

Series: Psalm
Title: The Banner Displayed
Text: Ps 60: 1-12
Date: April 2, 2020
Place: SGBC, NJ

Psalm 60: 1: «To the chief Musician upon Shushaneduth, Michtam of David, to teach; when he strove with Aramnaharaim and with Aramzobah, when Joab returned, and smote of Edom in the valley of salt twelve thousand. »

This golden Psalm of David is to teach. It is to teach us that God has given his saints “a banner.” A banner is a flag, an ensign. This banner is to be displayed. We read in verse 4, “*Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth. Selah.*” Our banner is Jehovah Nissi—the Lord our Banner, our Lord Jesus Christ (Ex 18: 15). God has given us Christ to be our Banner to be displayed or lifted up before all like as a flag is raised that his people might look to Christ alone. Why? The last part of verse 11 give the reason, “*vain is the help of man. Through God we shall do valiantly: for he it is that shall tread down our enemies.*”

David wrote this Psalm in the midst of war—“*When he strove with Aramnaharaim and with Aramzobah, when returned, and smote of Edom in the valley of salt twelve thousand.*” David won that battle, not Saul. It typified Christ winning the victory for his people, apart from our works. Christ accomplished the warfare for his people, not sinful man, not we ourselves. That is what this Psalm teaches us.

Subject: The Banner Displayed

Proposition: This Psalm teaches that Christ our Banner must be lifted up that we might look to him to win the victory for us.

Divisions: 1) It is vain to trust in man 2) Christ is our Banner by whom we are saved 3) When God makes us look to Christ our Banner then we triumph valiantly

IT IS VAIN TO TRUST IN MAN

Psalm 60: 1: O God, thou hast cast us off, thou hast scattered us, thou hast been displeased; O turn thyself to us again. 2: Thou hast made the earth to tremble; thou hast broken it: heal the breaches thereof; for it shaketh. 3: Thou hast shewed thy people hard things: thou hast made us to drink the wine of astonishment.

Saul was king prior to David. He was a sinner who trusted himself. Therefore, in Saul we see a representation of any sinner who trusts himself rather than Christ. In Saul, God teaches us that it is vain to trust in man. While Saul reigned as king, God worked against the children of Israel. God made the children of Israel to suffer defeat and division. That is a very important doctrine vital to salvation. We must understand this; we must believe it about ourselves. As long as our sinful, God-hating flesh reigns over us making us look to man rather than Christ, God shall work against us and we shall suffer defeat and division in everything we do.

In our Warfare

One, we see it is vain to trust in man in the battles they fought. Under King Saul they looked to man to win their battles and their wars. They looked to the strength of their armies and the cunning of their generals. Therefore, God made the children of Israel suffer defeat in war—“*O God, thou hast cast us off, thou hast scattered us, thou hast been displeased.*”

When God’s people look to Christ, we win the battle by Christ. On one occasion when the children of Judah were preparing to go into battle under king Jehoshaphat, God sent a word to them, “And he said, Harken ye, all Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, and thou king Jehoshaphat, Thus saith the LORD unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God’s” (2 Chr 20:15). Of course, they won the battle.

But when Saul and his men looked to themselves, God did not go out to war with them. Therefore, the result was defeat. That is what he means by saying, “*O God, thou hast cast us off.*” In verse 10, he speaks of “*God, which hadst cast us off.*” How did God cast them off? “*Thou, O God, which didst not go out with our armies?*”

Brethren, we cannot defeat earthly enemies except by Christ. Then certainly, we cannot defeat our great enemies such as satan, sin, our sin-nature, death and hell. It is vain to trust in man! We must believe on Christ! Only Christ defeats the enemies of his people.

In Creating Unity

Two, we see it is vain to trust man to create unity or to reconcile ourselves to God when we the division they suffered under the reign of king Saul. Since they looked to man, God caused Israel to suffer division amongst themselves in their own kingdom. He speaks of it symbolically as an earthquake—“*Thou hast made the earth to tremble; thou hast broken it.*”

We are sinners. Our sins have separated us from God. Therefore we cannot create unity between us and God. We cannot reconcile ourselves to God apart from Christ. If we cannot create spiritual unity between one another then we certainly cannot create unity with God. Only Christ can reconcile us to God and bring us into union.

