

## Psalm 56-60 Chapter Study

### Psalm 56

To the Chief Musician. Set to “The Silent Dove in Distant Lands.” a Michtam of David When the Philistines Captured Him in Gath.

Psalm 16, then Psalms 56-60 are all referred to as Miktam’s.

We don’t know exactly what a Miktam was, but the root word means to cover.

Some scholars think these Psalms may have been quiet, even silent meditations; as if David composed them with the idea that he spoke them behind his hand, covering his lips so others would not see or hear.

Their content does give the impression David was in the midst of danger.

Note that this Psalm was set to a tune called, “The Silent Dove in Distant Lands.”

And he was in enemy territory.

In 1 Sam. 21 we read how when David was on the run from King Saul, things got so dicey for him he ended up having to flee to the Philistine city of Gath – **Goliath’s** city; & this was after he’d slain the giant in the Valley of Elah.

The Philistines granted him shelter at first, knowing that he was a fugitive from Saul and thinking that he was defecting to their side.

But after a while there in Gath, other voices began to say he was just there to spy out their weaknesses & it would be best to get rid of him.

David saw the change of attitude toward him and pretended he was insane.

The Philistines believed the insane were in special communications with the gods, so they left them alone.

David used this goofy idea as a way to duck the plan to knock him off.

Then as soon as they took their attention off him, he escaped before they could figure out he’s was faking it.

This is the song he composed, thanking God for protecting him during an extremely sketchy time in his life.

<sup>1</sup> Be merciful to me, O God, for man would swallow me up; Fighting all day he oppresses me.

David felt awfully alone in Gath. Both Saul & the King of Gath had now turned against him.

<sup>2</sup> My enemies would hound *me* all day, For *there are* many who fight against me, O Most High.

<sup>3</sup> Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in You.

Fear became for David a prod, a reminder to renew His trust in the Lord.

<sup>4</sup> In God (I will praise His word), In God I have put my trust; I will not fear. What can flesh do to me?

Well, a lot actually! Others can bring a lot of distress into our lives.

Man is capable of horrible evil.

But David’s perspective here is eternal, not temporal.

Sure the pains of this life can hurt, the troubles of this world can seem crushing.

But when compared to eternity, they are naught but a brief moment.

<sup>5</sup> All day they twist my words; All their thoughts *are* against me for evil.

<sup>6</sup> They gather together, They hide, they mark my steps, When they lie in wait for my life.

<sup>7</sup> Shall they escape by iniquity? In anger cast down the peoples, O God!

One of the problems we face when we’re in a prolonged trial is the temptation to think that God’s forgotten us.

This is something Job expressed time & again.

David vents about it in several of his Psalms.

But here, it’s not a doubt that plagues him.

On the contrary; he knows God’s attention is on him.

<sup>8</sup> You number my wanderings;

You know where I’ve been & where I am.

Put my tears into Your bottle; *Are they* not in Your book?

David asks God to collect each of his tears, & record the cause of each one of them.

You don’t get more intimate or aware than that.

<sup>9</sup> When I cry out *to You*, Then my enemies will turn back; This I know, because God *is* for me.

David could say that with such confidence because he knew He was for God, and God had already told David that

he was for him.

God is for you too! Listen to this –

Ephesians 1 - <sup>3</sup> Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ, <sup>4</sup> just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, <sup>5</sup> having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, <sup>6</sup> to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved. <sup>7</sup> In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace <sup>8</sup> which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, <sup>9</sup> having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself

<sup>10</sup> In God (I will praise *His* word), In the Lord (I will praise *His* word),

<sup>11</sup> In God I have put my trust; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?

<sup>12</sup> Vows *made to You are binding* upon me, O God;

David had promised to love & serve God. He speaks out a renewal of that vow.

I will render praises to You,

<sup>13</sup> For You have delivered my soul from death. *Have You not kept* my feet from falling, That I may walk before God In the light of the living?

God had delivered David time & again; He would do so once more & David will praise & thank Him for it.

## Psalm 57

To the Chief Musician. Set to “Do Not Destroy.” a Michtam of David When He Fled from Saul into the Cave.

This song is like the previous; a triumphant celebration of God’s faithful deliverance.

The bedrock of most of Israel is limestone which weathers into caves both small & large.

In the years that David was a fugitive from Saul, he lived in several large caves with his band of malcontents who flocked to his banner.

There were a few close calls when Saul’s army was searching for David & he narrowly escaped being caught.

This psalm was composed during one of those times.

So it’s a ***miktam***; David sings it quietly since the enemy is still close.

