

When any Psalm gives us the historical background in the superscription, we have the privilege of actually grasping, not guessing, what was happening when the Psalm was being written. This particular Psalm gives us very specific insight as to its historical context.

Now we will observe from the superscription the following:

1) The Psalm was “for the choir director.” There are 55 Psalms that contain this and what this means is that the one in charge of music was responsible to see to it that this Psalm was stressed and even sung in the worship services of Israel. Leadership was responsible to communicate publicly the instruction found in this Psalm. So not only was this Psalm to be taught, but sung, which would doubly reinforce the point. This Psalm does give us something to sing about.

2) The Psalm was “according to Shushan Eduth.” The word “shushan” refers to an instrument of music that resembled a lily, probably a trumpet (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 813). The word “eduth” refers to a precept or revelation of God (*Ibid.*, p. 608). The emphasis of these two words is that God has revealed this specific Psalm and he wants it presented in some fanfare method. So a fanfare was to announce that they were about to hear a revelation of God.

3) The Psalm was a “Mikhtam” Psalm. This means it really draws attention to the written Word of God. So even though it may be set to music, the music is to draw attention to the truth of the written Word.

4) The Psalm was a Psalm of David. As we will see this is a war Psalm of David. He was not just in a private war when he wrote this, the nation Israel was at war.

5) This Psalm was written to “teach.” The Hebrew word means that this Psalm was written for the purpose of presenting instruction so that people could be trained by the knowledge of this instruction and be disciplined by the instruction (*Ibid.*, p. 438).

6) This Psalm was written when David “struggled with Aram-naharaim and with Aram-zobah and Joab returned and smote twelve thousand of Edom in the Valley of Salt.” Those specific battles are found in II Samuel 8:1-14; 10:9-19; I Chron. 18:1-13.

Now we may observe that these battles were battles David won. However, apparently while he was in those battles, he did not sense that he was going to win and even after he had won, he didn't sense that he would win the next battle.

David's life was often a roller coaster of a ride. One day he would be up celebrating victory and the next day he was looking at another enemy who was out to destroy him and Israel. This does reveal something interesting—**just because one is successful does not mean he is secure. Just because one is having victory does not mean he is happy.**

When we win a victory of sorts and then face another battle, we may begin to think we have been abandoned by God. There is no worse or lonelier feeling; there is no greater sense of a meaningless existence as when you think you have been abandoned by God. Even though David was winning battles, there were still times he felt so alone and so dark and dreary. That is the background behind the writing of this Psalm. The point to see is this:

WHEN WE HAVE EXPERIENCED SOME VICTORY AND YET STILL SENSE THE PRESSURES OF WAR, AND WHEN WE FEEL AS IF GOD IS NOT WITH US, WE NEED TO PRAY AND REMEMBER GOD'S WORD AND ASK FOR GOD'S HELP.

There will be times when God will seem so far removed from us, even when things have gone well. It is right at those moments when we need to continue to pray and remember God's Word and continue to ask God for help.

That is precisely what David did in this Psalm. When you read this Psalm, you would actually think that it was written after David had suffered some terrible defeat. But that is not the case. The superscription makes it clear that David wrote this after a great victory. It was right then when he felt so all alone.

Sometimes after a victory we will become lax in our worship. Our prayer life may dwindle and our reading of God's Word may become sporadic. It is right then when we can feel so all alone and it is right in this context where this Psalm is so important.

Now the Psalm breaks down into three main stanzas:

STANZA #1 – David expresses what God has done. **60:1-5**

I want us to observe that no matter how bad things were, no matter how lonely David felt, he still embraced and believed the doctrine of the sovereignty of God. There are five sovereign acts David credited God with in this Psalm:

Sovereign Act #1 - God had rejected His people. **60:1a**

Even though a battle had been won, there was still a sense of rejection. David was more concerned with the theological implications rather than the immediate battle victory.

Sovereign Act #2 - God had broken His people. **60:1b**

God has His ways of breaking down His own people.

Sovereign Act #3 - God had shaken things up for His people. **60:2**

Again, even though there had been a victory, the land had been shaken by war. More than likely this is a prophetic glimpse of what will happen to Israel in the Tribulation.

Sovereign Act #4 - God had caused hardship to be experienced by His people. **60:3**

God is a sovereign God of hardship. God sends hardships to get His people to turn to Him and He uses hardships to develop them.

Sovereign Act #5 - God had provided a banner for His people. **60:4-5**

This fact that God provides a banner for His people absolutely guarantees the survival of Israel. But notice from **verse 4** that this banner is only applicable to those who “fear” God on the basis of truth. This fear is in direct connection to the “beloved” of God and with right had salvation. What this means is that this is all connected to Jesus Christ.

This Psalm has a direct connection to the cross of Jesus Christ. Israel rejects Christ and after Calvary she is abandoned, but there is a banner she may turn to experience God’s favor again; the banner is Jesus Christ. “Selah” stop and think about this.

STANZA #2 – David expresses what God has said. **60:6-10**

Faith is never in any better hands than when it relies on the promises of God, no matter what the circumstance. What these verses say is that God is a Holy God and He will be exulted by fulfilling His promise of allowing Israel to have the Promised Land. All of the areas mentioned in this Psalm were key areas of the Promised Land, which were controlled by the Edomites and Philistines.

When you are God’s people and you know this land belongs to you, you do begin to wonder why you have to fight for it all the time. What David is doing here is remembering what God had promised in His Word, namely, that the land belonged to Israel. God was developing Israel through these battles and these battles were designed to take the land.

As Dr. Alan Ross said, God would “parcel out Shechem and the Valley of Succoth, that is He would give the land to His people. Twenty miles east of Shechem, in the tribe of Ephraim, is Succoth, a city in the tribe of Gad, near the Jordan River. Ephraim, a centrally located and large tribe in Israel, was strong. Like a helmet she was a defense for the nation. Judah was a scepter of the Lord, that is, David (from Judah) was God’s ruler even though he was threatened. Israel’s enemies would be reduced to menial labor. Gilead, east of the Jordan River and Manasseh, a tribe on both sides of the river, belonged to Him. Moab would be like a washbasin brought to the conqueror. Edom would be like a slave to whom God, like a warrior, would throw his show. Philistia would hear God’s triumphant shout after David’s victory” (*Psalms*, p. 838).

STANZA #3 – David expresses what God needs to do. **60:11-12**

David asks God to give victory. David realizes no man could deliver from these enemies and He asks God to tread down his adversaries.

One thing we see over and over again and that is when David felt he was so all alone and abandoned, he looked to the Lord.

Again, let me remind us all that David had just won a battle. But he realized there were still more battles to fight and he also knew that success in those battles came from God.

Practical Lessons:

1. God is sovereignly controlling moments of our lives when we feel rejected, broken and shaken.
2. Faith is at its strongest and finest level when it totally and completely relies upon the promises of God.
3. God will protect and God will deliver and enemies will fall.
4. We will experience many victories in life if we are faithful to the Lord, but we will not sense the ultimate, final victory until we are with Him.