

Psalm 64

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.

Psalm 64: The psalm is a prayer that the vicious plots of wicked men against the righteous might fail. The psalm may be divided into two parts: a petition against the devices of the wicked (verses 1-6), and an expression of the certainty of divine retribution (verses 7-10).

Verses 1-10: This psalm begins with a vivid description of the devious ways of the wicked, especially their speech (verses 3-5, 8). Still, the psalmist does not fear that God will lose control of the situation. After seeing His justice at work, the righteous will be glad and trust all the more in Him (64:10).

- I. The Malevolent Ingenuity of the Wicked (64:1-6).
- II. The Memorable Reciprocation by the Lord (64:7-10).

Verses 1-6: The psalmist earnestly begs of God to preserve him from disquieting fear. The tongue is a little member, but it boasts great things. The upright man is the mark at which the wicked aim, they cannot speak peaceably either of him or to him. There is no guard against a false tongue. It is bad to do wrong, but worse to encourage ourselves and one another in it. It is a sign that the heart is hardened to the greatest degree, when it is thus fully set to do evil. A practical disbelief of God's knowledge of all things, is at the bottom of every wickedness. The benefit of a good cause and a good conscience, appears most when nothing can help a man against his enemies, save God alone, who is always a present help.

In contrast to the long, laborious scheming of the “enemy”, God’s judgment is swift and appropriate. He frustrates their plans and uses their weapons against them, the “arrows”, the attack that comes “suddenly”, and their own sharp “tongue”.

Psalm 64:1 "Hear my voice, O God, in my prayer: preserve my life from fear of the enemy."

“Preserve my life from fear”: The psalmist recognized that the fear of an enemy can be as destructive as an actual assault.

God hears our prayer many times, even before we utter it aloud. He even knows the thoughts of our heart. Our prayers are symbolized by the rising of the smoke from the burning on the altar of the oil. No prayer that is in earnest fails to rise to the throne of God. We must not pray amiss, but pray in the will of God. We are the salt of the earth, Christians. Our prayers must keep us in such close contact with God, that we will preserve the earth with our prayers. Fear is lack of faith. Christians should not fear the things of this earth. Our enemy should not be the subject of our fear. The only fear, that is permissible by God, is fear of the Lord.

Psalm 64:2 "Hide me from the secret counsel of the wicked; from the insurrection of the workers of iniquity:"

The word used denotes both the place where wicked men meet together for consultation (see Genesis 49:6). And the counsel itself they there take; from the bad effects of which the psalmist desired to be hid and preserved. So Saul and his courtiers secretly took counsel against David, and the Jews against Christ, and that very privily and secretly (see Matt. 26:3).

"From the insurrection of the workers of iniquity": Their noise, rage, and tumult (see Psalm 2:1). The former phrase denotes their secret machinations and designs, and this their open violence. And the persons that entered into such measures are no other than evildoers and workers of iniquity. Though they might be under a profession of religion, as David's enemies, and the Jews, who were Christ's enemies, were (Matt. 7:22). And who are further described in the next verses.

David is facing much of what the Lord Jesus faced. The counsel (in secret), met to see if they could do away with Jesus. The word that insurrection was translated from means a tumultuous crowd. The workers of iniquity were after David to destroy him. We also see in this, that the tumultuous crowd was out to destroy Jesus. Even though Jesus was innocent of any wrong doing, they cried for Jesus to be crucified.

Psalm 64:3 "Who whet their tongue like a sword, [and] bend [their bows to shoot] their arrows, [even] bitter words:"

“Whet their tongue”: Their intent was to slander with their speech (compare Psalm 59:7).

This is another prophetic Scripture about Jesus. Notice the tongue they whet is like a sword, it is not a sword. The sword symbolizes the Word of God. They are pretending that the Word of God is why they are coming against Jesus, when in fact, it is not the Word at all. The Word of God should have told them exactly who Jesus was. They shot their bitter words at Jesus. They even accused the very Son of God of blasphemy. What boldness they had against God the Word!

