Pss 2:4; 37:13. God is declared to be a bulwark for the worshiper, and the divine strength (עוז) will match the strength of those who conspire against the threatened person. The meaning of "I will watch for you" in v 10 is not entirely clear. One may think with Weiser of the expectation of the imminent appearance of God in some sort of theophanic occasion, an epiphany of God before the congregation. On the other hand, the suppliant may be waiting for any suitable divine response against the enemies. In any case, the speaker is confident of being met by a loyal and powerful God who will give victory over the foes (v 11).

The prayer for the punishment of the enemies in vv 12–14 begins with the request that they not be killed outright, "lest my people forget" (the words of a king?). The speaker prays that God will strike the foes a mighty blow and send them staggering down to Sheol (v 12), to put an end to them so that they are no more (v 14a). The people forget so easily; a sudden destruction would not establish itself effectively in their memories. A. A. Anderson (I, 439) comments that "they would be living witnesses to the reality of God's retribution"—while they stagger down to the realm of the dead!

V 13 seems to carry the idea of the act-consequence, a self-producing concept of retribution with the petition that the enemies be taken captive (caught or trapped) by their own arrogant pride (see *Comment* on 57:7). The speaker asks that the judgment of God will be such that Yahweh's ("God" in v 14) rulership over Jacob will become known world-wide (cf. 1 Sam 17:46). Jacob in this context is most probably understood as Israel (see Pss 22:24; 53:7; 114:1; "the God of Jacob" is found several times, e.g., Pss 20:2; 75:10; 76:7; 81:2, 5; 94:7; 146:5).

Description of enemies and vow of praise (59:15–18). The description of the enemies as howling dogs in vv 15–16 repeats the description in vv 7–8, but with variation in v 16. The disturbing and destructive nature of the dogs is emphasized (see *Comment* on vv 7–8), for they roam at night looking for food and prey. There is a possibility that v 16 should be read ironically; i.e., though the dogs prowl about unpleasantly, they roam about unsatisfied—able only to growl and whine! (see note 16.b.). If this interpretation is followed, the translation should be more like:

> But they roam about for food,
> and if they are not satisfied, they may whine!

In this case, the dangerous dogs of v 8 only whine for food in v 16. However the verse is read, the speaker vows to praise God for his loyal-love and strength. The speaker has a "bulwark" and a place of refuge in the present time of trouble. The howling of roaming dogs will be more than matched by praise sung out at morning time: "Howl on, you prowling dogs, I have a refuge, a sure retreat, where you cannot reach me, and from my safe place, I will watch you stagger down to hell!" The "watching" for God in v 10 is fulfilled in the singing of praise in v 18 (note the change of verbs). (For the morning as a time of divine help and deliverance, see Pss 5:4; 30:6; 46:6; 49:15; 90:14; 92:3; 130:6; 143:8; Isa 33:2; etc.) Morning likely reflects both cultic and metaphorical meaning. The morning was the time when prophets preached their messages and priests gave oracles, a time of sacrifice and rites of worship. Metaphorically, the morning was the time when night and watching and waiting were over and a new day was at hand.

Explanation

Though institutional and cultic settings for this psalm are strongly advocated (see Hubbard, *Dynamistic and Legal Language in Conflict Psalms*), its distinctive quality seems to be literary, with its strong descriptions of enemies as prowling dogs. The content of the psalm reminds us that we have not escaped the problem of enemies and their evil work in human society. The "dogs" prowl about in our communities and towns as they did in the ancient world—"dogs" which embody the devouring, malignant persons and forces in human affairs.

Like ancient Israelite communities, we too are dependent on Yahweh for deliverance. As Hubbard (144) argues, this psalm seems to reflect a breakdown of both legal and moral processes (he calls them "dynamistic processes"): "Law no longer mediates justice nor does the dynamic automatically connect acts and consequences." The perversion and corruption will grind on unless Yahweh is willing to intervene. Of course, the psalm brings to the fore the matter of attitude toward enemies in the harshly worded petitions for divine judgment (see *Explanation* of Ps 58). The enemies are dealt with in the context of faith in Yahweh's supreme judgeship and the refuge and "bulwark" which he provides for those who put their faith in him. Ps 59 points to trust in the saving power of God, whose laughter and derision (v 9) are more than a match for the evildoers who, like hungry dogs, prey on people.

> A mighty fortress is our God;
> A bulwark never failing.
> Our helper he, amid the flood
> Of mortal ills prevailing . . .
>
> Martin Luther

It is fitting that the last word of Ps 59 is "loyal-love" (חֶסֶד), a word which conveys the faithful commitment of Yahweh to the deliverance and protection of his people (see K. D. Sakenfeld, *Faithfulness in Action: Loyalty in Biblical Perspective* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985], esp. 83–100). God is a high tower, a sure retreat: "my God of loyal-love" (or "my loyal God"); cf. Pss 5:7; 13:5; 17:7; 32:10; 31:7–8; 40:11; 57:3; 143:12.

