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Walter E. Keller

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## Psalm 60

**To the leader: according to the Lily of the Covenant. A Miktam of David; for instruction;  
when he struggled with Aram-naharaim and with Aram-zobah, and when Joab on his  
return killed twelve thousand Edomites in the Valley of Salt.**

(NRSV)

- 1 O God, you have rejected us, broken our defenses;  
you have been angry; now restore us!**
- 2 You have caused the land to quake; you have torn it open;  
repair the cracks in it, for it is tottering.**
- 3 You have made your people suffer hard things;  
you have given us wine to drink that made us reel.**
- 4 You have set up a banner for those who fear you,  
to rally to it out of bowshot. <sup>(a)</sup>**
- 5 Give victory with your right hand, and answer us, <sup>(b)</sup>  
so that those whom you love may be rescued.**
- 6 God has promised in his sanctuary: <sup>(c)</sup>  
“With exultation I will divide up Shechem,  
and portion out the Vale of Succoth.**
- 7 Gilead is mine, and Manasseh is mine;  
Ephraim is my helmet;  
Judah is my scepter.**
- 8 Moab is my washbasin;  
on Edom I hurl my shoe;  
over Philistia I shout in triumph.”**
- 9 Who will bring me to the fortified city?  
Who will lead me to Edom?**
- 10 Have you really rejected us, O God?  
Will you not go out, O God, with our armies?**
- 11 O grant us help against the foe,  
for human help is worthless.**
- 12 With God we shall do valiantly;  
it is he who will tread down our foes.**
- Selah**
- (Verse 10 as in TEV)

### Footnotes:

- a. (v.4) Gk Syr Jerome: Heb *because of the truth*  
b. (v.5) Another reading is *me*  
c. (v.6) Or *by his holiness*

**Psalm 60** is a lament after Israel has suffered a severe defeat in battle. The timing of the specific events inspiring this Psalm and opinions as to the date of its composition have been warmly debated. Views range from the time of David's reign to the period of the Maccabees in the second century B.C. The compiler of Psalm 108 quotes Psalm 60:6-12 as 108:7-13. Verses 1-4 poetically describe the condition of the nation, and verse 5 is a prayer for God's help. Verses 6-8 then give God's answer, in which he lays claim to sovereignty over all the surrounding nations. Verses 9-12 are the response of the king or his military commander, in which he prepares to go out once more against the foes of Israel with the help of God.

When we Christians pray this Psalm we might think especially of verses 11-12, as we do battle against our old evil Foe, the Devil. To use Luther's word, "With might of ours can naught be done, soon were our loss effected. But for us fights the Valiant One, Whom God himself elected. Ask ye 'Who is this?' Jesus Christ it is, Of Sabbath Lord, and there's none other God; He hold the field forever." (A Mighty Fortress is Our God, stanza 2)

**Prayer to accompany Psalm 60:**

Lord Jesus, you have overcome the world, and all power and authority is yours. When evil seems to triumph, give us courage and faith, and help us never to forget that you are with us to the end of time. To you be glory now and forever. Amen.