

# Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs: The Master Musician's Melodies

Bereans Sunday School  
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## Psalm 60 — From Defeat to Victory

### 1.0 Introducing Psalm 60

- Psalm 60 is the fifth consecutive Mikhtam by David (see Psalms 56–59).
  - ♦ See, also, Psalm 16 where the first Mikhtam appears.
- The purpose of Psalm 60 is to teach or instruct others. Compare 2 Samuel 1:18.
- The historical heading for Psalm 60 refers to the events of 2 Samuel 8:1-14 and 1 Chronicles 18:1-13. It is the longest historical superscription in Psalms.
- Psalm 108:6-13 repeats 60:5-12.

### 2.0 Reading Psalm 60 (NAU)

**60:1** A Mikhtam of David, to teach; when he struggled with Aram-naharaim and with Aram-zobah, and Joab returned, and smote twelve thousand of Edom in the Valley of Salt.

O **God**, You have rejected us.  
You have broken us;  
You have been angry;

O, restore us.

**60:2** You have made the land quake,  
You have split it open;

Heal its breaches, for it totters.

**60:3** You have made Your people experience hardship;  
You have given us wine to drink that makes us stagger.

**60:4** You have given a banner to those who fear You,  
That it may be displayed because of the truth.

**Selah.**

**60:5** That Your beloved may be delivered,

- Save with Your right hand, and answer us!
- 60:6** God has spoken in His holiness:  
“I will exult, I will portion out Shechem  
and measure out the valley of Succoth.
- 60:7** “Gilead is Mine, and Manasseh is Mine;  
Ephraim also is the helmet of My head;  
Judah is My scepter.
- 60:8** “Moab is My washbowl;  
Over Edom I shall throw My shoe;  
Shout loud, O Philistia, because of Me!”
- 60:9** Who will bring me into the besieged city?  
Who will lead me to Edom?
- 60:10** Have not You Yourself, O God, rejected us?  
And will You not go forth with our armies, O God?
- 60:11** O give us help against the adversary,  
For deliverance by man is in vain.
- 60:12** Through God we shall do valiantly,  
And it is He who will tread down our adversaries.
- For the choir director; on a stringed instrument.

### 3.0 Understanding Psalm 60

#### 3.1 Outline

- I. Historical Setting (v. 1a)
- II. God Rejected by Defeat (vv. 1b-4)
- III. God Reveals by Decree (vv. 5-8)
- IV. God Relieves by Deliverance (vv. 9-12)



#### 3.2 Notes

- **v. 1** Historical superscription
  - “Joab” is Abishai in 1 Chronicles 18:12 and David in 2 Samuel 8:13.
    - ✓ Perhaps the differences reflect the chain of command: David as commander-in-chief, Joab as field commander, and Abishai as a subordinate to Joab.
  - “twelve thousand” is 18,000 in 2 Samuel 8:13 and 1 Chronicles 18:12.
    - ✓ Perhaps the variation in the numbers reflects different methods of calculating the casualties at separate levels in the chain of command.
    - ✓ Perhaps the differences indicate different engagements within the greater battle or even a series of battles.
  - “Edom” is Aram in 2 Samuel 8:13.
    - ✓ Perhaps the difference is due to both Edomites and Arameans being joined in the campaign against David’s forces.

- **v. 2** “You have made the land quake”
  - David employs the imagery of an earthquake to describe the crushing defeat of Israel.
  - See Psalm 18:7.
  
- **v. 3** “wine to drink that makes us stagger”
  - This image expresses divine judgment.
  - See Isaiah 51:17-23; Jeremiah 25:15-28; Psalm 75:8.
  
- **v. 4** “That it may be displayed because of the truth”
  - “that they may flee to it from the bow” (ESV) or “a refuge for them out of bow shot” (NAB).
  - NIV: “you have raised a banner to be unfurled against the bow.”
  - NAU is preferable (cp. KJV, NKJV, ASV, NASB, NJPS).
  
- **v. 6** “Shechem . . . the valley of Succoth”
  - Shechem represents the territory west of the Jordan River.
  - The valley of Succoth represents the territory east of the Jordan.
  - These two locations are mentioned in Genesis 33:17-18 as Jacob returns to the land promised to Abraham.
  - God indicates that He will fulfill His promise.
  
- **v. 7** “Gilead . . . Manasseh . . . Ephraim . . . Judah”
  - Gilead and Manasseh are also east of the Jordan River.
  - Ephraim and Judah are the two major tribes west of the Jordan.
  - These are representative of all the tribes of Israel.
  
- **v. 7** “helmet . . . scepter”
  - Helmet, scepter (or, a commander’s rod), washpot, and sandal could be the equipment of a warrior-king.
  - “Judah is My scepter” alludes to the prophecy of Jacob in Genesis 49:10.
  
- **v. 8** “Moab is My washbowl”
  - Moab is depicted as a servant bringing a washbasin.
  - Washbasins or washpots were used for bathing and for toilet purposes. Such service was menial and humiliating.
  
- **v. 8** “Over Edom I shall throw My shoe”
  - Throwing the shoe (or sandal) over Edom could express taking possession of that territory.
    - ✓ Although Ruth 4:7 appears to be similar, it is distinctly different in both action and purpose.
  - It is possible that the reference is to tossing the dirty sandals to servants for cleaning—another menial and humiliating task. “Over” could be translated “to” or “at.”



- v. 9 “the besieged city”
  - Mountains and narrow gorges protected Edom’s cities (similar to the later Nabataean city of Petra).
  - By “Who will lead me to Edom?” David implies that the Lord is sovereign over Edom (v. 8). Perhaps He would aid David in the battle against Edom.

#### 4.0 Singing Psalm 60



##### **On a Day of Humiliation for Disappointments in War** (Tune: “Blessed Be the Name” minus the refrain)

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|--|---|
| <b>1</b> Lord, hast thou cast the nation off?<br>Must we for ever mourn?<br>Wilt thou indulge immortal wrath?<br>Shall mercy ne’er return?               | <b>2</b> The terror of one frown of thine<br>Melts all our strength away;<br>Like men that totter drunk with wine,<br>We tremble in dismay.     |
| <b>3</b> Great Britain shakes beneath thy stroke<br>And dreads thy threat’ning hand;<br>O heal the island thou hast broke,<br>Confirm the wav’ring land. | <b>4</b> Lift up a banner in the field<br>For those that fear thy name;<br>Save thy beloved with thy shield,<br>And put our foes to shame.      |
| <b>5</b> Go with our armies to the fight,<br>Like a confed’rate God;<br>In vain confed’rate powers unite<br>Against thy lifted rod.                      | <b>6</b> Our troops shall gain a wide renown<br>By thine assisting hand<br>'Tis God that treads the mighty down,<br>And makes the feeble stand. |

— Isaac Watts

#### 5.0 Praying Psalm 60

- Lord, restore me to fellowship with You. [v. 1]
- Thank You, O God, for providing for Your people. [vv. 4-5]
- Teach me to trust You, rather than men. [v. 11]
- Lord, thank You for enabling Your people to be victorious. [v. 12]
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#### 6.0 Applying Psalm 60

- Only God can give true victory.
- His people must ask Him for that victory.
- God will fulfill His decrees.