Human Help Is Futile; God's Help Would Be Sufficient (60:1–14)

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Translation

1–2 For the leader;[a] *ʿal-shushan ʿeduth;*[b] a Davidic *miktam* for teaching;[c] when he fought[d] Aram-Naharaim and Aram-Zobah, and Joab returned and struck down twelve thousand Edomites in the Valley of Salt.[e]

3 (1) *O God, who*[a] *has spurned*[b] *us, who has breached our defenses*[c] (3+3)
though you are angry, turn back to us![d]—

4 (2) *You who made the land quake; ripped it open!*[a] (3+3)
Heal[b] *its fissures, for it has split apart!*[c]

5 (3) *You who made your people suffer hard times;*[a] (3+3)
who gave us wine to drink that made us reel;[b]

6 (4) *You who put up a banner*[a] *for those who fear you—* (4+2)
only to let them flee[b] *before the bowmen!*[c] *SELAH*

7 (5) *So that*[a] *those dear to you may be rescued,* (3+3)
save (us) by your right hand and answer us![b]

8 (6) *God made a holy promise:*[a] (3+3+3)
"I will exult[b] *(and) divide up Shechem,*
and measure off the Valley of Succoth.

9 (7) *Gilead is mine, and Manasseh too;* (2+3+2)
Ephraim is a helmet for my head;[a]
Judah is my staff;

10 (8) *Moab is my washpot;*[a] (3+3+3)
I will throw my shoe[b] *over Edom—*
Philistia, shout because of me!"[c]

11 (9) *Who can take me to the siege-proof city?*[a] (3+3)
Who can lead[b] *me to Edom?*

12 (10) *Is it not you, O God, though you spurned us*[a]*—?* (3+3)
Will you not go forth, O God, with our forces?

13 (11) *Give us relief from distress;*[a] (3+3)
for human aid is futile!

14 (12) *With God we could gain success;*[a] (3+3)
he could tread down our foes!

Notes

1–2.a. See n. 51:1–2.a.

1–2.b. Usually understood lit. as "lily of testimony." The expression is probably the name of a tune or other musical direction for the recitation of the psalm. The same expression is used with variations in the titles of Pss 45, 69, and 80. S. Mowinckel (*PIW*, II, 214) suggests that the words refer to a rite in which oracles/revelation/omens were received from the way lilies did or did not bloom (citing the blossoming of Aaron's rod Num 17:21–25 [EVV 6–10]). Mowinckel speculates that the four psalms involved may have been sung over lilies in expectation of a sign of a divine response. L. Delekat ("Probleme der Psalmenüberschriften," *ZAW* 76 [1964] 294–95) attempts to relate the expression to the contents of the four psalms by using the LXX reading of "for those who shall be changed," assuming שנים + ש + על (from, שנה "change") and suggesting that the psalms are for those "whose situation changes for the worse." Delekat suggests that the expression in 45:1 belongs to Ps 44, where it would be appropriate. If the expression does refer to a melody, the word "lily" may

refer to love, especially to the female in sexual relations (see Cant 6:3; 4:5, and note that Ps 45 is a song for a royal wedding). The word עֵדוּת is found also in the title of Ps 80. Eerdmans (67) assumes that the word means "covenant" (see also Kidner, I, 42), and since he assumes that Pss 60 and 80 refer to tribes of North Israel he infers that the word indicates a song which extends the covenant to all the tribes of Israel. Mowinckel (ibid.), as noted above, takes the word in the sense of "revelation" or "oracle," which may point in the right direction. The word עֵדוּת can mean "exhortation/reminder" (KB, 683), and in a context like Ps 119:88 is equivalent to "teaching" or "instruction." LXX in 60:1 seems to take עדות as עוד, "yet, again"—"those that shall yet be changed."

1–2.c. For "Davidic *miktam,*" see n. 56:1.c. The expression "for teaching" (לְלַמֵּד) has been supposed to refer to a psalm to be learned by heart, which is improbable since all the psalms were recited from memory. S. Mowinckel (*PIW*, II, 217) thinks ללמד was not a liturgical term, but meant "to prod" or "to goad on," with the meaning of encouraging the people (as David did the sons of Judah to fight in 2 Sam 1:18), or to "goad on" Yahweh to get him to intervene for his people. The option of encouraging and informing the people is more probable.

1–2.d. LXX reads "when he burned Mesopotamia and Syria," taking the verb from יצה rather than נצה.

1–2.e. See *Comment.*

3.a. With Johnson (*CPIP*, 166, n. 2), taking the construction as coordinate relative clauses with the relative particle omitted (GKC, 155f).

3.b. Keeping the traditional translation of זנח as "cast off/reject/spurn," rather than as "angry" with Yaron ("The Meaning of *Zanah,*" 230) and Dahood.

3.c. The verb פרץ carries ideas of breaking down a wall (80:13; 89:41), of breaking out (106:29), and of a breach or gap (106:23). The best parallel here is probably 2 Sam 5:20, where the idea is that of breaking through the ranks of a military force.

