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**Psalm 59: To the leader: Do Not Destroy. Of David. A Mitkam,
when Saul ordered his house to be watched in order to kill him.**

Walter E. Keller

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Psalm 59

To the leader: Do Not Destroy. Of David. A Mitkam, when Saul ordered his house to be watched in order to kill him.

(NRSV)

**¹ Deliver me from my enemies, O my God;
protect me from those who rise up against me.**

**² Deliver me from those who work evil;
from the bloodthirsty save me.**

**³ Even now they lie in wait for my life;
the mighty stir up strife against me.
For no transgression or sin of mine, O LORD,**

⁴ for no fault of mine, they run and make ready.

Rouse yourself, come to my help and see!

**⁵ You, LORD God of hosts, are God of Israel.
Awake to punish all the nations;
spare none of those who treacherously plot evil.**

Selah

**⁶ Each evening they come back,
howling like dogs
and prowling about the city.**

**⁷ There they are, bellowing with their mouths,
with sharp words^(a) on their lips—
for “Who,” they think,^(b) “will hear us?”**

**⁸ But you laugh at them, O LORD;
you hold all the nations in derision.**

**⁹ O my strength, I will watch for you;
for you, O God, are my fortress.**

**¹⁰ My God in his steadfast love will meet me;
my God will let me look in triumph on my enemies.**

**¹¹ Do not kill them, or my people may forget;
make them totter by your power, and bring them down,
O Lord, our shield.**

**¹² For the sin of their mouths, the words of their lips,
let them be trapped in their pride.
For the cursing and lies that they utter,**

**¹³ consume them in wrath;
consume them until they are no more.**

**Then it will be known to the ends of the earth
that God rules over Jacob.**

Selah

- 14 Each evening they come back,
howling like dogs
and prowling about the city.**
- 15 They roam about for food,
and growl if they do not get their fill.**
- 16 But I will sing of your might;
I will sing aloud of your steadfast love in the morning.
For you have been a fortress for me
and a refuge in the day of my distress.**
- 17 O my strength, I will sing praises to you,
for you, O God, are my fortress,
the God who shows me steadfast love.**

Footnotes:

- a. (v.7) Heb *with swords*
b. (v.7) Heb lacks *they think*

Psalm 59 is a personal lament beginning with a typical prayer for deliverance, and continues with faith that God, in his steadfast love and power will act on behalf of the Psalmist and the nation. The Psalm also contains the characteristic themes of imprecation and gratitude. Of special note is the repetition of thoughts and expressions (note especially verses 6 and 14, and verses 9-10 and 17).

This is another Psalm of David in which David appears as a prototype of Jesus who is also besieged by enemies who seek to kill him. We might think of Jesus praying this Psalm and asserting in verses 3c-4a that his suffering is an innocent suffering, as he does also in John 8:46, and as the Apostle Paul declares in 2 Corinthians 5:21. Such innocence makes of Jesus the Lamb of God who in his crucifixion takes away the sin of the world. In his ordeal, David looks to the LORD (verses 8-10); just so does Jesus in his ordeal entrust himself to the heavenly Father. It is easy to think of Jesus as praying verse 16: "I will sing of your might, O LORD, I will sing of your steadfast love (on Easter!) morning. For you have been a fortress for me and a refuge in the day of my distress."

Prayer to accompany Psalm 59:

Lord God of power, you rescued your Son from the grasp of evil powers.
Deliver us from evil and confirm our trust in you, so that with our rising we
may sing of your power and at dawn exult in your mercy; through your Son,
Jesus Christ out Lord. Amen.

Linger longer over verse 9:

**O my strength, I will watch for you;
for you, O God are my fortress.**