<sup>1</sup> Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me! For my soul trusts in You; And in the shadow of Your wings I will make my refuge, Until *these* calamities have passed by.

<sup>2</sup> I will cry out to God Most High, To God who performs *all things* for me.

<sup>3</sup> He shall send from heaven and save me; He reproaches the one who would swallow me up. Selah – God shall send forth His mercy and His truth.

<sup>4</sup> My soul *is* among lions; I lie *among* the sons of men Who are set on fire, Whose teeth *are* spears and arrows, And their tongue a sharp sword.

While David’s companions were a bunch of debt-ridden, malcontents & failures, Saul’s army was composed of the best & brightest.

What’s awesome is to see how because of God’s blessing on David, Saul’s elite were totally ineffective in catching him, while those misfits who followed David ended up becoming his mighty men who conquered far & wide & made Israel the premier kingdom of its day.

What was true of David & his mighty men is true today. >> Calvary Chapel movement.

<sup>5</sup> Be exalted, O God, above the heavens; *Let Your glory be* above all the earth.

<sup>6</sup> They have prepared a net for my steps; My soul is bowed down; They have dug a pit before me; Into the midst of it they *themselves* have fallen. Selah

<sup>7</sup> My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast; I will sing and give praise.

<sup>8</sup> Awake, my glory! Awake, lute and harp! I will awaken the dawn.

As a miktam, David says this quietly while the enemy is near.

But as soon as they are dispensed with, He will praise God with loud shouts.

9 I will praise You, O Lord, among the peoples; I will sing to You among the nations.

10 For Your mercy reaches unto the heavens, And Your truth unto the clouds.

11 Be exalted, O God, above the heavens; *Let Your glory be* above all the earth.

## Psalm 58

To the Chief Musician. Set to “Do Not Destroy.” a Michtam of David.

So, same tune as before, but different words.

In this Psalm, David is distressed over the perverted justice being dispensed by wicked judges.

He knows that this is an offense God finds especially grievous, so he speaks up against it as well.

1 Do you indeed speak righteousness, you silent ones?

They have been silent in regards to what’s right.

Do you judge uprightly, you sons of men?

2 No, in heart you work wickedness; You weigh out the violence of your hands in the earth.

The problem with perverted justice is that it encourages the evil to commit their crimes, knowing they won’t be stopped or punished.

3 The wicked are estranged from the womb; They go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies.

David is clear that evil isn’t merely an act – it’s a problem of the heart & nature.

Again, as we saw last week – man is not a sinner because he sins, he sins because he’s a sinner.

What’s tragic for a society is when men who make no pretense at truth & justice are seated as its judges.

4 Their poison *is* like the poison of a serpent; *They are* like the deaf cobra *that* stops its ear,

5 Which will not heed the voice of charmers, Charming ever so skillfully.

Like a deaf cobra angling to strike, these judges have a wicked agenda & nothing will hinder them.

There’s no appeal to these guys to do what’s right because they are wholly bent on wickedness.

There’s only one way to stop a poisonous snake from striking -

6 Break their teeth in their mouth, O God! Break out the fangs of the young lions, O Lord!

Then all they can do is gum you!

David’s point is that these wicked judges are so committed to their sin, there’s not way to stop them.

All you can do is take away their power to inflict harm.

There’s much wisdom here in terms of deciding what to do with criminals; whether they be of the white or blue collar variety.

A man can rob others through extortion & embezzlement or with a gun.

It doesn’t really matter which means he uses – the result is the same.

If a man demonstrates his commitment to evil, no amount of rehabilitation is going to make him safe.

He will serve his time, & when he gets out, he’ll go right back to his crime.

All civil society can do is take away his ability to inflict harm.

That’s what David asks God to do with those criminals who were at that time in the seat of power as judges.

7 Let them flow away as waters *which* run continually;

This is water that doesn’t flow to a cistern, it falls onto the ground, then disappears into the earth.

*When he bends his bow*, Let his arrows be as if cut in pieces.

Shattered arrows.

8 *Let them be* like a snail which melts away as it goes,

Ever seen a snail that gets tossed into the sun or get’s salt poured on it?

*Like* a stillborn child of a woman, that they may not see the sun.

Let them be like a miscarried child.

9 Before your pots can feel *the burning* thorns, He shall take them away as with a whirlwind, As in His living and burning wrath.

When they started a fire, they would often use briars & thorn bushes as the kindling because it catches quickly.

So this is an image of the quick judgment of God.

10 The righteous shall rejoice when he sees the vengeance; He shall wash his feet in the blood of the

wicked,

Not literally ‘wash’ – more the idea of the blood washing over his feet; He will stand on the ground where their blood was shed in their righteous execution.