3.d. The polel imperfect of שוב can mean to "restore fully," as in 23:3 (see A. R. Johnson, *CPIP*, 166, n. 2). However, in this context the meaning seems to be "turn back from your anger to us." A. Aejmelaeus (*The Traditional Prayer in the Psalms*, 34–37) has demonstrated that שוב in some contexts, with God as the subject, carries the meaning of "return from battle," or from the execution of punishment, or "return from anger." See Num 10:35; Pss 7:7–8, 12–13; 18:38; 85:5–6; 90:7–9, 11; Exod 32:12; Deut 13:18; Josh 7:26; 2 Kgs 23:26; Jonah 3:9. LXX reads "and you had pity on us," apparently reading the verb as equivalent to רחם or חנן. Johnson reads as a question: "Will thou in thine anger forsake us completely?"—with the first verb having concessive force and the polel of שוב meaning "completely," used with intransitive force as in Jer 8:5 (following Dahood), with ל meaning "from." NEB has "and rebuked us cruelly." NAB ("Rally us!") assumes a battle scene and a plea for God's help when the ranks of Israel's defenders have been broken.

4.a. The verb פצם appears only here. The probable meaning refers to the opening of fissures in the ground as the result of an earthquake. Dahood prefers "and it went to pieces." LXX, however, understands the word to mean "throw into confusion" or "disturb."

4.b. The reading is uncertain. MT (and LXX) have qal imperative of רפה, understood as רפא, "heal/mend"; thus, "heal its breaks/fractures/fissures." Another option would be to take רפה as "sink down/relax/subside," reading with the idea of cracks in the earth (from an earthquake) which sink down into the earth. A. R. Johnson (*CPIP*, 166, n. 4) prefers to read from רפף ("to tremble"): "It is trembling, yea tottering, with its blows," understanding כי as emphatic. Dahood prefers רפה in the sense of "weak": "Weak from its fractures, much did it totter."

4.c. Or, "it is tottering/shaking"—even "collapsing," as in NJV.

5.a. NEB adopts the suggestion that ראה, "see/experience," should be read here as equal to רוה, "drink deeply" (D. W. Thomas, *TRP*, 23; see also Dahood, II, 78). But this is unnecessary (see A. R. Johnson, *CPIP*, 166, n. 5).

5.b. Lit. "wine (that is) staggering/reeling." Cf. Isa 51:17, 22. The metaphor is that of the cup of God's wrath which leaves the drinker dazed and staggering. Perhaps the image is derived from the drinking of water in an ordeal (see Num 5:11–31; cf. Ps 75:9; Jer 25:15; contrast the "cup of salvation," Ps 116:13; Kraus, II, 972).

6.a. This is a very difficult verse. נֵס means "standard/sign/signal/banner." The change to מָנוֹס, "refuge," is frequently proposed (so Gunkel, Schmidt, Oesterley), and it is possible that נס itself can mean "refuge" (Thomas, ibid.). The verb could be read as a precative perfect and begin a petition, "Give [*or,* set] a rallying banner for those who fear you" (so Dahood, Buttenwieser); or the verb could be emended to תנה (impv. from נתן, "give/set/put"). However, MT in the usual sense is maintained

above. A. R. Johnson (166, n. 6) cites Exod 17:15 (E); Isa 5:26; 11:10, 12; 13:2; 18:3; 49:22; 62:10; Jer 4:21; 51:12, 27) and translates, "Thou didst rally those that fear thee to Thy standard."

6.b. The hithpolel infinitive להתנוסס means "to take flight/flee" if derived from נוס, "flee/escape." If taken as a denominative from נס, the verb means "to rally (around a standard or banner)" or "to be displayed (of the banner)." Thus RSV, "to rally to it [the banner] from the bow"; JB, "to rally those who fear you"; NIV, "you have raised a banner to be unfurled against the bow."

6.c. LXX and other versions support the reading of קֹשֶׁט as an Aramaism for קֶשֶׁת, "bow." However, קשט means something like "truth" in Prov 22:21 (and in Aramaic in Dan 2:47; 4:37) and that meaning is preferred here by some interpreters; e.g., NEB, "to make their escape before the sentence falls [with a note, 'before truth']"; Johnson (*CPIP*, 166–67), "Only to let them flee before the truth," i.e., the reality of suffering a severe setback by the enemy's defeat of Israel's forces. Possibly a pun was intended between קשת ("bow") and קשט ("truth"); to flee from the bow is fleeing from the reality ("truth") which God has allowed to happen. See *Comment*.

7.a. The rather awkward construction is an attempt to get the force of the למען and the unusual position of the final clause (note 122:8, 9). The למען as a conjunction indicates result in response to prior action; 7a refers back to the action of God in the preceding verses (Johnson, *CPIP*, 166, n. 8, who translates, "That in return those dear to Thee may be delivered . . .").

