

STUDIES IN PSALMS
QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. At what possible time did verses one through three apply to the nation of Israel?
2. From the superscription of this psalm we could assume that David fought against the Syrians in the far north. Read II Sam. 8:13, 14; I Kings 11:15, 16 and I Chron. 18:12, 13. While David was away from Jerusalem the Edomites took advantage of his absence and invaded Palestine. News came to David—he sent Joab to defend the homeland. In the interval David wrote this psalm. What did Joab do? Read verse nine and notice the faith of David. Discuss.
3. What is “the banner” given to them that fear thee? Cf. vs. 4.
4. Moab and Edom were to be treated in a strange way—“Moab is my washpot” and “Upon Edom will I cast my shoe”. What is the meaning of these figures of speech?
5. Has God ever led in war or has He merely used it as a rod of correction after man initiated it?

P S A L M 61

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE

The Psalmist, in Banishment, Prays for Restoration.

ANALYSIS

Stanza I., vers. 1-4, Prayer for Restoration based on Past Mercies. Stanza II., vers. 5-8, Prayer for Long Life, grounded on Public Blessings, and closing with a Promise of Perpetual Praise.

(Lm.) By David.

- 1 Do hear O God my piercing¹ cry,
oh attend unto my prayer:
 - 2 From the end of the land unto thee will I cry when my heart
fainteth,
into a rock too high for me (to climb) shalt thou lead me.
1. “Plaintive”—Del.; “ringing”—Dr.

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- 3 For thou hast been a refuge for me,
a tower of strength from the face of the foe.
- 4 I would fain be a guest in thy tent to the ages,
I would take refuge in the hiding-place of thy wings.
- 5 For thou O God hast hearkened to my vows,
thou hast given a possession to the reverers of thy name.
- 6 Days unto the days of a king shalt thou add,
his years as of generation after generation:
- 7 He shall be enthroned to the ages before God,
Kindness and Truth appoint thou to preserve him.
- 8 Thus will I make melody of thy name to futurity,
that I may pay my vows day by day.

(Lm.) To the Chief Musician. (CMm.) For Jeduthun.

PARAPHRASE

PSALM 61

O God, listen to me! Hear my prayer!

2 For whatever I am, though faraway at the ends of the earth, I will cry to You for help. When my heart is faint and overwhelmed, lead me to the mighty, towering Rock of safety.

3 For You are my refuge, a high tower where my enemies can never reach me.

4 I shall live forever in Your tabernacle; oh, to be safe beneath the shelter of Your wings.

5 For You have heard my vows, O God, to praise¹ You every day, and You have given me the blessings You reserve for those who reverence Your name.

6 You will give me² added years of life, as rich and full as those of many generations, all packed into one!

7 And I shall live before the Lord forever. Oh, send your lovingkindness and truth to guard and watch over me,

8 And I will praise Your name continually, fulfilling my vow of praising You each day.

EXPOSITION

No better origin in David's life for this sweet little psalm need be sought, than when the psalmist was at Mahanaim; Absalom's rebellion having been crushed, and the King waiting

1. Implied from verse 8.

2. Literally, "to the days of the king."

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to return to Jerusalem. It is only a snatch of song, revealing but a glimpse into the experiences of the Monarch; but it is striking, and well worthy, not only of preservation, but of occasional use in the liturgy of the Temple.

Far from home, far from the services of the Sacred Tent, the petitioner cries out to be permitted to return. He is occasionally depressed, but finds solace in his harp, whereon he formulates his plea. He recalls past mercies, and the memory of them emboldens his present requests. To be again Jehovah's *guest* and to realize the sense of *nestling* under His protection, is his foremost wish.

Reverting to the past, he remembers that those past mercies had been granted in answer to *vows* previously made; and, in particular, that to his brethren as well as to himself, the Sanctuary had been granted as a priceless *possession*. Continued *life* then comes into the field of his desire; and, at this point, he is carried away in what we may describe as a Messianic Ecstasy; asking for such a prolonged continuance of *days* as far transcended ordinary human existence. What mortal, though crowned, could reasonably expect to live *generation after generation*? to be *enthroned age-abiding before God*? It may be that, as some interpret, David was thinking rather of his dynasty (according to 2 Sam. 7) than of his own person. But the mind soon tires of the thought of a mere dynasty abiding, while the members who in succession sustain it, are all, one after the other, swept away by death. At all events it is a welcome and instructive relief to find the ancient Targum-writing Rabbis discovering, in the prospect of the dynasty, the brighter prospect of a Final Holder of dynastic promises—the Messiah? Thus on ver. 8: "Very pathetic is the paraphrase of the Targum (= *interpretation* or *translation*). 'So will I pay my vows in the day of the redemption of Israel, even in the day when King Messiah is anointed to reign'"—Kp.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Read II Samuel, chapter eighteen and discuss this psalm with the background of David's exile in Mahanaim.
2. David's faith—confidence—love for God is beautifully expressed in this psalm. To David God is: (1) "A rock that is higher than I"; (2) "A refuge for me"; (3) "A strong

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tower"; (4) "a refuge in the covert of thy wings"; (5) "I shall dwell in Thy tent". Discuss these figures as they relate to us.

3. There is a prophecy in verses six through eight—what is it?

PSALM 62

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE

Restful Resolution, Exposing the Treacherous and Encouraging the Timorous, traces both Power and Kindness to God the Judge of All.

ANALYSIS

Stanza I., vers. 1-4, Counselling himself to be Patient, the Psalmist Remonstrates with False Friends. Stanza II., vers. 5-8, Again (by *Refrain*) Counseling Himself to be Patient, he seeks to Restore the Confidence of the People. Stanza III., vers. 9-12, exposing False Grounds of Confidence, he traces all Power and Kindness to the Supreme Judge.

(Lm.) A Psalm—By David.

- 1 Surely¹ unto God be thou still² my soul,
for³ from him is my salvation:
- 2 Surely he is my rock and my salvation my lofty retreat,
I shall not be greatly shaken.⁴
- 3 How long keep ye rushing at a man,
continue crushing all of you,—⁵
as at a leaning wall as at a bulging fence?
- 4 Surely from his dignity have they counselled to thrust him
out,
they delight in falsehood:
With his mouth doth each of them bless,
but inwardly they curse.
- 5 Surely unto God be thou still my soul,
for from him is mine expectation:

1. Or "only"; and so in vers. 2, 4, 5, 6, 9.

2. M.T.: "silence (is) my soul."

3. So some cod. (w. Sep., Syr., Vul.); cp. ver. 5—Gn.

4. "Be shaken"—Br.

5. According to another vocalisation: "All of you shall be crushed."