Psalm 64:4 "That they may shoot in secret at the perfect: suddenly do they shoot at him, and fear not."

From an unobserved quarter; from a place where they are so concealed that it cannot be known where the arrows come from. There was a purpose to ruin him, and at the same time to conceal themselves, or not to let him know from what source the ruin came. It was not an open and manly fight, where he could see his enemy, but it was a warfare with a concealed foe. “In secret”: Anonymously.

"At the perfect": At the upright; at one who is perfect so far as his treatment of them is concerned (compare Psalm 18:20 and 18:23 notes).

"Suddenly do they shoot at him": At an unexpected time, and from an unlooked-for quarter. They accomplish what they intended; they carry out their design.

"And fear not": They feel confident that they are not known, and that they will not be detected. They have no fear of God or man (compare Psalm 55:19).

We know for sure this is speaking of Jesus, because it says the perfect. No one ever lived on this earth perfect, except Jesus Christ. It is amazing to me, how they could say these things to the Son of God, and not fear what might happen to them. Jesus is the Judge of all the world, and they will have to stand before Him and give an account. How could they not fear? I really believe, toward the end of Jesus' earthly ministry, that they knew who He was. They were just afraid of losing their hold over the people to Him, if they admitted that He was truly the Messiah. What a very foolish thing to do. They wanted world power so much, that they gave up any chance of eternal life.

Psalm 64:5 "They encourage themselves [in] an evil matter: they commune of laying snares privily; they say, Who shall see them?"

"Who shall see them"? This was a question of brazen autonomy. They mock the omniscience of God (compare Psalm 59:7).

We know that they sent spies to search out Jesus and try to find anything that they might accuse him of. I believe in this verse, that David is speaking of his enemies laying traps for him, and all of them getting together and trying to destroy him. It also is speaking of the conspiracy going on between the scribes and the Pharisees against Jesus. Those, who never had been in agreement before on anything, worked together as if they were friends to try to destroy the Lord Jesus.

Psalm 64:6 "They search out iniquities; they accomplish a diligent search: both the inward [thought] of every one [of them], and the heart, [is] deep."

"Inward thought ... heart ... deep": The evil intent of the unrighteous flows from inward depravity.

This again, is not just David's enemies seeking ways to find him guilty, but this is speaking of the enemies of the Lord. I always love it, when Jesus would trap them by answering their questions with a question, that was impossible to answer without getting themselves in trouble. They even tried to accuse the Lord for healing on the sabbath. The amazing and wonderful thing to me, was that they could not trap Jesus. They always got caught in their own trap. Every thought they had, day and night, was on how to trap Him. But they could not, until it was the right time for His purpose.

Verses 7-10: When God brings upon men the mischiefs they have desired on others; it is weight enough to sink a man to the lowest hell. Those who love cursing, it shall come upon them. Those who behold this shall understand, and observe God's hand in all. Unless we do so, we are not likely to profit by the dispensations of Providence. The righteous shall be glad in the Lord; not glad of the misery and ruin of their fellow-creatures. But glad that God is glorified, and his word fulfilled, and the cause of injured innocence pleaded effectually. They rejoice not in men, nor in themselves, nor in any creature, or creature enjoyments. Nor in their wisdom, strength, riches, or righteousness. But in Christ, in whom all the seed of Israel are justified and glory, and in what he is to them, and has done for them.

Psalm 64:7 "But God shall shoot at them [with] an arrow; suddenly shall they be wounded."

God shall shoot ... arrow": The arrows of God, as Old Testament history demonstrates, include natural judgments such as deadly disease, defeat, and calamity.

Can you imagine how those, who slapped Jesus and spit upon Him, and even the ones who nailed Him to the cross, felt when the sun became dark in the middle of the day and the earth became to tremble? I am sure that a dart of pain ran through their heart, knowing they had crucified the Son of God. Some of them said; surely this was the Son of God.