7.b. Read "us" with *kethiv* rather than "me" with *qere* and 108:7. The singular in 108:7 is influenced by the context. Dahood reads "Grant us triumph," arguing that ענה can mean "to conquer, triumph" in some contexts (see I, 116; with support from R. T. O'Callaghan, W. L. Moram, and Buttenwieser, 252). Certainly, ענה frequently means more than a verbal answer. In this type of usage, its basic meaning is "to react/respond/to bring about a change of circumstances." The desire for a theophanic word may be indicated, but it would be a word announcing help and giving victory.

8.a. Lit. "God has spoken [*or*, spoke] in his holiness." Most commentators assume that the meaning is "in his holy place" or "sanctuary." However, "in his holiness" may be correct (cf. Pss 89:35; 105:42; Jer 23:9; Amos 4:2). Johnson (*CPIP*, 168, n. 4) prefers "God hath given His own sacred word." Dahood argues for the heavenly sanctuary and translates "from" rather than "in."

8.b. The verb עלז is not used elsewhere of Yahweh. NEB, "I will go up now," accepts the reading עלה זה (cf. Num 13:17; see C. R. North, *VT* 17 [1967] 242–43). See also Ps 108:8: Allen, n. 108:8.b., retains "I will exult"; LXX translates ὑψωθήσομαι, "I will be lifted up, exalted" = "I will be triumphant." JB has "I the victor will . . ."; Dahood prefers a hendiadys: "Exultant, I will make Shechem my portion" (cf. NAB, NIV), which is probably correct.

9.a. Lit. "the stronghold [*or*, protection] of my head," but a leather or bronze helmet is probably intended.

10.a. The metaphor is one of humiliation and servitude. Washpots were often dirty, used for bathing, and even for toilet purposes. The haplography supposed by Gunkel and Kraus to yield מי מואב, "waters of Moab," or ים מואב, "sea of Moab" (referring to the Dead Sea), is unnecessary. LXX, "Moab the bowl of any hope," appears to be the result of understanding רחץ in its Aramaic sense of "to trust" (so J. Barr, *Comparative Philology and the Text of the Old Testament* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968], 55).

10.b. The translation depends on the meaning of this expression. The casting of the sandal or shoe may indicate the symbolic action of taking possession of Edom (cf. Deut 11:24; Ruth 4:7 is often cited, but is not really relevant). On the other hand, the metaphor may be one of domination; either in the sense of "the slave to whom the warrior flings his sandals to carry or to clean" (Kirkpatrick; in which case, it might be better to translate "at Edom"), or in the sense of a conqueror who puts his foot on a vanquished foe as a sign of victory (see Dahood, though his reading of the verb as "plant" is unacceptable). Buttenwieser's interesting comments (75–76) need supplementing by C. M. Carmichael, "Ceremonial Crux," *JBL* 96 (1977) 321–36. The Arabic custom cited of referring to a wedding day as "the day of putting on the shoe" goes back to a euphemism for sexual intercourse. However, an allusion to sexual activity does not seem probable here.

10.c. The text in Ps 108:10 is much easier, עָלַי־פְּלֶשֶׁת אֶתְרוֹעָע, "over Philistia I will shout (in victory)." LXX, "the Philistines have been subjected to me," apparently reads hithpael of רעע, II (cf. Isa 24:19; Prov 18:24). The verb is usually derived from רוּעַ, "to raise a shout." In its other usage in Pss 108:10 and 65:14, the hithpael indicates "shout of joy, triumph." However, in its hiphil form the shout may be that of alarm or distress, which may be the meaning of the hithpael here. Dahood adopts the reading of התרעע as hithpael infinitive construct with 1st person singular suffix, with עלי as in 108:10: "over Philistia will be my cry of conquest" (note Delitzsch, 226). Kirkpatrick, 342: "Mighty Philistia must raise the shout of homage to its conqueror." NJV: "acclaim me, O Philistia!"

11.a. Since the verb can sometimes mean "bring offering/tribute," it is sometimes read in tha sense here (so Dahood, "who will bring me the Rock City?"). The מי expresses a wish = "O for one bring me [or, bring to me]. . . ." The "siege-proof city"—"entrenched city" (as in 31:22); 108:11 has "fortified city" (עיר מבצר)—probably ancient Petra, or Edom as whole, is thought of a fortress city in both psalms.

11.b. Haplography is usually assumed for יַנְחֵנִי = נָחֵנִי imperfect from נחה. However, Dahood may correct in arguing that this is a case of two like consonants being written as one when the final lett of the preceding word (מי, in this case) is the same as the first of the following (see Dahood, II, 81 f references).

12.a. See Johnson, *CPIP*, 166, n. 2; 170, n. 4; GKC, 155f. The הֲלֹא seems to have a force like that הִנֵּה ("behold"); see Dahood, II, 24, on 54:2; BDB, 520; JB: "God, can you really have rejected us? Y no longer march with our armies."

13.a. More commonly מצר is read as "from the foe/adversary," but LXX reads θλίψεω "trouble"; so, KJV, JB. Perhaps there is a deliberate wordplay between צר, "foe," in v 14 and "trouble/distress," in v 13; (Johnson, 173).