<sup>11</sup> So that men will say, “Surely *there is* a reward for the righteous; Surely He is God who judges in the earth.”

Once again we see the importance of not passing judgment on something before the end.

The wicked may get away with their schemes for a while, but they always get caught in the end.

God will vindicate His righteous ones before the eyes of all!

## Psalm 59

To the Chief Musician. Set to “Do Not Destroy.” a Michtam of David When Saul Sent Men, and They Watched the House in Order to Kill Him.

David really liked this tune, so he used it again.

This song was composed against the backdrop of his being married to Saul’s daughter.

He was one of Israel’s military champions & commanders; a rising star who made Saul nervous because the people showed more love for David than himself.

So he sent an assassination squad to David’s house to kill him while he slept.

But David knew about it and escaped by putting some pillows in his bed to make it look like he was there under the covers.

What really ticked Saul off when it was discovered David had escaped was that his own daughter had helped him get away.

We’re just going to read this straight thru; it doesn’t need any comment.

As we do – keep an eye out for how we can use this prayer in regard to our spiritual enemy.

Chances are, you don’t have a half dozen assassins stalking you.

But you do have demons who are conspiring for how to bring you down.

Use this Psalm as a prayer & strategy in overcoming them.

<sup>1</sup> Deliver me from my enemies, O my God; Defend me from those who rise up against me.

<sup>2</sup> Deliver me from the workers of iniquity, And save me from bloodthirsty men.

<sup>3</sup> For look, they lie in wait for my life; The mighty gather against me, Not *for* my transgression nor *for* my sin, O Lord.

<sup>4</sup> They run and prepare themselves through no fault *of mine*. Awake to help me, and behold!

<sup>5</sup> You therefore, O Lord God of hosts, the God of Israel, Awake to punish all the nations; Do not be merciful to any wicked transgressors. Selah

He means those sold-out to evil. These are men who will never repent or turn to God.

<sup>6</sup> At evening they return, They growl like a dog, And go all around the city.

<sup>7</sup> Indeed, they belch with their mouth; Swords *are* in their lips; For *they say*, “Who hears?”

<sup>8</sup> But You, O Lord, shall laugh at them; You shall have all the nations in derision.

This mention of the nations is a clue David knew the assassin were foreign mercenaries who worked for Saul.

Most of the Israelites loved David & had come to believe God had anointed him to be king.

Ancient kings often employed foreign mercenaries as their private bodyguards because they had only one interest – protecting the life of the guy who paid them.

They would have been the ones Saul sent on this mission of offing D.

<sup>9</sup> I will wait for You, O You his Strength; For God *is* my defense.

<sup>10</sup> My God of mercy shall come to meet me; God shall let me see *my desire* on my enemies.

<sup>11</sup> Do not slay them, lest my people forget; Scatter them by Your power, And bring them down, O Lord our shield.

<sup>12</sup> For the sin of their mouth *and* the words of their lips, Let them even be taken in their pride, And for the cursing and lying *which* they speak.

<sup>13</sup> Consume *them* in wrath, consume *them*, That they *may not be*; And let them know that God rules in Jacob To the ends of the earth. Selah

- 14 And at evening they return, They growl like a dog, And go all around the city.  
 15 They wander up and down for food, And howl if they are not satisfied.  
 16 But I will sing of Your power; Yes, I will sing aloud of Your mercy in the morning; For You have been my defense And refuge in the day of my trouble.  
 17 To You, O my Strength, I will sing praises; For God *is* my defense, My God of mercy.  
 God *is* my defense.

What's remarkable about David is that while these psalms get pretty nasty in terms of the way he asks for God to pounce on his enemies, David consistently refused to defend himself publicly.

Even though the prophet Samuel had anointed him king, David refused to move against Saul to take the throne.

He waited on God to give it to him, FOR YEARS!

When liars told all kinds of nasty stories about him & accused him of being a traitor, he remained silent and let his actions speak for him.

He let others defend him.

David turned all the words he could have said to people up to the Lord; knowing God would hear & heed the good ones, and ignore those that were wide of the mark of God's will.

## Psalm 60

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 12,000 Edomites in the Valley of Salt.

During the days of David's reign, he led the army of Israel on a northern campaign to take possession of the land God had given them.

David was continuing the conquest Joshua had begun. But those who came after Joshua had neglected.

This territory in the north had been promised all the way back in Genesis to Abraham.

While Israel's army was occupied up north, the Edomites on Israel's south-eastern border saw this as an opportunity to attack.