Look at this personally. When two sinners are divided there is one reason, they are trusting in themselves. If a believer trusts Christ to make our brethren stand—to teach them, correct them, make them submit to Christ—then Christ will produce unity between us and our brethren. As the apostle Paul said, “Who art thou that judgest another man’s servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand” (Rom 14:4). But if one brother accuses another, condemns him, forsakes him then it is the sure result of trusting himself; he is trusting his own self-righteousness, trusting his own wisdom, looking to himself to be his brother’s judge. It is sinful pride! Therefore, God will not create unity by it. When we look to ourselves we create division because we are not trusting Christ and it does not glorify God. So knowing that Christ alone reconciles sinners to one another, we can be certain that Christ alone is able to reconcile sinners to God.

In Learning from God’s Providence

Under Saul’s dominion, God made the children of Israel see hard things. God brought them to stagger as drunk men in that they knew not what to do about the problems God brought them into—*“Thou hast shewed thy people hard things: thou hast made us to drink the wine of astonishment.”*

Brethren, does that sound familiar? We talk about God’s timeliness in bringing portions of scripture that apply to our lives right now. Do we not see God’s timeliness in bringing us to this portion of scripture as we see face the hard things God has set before us in the world today? This is exactly what God has done in sending this pestilence we call the coronavirus.

God has shown us *hard things*: people are dying; the economy is failing; unemployment is at an all-time high. God has made *the earth tremble*: nations and governments are divided; political parties are divided more than ever; God has made an earthquake of division the world over. In it all God has *made us drink the wine of astonishment*: political leaders, physicians, economists, everyone is staggering about as drunk men having no idea what to do about these problems.

What caused God to send this virus and make the world drink this wine of astonishment? We have trusted man rather than God. It is vain to trust man’s strength rather than Christ our Strength. Yet, we see men continuing to look to man’s strength. That is what we do when we look to government to save us from this judgment of God. It is trusting man when so many blame this party and that party. It is no different than trusting our works to save us from our sins.

It is vain to trust man’s wisdom rather than Christ our Wisdom. Yet, that is what we see men continue to do. It is leaning to our own understanding to try to understand this pestilence apart from God’s word. It is trusting our own wisdom when we give our opinions or chalking this up as some big conspiracy overblown by the media. **THIS IS GOD’S JUDGMENT! WE SHOULD TAKE IT SERIOUSLY!** But to look to our wisdom concerning this virus is no different than trusting our Wisdom to save us from our sins.

Yet, we see our total depravity. God sent this judgment upon us in the first place because men are trusting man rather than God. Yet, in the midst of this judgement man continues to look to man to save ourselves from it rather than to God. That is total depravity in action!

CHRIST IS THE BANNER BY WHOM GOD’S PEOPLE ARE SAVED

Psalm 60: 4: Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth. Selah. 5: That thy beloved may be delivered; save *with thy right hand*, and hear me. 6: God hath spoken in his holiness; I will rejoice, I will divide Shechem, and mete out the valley of Succoth. 7: Gilead *is mine*, and Manasseh *is mine*; Ephraim also *is the strength of mine head*; Judah *is my lawgiver*; 8: Moab *is my washpot*; over Edom will I cast out my shoe: Philistia, triumph thou because of me. 9: Who will bring me *into the strong city*? who will lead me into Edom? 10: *Wilt not thou, O God, which hadst cast us off?* and *thou, O God, which didst not go out with our armies?*

God raised up David as king over Israel so that they fought under his banner rather than Saul’s. Doing so they prospered. In that we see typified Christ our King under whose banner every believer fights the good fight of faith rather than under the banner of our sinful flesh.

God Gave Us our Banner

“Thou hast given a banner.” God gave his only begotten Son. For you and me who God has turned from sin and self, Christ is our King. We fight under Jehovan Nissi, the Lord our Banner. God gave us our Banner by sovereign and free grace.

God did not give this Banner to everyone, only *“to them that fear thee.”* It is not that God gave us Christ because we first feared him. We fear him because God first gave us Christ. We love him because he first loved us. He spread his Banner of love over us (Song 2:4). That is why we fear God.

