

This psalm celebrates the LORD's greatness and sovereignty over all the nations of the earth. David, the author, is amazed by the LORD's mercy and faithfulness and compares it to the highest thing he could think of: the heavens. He recognizes that the LORD can do whatever He wants with Israel and all other nations and that only through the LORD could Israel have victory over their enemies.

A Song or Psalm of David

The title tells us that this psalm's author is David, who wrote this psalm incorporating portions of both Psalm 57 and Psalm 60 to celebrate the greatness of God. Verses 1-5 comes from Psalm 57:7-11 and vs. 6-13 come from Psalm 60:5-12.

1 O God, my heart is fixed; I will sing and give praise, even with my glory.

“O God, my heart is fixed [*to be firmly established; secure and unmoving*]” – David is not half-hearted or wavering in his desire to glorify God. He has made up his mind and nothing can change it.

“I will sing and give praise [*to sing or make music*], **even with my glory** [*honor; abundance; riches*]” – David is determined to use song and music to glorify God to the best of his ability (“with my glory”).

2 Awake, psaltery and harp: I myself will awake early. 3 I will praise thee, O LORD, among the people: and I will sing praises unto thee among the nations.

“Awake, psaltery and harp: I myself will awake early [*dawn*]” – David's idea seems to be to start the day early praising the LORD. He is urging his musical instruments to wake up and be ready, adding that he also will wake up at dawn, ready to start praising God.

“I will praise thee, O LORD, among the people [*kindred; countrymen*]” – David is ready to praise the LORD in public among his own countrymen.

“and I will sing praises unto thee among the nations” – David is also ready to praise the LORD among the Gentile nations. Like David, we should be willing, not only to praise God among our fellow Christians, but also out in the world among the unbelievers.

4 For thy mercy is great above the heavens: and thy truth reacheth unto the clouds.

“For thy mercy [*goodness; kindness*] **is great above the heavens”** – David compares the LORD's goodness and kindness to the heavens, the highest thing he could see. The heavens include the sky, the stars and everything else that he could see while standing on the earth. David declares that the mercy of the LORD far exceeds these in greatness and magnitude.

“and thy truth [*faithfulness; reliability; sureness*] **reacheth unto the clouds”** – The word “reacheth” is in italics (not in the original Hebrew) but is implied by the grammar of the text. The clouds were far above what David could reach out and touch, but the LORD's faithfulness could easily reach them in its greatness.

5 Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens: and thy glory above all the earth;

Still using the vastness of the sky and all that could be seen from the earth for comparison, David declares God's greatness to be far above the heavens. The glory of God, being higher than the heavens, is above all the earth and above all that man could reach. Man tried to reach into the heavens and failed at the tower of Babel (**Gen. 11:4** “*And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth*”). Man can now fly in the heavens in aircraft and spacecraft, but he can still come nowhere near the glory of God. Russian cosmonauts in the early years of the space race scoffed and said that they didn't see God when they were in orbit around the earth, but they were totally missing the point of Who God is. **Psa. 19:1** “*The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.*”

6 That thy beloved may be delivered: save with thy right hand, and answer me.

This verse begins the section drawn from Psalm 60. God's “beloved” likely refers to Israel, His chosen people. David asks that the LORD would respond to his prayer and “deliver” (Hebrew means “rescue”) them from their troubles. The right hand was considered to be the hand of strength and effectiveness, since most people are right handed and their right hand would be their strongest and have the most dexterity.

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

“God hath spoken in his holiness [*sacredness; set apart*]” – David declares the LORD to be speaking and vs. 7-9 seem to be specifying what the LORD said. Speaking from His holiness sets what God says apart from what men may say. Many times men make claims and are unable to follow through and fulfill their claims. God, however, is sacred, set apart from men, and what He says carries the weight of His sovereignty.

“I will rejoice” – God is sovereign over Israel, a fact that gives Him joy. He can do with Israel as He pleases, as He describes next.

“I will divide Shechem, and mete out [*measure*] **the valley of Succoth”** – Shechem and the valley of Succoth are a city and region within Israel and God declares that He can divide them up and give them to whoever He wants. This is a warning that the enemies of Israel cannot take the territory of Israel without God allowing them to do so.