14.a. Commonly translated, "we shall do valiantly," but the context indicates that the meani should be "prove successful/prevail," or "get victory." Cf. Ps 118:15, 16; 1 Sam 14:48. NIV has "With G we will gain the victory." The *Translation* assumes that the imperfect forms of the verbs are modal force. It could also be: "With God we can prevail; he can tread down our foes!" Cf. D. Michel, *Tempo und Satzstellung in den Psalmen* (Bonn: H. Bouvien, 1960), 148, no. 23, 63.

Form/Structure/Setting

This psalm is plagued with difficulties, and all interpretation is tentative. appears to be a modified prayer of communal lament. Some of the famili elements of the lament are present: the vocative address to God, the use of th word זנח (v 3), which occurs elsewhere in laments (see Pss 44:10, 24; 74:1; 88:1 Lam 3:15), the descriptions of conditions which form a complaint, petitions f divine aid in a time of great trouble, and perhaps a confession of trust (modified form) in vv 8–10, 14. The psalm seems to express the prayer of th people (and their leader) during a time of national defeat and humiliation.

The psalm can be divided into three sections: vv 3–7, 8–10, and 11–14. Th speaker in vv 3–7 and 12–14 uses the plural "us" for self-identification and address God as "you." The subject addressed in v 14 could be either God or the grou included in the "we" of that verse. God is quoted in first person in the midd section (vv 8–10). The use of *Elohim* in each section is a rhetorical feature whic seems to mark off the sections (vv 3, 8, 12). The use of זנח ("spurn" or "be angry in v 12 links it back to v 3 and the first section. Ogden (*JSOT* 31 [1985] 84) not also that the dual interrogatives in v 11 match the twin use of *Elohim* in v 12. Th first question asks, "Who can take me to the siege-proof city?" The response i question form is, "Is it not you, O God?" The second question is "Who can lea me . . . ?" The parallel is another question, "Will you not go forth, O God . . .

The *selah* division of the psalm is a twofold one. The division at v 6 seen premature in terms of the analysis above. Perhaps there are three possibilities f explaining the position of the *selah*. First, a pause after the description of th conditions of complaint may have been deemed appropriate, for one reason another. Second, the severely unbalanced line in the MT may have attracted th *selah*. Third, the reading of v 6 may have been a positive one for the scrib interpreters (see Cohen, 190; NIV), or a prayer (using precative perfect) for Gc to set up a banner to rally the demoralized forces of Israel. If the last is the cas there may be a sequence of three calls for divine help in vv 3b, 4b, and

(so Ogden, *JSOT* 31 [1985] 86; see *Notes*). Kellermann (60) argues that the rally-sign is the Yahwistic holy place on Zion, citing Jer 4:6 as a close parallel. I have attempted to interpret this verse in another way and use a different analysis (see *Notes* and *Comment*).

The psalm is among those which seem to offer recognizable linkage with Israelite history. The wording is not precise enough, however, to preclude different theories—and not general enough to exclude others! Older critical commentators, in accord with a general approach, tended to think of the Maccabean period (Kraus cites Hitzig, Olshausen, Duhm, Buhl, Staerk). Joram's campaign against the Edomites has been suggested on the basis of 2 Kgs 8:20–22, 2 Chr 21:8–10, but seems most unlikely since the distress in the psalm does not appear in the prose accounts. The MT title associates the psalm with a campaign of David against the Edomites, and this setting is defended by some modern scholars (see Kirkpatrick, Buttenwieser, Kidner, and tentatively by Dahood). Those who defend a setting in the time of David postulate an invasion by the Edomites while David was busy in the North with the Syrians (e.g., Kirkpatrick). This is pure speculation and provides no firm basis for the psalm (1 Kgs 11:14–16 seems to indicate that Edom would have had more reason to lament than Israel).

The most probable setting reflected in the psalm is that of the time after the fall of Jerusalem in 587 B.C.E. (e.g., Kraus, Kellermann). The conditions described in the complaint would fit the exilic period, and the reference to Edom accords well with the Israelite animosity toward the Edomites exhibited in a number of passages (see Jer 49:7–22; Isa 63:1–6; Ezek 25:12–14; Obad; Ps 137; Lam 4:21–22). Lamentation ceremonies and fast days seem to have been a part of Israelite worship before the fall of Judah (see Jer 36:9) and afterwards (Zech 7:2–7; 8:19; see Kellermann; E. Janssen, *Juda in der Exilszeit* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1956], 94–104), and the psalm would have been at home in such ceremonies. Ogden ("Psalm 60") argues that it stems from a lament ceremony (most probably post-exilic) in which it was linked with Isa 63:1–6 as a prophetic response. He thinks it probable that Ps 60, Isa 63, Ps 137, Obad, and Jer 49:7–22 all belong to the same "fundamental historical and liturgical context" (93), and this is probably correct. However, the caution and reservation of Kraus (*Psalms 1–59*, 3) regarding the hypothetical nature of all attempts to provide specific contexts for this psalm in the history of Israel is well taken.