Psalm 64:8 "So they shall make their own tongue to fall upon themselves: all that see them shall flee away."

"Own tongue ... fall": God providentially steers the plots of the wicked to their own demise.

They may flee, but there is nowhere to run to get away from God. At this point, they probably wished they had cut their tongues out before it could say these things about the Son of God. Now, no one wants to be associated with them.

Psalm 64:9 "And all men shall fear, and shall declare the work of God; for they shall wisely consider of his doing."

"Shall declare": Believers should glorify God, not only for His love and mercy, but also for His marvelous acts of judgment on the wicked.

On this earth these men had boldly come against the Son of God, but there is coming a day, when they shall have to stand before Him in judgement, and then they will be terrified. All wise people fear God. When we think of His perfection in comparison to our shortcomings, it is enough to cause fear. There is coming a time when all will bow before the Lord.

Philippians 2:10-11 "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of [things] in heaven, and [things] in earth, and [things] under the earth;" "And [that] every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ [is] Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Psalm 64:10 "The righteous shall be glad in the LORD, and shall trust in him; and all the upright in heart shall glory."

They rejoice at the vengeance executed on the wicked; but then their joy centers in the Lord. It is not at the ruin of the wicked, simply considered, but because of the glory of God's justice displayed therein, and of his grace and mercy to them. They rejoice in the Lord, because of what he is unto them, and because of what he has done for them. Because of his righteousness they are clothed with, from whence they are denominated righteous ones. And because of the salvation he has wrought out for them. And they are the more affected with it when they see the calamities, woes, and destruction of wicked men (see notes on Psalm 32:11).

"And shall trust in him": Who is known by his judgments he executes on the wicked. And the more he is known, be it in what way it will, the more is he trusted in (Psalm 9:10). The Targum paraphrases it, "and shall trust in his Word;" either in his word of promise, or rather in his essential Word, Christ.

"And all the upright in heart shall glory": Not in men, nor in themselves, nor in any creature, or creature enjoyments. Nor in their wisdom, strength, riches, nor righteousness; but in Christ, in his wisdom, righteousness, and strength. In whom all the seed of Israel are justified and glory. And in what he is to them, and has done for them; of the upright in heart (see notes on Psalm 32:11).

Who are the righteous? Those who have repented of their sins and been washed in the blood of the Lamb. There is no greater joy than to know that you are in right standing with the Lord. The victory for each of us was won on the cross by Jesus, but the glorious day of rewards will be that day when God accepts us into His household, and we are accepted in heaven. The glory of the saints is their everlasting life with Jesus.

Psalm 64 Questions

1. When does God hear our prayer?
2. Who is the salt of the earth?
3. What is fear?
4. What is the only permissible fear?
5. How does verse 2 relate to Jesus?
6. What does the word, that insurrection was translated from, mean?
7. Even though Jesus was innocent of any wrong doing, they cried to do what to Jesus?
8. What should we notice about the tongue in verse 3?
9. What does the sword symbolize?
10. What was the worst thing these evil people accused Jesus of?
11. What should the Word of God have told them?
12. What one word, in verse 4, lets us know for sure that this is speaking of Jesus?
13. Who is the Judge of all the world?
14. When does the author believe that those in the temple actually knew who Jesus was?

15. They wanted _____ so much that they gave up any chance of eternal life.
16. Why did they send spies to check on Jesus?
17. What was unusual about the scribes and Pharisees being together on the plot?
18. What does the author love about the answers the Lord gave to these who were trying to trap Him?
19. When was the only time they could catch Jesus?
20. What do you think these accusers thought, when the darkness came in the middle of the day, and the earth began to shake?
21. What did some of them say at this time?
22. What do they wish they had done, so they could not have accused the Lord?
23. How will they feel, when they must stand before Jesus in judgement?
24. Who shall be glad in the Lord?
25. Who are the righteous?
26. When was the victory for each of us won?