

## Psalm 60

**Title:** Lament Over Defeat in Battle

**Author and Date:** David

**Key Verses:** Psalm 60:1, 10

**Type:** Communal (National) Lament

### **Outline**

- A. Lamentation of the past: defeat in battle (verses 1-4).
- B. Proclamation for the present: deliverance in battle (verses 5-8).
- C. Expectation of the future: determination in battle (verse 9-12).

### **Notes**

Title: "For the Chief Musician; set to Shushan Eduth. Michtam of David, to teach; when he strove with Aram-naharaim and with Aram-zobah, and Joab returned, and smote of Edom in the Valley of Salt twelve thousand." For the "Chief Musician", see the notes on the title of Psalm 4. The words "Shushan Eduth" mean "the lily of testimony". "Shushan" is similar to "Shoshannim", "lilies", in the title of Psalm 45, 69, and 80. "Shushan Eduth" may have been a popular tune title of the day to which this psalm was "set" or sung; or, it may refer to a particular music style. For "Michtam of David", see the notes on the title of Psalm 16 (see also the titles of Psalm 56-59). "To teach" is mentioned in this title only (see 2 Sam. 1:17-18). The references to smiting "Aram-Zobah" (Syria) and "Edom in the Valley of Salt" are taken from 2 Samuel 8:3-13 and 1 Chronicles 18:3-13. Here, David and his armies battled the Syrians, Philistines, Moabites, and Edomites.

Summary: Psalm 60 is a communal (national) lament, or national prayer (note the "we", "us", and "our" throughout; see verses 1, 3, 5, 10, 11, 12). The psalmist and Israel are lamenting the disaster and defeat they have experienced in a previous battle. They believe God has cast them off to an invading army and they are now broken (verse 1). There has been some national defeat or calamity whereby the land is devastated (verse 2) and the people are in disarray (verse 3). However, those who fear God are given hope with a banner of truth to rally behind (verse 4). The psalmist prays that God would deliver Israel, save them, and answer them (verse 5). When God speaks, he reminds Israel that he owns the neighboring lands around them and rules over them all (verses 6-8). The psalmist wants to go to Edom (verse 9), but he knows that God has cast off the people (verse 10). So, he prays for God's help against the present adversary (verse 11) and he believes that there will be victory over any adversaries in the future (verse 12).

Verse 1: “Cast us off” points to God’s abandonment or rejection of his people because of their sin (see also verse 10 and Psa. 43:2; 44:9, 23).

Verse 3: “Drink the wine of astonishment” (KJV) is a common metaphor for divine judgment (Rev. 14:10; 16:19).

Verse 4: This is a declaration of hope. The people of Israel who still fear God can rally around the banner of truth in times of defeat. For “Selah”, see the notes on Psalm 3.

Verses 5-12: The psalmist (the leader of the army) prays for God’s deliverance, salvation, and answer. “Thy beloved” is the nation of Israel who is still loved by God. These verses are repeated in Psalm 108:6-13, just like Psalm 57:7-11 is repeated in Psalm 108:1-5.

Verse 6: God speaks in “his holiness” which refers to his complete moral purity (1 Jn. 1:5). The NIV and other versions read “from his sanctuary”, which would be the tabernacle in David’s day. God speaks and wants to remind Israel that he is in control of her neighboring nations. Shechem (“divide”, Josh. 17:7; 20:7; 24:1,25) and Succoth (“mete out”, Josh. 13:27) are divided and measured by God.

Verse 7: Gilead (Josh. 22:9, 13, 15) and Manasseh (Josh. 13:29-31; 17:1-13) belong to God (“is mine”). Ephraim (Josh. 16:5-10) will be God’s powerful protection (“the strength of my head”; that is, a helmet). Judah will be God’s ruler (“my scepter”, Gen. 49:10; 2 Sam. 7:11-16).

Verse 8: Moab (“my washpot”, Gen. 19:37) and Edom (“cast my shoe”, Gen. 36:1,8) will be placed in servitude by God. Philistia will cry out in homage to God (“shout”, 2 Sam. 8:1-14).

Verse 9: We are not told why, but the psalmist (the leader of the army) wants to go to the “strong city” (KJV) or capital of Edom. This would be Sela (Petra) or Bozrah. He may have gone there for battle.

Verse 10: See verse 1. “Hosts” (ASV) are the “armies” (KJV) of David. This helps us to understand that this psalm is talking about a defeat in battle (Psa. 44:9; see also the story of Israel’s loss to the Philistines in 1 Sam. 4:1-8).

Verses 11-12: These verses express the complete confidence and trust of the psalmist in God and not in man (Psa. 146:3). His prayer to God for help is answered (2 Sam. 8:14).

## **Questions**

1. What does God do to Israel and what does the psalmist request of God (verse 1)?

2. What does God do to the land (verse 2)?
  
3. What does God do to the people (verse 3)?
  
4. What does God give to those who fear him (verse 4)?
  
5. What does the psalmist request of God (verse 5)?
  
6. How does God speak (verse 6)?
  
7. What does God say about the following people and places:  
  
    Shechem and Succoth (verse 6)?  
  
    Gilead, Manasseh, Ephraim, and Judah (verse 7)?  
  
    Moab, Edom, and Philistia (verse 8)?
  
8. What questions does the psalmist ask (verse 9)?
  
9. What does the psalmist believe God does to Israel (verse 10)?
  
10. What is the help of man (verse 11)?

11. What does the psalmist believe Israel can do with God's help (verse 12)?

### **Applications for Today**

1. God casts off his people when they sin (verses 1 and 10). Who did God cast off in OT times (2 K. 23:27; Jer. 12:7)? Does God cast off his people forever (Psa. 77:7; Lam. 3:31)?
2. During battle, we need to take up the banner of truth and display it before all people (verse 4). What are Christians to put on in battle (Eph. 6:14)?
3. In the midst of battles, God still loves his people (verse 5). Can anything separate Christians from God's love (Rom. 8:39)?
4. Seeking help or salvation from man is vanity (verse 11). Who are we not to trust (Psa. 146:3)?
5. What a great admonition: "Through God we will do valiantly"! With God's help, we can conquer our adversaries (verse 12). What does the right hand of the Lord do for the righteous (Psa. 118:15-16)?