They managed to drive a wedge into Israel's southern region & lay waste to a few communities.

David's general Joab turned the Edomite attack back, at great cost to the enemy.

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

David believed the fate of Israel was a **direct result** of either God's blessing or judgment.

This setback of the Edomite invasion had to be the result of some error Israel had made.

It was God's way of getting their attention so they could repent & return to God's blessing.

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

What good was a northern victory if the foundations of the kingdom in the south were being stripped away?

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

It was a time of confusion for all. What exactly was going on?

As David ponders what was happening, the answer begins to come – so he says -

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

The banner was a standard armies carried into battle identifying who they fought for.

It nearly always was held by sentries who stayed with the king.

It was the symbol & representation of the kingdom's glory.

One of the chief goals in battle was to capture the enemy's banner because it meant you had taken their glory.

In v. 4 David says Israel's fortunes are the way God seeks to show His glory to the nations.

But his banner can only be held by those who remain true to Him.

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

This is David prayer for the Edomite invasion to be turned back.

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

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

These regions were parts of Israel. God claims them as His own. But . . .

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

[literally – “over Philistia, because of Me, the shout of triumph]

These regions on the borders of Israel had set themselves against God’s people.

Edom wasn’t the only kingdom planning an invasion.

Both Moab & Philistia would jump into action if Edom’s attack worked.

But God **disdains** their plans.

Moab is a dirty sink.

Philistia is a loser.

And Edom is a place where you empty your shoe when you get a rock in it.

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

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

Edom occupied the mountain fastness south of the Dead Sea.

They carved their cities into the canyons & rocks of the hills & seemed an impregnable fortress.

David knows if God goes with Israel, such fortresses will not avail the enemy.

But this invasion by the Edomites has caused David to question if God is really with them.

So he prays -

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

David sent his general Joab & a couple division of the army to deal with the invasion.

But if God did not help them, it was futile.

Because it is only -

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

There’s nothing in the account of this in 2 Sam 8, or 1 Chr. 18 that makes any indication the Edomites attacked because Israel had sinned.

David’s response in this Psalm **to** the attack suggests he **at first** saw it as God’s judgment of a wavering Israel.

But both David’s victory in the North & Joab’s dramatic victory over the Edomite invaders suggests the invasion WASN’T a sign of judgment.

It was something else altogether.

What that was is hinted at in v. 8 were God announces **His attitude** toward Edom, they aren’t His instrument to judge Israel; they are a rejected people.

You see, there’s an important spiritual lesson to be gleaned from this story in Israel’s history.

Again – let me set the scene – David had picked up Joshua’s sword & was finishing the work of conquest over the Land God had given to His people.

While David was extending the borders into brand new territory, AN old enemy Israel had previously dealt with tried a new round of trouble.

Often times when God is giving us victory in some new area of our walk, the enemy will slip in from some other angle to try & distract us.

Often times like Edom, this diversion is a challenge in an area we’ve already had a previous victory in.

Don’t allow the enemy’s diversionary tactics to get you to take your eye off moving the ball up the field.

When **Joe Torre** was catching for the (?) Cardinals, Willy Mays came to bat for the Giants.

Mays was probably the best all around baseball player of all time.

Torre knew Mays was a terror with the bat, & waited till the pitcher was winding up then asked Mays a question.

Mays started to answer, paused as the pitcher released, & mid-sentence, hit the ball over the outfield fence.

When he finished rounding the bases, he walked up to Torre & with a smile, finished his answer.

Spiritual battle is a deadly serious thing for the devil.

He’s not going to just sit back when you make progress in growing deeper in Christ.

He doesn’t wring his hands & whine – he angles for a new opening.

Be smart! Be ready!

When you’re in one of those seasons of great blessing, know that the enemy is at work to mess things up.

As with Edom, more than likely the enemy will attack an area you’ve already done battle in & gained

ground.

I've seen this with married couples time & again.

They'll struggle with their marriage, then God gives them victory & they make great progress.

Several months, even years go by, then one or both of them see God giving them wonderful victory in some brand new personal issue.

Low & behold – tension starts up between them.

Old junk they both thought they were long past rises up.

The enemy whispers, "Look! Nothing's changed! It's all the same old crud all over again."

The tendency is to think that the old victory wasn't real.

***It was!***

But the devil's goal is to get us to ***doubt*** the past work & victory of God.

Do what Israel, David & Joab did.

Nip it in the bud!

Don't wig out or get distracted from the wonderful ***new*** ground God is giving you.

Recognize the distraction for what it is – the enemy's panicked & frantic attempt to halt your progress in Christ.