God gave the Banner *“that it might be displayed.”* He gave us Christ that in the preaching of the gospel we might raise up Christ before all like a flag is raised up. God gave us our Banner to be displayed. His people do not hide our Banner by taking the offense out of the cross. God gave us Christ to be displayed in truth in the preaching of the gospel, offense and all! And God gave us this Banner for each believer to display to one another, to turn each other to Christ from our flesh in all our times of need.

God gave us this Banner *“because of the truth.”* It is because God saves only by the Truth. It is because God defeats our enemies only by the Truth. It is because Christ is the Truth! The oldest translations read *“to flee from the bow.”* The Philistines are listed here as the great enemies of Israel. They were masters at archery. The Philistines could shoot a bow with the left and right hand. God gave a banner to the children of Israel that the soldiers might see the ensign and flee to the banner from the enemy. It typifies how Christ exalted in the preaching of the gospel is the one weapon in our warfare.

2 Corinthians 10: 3: For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: 4: (For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) 5: Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

Consider How and For What Reason a Flag was Used on the Battlefield

We do not use an ensign now as they once used it during a battle. It once served as a weapon. In fact a banner was the most important weapon of all on the battlefield. How so?

One, in the confusion of war, the soldiers saw the banner raised on high and rallied to it. They united beneath it. Christ is exalted in the preaching of the gospel that God might draw his people to Christ out of this world and unite us with our brethren. We need Christ our Banner to be raised on high right now more than ever! Believer look to Christ away from this world right now!

Two, the banner helped soldiers get their bearings. By looking to the banner they knew where they were and where they should go on the battlefield. As we hear Christ exalted in the gospel we get our bearings in this crazy world. Christ is our guide. We hear him amidst all the voices arguing in this world. Christ commands us to be always *“casting all your care on him for he careth for you”* (1 Pet 5:7).

Three, a sight of their flag instilled strengthened in the soldiers so that they could fight and defeat their enemies. Remember, when Moses held up the rod? The LORD fought for Israel and prevailed against the Amalekites. But when the rod came down, the enemy prevailed. As Christ is exalted in the gospel Christ is our Strength. He fights for us. Christ defeats our enemies within and without. As we hear the news report in our day, we become filled with doubts and fears. But as we behold Christ exalted in the preaching of the gospel Christ removes our doubts and fears. He assures us in heart that the battle is not ours but his! *“We are more than conquerors through him that loved us”* (Rom 8:37).

Fourthly, the banner intimidated the enemy by showing that Israel was still in the fight. Believer Satan and all our enemies are afraid of Christ. The apostle Peter said, *“Who resist steadfast in the faith”* (1 Pet 5: 9). Flee to Christ and the devil will flee from us.

Fifthly, the banner was raised as a declaration of victory. As Christ is exalted in the gospel we are reminded that the victory has already been won. Christ has accomplished our warfare. The Lord has rewarded his people double for all our sins. By Christ we have free justification from all our sins; redemption from the curse of the law; eternal life so that we can never again be lost. Christ is the Captain of our Warfare! (Is 40: 1-2)

Brethren, in the midst of the confusion in this world right now, look up to Christ our Banner, flee from carnal weapons, flee from our own vain flesh, flee to Christ our Banner.

How Does God Do This For Us as our Banner is Exalted?

As our Banner is exalted Christ intercedes with the Father for each of his redeemed. Christ says to the Father, *“That thy beloved may be delivered; save with thy right hand, and hear me.”* Christ is God’s beloved and all his elect are beloved in him. Therefore, Christ pleads God’s own love. He pleads God’s glory—*“save with thy right hand, and hear me.”* God’s right hand is Christ our King. Therefore, Christ pleads his own righteousness by which we are made the righteousness of God in him. Christ pleads his own blood by which are sins are put away. And God always hears his Son and delights in him.