8 Gilead *is* mine; Manasseh *is* mine; Ephraim also *is* the strength of mine head; Judah *is* my lawgiver;

“Gilead is mine; Manasseh is mine” – God can also do what He wants with the region of Gilead and the tribe of Manasseh.

“Ephraim also is the strength of mine head” – Ephraim was the most populated and presumably the strongest tribe militarily and God could use them to defend and protect Israel like a helmet defends a soldier’s head. The idea is that God can utilize Israel’s assets as He sees fit to accomplish His purposes.

“Judah is my lawgiver” – God chose the tribe of Judah to rule over Israel (**Gen. 49:10** [from Jacob’s blessing on his son Judah] *“The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be”*). Jesus Christ, the Messiah King over Israel and the whole world came from Judah through the line of David. God created the nation of Israel and chose to use the tribe of Judah to bring forth the Savior of the world.

9 Moab *is* my washpot; over Edom will I cast out my shoe; over Philistia will I triumph.

“Moab is my washpot” – The LORD has just declared that the regions and people of Israel are His to do with as He pleased, and now He expresses His sovereignty over Gentiles nations such as Moab, Edom and Philistia. A “washpot” was a vessel used to wash one’s face and feet, a lowly and menial purpose. The LORD compares Moab to a humble washpot, indicating that Moab existed to serve His purposes. Any victory Moab might have over Israel was temporary and only served the LORD’s purpose of disciplining Israel.

“over Edom will I cast out my shoe” – Commentators have two general interpretations of the casting of a shoe. The first was of the master casting his shoe toward his servant for cleaning. The second interpretation was that of a conquering king casting his shoe over the conquered foe to prove his superiority. Either interpretation would fit the context of this verse.

“over Philistia will I triumph [to shout for joy or in triumph]” – The LORD will celebrate the fact that He is in total control over the Philistine nation. The LORD is not worried about Dagon or any of the other Philistine gods, nor of the military might of the Philistines.

10 Who will bring me into the strong city? who will lead me into Edom? 11 *Wilt not thou*, O God, *who hast cast us off?* and wilt not thou, O God, go forth with our hosts?

“Who will bring me into the strong city? who will lead me into Edom?” – In the ancient world, when a king captured a city he would enter that city as a conquerer. David is asking the question of who would ultimately give him victory over Israel’s enemies. He asks who will enable him to enter the “strong city” as conquerer. The “strong city” is one that is well fortified and difficult to conquer and some commentators suggest that David may be referring to Petra, the rock city of Edom. The city was cut into a mountain and was considered to be virtually impregnable. Apparently David believed that whoever could give him victory over Edom and it’s principal city of Petra would be capable of giving victory anywhere.

“Wilt not thou, O God, who hast cast us off?” – David knows that no human help could provide victory over such a strong enemy. Only God could do so. And yet David acknowledges that God had abandoned Israel in the past due to their sins and their abandonment of the LORD.

“and wilt not thou, O God, go forth with our hosts?” – David now asks for forgiveness and compassion from the LORD so that He would accompany Israel into battle and give them the victory.

12 Give us help from trouble: for vain *is* the help of man.

David understands that the LORD is the only true hope that Israel has. Man’s help is “vain” (worthless, empty, nothing) because the strength of men is limited and men’s loyalty can be unreliable or even untrustworthy at times. Thus he appeals to the LORD, Who is faithful and omnipotent, to rescue Israel from their troubles.

13 Through God we shall do valiantly: for he *it is that* shall tread down our enemies.

“Through God we shall do valiantly [strength; ability]” – David acknowledges that Israel’s strength and ability to gain the victory will not come from themselves but through God.

“for he it is that shall tread down our enemies” – David knows that God is the One Who defeats their enemies, not any military prowess or clever strategy or superior weapons. David knew from personal experience that the LORD can give victory to a young boy with only a sling who was facing an enemy soldier that had superior size, strength, experience and weapons. David’s confidence was in the LORD (**1 Sam. 17:45** *“Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied”*).