



GOD, MY EXCEEDING JOY

A JOYFUL JOURNEY THRU THE PSALMS

May 23, 2021 PM

Ps 59 – Deliverance in the Morning

PSALM 59
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PURPOSE: David pleads for God's deliverance from Saul's depraved attempt to snuff out his life. While his enemies look for opportunities to slay him, he looks to God to sustain him.

TYPE: Lament with Imprecations.
Author: David **Date:** c. 1013 BC
Setting: During Saul's early pursuit of David (1 Sam. 19:11)

HEADINGS		OPENING LAMENT: PETITION FOR PROTECTION FROM ENEMY ASSAULTS vv. 1-10			CONFIDENT PRAYER FOR ELIMINATION OF HIS ENEMIES STRENGTHENED PETITION: vv. 11-17		
Authorization Consigned to the Tabernacle Choir Director Musical Note <i>Al-Tasheth!</i> (lit., "Do Not Destroy") Song Type <i>Miktam</i> (Meditation? Inscription?) Author David Historical Setting Saul's Besieging of David's House (1 Sam. 19:11)	Plea for Deliverance from Enemies vv. 1-5 Four-Fold Initial Petition vv. 1-2 Two Requests for God's Saving Security v. 1 Two Requests for God's Just Protection v. 2 Complaint about Plots vv. 3-4 Unwarranted and Treacherous Assaults vv. 3-4a Plea for Quick Help v. 4b Concluding Petition for Strong Intervention v. 5 Appeal to God's Might v. 5a Prayer for Firm Judgment v. 5b [Selah]	Lament over the Dangerous Dogs vv. 6-7 INNER REFRAIN: The Arrival of His Wild-Dog Enemies v. 6 The Fearless Assault of Their Weaponized Words v. 7	Confidence in God's Protection vv. 8-10 Confidence in God's Own Confidence v. 8 MAIN REFRAIN: Promise to Trust vv. 9-10 Resolve to Watch for God v. 9-10a Confidence in Final Victory v. 10b	Prayer for Destruction of Enemies vv. 11-13 Prayer for Memorable Intervention vv. 11-12 Imprecation for Slow but Steady Overthrow v. 11 Justification of the Imprecation: The Enemies' Proud Words v. 12 Prayer for Thorough Judgment v. 13 Imprecation for Righteous Wrath v. 13a Justification of the Imprecation: The Glory of God's Reign v. 13b [Selah]	Lament for the Deprived Dogs vv. 14-15 INNER REFRAIN: The Arrival of His Wild-Dog Enemies v. 14 The Pitiful State of Their Failed Terror v. 15	Confidence in God's Protection vv. 16-17 Resolve to Praise God for Certain Deliverance v. 16 MAIN REFRAIN ADAPTED: Promise to Praise v. 17	

I. GENRE: Lament with Imprecations

- A. The strongest laments are in vv. 3-4, 6, & 14.
- B. The imprecations (prayers for judgment) begin in v. 5 but intensify in v. 11-13.
 1. David knew of Samuel's **prophetic** word that Saul would fall.
 2. David was careful never to lift a finger against Saul, and he left judgment in God's hands.
- C. The song includes strong statements of trust and several promises to trust and praise God (vv. 9, 16-17).

II. SETTING

- A. **AUTHOR:** David, part of a collection of his poems from Pss 51-70.
- B. **BACKGROUND:**
 1. The superscription places the events behind this song in **1 Sam 19:11-24**.
 - a. David was married to Saul's daughter, Michal, and Saul sent mercenaries to stake out the house to snuff out David. David was able to escape before the trap could be sprung.
 - b. This was Saul's 5th attempt on David's life since 1 Sam. 16:14.
 2. It is possible that David composed the song later after **reflecting** on that event, perhaps utilizing portions of prayer he prayed & sang at the time.

- a. Several places in the psalm refer to enemy nations (v. 5, 13).
- b. David may be describing Saul as an evil outsider who was a precursor to the enemies David would face for years to come.
- c. But David had also recently battled the Philistines (1 Sam 19:8), and they had been seeking his life ever since the Goliath episode (1 Sam 17).

C. PLACEMENT:

- 1. Pss 56-60 all contain the label “A Mikhtam,” (something like “inscription”) perhaps indicating a prayer letter to God.
- 2. Pss 57-59 all contain the heading “set to Al-Tashsheth,” (“Do Not Destroy”) which is either a tune name or a style of playing.
- 3. Ps 59 fits with Ps 58 in that enemies are described as dangerous **animals** (58:4, 6; 59:6, 14) who speak destructive evil (58:3-5; 59:3-4, 6-7, 14-15).
- 4. “Thirtle’s Theory” (named after James Thirtle) may apply here.
 - a. Thirtle argues that the copies of the Psalms confused the subscripts of some psalms with the superscripts of others.
 - b. In his view, statements about song types are subscripts, as clearly seen in the poem in Habakkuk 3.
 - c. If this is correct, then the first two headings to Psalm 60, “For the choir director; according to Shushan Eduth,” actually is the subscript to Psalm 59.
 - d. The term “Shushan Eduth” means “the lilies of the **covenant** or testimony,” and it could refer to the marriage covenant that Michal has with David.

III. STRUCTURE: Opening Lament (vv. 1-10), Strengthened Petition (11-17)

- A. This psalm contains a bit of intentional repetition, and there’s a general movement toward greater intensity and confidence.

- B. There are two sets of **refrains** in the poem.

- 1. An **inner** refrain (in the middle of sections) about David’s enemies being dangerous dogs (vv. 6, 14). These are both preceded by the musical term “Selah” used here as a minor breakpoint.
- 2. A **main** refrain at the end of vv. 9-10 and vv. 16-17.
 - a. The wording in vv. 9-10a and v. 17 is almost identical in Hebrew, being only perhaps one letter different.
 - b. Some versions translate these two refrains identically: NET, “You are my source of strength! I will sing praises to you! For God is my refuge, the God who loves me.”

IV. NOTES & APPLICATION

- A. The psalm is rich with wonderful word play in the Hebrew text.
 - 1. The words for the “**fierce** men” (e.g. mighty, v. 3) rhymes with the word for “my **strength**” (v. 10, 17).
 - 2. The enemies are sent to “watch” for David (heading), but David is determined to “watch” for God’s help (v. 9).
- B. David’s protesting his innocence (vv. 3-4) is not pride but an honest confession of his heart. Jonathan had vouched for him (1 Sam. 19:4).
- C. David’s enemies have heaped up trouble against him, but David heaps up his understanding of God’s attributes. See v. 5.
- D. V. 8 has 1 of 3 instances in the Pss where God **laughs** (Pss 2:4; 37:13).
 - 1. These are always laughs of derision, not pleasure.
 - 2. God is not sadistic but demonstrations of His ultimate control and the futility of waging war against His plan and purposes.
- E. The repeated references to strongholds all allude to high places. Enemies were mounting plans against him, but they were not high enough to pull him from God’s uplifting protection (v. 1).