

December 14 Su Reading A348 — Psalm 60, 75 — Wine of Judgment

Audio: [Psa. 60](#), [Psa. 75](#)

**Feelings or Faith?** — In these psalms, wine is used as a symbol of judgment. Psalm 60 sees Israel as God's nation that did not feel God's presence. They felt that He had rejected them (vv. 1, 10) and had given "*wine to drink that made us stagger*" (v. 3). They recognized that God was their only hope, not their own strength, so they prayed, "*Oh, grant us help against the foe, for vain is the salvation of man!*" (v. 11). Psalm 75 is a song of praise and thanksgiving for the promise God made for judgment against Israel's foes, pictured again as a cup of wine: "*For in the hand of the LORD there is a cup with foaming wine, well mixed, and he pours out from it, and all the wicked of the earth shall drain it down to the dregs*" (v. 8). Israel struggled with how abandoned they felt, but they rejoiced in the trust they had in what God was going to do for them. The former was based on feelings, and the latter was based on faith. May we walk in positive faith today instead of being dragged down by negative feelings!

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December 15 M Reading A349 — 2 Samuel 10 — Ammon Rises Up I

Audio: [2 Samuel 10 \(ESV\)](#)

**Escalation** — Why did Israel's kingdom under David expand so far north of the boundaries of the Promised Land? It wasn't because David was hungry for growth. Rather, it was because Israel's enemies picked fights with God's people and were soundly defeated. God was protecting His people. It all started with the foolish action of the new king of Ammon, east of Israel (part of current Jordan). The Ammonites were descendants of one of Lot's two sons and were protected by God when Israel approached to occupy the Promised Land. David's intentions were good, as he sent official comforters to young King Hanun, who responded by cutting off half the beards and robes of David's messengers (v. 4). He turned a kind gesture into a tragic war, escalating the conflict by hiring 33,000 Syrian (Aramean) soldiers from the far north to help him (v. 6). Bad choice; big loss. The defeated Syrians then foolishly decided to escalate the conflict by gathering even more Syrians to fight against Israel, which resulted in their defeat and losing over 40,000 of their soldiers, so that "*they made peace with Israel and became subject to them*" (v. 19). It was the enemy's escalation that ended in Israel's expansion.

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December 16 Tu Reading A350 — 1 Chron. 19, Ps. 20 — Trust in Yahweh

Audio: [1 Chron. 19](#), [Psa. 20](#)

**Trusting in Trouble** — What we read yesterday about Israel's defeat of the Syrians is basically repeated in today's reading of 1 Chronicles 19, so these comments will give attention only to Psalm 20. It is fitting to be read here because it calls on God to "*save the king!*" (v. 9), which He certainly did during the attacks on Israel by the Ammonites and Syrians. Variations of the Hebrew word for "save" appear several times in this psalm. Speaking of the king, the people declared that "*we shout for joy over your salvation ... the LORD saves his anointed [the king] ... with the saving might of his right hand*" (vv. 5-6, emphasis added). Israel's victories were accomplished only by the willing and saving power of God. That is true for us as well. We don't "*trust in chariots and ... horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God*" (v. 7). When you face a difficult task today, turn to God in prayer, ask Him to help you, trust Him to do it, look for His answer, and praise Him for it!

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**The Hope of All the Earth** — Both of these psalms are concerned with the need of the whole world to recognize the one true God and to come to Him. Psalm 65 says to God, “*to you shall all flesh come*” (v. 2), who is “*the hope of all the ends of the earth*” (v. 5). It also declares that “*the ends of the earth are in awe at your signs*” (v. 8). One of those signs is the way the Creator cares for the earth He has made, watering it and producing food as the plants grow. Psalm 67 is even more expressive of the desire for “*the peoples*” or “*the nations*” (the Gentiles) to know God. This same verse is repeated for emphasis: “*Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you!*” (vv. 3, 5). The psalm ends with the great purpose of Israel and of us, which is to evangelize throughout the whole world: “*let all the ends of the earth fear him!*” (v. 7).

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**Blameless** — In both of these psalms, David calls to God for help and anticipates praise when He answers. Parts of Psalm 69 are quoted five times in the New Testament, mostly regarding the undeserved treatment of Jesus. One verse especially stood out to me in pointing out how important my conduct is to others. David prayed, “*Let not those who hope in you be put to shame through me, O Lord GOD of hosts; let not those who seek you be brought to dishonor through me, O God of Israel*” (Ps. 69:6). All Christians sin at times, but it negatively affects others as well as us. Other believers can “*be put to shame through me ... [and] brought to dishonor through me.*” That should cause us to be more careful in our daily walk with God, trying to sin less because of its influence on others. How many times have you heard unbelievers refer to Christians as being hypocrites? They do that because they have observed bad attitudes and sins of Christians. They bring “*shame*” and “*dishonor*” on the whole body of Christ. Let us endeavor to “*be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world*” (Phil. 2:15).

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**Sin's Cover Up** — There are so many things wrong in this story of David and Bathsheba. Something was wrong from the opening statement that “*when kings go out to battle ... David remained at Jerusalem*” (2 Sam. 11:1). David seemed to be lax in his duty here. He was also lax in his morals, beginning with not guarding his eyes from temptation. That led to coveting and then to adultery. Other people became aware of his sin with Bathsheba—one person told David her name (v. 3) and another was sent by her to tell David that she was pregnant (v. 5). Joab also became involved as he agreed to participate in the murder of Uriah that was suggested by David (v. 15). It became a multiple murder, since also “*some of the king's servants are dead, and your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also*” (v. 24). The coverup added to the sins of adultery and murder. Sin often leads to further sin and worse sin. This chapter ends with its single mention of God: “*But the thing that David had done displeased the LORD*” (v. 27). David tried to cover up both sins, but he was not hiding them from God. It was not hidden from the messengers or from Joab, either. As Moses told Israel before they entered the Promised Land, “*... behold, you have sinned against the LORD, and be sure your sin will find you out*” (Num. 32:23). Tomorrow, we will see that Nathan also found out about it.

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**Marvelous Grace** — David had no pity for the rich man in Nathan's story who stole the pet lamb of the poor man. He said, "*He deserves to die*" (v. 5). David also deserved to die, but God showed His marvelous grace after confronting the king with his sin. God told David, "...*you despised the word of the LORD ... you have despised me ... [and] you have utterly scorned the LORD*" (vv. 9, 10, 14). David genuinely confessed, saying, "*I have sinned against the LORD*" (v. 13), but God did not remove his punishment. He said, "*Nevertheless ... the child ... shall die*" (v. 14). Then, God's grace stepped in, giving David and Bathsheba another son, Solomon, whom God chose to continue David's dynasty. It was God's gracious gift to this former adulterer and murderer. The text said about Solomon, "*And the LORD loved him*" (v. 24), and God gave this child the name Jedidiah, meaning "beloved of the LORD." We deserve to die as well for our sin because we also "*despised*" God in disobedience, but in His mercy and grace, He saved us and gave us gifts that we did not deserve. Marvelous grace of our loving Lord!