Then Christ, being the Mediator, comes to us to give us a word from the Father that we might be comforted. Christ says to us, *“God hath spoken in his holiness; I will rejoice.”* God’s promise to David is a type of God’s promise to Christ. God said, *“Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David”* (Ps 89:35). God will not lie to Christ his Son. He has sworn by himself—*by his holiness*—because he can swear by no greater. Since this is God’s covenant promise to Christ, this is God’s covenant promise to all his elect in Christ. Since this is Christ’s rejoicing, this every believer’s rejoicing in Christ

2 Corinthians 1:20: For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.

Christ declares to every believer what God the Father promises Christ: that all who Christ redeemed are his and all shall be called out of this world to faith in Christ—*“I will divide Shechem, and mete out the valley of Succoth. Gilead is mine, and Manasseh is mine; Ephraim also is the strength of mine head; Judah is my lawgiver.”* Under Saul these were all divided by the symbolical earthquake caused by man’s vain way. Now, Shechem on the west, Succoth on the east of Jordan, Gilead and Manasseh on the east and Ephraim and Judah on the west are all united. Man’s way divides. But in Christ there is no separation, only unity. Christ shall call all his elect, Jew and Gentile and make us one.

Also, Christ declares to us that all our enemies are conquered and serving his purpose. The Gentiles here stand for all our enemies. He speaks of Israel's three worst enemies to show us all our worst enemies are conquered—*"Moab is my washpot; over Edom will I cast out my shoe: Philistia, triumph thou because of me. Who will bring me into the strong city? who will lead me into Edom? Wilt not thou, O God, which hadst cast us off? and thou, O God, which didst not go out with our armies?"* Brethren, as assuredly as God cast us off those who trust in man, God shall save all who trust his Son. The battle is not yours but God's! Did God go with David and give him the victory? Yes, indeed!

1 Chronicles 18: 1: Now after this it came to pass, that David smote the Philistines,...2: And he smote Moab; and the Moabites became David's servants, *and* brought gifts...5: And...David slew of the Syrians two and twenty thousand men. 6:...the Syrians became David's servants, *and* brought gifts. Thus the LORD preserved David whithersoever he went.

David pictures Christ.

Isaiah 63:1: Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.

Brethren, Christ has conquered our enemies. When David conquered those enemies he brought all their weapons, their gold and their silver to Jerusalem to be used by his people in the worship of God. Christ says to you and me, *"Moab is my washpot."* Even the vessels of dishonor, the non-elect reprobate, have been conquered by Christ. He is using them serve him in accomplishing his purpose of calling out and preserving his elect.

Psalms 2: 1: Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?...6: Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. 7: I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou *art* my Son; this day have I begotten thee. 8: Ask of me, and I shall give *thee* the heathen *for* thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth *for* thy possession. 9: Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

But even amongst the Gentiles, God shall save all his elect. For example, Ruth was a Moabite. All of us who Christ's saves were enemies in our minds by wicked works. But Christ reconciled us to God even when we were enemies. Being then reconciled friends to God, we can be certain Christ shall save us (Rom 5: 6-11).

LOOK TO CHRIST AND TRIUMPH

Psalm 60: 11: Give us help from trouble: for vain is the help of man. 12: Through God we shall do valiantly: for he *it is that shall tread down our enemies.*

When the Spirit of God exalts Christ in our hearts, bringing us to look to our Banner, we cry out to him for salvation as we repent from ourselves—*"Give us help from trouble: for vain is the help of man."* We hear our cry back up in verses 1 & 2, *"O God, thou hast cast us off, thou hast scattered us, thou hast been displeased; O turn thyself to us again. 2: Thou hast made the earth to tremble; thou hast broken it: heal the breaches thereof; for it shaketh."*

Brethren, Christ alone is the great Healer, the Repairer of the Breach. There is no remedy but by returning to the Lord with repentance, faith, and prayer beseeching him to return to us. If we can do so by God's grace then God has already brought us under Christ our Banner to trust Christ alone. And when the Spirit of God turns us from ourselves and from man to Christ our King, as we go forth fighting under his banner—*"Through God we shall do valiantly: for he it is that shall tread down our enemies."*

So, believer, let's hear God! The teaching of this Psalm is that all things are Christ's. He has conquered all. He shall call out all his elect and unites us in him. He shall use even the reprobate to do it. So, believer, having Christ, all things are yours. Therefore, in the midst of this world today, God says to us,

1 Corinthians 3: 21: Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours; 22: Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; 23: And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's.

Amen!