

LESSON 3

PSALMS 59—61

PSALM 59: ENCIRCLED BY ENEMIES

The content of the psalm indicates that the writer was encompassed by men who, by order of the king, were watching every move he made for an opportunity to kill him. What should a righteous person do in this kind of circumstance? How should one respond in such an overwhelming situation?

The man praying this psalm is a blameless man who can plead his innocence before God. He has enemies all around him. Pursuing him are villains who are without justifiable reasons for attacking him. At its heart, the psalm presents the response of a godly man to those who are seeking his life.

We would call this prayer an individual lament psalm. Perhaps later in the history of the psalm, it was made into a national lament by another inspired writer. For this reason, we see in it a reference to “all the nations.”

1. Why could there be praise in this lament psalm?
2. Which verses show how the writer trusts God’s power to protect him from his enemies?
3. Why does God “laugh at” the wicked (v. 8)?
4. How could this be used as a lament psalm for all of Israel?
5. How can we apply this psalm to our lives?

PSALM 60: RECOVERING FROM DEFEAT

This national lament song/prayer was written about the recovery of Israel after the nation had suffered a discouraging loss of some kind. Prayer is being made to God as Israel picks herself up from the humiliation of defeat that has come at the hands of a foreign nation.

When a nation has suffered loss and has been routed by the enemy, what is the way back to victory and the blessings of God? Within the psalm we see a pattern for recovery from failure.

6. Why do the Israelites think they have been defeated?
7. How does the psalmist picture God helping Israel regain its strength and victory in battle?
8. In what ways does failure hurt us?
9. In what ways can failure sometimes help us?
10. Which verses show Israel's trust that God will take back His wounded nation?
11. What could the Israelites learn from this psalm?

**PSALM 61:
LIFE'S HIGHEST AMBITION**

The writer of this psalm apparently is exiled from Jerusalem, and in his prayer he is expressing his longing to be near the tabernacle of the Lord. The author could have been David, as the title suggests. If so, perhaps he wrote it when he was at Mahanaim, after the collapse of Absalom's rebellion and before his return to Jerusalem.

As a king, he was concerned about his leadership of the people. He writes in the first person (with "I") in the first half of the psalm and in the third person (with "he") in the second half.

The psalm beautifully illustrates the great, spiritual ambition that should reside in our hearts. The desire to dwell in God's presence is singled out as the highest and the noblest of all human yearnings.

12. What does David want from God?
13. Why is he seeking God so fervently?
14. Name some of the things that you ask of God.

15. How does the psalmist pay his vows “day by day” (v. 8)?
16. What is this writer’s highest ambition?