GOD, MY EXCEEDING JOY
A JOYFUL JOURNEY THRU THE PSALMS

June 28, 2020 PM

Ps 64 – Shootout at the Safe House

I. SETTING

A. AUTHOR: David, part of a collection of his poems from Pss 51-70.

B. BACKGROUND.

1. The superscriptions provide no historical notes, and there are not specific events clearly mentioned in the poem.

2. The psalm describes enemies making secret plots to tear down David with orchestrated verbal assaults, a predicament that could fit many different periods in David's life.

3. The description of the enemies' plots (vv. 3-6) sounds not too different from modern politics!

C. PLACEMENT:

1. Psalms 63 & 64 share some common elements.

a. The problem of threatening speech from enemies.

b. The element of trust in God's power to put down enemies.

c. Concluding references to the delivered glorying/boasting

2. Pss 61, 62, and 64 repeatedly use words related to the Hebrew root *chasah* (to trust, to take refuge).

II. GENRE: Lament with Strong Confidence

A. The only prayers in the psalm are prayers for help (vv. 1-2).

B. Nonetheless, the poem ends with a strong note of confidence. But unlike a psalm of thanks, there is no direct word of praise of vow of thanks.

PSALM 64

PURPOSE: After praying for deliverance from a covert plot to undermine his safety, David expresses certainty in God's more powerful moves of deliverance that will bring relief and rejoicing to the righteous.

Type: Lament with Strong Confidence
Author: David (c. 1040-970 BC) **Date:** Unknown
Note: Most but not all the verbs in vv. 7-9 are past tense, indicating the certainty of coming deliverance.

HEADINGS	LAMENT OVER APPROACHING ASSAULT: THE CALCULATED ATTACK OF ENEMIES vv. 1-6		CONFIDENCE IN GOD'S COMING DELIVERANCE: HIS OVERWHELMING COUNTER OFFENSIVE vv. 7-10	
Authorization Consigned to the Tabernacle Choir Director **Authorship** David	**Call for Help vv. 1-2** Opening Plea for Attention v. 1a Request for Protection from Secretive Enemy Plans vv. 1b-2	**Description of Enemy Plots vv. 3-6** Covert in Their Planning of Verbal Assaults vv. 3-4 *The Weaponizing of Their Words* *v. 3* *Their Attack on the Innocent* vv. 5-6 Confident in Their Stealthy Planning of Subversion vv. 5-6b Commentary on Their Depravity v. 6c	**Description of Divine Deliverance vv. 7-8** God's Sudden Counter Offensive v. 7 The Boomerang of Divine Justice v. 8 *The Judgment of Their Own Words Inflicted Upon Them* *v. 8ab* *The Public Observation of Their Defeat* *v. 8c*	**Cause for Praise vv. 9-10** The Resultant Widespread Fear & Worship of God v. 9 The Thankful Confidence & Joy of the Righteous v. 10

III. STRUCTURE: Lament over approaching assault (vv. 1-6), Confidence in God's Coming Deliverance (vv. 7-10)

A. The two halves of the poem are in some ways mirror opposites.

1. The first half opens with a call for help (vv. 1-2) while the final half closes with a cause for praise (vv. 9-10). Some even translate vv. 9-10 as commands where David is calling on others to thank the Lord.

2. The middle sub-sections of the poem describe attack (vv. 3-6) and counterattack (vv. 7-8).

B. There are many points of contact between the two halves of the psalm.

Verses 1-6	Verses 7-10
v. 2 "*those who do* iniquity"	v. 9 "the *work* of God"
v. 3 "their *tongue*"	v. 8 "their tongue"
v. 3 "their arrows"	v. 7 "His arrow"
v. 4 "Suddenly they shoot"	v. 7 "suddenly they will be wounded
v. 4 "they shoot"	v. 7 "God will shoot:
v. 4 "and do not fear"	v. 9 "All men will fear"
v. 5 "Who can see them?"	v. 8 "All who see them"
v. 6 "the heart of a man"	v. 10 "the upright of heart"

IV. NOTES & APPLICATION

A. The Theme of Hiding

1. David asks to be hidden from enemy plots (v. 2)

2. His enemies are making secretive plots (vv. 2, 4, 5)

3. David rejoices that the righteous will find refuge (v. 10)\

4. In the end the secret plots of the wicked (v. 5) will be exposed as evil failures (v. 8).

B. The Depths of Depravity

1. The threat David faces is not an unorganized frenzy but a highly organized mob, a cartel of powerful enemies (vv. 2, 6).

2. These are not accidental enemies but intentional opponents who are steeped in their commitment to evil (v. 6).

3. The depths of depravity are on horrid display when men use their God-given creative talents to hatch plans of deception and destruction.

C. The Certainty of Deliverance.

1. Most of the verbs in vv. 7-9 are forms normally translated as past tense.

2. Because of this, some commentators understand the second half of the psalm to have been written after God answer the prayer of vv. 1-6.

3. But there are times where past tense verbs are used in Hebrew to describe certainty about the future, and that seems to be the case here.

4. The verbs in v. 10 are not in the past tense, suggesting that we should read the second half of the poem as referring to a confident outcome.

5. We have a God who declares the end from the beginning. His final plan is as good as done in terms of its certainty—and that gives us hope!

D. God's Response

1. God's response to the enemy is a righteous and appropriate response. They are judged according to what they have done.

2. And yet God's power is not equal or less than theirs. He only needs one arrow (v. 7) to finish the whole battle.

3. Spurgeon, "They shoot, and shall be shot. A greater archer than they are shall take sure aim at their hearts. One of his arrows shall be enough, for he never misses his aim. The Lord turns the tables on his adversaries, and defeats them at their own weapons."

E. Reflection

1. The verb "consider" (v. 9) is a word for pondering and wise reflection.

2. They are beautifully reflected in the hymnist's words, "Ponder anew what the Almighty can do."