.”

² *You have shaken the land and torn it open; mend its fractures, for it is quaking.* The initial victory of Edom hit Israel like water bursting through a dam or an earthquake shaking the country. David felt the shock waves that were sent through the whole earth. Yet, David knew that the God who could shake the earth could also *heal its breaches*.

³ *You have shown your people desperate times. In other words, You have made your people look doom in the face.”* *Msg.* Still, there was a kind of comfort in understanding that God was the author of what was happening because what God does in judgment or discipline, He can restore in love and mercy. David knew from experience that God is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love (Psa. 145:80). Hard times can bring people to repentance.

⁴ *Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth. Selah.* ⁵ *That thy beloved may be delivered; save with thy right hand, and hear me.*

The *Msg* says, *“Then you planted a flag to rally your people, an unfurled flag to look to for courage. Now do something quickly, answer right now, so the one you love best is saved.”*

David, which means beloved, interpreted Israel’s defeat as a sign that God had rejected His people, yet he would not stop flying the banner of allegiance and trust in God. He understood that their rescue would be found in *greater allegiance to God, not less*.

Those who learned the lesson of verses 1-3 and sought the Lord as did David grabbed hold of faith. God gave a banner to those who feared Him--not a tormenting fear, but a reverential fear.

The concept of the banner was connected to Israel’s reliance upon God and His victory for them. “When Amalek fought against Israel in Rephidim, victory came to the people of God as Moses held up his arms, supported by Aaron and Hur, and prayed as Joshua went forth in battle. After the victory Moses built an altar, and called the name of it ‘Jehovah Nissi,’ that is, Jehovah our Banner.”

For us, God’s banner over us represents His blood that was shed at Calvary and continues to flow to us today wrapped in His saving power, love, and protection. He is our Jehovah-nissi and his banner over us is love.

Encouragement—A Triumphant Message 6-8

⁶ *God hath spoken in his holiness; I will rejoice, I will divide Shechem, and mete out the valley of Succoth.*

⁷ *Gilead is mine, and Manasseh is mine; Ephraim also is the strength of mine head; Judah is my lawgiver;*

⁸ *Moab is my washpot; over Edom will I cast out my shoe: Philistia, triumph thou because of me.*

David speaks prophetically. God is using him to proclaim how the land of Israel was His special possession and that He would deliver it to Israel just as He promised. David understood the LORD to step forward and settle land disputes. When God spoke, he did not speak symbolically, but geographically.

Gen. 15:18-21 said, In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates: ¹⁹ The Kenites, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites, ²⁰ And the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaims, ²¹ And the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.

- God had promised the land to Abraham and his descendants.
- Abraham lived in the land of Canaan until the famine came and his entire family moved to Egypt. This was all in the plan of God.
- In Egypt, they grew into a mighty nation.
- God delivered them from Egypt by the hand of Moses.
- After Moses died a new leader was appointed – Joshua.

Joshua 3:2-3 *Moses my servant is dead. Now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, into the land that I am giving to them, to the people of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given to you, just as I promised to Moses.*

The promised land was surrounded by enemies on every side. And sometimes, our lives, it seems like the enemy is trying to attack from all sides, but God is our refuge and our strength, a very present help in trouble.

- Philistines on the western border (the arch enemy of Israel)
- Edom to the south (Edom was another name for Esau – Jacob and Esau were the sons of Isaac and the grandsons of Abraham)
- Ammon and Moab to the east (These were the sons of Lot that were born of an incestuous relationship with his daughters after the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah)
- Arameans to the north.

Among the tribes mentioned, God says ***Gilead is mine and Manasseh are mine. He says that:***

- ***“Ephraim is the strength of mine head—my helmet, the strong tribe charged with defending Israel.***
- ***Judah is my lawgiver—the one chosen*** to be the royal tribe by which the Savior would come into the world.

The Lord didn’t give the land to His people so they might lose it to their enemies! The Lord spoke with disdain of the enemies who attacked Israel. Edom and Moab were both known for their arrogance. In God’s eyes:

- **Moab** was nothing but a basin used for washing dirty feet. Moab was reduced to a household vessel. (Ruth was a Moabite)
- **Edom** was a servant who cleaned dirty shoes. I will use them like slaves.

And for Philistia, the perpetual enemy of Israel, the Msg. Bible says God would rain down fireworks all over Philistia – meaning God would give Israel the victory over this enemy.

None of this had happened yet. David was operating in the realm of faith. By faith, David was going to move forward to take the fortified city of Petra located in Edom only if God instructed him to do so and if God was going to lead them.

