

Psalms 59:0 ¶ To the chief Musician, Altaschith, Michtam of David; when Saul sent, and they watched the house to kill him.

This is another psalm of David that he gave to the chief Musician for use at the tabernacle. After looking at the Hebrew, I believe the CJB gave the best explanation for “Altaschith,” that it was to be sung to the tune of “Do Not Destroy.” This must have been a popular tune since David chose it for three of his psalms (57-59) and Asaph for one (75). “Michtam” makes reference to a poem. David wrote this psalm in connection with the time Saul was watching his house for an opportunity to kill him (1Samuel 19).

Good summary from New Bible Commentary: “The background story in 1 Samuel 19:10-12 suggests a one night ambush at David’s house, but such a story is told only in its essentials and the whole period beginning at 1 Samuel 19:10 leaves plenty of time for the persistent threat of which the Psalm speaks (6, 14). At some point in his flight from Saul, David slipped through the watchers and home to Michal. Saul had to act with circumspection because of David’s popular repute but doubtless hoped at first to despatch David by unattributable murder. When David’s escape made this impossible, the ambush was set.”

Psalms 59:1 ¶ Deliver me from mine enemies, O my God: defend me from them that rise up against me.

Psalms 59:2 Deliver me from the workers of iniquity, and save me from bloody men.

Once again, David opens his psalm with a prayer asking God to deliver him from his enemies. He wants God’s protection from the bloodthirsty men that want to take his life.

The word “defend” in the Hebrew states to “set up (on high).” So, David is asking God to set him high above those that are rising up against him—to keep him out of their reach.

It is important to note throughout the psalms that David always references God in a personal way; he has invested in a relationship with God. He is not talking to a distant God that he only hopes can hear him. He knows that He can hear him, and he can depend upon Him to act on his behalf. He approaches God with an active and confident faith—just as we who have accepted Him as Savior should do today.

Hebrews 4:16 “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”

Psalms 59:3 For, lo, they lie in wait for my soul: the mighty are gathered against me; not for my transgression, nor for my sin, O Lord.

Psalms 59:4 They run and prepare themselves without *my* fault: awake to help me, and behold.

Psalms 59:5 Thou therefore, O Lord God of hosts, the God of Israel, awake to visit all the heathen: be not merciful to any wicked transgressors. Selah.

Saul's men are staked out watching for an opportunity to kill him, but not for anything that he has done wrong. They are trying to eliminate his perceived threat to Saul's throne. He begs God to help him and show no mercy to his enemies in the process.

Spurgeon: "Like wild beasts they crouched, and waited to make the fatal spring; but their victim used effectual means to baffle them, for he laid the matter before the Lord. While the enemy lies waiting in the posture of a beast, we wait before God in the posture of prayer, for God waits to be gracious to us and terrible towards our foes."

Selah – a pause, an opportunity for meditation

Psalms 59:6 They return at evening: they make a noise like a dog, and go round about the city.

Psalms 59:7 Behold, they belch out with their mouth: swords *are* in their lips: for who, say they, doth hear?

David compares the men hunting him to dangerous dogs on the prowl that roam about the city. They plot and make their plans thinking that no one is paying attention to them.

Psalms 59:8 ¶ But thou, O Lord, shalt laugh at them; thou shalt have all the heathen in derision.

Psalms 59:9 Because of his strength will I wait upon thee: for God *is* my defence.

Psalms 59:10 The God of my mercy shall prevent me: God shall let me see *my desire* upon mine enemies.

David is confident that God scorns these men of Israel as He does those of heathen nations that do not recognize Him as LORD. He looks to God as his strength and personal defender. He is confident that God in His mercy will go before him and give him victory over his enemies.

Psalms 59:11 Slay them not, lest my people forget: scatter them by thy power; and bring them down, O Lord our shield.

Psalms 59:12 For the sin of their mouth *and* the words of their lips let them even be taken in their pride: and for cursing and lying *which* they speak.

Psalms 59:13 Consume *them* in wrath, consume *them*, that they *may not be*: and let them know that God ruleth in Jacob unto the ends of the earth. Selah.

Interestingly, David does not call for God to kill his enemies at first. He wants God to bring them down in shame as a consequence of their wicked plots and lies. He wants them to serve as a witness to the power of God and His protection of David. In His time, David calls for God to then destroy his enemies in affirmation of the truth that God rules in Israel and to the ends of the earth.

Selah – a pause, an opportunity to meditate

Spurgeon: "Good cause there is for this rest, when a theme so wide and important is introduced. Solemn subjects ought not to be hurried over; nor should the condition of

the heart while contemplating themes so high be a matter of indifference. Reader, bethink thee. Sit thou awhile and consider the ways of God with men.”

Psalms 59:14 And at evening let them return; *and* let them make a noise like a dog, and go round about the city.

Psalms 59:15 Let them wander up and down for meat, and grudge if they be not satisfied.

David reiterates how his enemies are like dangerous prowling dogs that return at night seeking their victim but are continually thwarted.

Psalms 59:16 But I will sing of thy power; yea, I will sing aloud of thy mercy in the morning: for thou hast been my defence and refuge in the day of my trouble.

Psalms 59:17 Unto thee, O my strength, will I sing: for God *is* my defence, *and* the God of my mercy.

David closes his psalm with a commitment to sing praise to God for His power and mercy. He is so grateful for God’s protection and deliverance during his time of trouble. He wants to show his gratitude for God’s mercy and favor.

Another good thought from Spurgeon: “The greater our present trials the louder will our future songs be, and the more intense our joyful gratitude. Had we no day of trouble, where were our season of retrospective thanksgiving?”