Comment

The superscription (60:1–2). The historical note in the superscription is the result of the efforts of scribal interpreters to link psalms to accounts of the career of David. As noted above, the psalm is assigned to the context of David's conquest of Edom according to 2 Sam 8:13–14 // 1 Chr 18:12–13. Aram-Naharaim is a name for Mesopotamia and may allude to 2 Sam 8:3, which seems to refer to David marching to the Euphrates to establish his power and possibly to the hiring of Mesopotamian chariots and horsemen by the Ammonites to fight against him in 1 Chr 19:6. Aram-Zobah refers to a major Aramean state during the time of David, located on the eastern slopes of the Anti-Lebanon mountain range in the Biqaʿ Valley. The scribal interpreter who provided the historical data for the title of Ps 60 may have had a text of 2 Sam 8:13 that read "and when he [David] returned, the son of Zeruiah defeated the Edomites" (see P. K. McCarter, Jr., *2 Samuel*, AB 9 246). Since Joab was the best known son of Zeruiah (rather than Abishai, his brother, who is credited with killing the Edomites in 1 Chr 18:12), the scribe identified him as the victor over the Edomites (Joab's attacks on Edom are also related in 1 Kgs 11:15–16). The precise location of the Valley of Salt is unknown, but it most probably refers to one valley or another in the region of the Dead Sea, probably in Edomite territory, rather than to the Wadi el-Milh, east of Beersheba. The number 12,000 differs from the 18,000 in 2 Sam 8:13 // 1 Chr 18:12. The variation is due either to a difference in traditions or to textual error.

The title most probably reflects the long animosity between Edom and the Israelites, which was exacerbated by the cooperation of the Edomites with the Babylonians in the destruction of Jerusalem in 587 B.C.E. Ps 137:7 indicates that the Edomites exploited the misfortunes of Jerusalem (see also Obadiah; Allen on Ps 137:7, n.b. 236). Thus two exilic and post-exilic interests converged: that of David and his exploits and the condemnation of Edom. It is quite probable that Ps 60 was composed as an *ad hoc* prayer which arose out of meditation on David during the terrible times after the fall of Jerusalem and out of the deep resentment of what was perceived to be a betrayal by the Edomites, who "should not have rejoiced over the people of Judah in the day of their ruin" (Obad 12), and who also participated in the looting of Jerusalem according to Obad 13 and in cutting off the escape of fugitives according to Obad 14.

Complaint and prayer for help (60:3–7). The condition of the people is perceived as being the result of divine anger and rejection. Their line of defenses had been broken through by an invader (v 3). The verb זנח is found in other laments (e.g., Pss 44:10, 24; 74:1; 78:15; Lam 3:17; compare v 3 with 44:10–12) and refers to rejection or anger—or both. The אנף of v 3b is a denominative verb from אף, "nose/anger," and carries the connotation of snorting in anger. A. A. Anderson notes that the verb is used on the Moabite Stone (line 5) for the anger of the Moabite god Chemosh against his people. The uncertain תשובב לנו, read here as "restore us," is an expression early in the prayer of the necessity of divine help. The distress of the present situation is beyond human remedy (v 11).

The invasion of an enemy has shaken the land like an earthquake (v 4); its terror has been like that produced when earthquakes break open the ground with fissures. According to the interpretation adopted here (see *Notes*), the situation is too bad to delay any longer a prayer for deliverance: "Heal its fissures!" Again, the need lies beyond the power of human hands. The people have experienced hard times (or "things," v 5a), in which the confusion and shock have left them staggering and reeling as if overcome by too much wine (cf. Isa 51:17, 22; Jer 25:15–16). The fearful violence of events has left the people dazed and traumatized, and it is God (v 3) who is responsible for it all.

As v 6 is interpreted here, it refers to a signal banner which had been raised (most probably thought of as on the walls of Jerusalem) to warn the inhabitants of the outlying areas to flee to the relative safety of the walls of a fortified town.

The situation in mind is like that envisioned in Jer 4:6:

> Raise a standard toward Zion,
> flee for safety, stay not,
> for I bring evil from the north, and great destruction. (RSV)

See also Isa 13:2; 18:3; 30:17; Jer 50:2. The signal banner was not to rally troops for a campaign or for a journey (as in some references, e.g., Jer 51:12, 27; Isa 49:22; 62:10) but to warn the farmers and tradesmen in the surrounding villages to drop their work and to make for the walls of the town, with their wives and children, hoping that they could get there before the gates were closed. Of course, the safety of the walled town might prove to be deceptive. The invader might lay siege, bringing about great suffering from shortages of water and food and from disease, with the prospect of a terrible eventual violent overthrow of the town.

