

On God the Solid Rock I Stand  
Psalm 61

When life hits us between the eyes with the unexpected and the unwelcomed, we have 2 options staring us in the face: we can run from God or we can run to God. We can run from Him into the sinking sands of sin and despair, or we can flee to the solid rock of safety and security, the God who is our rock, our refuge, our strong tower, our dwelling place, our shelter, the God who will establish and prolong forever the reign of His Son, King Jesus (v. 6-7).

Psalm 61 could be classified as “a royal psalm of lament.” It is something of a combination of poetic genres, penned by David.

- Psalm of lament and petition (vs 1-2)
- Psalm of confidence and assurance (vs 3-5)
- Psalm or messianic promise and expectancy (vs 6-8)

Its emphasis on God as “our rock” picks up on a theme that appears 20 times in the Psalms.

- The psalm is part of a unit of psalms (Ps 61-64) which are united by the theme of “trust in God during times of trouble.”
- Its background is uncertain. Some believe David is on the run because Absalom has pulled a coup and now sits on his father’s throne (2 Sam. 15-18).
- Thus he asks for God to keep His covenant promise of 2 Sam. 7:12-17, and to prolong the life of the king forever (v.6). What then can we anticipate, can we expect, when we make this Great God the Rock upon which we will take our stand?

I. Let the Lord provide for you. 61:1-2

- The Psalm begins intimately and personally; my cry, my prayer, my heart.

1) God will hear when you call. 61:1

- Hebrew poetic parallelism

Hear → attend

My cry → my prayer

2) God will lead when you call. 61:2

- David is away from the presence of God either geographically (literally), figuratively or perhaps both!

- He feels far from God. I have no sense or awareness of the divine presence. The “absence of God” overwhelms me.

- Thus the content and substance of His prayer: “Lead me to the Rock that is higher than I” (capitalization mine).

- David takes an upward look. How can we be led to this “exalted Rock?” 1)

Word, 2) Holy Spirit, 3) Prayer, 4) Worship, 5) Counsel of the godly.

II. Let the Lord Protect you. 61:3-4

- David recalls God’s past faithfulness in his life.

- 4 magnificent metaphors depict various aspects and facets of our God’s care for His children.

- It is interesting to note that each picture of God’s protective care is more tender and personal.

1) He is your refuge 61:3

- “Shelter for me” is better rendered “my refuge” (*NIV, ESV*). God is a place of protection and safety, security and peace (cf Ps 18:2; Ps 62:7-8).

2) He is your strong tower 61:3

David sees himself at home, in a citadel, a strong tower, protecting him from his

enemies (cf Prov. 18:10).

3) He is your dwelling place 61:4

- Most translations take vs 4a as a request, though it is one of confidence. It is best rendered: “let me dwell in your tent forever” (*NASB, ESV*). The image of the tent or tabernacle looks both backwards and forward. (Ex 33; Num. 11; John 1:14).
- The tent is a place of domestic dwelling, a home to welcome family, friends and even strangers. David wants to be near God and with God as one who is welcomed in the Lord’s home. And, he wants to live there “forever.” (cf Ps 23:6; 27:4).

4) He is your shelter 61:4

- Once again the image of the protective wing of a mother bird is drawn upon. It appears in 17:8; 36:7; 57:1; 63:7; 91:4.
- The wing of a mother bird conveys warmth, security, peace and tranquility. It is a place of rest. Absent are feelings of anxiety, vulnerability, and fear.

III. Let the Lord preserve you 61:5-8

Our God is a God who can be trusted. We can give ourselves completely to Him without hesitation or reservation.

1) Trust His promise 61:5-7

David pledged to honor and serve His God, to trust Him and thank Him for His goodness and gifts.

a) He will prosper His people 61:5

- You heard my vows, my words of devotion and commitment.
- You have given me the heritage, the blessings of the covenant that includes

land, life and a Lord!

- The blessings of this “inheritance” (NASV) are reserved for a very particular people: “those who fear [respect, honor] Your name.”

b) He will promote His King 61:6-7

- What we will inherit is wedded to the King that God promotes, preserves and prospers (Rom. 8:17).
- The days of the king’s life will be prolonged or extended. Amazingly, it will add up to “many generations.” Further, “he shall sit forever before God (*Elohim*)” [lit. trans.] (Heb. 1:3; Phil 2:9-11).
- Either David must have a succession of sons that never ends, or he must have one Son who never ends! It is the latter, and that Son is King Jesus.
- God sends 2 wonderful companions to insure the preservation or protection of His King. They are mercy (*hesed*) and truth.

2) Honor Him with praise 61:8

- David makes 2 great affirmations:
  - I will sing praise to Your name forever
  - I will daily perform my vows
- David says I will worship you with my voice and with my life. I want to do this daily! I want to do this forever!
- How different does Psalm 61 end from how it began.
  - From the ends of the earth to the shelter of God’s wings.
  - From crying in desperation to praising the Lord forever.