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## Psalm 64: To the leader. A Psalm of David.

Walter E. Keller

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**Psalm 64**  
**To the leader. A Psalm of David.**  
(NRSV)

- <sup>1</sup> Hear my voice, O God, in my complaint;  
preserve my life from the dread enemy.**
- <sup>2</sup> Hide me from the secret plots of the wicked,  
from the scheming of evildoers,**
- <sup>3</sup> who whet their tongues like swords,  
who aim bitter words like arrows,**
- <sup>4</sup> shooting from ambush at the blameless;  
they shoot suddenly and without fear.**
- <sup>5</sup> They hold fast to their evil purpose;  
they talk of laying snares secretly,  
thinking, “Who can see us?”<sup>(a)</sup>**
- <sup>6</sup> Who can search out our crimes?<sup>(b)</sup>  
We have thought out a cunningly conceived plot.”  
For the human heart and mind are deep.**
- <sup>7</sup> But God will shoot his arrow at them;  
they will be wounded suddenly.**
- <sup>8</sup> Because of their tongue he will bring them to ruin;<sup>(c)</sup>  
all who see them will shake with horror.**
- <sup>9</sup> Then everyone will fear;  
they will tell what God has brought about,  
and ponder what he has done.**
- <sup>10</sup> Let the righteous rejoice in the LORD  
and take refuge in him.  
Let all the upright in heart glory.**

**Footnotes:**

- a. (v.5) Syr: Heb *them*  
b. (v.6) Cn: Heb *They search out crimes*  
c. (v.8) Cn: Heb *They will bring him to ruin, their tongues being against them*

**Psalm 64** is a prayer for protection from enemies. It is the personal lament of one who is hard-pressed by enemies who imagine that no one, not even God, will discover their evil purposes. The Psalmist prays that God will preserve him from these secret plots of evil men (verse 2). These wicked evildoers are further described in verses 3-6, along with their feelings of impunity. But God

sees them and will not allow evil to continue perpetually. He will destroy such arrogant people and thereby inspire fear in the hearts of all who hear.

Some interpreters understand verses 7-9 to be a counter-curse uttered by the Psalmist. I believe it is preferable to understand these verses as the Psalmist's statement of assurance that the request of his prayers will be granted. Based on this confidence, the Psalmist calls on the righteous to rejoice in the LORD (verse 10).

Christians will think of the course of events that brought Jesus to trial and an innocent death, and how the Heavenly Father vindicates his crucified Son by raising him from the dead.

**Prayer to accompany Psalm 64:**

Heavenly Father, you gave your Son victory over those who plotted evil against him; when he cried to you in his agony, you delivered him from the fear of his enemies. May those who suffer with him in this life find refuge in you, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen