

Psalm 60:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Through God we shall do valiantly: for he it is that shall tread down our enemies.

Analysis

Through God we shall do valiantly: for he it is that shall tread down our enemies. This concluding verse expresses confident expectation of victory through divine empowerment. After acknowledging human help's vanity (v.11), David affirms that God's help ensures victorious action. The verse balances human agency ("we shall do valiantly") with divine causation ("he it is that shall tread down our enemies"), presenting biblical perspective on divine-human cooperation in spiritual warfare.

"Through God" (be-Elohim, בְּאֱלֹהִים) indicates instrumentality—by means of God, with God's help, empowered by God. The preposition be can mean "in," "by," "with," or "through," emphasizing that God is the means, source, and enabler of victorious action. Apart from God, Israel cannot succeed; through God, they cannot fail. This echoes Philippians 4:13: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

"We shall do valiantly" (na'aseh-chayil, נָעֲשֶׂה-חַיִל) combines future certainty with confident action. Asah means to do, make, accomplish, perform. Chayil means strength, might, efficiency, wealth, army—often translated "valiantly" in military contexts. The phrase indicates effective, powerful, victorious action. Importantly, "we shall do"—believers aren't passive while God does everything, but actively engaged in accomplishing God's purposes, empowered by Him.

This presents balanced biblical perspective on divine sovereignty and human

responsibility. God empowers, but humans act. Faith isn't passive fatalism ("God will do everything; I'll do nothing") nor is it self-reliance ("I'll accomplish this through my effort"). Rather, "through God we shall do"—God's power working through human action produces victorious results.

"For he it is that shall tread down our enemies" (vehu yabus tzarenu, זֶהוּ יָבֹס צָרֵינוּ) provides the basis for confidence. Yabus means to trample, tread down, bring into subjection—military imagery of victor trampling defeated foes. "He it is" is emphatic: "He Himself, God alone." While believers act ("we shall do valiantly"), ultimate victory belongs to God's power, not human effort. Genesis 3:15 promised the seed of woman would bruise the serpent's head. Romans 16:20 assures believers: "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly."

The verse concludes the psalm with confident expectation. Though opening with lament over defeat (v.1-3), the psalm moves through recognition of God's provision (v.4-8), urgent appeal for help (v.9-11), to confident assurance of victory (v.12). This progression models faith's movement from discouragement through trust to confident hope.

Historical Context

This verse reflects Israel's theology of holy war. In Old Testament military engagements, Israel understood that Yahweh fought for them, giving victory not through military superiority but through divine intervention. Joshua at Jericho, Gideon against Midian, David against Goliath, Jehoshaphat against the Moabite-Ammonite coalition—in each case, God's power produced victory despite human weakness or inferior numbers.

The phrase 'tread down enemies' appears throughout Scripture. Psalm 44:5 declares: 'Through thee will we push down our enemies: through thy name will we tread them under that rise up against us.' Psalm 108:13 (which duplicates Psalm 60:12) repeats this exact verse. The imagery of treading down enemies originates in ancient warfare where victorious armies literally trampled defeated foes, and conquerors placed feet on necks of defeated kings (Joshua 10:24) symbolizing complete subjection.

David's wars with Aram and Edom (the historical context) illustrate this principle. Second Samuel 8:1-14 describes systematic subjugation of surrounding peoples—Moab, Zobah, Syria, Edom—all made tributaries to Israel. The text repeatedly attributes victory to divine action: 'The LORD preserved David whithersoever he went' (2 Samuel 8:6, 14). David's military success wasn't due to military genius or superior army but to God's faithfulness to His covenant promises.

The principle extends beyond physical warfare to spiritual conflict. Ephesians 6:10-18 describes spiritual armor and warfare, concluding: 'And take... the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit.' Believers fight spiritual battles not with physical weapons but with divine power. Second Corinthians 10:4 assures: 'The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds.'

Christ's victory over sin, death, and Satan fulfills this ultimately. Colossians 2:15 declares that Christ 'spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it' [the cross]. The resurrection demonstrates God's power to 'tread down' humanity's ultimate enemies. Believers share in Christ's victory through union with Him, experiencing progressive victory over sin (sanctification) and anticipating final victory when Christ returns to fully establish His kingdom.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. What does it mean to 'do valiantly through God' rather than either relying entirely on human effort or being entirely passive, and how does this balance divine sovereignty and human responsibility?

2. How can we distinguish between appropriate confidence in God-empowered action and inappropriate presumption or self-reliance?
3. What kinds of 'enemies' (physical, spiritual, psychological) does God promise to 'tread down,' and how do believers participate in this victory through faith and obedience?
4. How does the psalm's movement from lament (v.1-3) to confidence (v.12) provide a model for processing discouragement and moving toward faith-filled hope?
5. In what ways does recognizing that 'he it is that shall tread down our enemies' humble us while simultaneously empowering confident action?

Interlinear Text

Through God H430	we shall do H6213	valiantly H2428	for he it is that shall tread down H1931
		H1931	H947
אֶת־יְהוָה בְּאָלֹהִים נִעְשֶׂה כִּי־אֵל כִּי־יְהוָה יְמִינֵנוּ:			
our enemies H6862			

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 44:5 (Parallel theme): Through thee will we push down our enemies: through thy name will we tread them under that rise up against us.

Joshua 1:9 (References God): Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.

Isaiah 63:3 (Parallel theme): I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment.

Revelation 19:15 (References God): And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

1 Chronicles 19:13 (References God): Be of good courage, and let us behave ourselves valiantly for our people, and for the cities of our God: and let the LORD do that which is good in his sight.

Malachi 4:3 (Parallel theme): And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the LORD of hosts.

Isaiah 10:6 (Parallel theme): I will send him against an hypocritical nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets.

Psalms 118:16 (Parallel theme): The right hand of the LORD is exalted: the right hand of the LORD doeth valiantly.

Psalms 144:1 (Parallel theme): Blessed be the LORD my strength, which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight:

Zechariah 10:5 (Parallel theme): And they shall be as mighty men, which tread down their enemies in the mire of the streets in the battle: and they shall fight, because the LORD is with them, and the riders on horses shall be confounded.