Kraus (II, 587) suggests that the situation depicted in vv 6 and 11 could be that of the assembling of a group to flee as refugees to the safety of Edom (Obad 14; Jer 40:11), but he thinks it more probable that the content of vv 8–10 has to do with the future subjugation of Edom. However, Kraus himself notes the difficulty with v 14. It is possible that v 11 is ironic, reflecting bitter disappointment that Edom proved to be a false refuge—perhaps the Edomites blocked the escape of Israelites to Judah and turned refugees over to the Assyrians as in Obad v 14. However, this approach is too speculative to engender much confidence, and it seems better to think of Jerusalem as the failed place of refuge in v 6; thus the verse continues the complaint in v 5. God is charged with failing to protect his people who fled to the city from an impending attack. Yahweh (God) has devastated the land and left the people with great suffering.

V 7 is a prayer for divine deliverance. A response to the great distress of the people is urgently needed. God is reminded that these are "those dear to you" ("beloved ones") and "those who fear you" (v 6). The powerful action of the divine right hand is needed for deliverance (see Pss 17:7; 18:36; 44:5 [4]; 74:11; 138:7; etc.). God is implored to respond: "Answer us!"

A holy promise recalled (60:8–10). The divine oracle in vv 8–10 (vv 8–11 are also found in 108:8–11) is frequently interpreted as the response of a cult prophet or priest to the complaint and prayer of the preceding verses (see the summary and references of Johnson, 169–70). In this sense, the oracle would be a message of assurance that Yahweh is the divine warrior who has conquered Israel's land and controls the surrounding countries of Moab, Edom, and Philistia as well. Those forced to take refuge in Jerusalem can take heart. However, it is more likely that the divine message is a freely composed utterance from the past which is appealed to as a basis for the prayer and hope which follows (so Johnson, *CPIP*, 170–71). The rhetorical form of vv 8–10 is not intended so much as a divine oracle as a form of prayer to God to remind him of his commitment to Israel (Ogden, *JSOT* 31 [1985] 87). These are the kinds of promises of divine sovereignty that Yahweh exultantly declared to his people, but which lack fulfillment.

The message itself is in the form of a victory song by the Divine Warrior (Gunkel), probably an *ad hoc* composition drawn from old traditions. The naming of Shechem and Succoth may recall the Jacob tradition of Gen 33:17–18 and 49:10; Edom and Moab allude to the Balaam oracle in Num 24:17–19. The Mosaic tradition of Deut 31:1–10 may also be involved (so Weiser). The territories mentioned probably represent the major areas of the Davidic kingdom (so Weiser, Kellermann). Shechem, Succoth (in central Transjordan, perhaps, Deir ʿAlla in the Jordan Valley), Gilead, Manasseh, and Ephraim represent the areas of the Northern Kingdom, while Judah, Moab, Edom, and Philistia represent the South. The equipment of a warrior-king is applied piece by piece to the lands he intends to conquer: helmet, scepter or commander's rod, washpot, and shoe. The verbs in v 8 depict the division of conquered territory to those who will become its new residents, like the division of the land to the Israelites (e.g., Num 26:53, 55, 56; Josh 14:5; 18:2, 10; 19:51; Mic 2:4; Gen 49:7, 27; Exod 15:9; Judg 5:30, for חלק; for מדד, see especially 2 Sam 8:2, of David; Hab 3:6; Num 35:5). In the history of Israel, Yahweh had promised to carry out these intentions to be the Divine Warrior-King who would possess and measure out the land as indicated. From the standpoint of the speaker in the psalm, however, the divine program has been a failure. Yahweh has not kept his promises. What has happened to the exultant promises of the Divine Warrior?

A dismal present in contrast to past promise (60:11–12). The present reality in vv 11–12 is set against the exalted idealism of vv 8–10. The territory of the Northern Kingdom, now overrun by foreigners, still belongs to Yahweh, as do the vassal states of Moab, Edom, and Philistia (Kraus). The meaning of v 11 is an enigma. The verse leaves the reader with varied possibilities—and perhaps this is what it is intended to do. The informed reader brings a considerable repertoire to the verse. Is the speaker an Israelite king who is contemplating an invasion of Edom and needs divine assurance of the success of the campaign? The suggestion was made above that the verse is possibly the ironic statement of an Israelite refugee who has seen what happened to others who tried to flee to the safety of Edomite towns and fortresses entrenched in terrain almost impregnable to military invasion. Or is it the question of a person who actually longs for safety in Edom? Is there the hope that a flight of refugees to Edom would result in a new exodus and conquest of the promised land? Is the verse an old one framed in terms of Edom as the source of Yahweh's theophanic going forth to work mighty salvation for his people as in Hab 3? Perhaps the best interpretation is that of a continued appeal to the past commitments of Yahweh, as in vv 8–10, but with a transition into prayer in v 12. Yahweh is implored to return to his mighty divine warriorhood of the past, to revive Israel again and lead the Israelite forces in conquest of the mountain ramparts of the Edomites. The unidentified nature of the speaker is possibly an invitation to think of a new David, a king who would have the cooperation of Yahweh in new endeavors to fulfill old promises.