A Trustworthy Lord (vv. 9-12)

⁹ Who will bring me to the fortified city? Who will lead me to Edom? ¹⁰ Is it not you, God, you who have now rejected us and no longer go out with our armies? ¹¹ Give us aid against the enemy, for human help is worthless. ¹² With God we will gain the victory, and he will trample down our enemies.

The Msg Bible says, ***“Who will take me to the thick of the fight? Who’ll show me the road to Edom? You aren’t giving up on us, are you, God? refusing to go out with our troops? Give us help for the hard task; human help is worthless. In God we’ll do our very best; he’ll flatten the opposition for good.”*** Through God we shall do valiantly.

David made it clear that he wasn’t looking back at defeat. He wasn’t going to interpret one setback as the sign of total defeat. (The setback was that he was fighting one nation in the North and Edom attacks them in the south). He *was* going to look to the future and trust in God.

Psa. 20:7 says, ***“Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God.”*** David knew there was nothing too hard for God.

Petra was a strong city in the mountains—a rock city. Even though David had defeated Edom’s army in the battle. David would have to go into the center of the land to defeat this strong city. Only God could give victory over a fortress like that, and David knew it. So, he cries to God, acknowledging that ***the help of man is worthless.***

¹⁰ ***You aren’t giving up on us, are you, God? refusing to go out with our troops?*** David was fully aware that when God went with them into battle, there was always victory. He, also knew that God had been displeased with this people when they wanted an earthly king instead of His rulership. Before David went into battle, he wanted to be certain God was the One sending him. David needed God’s help.

He knew that no mere man could go into the city of Petra and come out a winner. With God on his side, he knew he would “ . . . ***gain the victory, and . . . trample down the enemies.*** David knew that with and through God victory would be Israel’s.

God has given us the victory today. When Jesus ascended back to the Father, he said, ***“All power is given to me heaven and in earth.”*** (Matt. 28:19). Jesus gave us the victory and now we must fight. We must not be complacent, but actively engaged in spiritual warfare. Israel fought physical battles to take hold of God physical promises—the land.

We Are to do Valiantly

Just like God taught David’s hands to war and his fingers to battle, He teaches ***“Our hands to war and our fingers to battle.”*** (Psa. 144:1) In Paul’s letter to the Corinthians, he wanted the church to know that ***the “... weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty through God for pulling down strong holds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.*** (2 Cor. 10:4-5).

We are fighting an invisible enemy—the devil. He tries very hard to make you forget that, so you think the enemy is your parents, the kids, the boss, your neighbor, the people in the church, the choir director and what have you. When, in actuality, the real enemy is the devil, and he is sitting back laughing at all the damage he has caused. He is the god of this world.

The phrase “god of this world” (or “god of this age”) indicates that Satan is the major influence on the ideals, opinions, goals, hopes and views of the majority of people. His influence also encompasses the world’s philosophies, education, and commerce. The thoughts, ideas, speculations and false religions of the world are under his control and have sprung from his lies and deceptions.

I Peter 5:8 tells us to ***“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:”*** We are to stay vigilant at all times. Remember, he wants to make himself as invisible as possible.

The apostle Paul tells us in Eph 6:10-17 how to fight this spiritual battle. ¹⁰***Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord (THE STRENGTH DOES NOT COME FROM YOU—IT COMES FROM THE LORD), and in the power of HIS might. ¹¹Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. ¹²For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of darkness of this world, against SPIRITUAL WICKEDNESS in high places.***

¹³***Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. We must stand.*** We can put up a resistance to the enemy.

¹⁴***Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; ¹⁶above all, taking the shield of faith with which, you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. ¹⁷And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;*** (Eph 6:10-17).

- Belt of truth
- Breastplate of righteousness
- Having feet shod properly
- Shield of Faith
- The helmet of salvation
- Sword of the Spirit

Verse 18 says, ***“praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.”***

If you want to walk in victory, prayer is the key that unlocks the resources of heaven that God wants to give us right now. The scripture tells us to be watchful because there are so many distractions that can cause a spirit of slumber. When Paul was speaking to the Roman church (Ro. 13:11-12). He said, “. . . ***do this, understanding the present time: The hour has already come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. ¹²The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.***

We have the victory through Jesus Christ and it’s through Him that we will do valiantly because if ***God is for us who can be against us.***

When Paul came to the conclusion of his life on earth, he wrote to Timothy, his son in the gospel saying, ⁷***I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. ⁸Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.*** (2 Tim. 4:7-8) He was letting Timothy know that it is through Jesus Christ that we do valiantly.

Sources

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NIV, NKJV, ESV, MSG Bibles

Psalm 60 – Discover the Books of the Bible

Be Worshipful, Psalms 1-89 by Warren Weirsbe