

Fact Sheet for **“A Song, a Song, and Half a Song”**
Psalm 108

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We have a song based on David's words in Psalm 108:3-5. My goals this morning are to give you a greater understanding of this Psalm's background, and to suggest a wonderful way to apply it.

Not just these words that we sing, but all of Psalm 108 is in itself a song that was sung in Israel. And as with the other Psalms, none of the music for it has come down to us through history. The superscription of Psalm 108 reads “A Song. A Psalm of David.” David wrote these words to be sure, but he may not have personally composed this particular Psalm. You see, this Psalm is *entirely composed* from the complete 2nd halves of two other Psalms that David did write (Psalms 57:7-11 and 60:5-12).

As we go to these two Psalms I want to suggest how to apply Psalm 108. Our application of this Psalm is directly dependent on which halves of Psalms 57 and 60 were specifically chosen to compose it. We'll come around to this later.

David wrote Psalm 57 when he was fleeing from King Saul and his army. Saul wanted to put David to death (1 Samuel 20:3). David and his men were hiding in a large cave at Engedi (1 Samuel 24). Saul came in to relieve himself and didn't notice them. It was then that David cut off the edge of Saul's robe, again without Saul noticing. When Saul left the cave David called to Saul (1 Samuel 24:11). Saul would spare David's life that day. Read the first half of Psalm 57 (verses 1-6). You can hear David's plea to God. But in the very next verse David's words turn to a rock solid statement of his faith in God. Those words make up the 1st half of Psalm 108. Here are the words of Psalm 108.

- ¹ My heart is steadfast, O God!**
I will sing and make melody with all my being!
- ² Awake, O harp and lyre!**
I will awake the dawn!
- ³ I will give thanks to you, O LORD, among the peoples;**
I will sing praises to you among the nations.
- ⁴ For your steadfast love is great above the heavens;**
your faithfulness reaches to the clouds.
- ⁵ Be exalted, O God, above the heavens!**
Let your glory be over all the earth!

Psalm 57 was not only poetry it was also David's heartfelt prayer. It began with his plea, and it ended with his strong statement of trust in God.

On the other hand, David wrote Psalm 60 long after he had become king. David was in the north, near the Euphrates with his main army (2 Samuel 8:3-4a; 1 Chronicles 18:3-4a). Edom, in the South, evidently took this chance to attack Judah. The deflating news of havoc at home and of a Judah's initial defeat in attempting to defend this attack was the setting for Psalm 60 (See 2 Samuel 8:13-14a; 1 Kings 11:15-17; 1 Chronicles 18:12-13a). Read the first half of Psalm 60 (verses 1-4). You can hear David's plea to God. But again, in the 2nd half of this

Psalm David's words turn to a solid statement of his faith in God. Those words make up the 2nd half of Psalm 108. Here are the words of Psalm 108.

**⁶ That (or "so that") your beloved ones may be delivered,
give salvation by your right hand and answer me!**

**⁷ God has promised in his holiness:
"With exultation I will divide up Shechem
and portion out the Valley of Succoth.**

Shechem and Succoth were on either side of the Jordan river. Shechem was a city west of the Jordan in the territory of Manasseh, Succoth was a city east of the Jordan in the territory of Gad.

**⁸ Gilead is mine; Manasseh is mine;
Ephraim is my helmet,
Judah my scepter.**

Gilead was the Israelite territory east of the Jordan. Manasseh's territory straddled it. Ephraim and Judah were the principal tribes west of it.

**⁹ Moab is my washbasin;
upon Edom I cast my shoe;
over Philistia I shout in triumph."**

"I cast my shoe" is a picture of a man returning home and flinging his shoes to a slave or into a corner.

These three verses (7-8) tell of God's absolute sovereignty in Israel's affairs.

**¹⁰ Who will bring me to the fortified city?
Who will lead me to Edom?
¹¹ Have you not rejected us, O God?
You do not go out, O God, with our armies.**

Judah's initial attempts to defend against Edom had not fared well. But David knew where their best defense was.

**¹² Oh grant us help against the foe,
for vain is the salvation of man!
¹³ With God we shall do valiantly;
it is he who will tread down our foes.**

David wrote the words of Psalm 108 to be sure, but whoever composed this Psalm specifically chose the 2nd halves of two of his Psalms that expressed rock solid faith in God.

Here is an application I am suggesting for Psalm 108.

We certainly have a lot to pray about. When we pray we present our pleas to God.

Why not end our prayers as David did, with rock solid expression of our trust in God?

This is what Psalm 108 is all about. This is why it was sung in Israel.