Prayer for relief (60:13–14). The achievement of חיל ("victory/wealth/strength/success") and relief from distress can come only from God. Human help is vain; only divine intervention will suffice. V 14 expresses confidence that divine aid would bring success. God is able to save his own: "He could tread down our foes." Ogden (92) notes that the verb בוס ("tread down") appears in Isa 63:6 (an Edom passage) and in only five other passages in MT (Ps 44:6; Prov 27:7; Isa 14:19, 25; Jer 12:10). The usage in Ps 44:6 (5) is parallel with the pushing down and goring of an opponent by a wild ox: "through your name we push down our assailants."

Explanation

The psalm pictures a desperate situation for the people of God. The conditions lie beyond the power of any saving help from human sources (v 13b). This fundamental idea is touched upon briefly in v 3b, "return to us," and in v 4b, "heal its fissures." The prayer is equally urgent in vv 7 and 13. The psalm struggles to affirm faith in the sovereignty of Yahweh over history in a time when that faith is being tested. The speaker represents those who wait in distress for new action on the part of God. At the present time, Yahweh seems to have spurned his people (v 12) and left them at the mercy of their foes. His people, however, will not let him forget his commitments from the past. Perhaps the psalm belongs to a context like that set forth in Lam 2:18 of those who cry out to Yahweh day and night, without rest or respite, because of what he has done to Zion. Isa 62:6–7 may be even more pertinent for Ps 60. The prophet appoints "sentinels" ("keepers") upon the walls of Jerusalem with the charge:

> You who remind the LORD,
> take no rest,
> and give him no rest
> until he establishes Jerusalem
> and makes it renowned
> throughout the earth. (NRSV)

If I have read Ps 60 correctly, it belongs to a considerable tradition of prayer in the OT which confronts the divine presence with relentless complaint and petition, divine responsibility for promises made and judgments which threaten those promises (cf., e.g., Moses, Num 14:13–19). I hardly need to say that these are bold prayers which arise from strong faith. They are not for the weak and half-committed, but they belong to the meek who will inherit the earth, those who are of little stature by worldly standards but who have the power of prayer.

As noted above, this psalm has sometimes been dated to the Maccabean period and thus contemporary with the Book of Daniel. This is almost certainly incorrect, but it is interesting to note that the psalm expresses a theological position similar to that of Daniel. In Daniel, there is an emphasis on deliverance by means other than human hands. The great image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream is destroyed by a stone "cut out by no human hand" (Dan 2:34), a stone which becomes a great mountain and fills the whole earth (Dan 2:35). In Dan 8:23–25, the bold, arrogant, and destructive king, who is the "little horn" (Antiochus Epiphanes) of the preceding vision, will be dealt with by divine intervention: "By no [human] hand, he shall be broken." So it must be; for all saving-help of human beings finally is judged to be empty and worthless. The psalm is a stark reminder that the limits of human power are easily reached and that salvation is God's work. The Israelites are warned in Deut 8:17 of the temptation after settling in the lands to say: "My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth" (עשה לי את החיל; cf. נעשה חיל in Ps 60:14). The antidote for such saying follows in Deut 8:18:

> You shall remember the Lord your God,
> for it is he who gives you power to get wealth [כח לעשות חיל].

The ancient promises still provide a basis for future hope. Surely God will not spurn and forget his people forever.

> Though for a while the people reel under the assaults of the enemy, they will yet scale the crags of Edom. Superbly strong in the divine energy, they will at last *tread down* Satan under their feet. (J. H. Eaton, *Psalms*, 156)

We too wait with our ancient brothers and sisters for the Divine Warrior to arise and fulfill his promise to overcome the powers of this world. Even so, come, O Lord!

A Prayer from the End of the Earth (61:1–9)

Bibliography

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Translation

1	For the leader;[a] with instrumental music;[b] a Davidic (psalm).[c]	
2 (1)	*Hear my cry,*[a] *O God;*	(3+2)
	pay attention to my prayer.	
3 (2)	*From the end of the earth*[a] *I call to you,*	(4+2[4]4)
	when my heart is faint,[b]	
	lead me[c] *to a rock that is higher than I.*[d]	
4 (3)	*For you have been a refuge for me;*	(3+3)
	a tower of strength[a] *against the enemy.*[b]	
5 (4)	*O that I might sojourn in your tent forever,*[a]	(3+3)
	(and) take refuge under the shelter[b] *of your wing!* SELAH.	
6 (5)	*For you have heard my voice, O God;*	(4+4)
	You have given me the heritage[a] *of those who fear your name.*	
7 (6)	*Add*[a] *to the days of the king;*	(4+3)
	let his years span the generations.[b]	
8 (7)	*May he sit enthroned in God's presence forever;*	(4+4)
	assign[a] *Loyal-love and Truth*[b] *to safeguard him.*	
9 (8)	*Then*[a] *I will always sing the praise of your name,*	(4+3)
	fulfilling[b] *my vows day by day.*	