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For the Chief Musician. A Psalm by David.

PSALM 64: 1 Hear my voice, God, in my complaint. Preserve my life from fear of the enemy.

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The psalmist prays for preservation from the wicked, Psa 64:1, Psa 64:2; whom he describes, Psa 64:3-6; shows their punishment, Psa 64:7, Psa 64:8; and the effect that this should have on the godly, Psa 64:9, Psa 64:10.

The title, To the chief Musician, or conqueror, A Psalm of David. The Syriac says, "composed by David when warned by Gad the prophet, who said, Stay not in Masrob, because Saul seeks thy life." Some think it was composed by David when he was persecuted by Saul; or during the rebellion of Absalom. But Calmet thinks it is a complaint of the captives in Babylon.

Verse 1

Hear my voice - The psalmist feared for his life, and the lives of his fellow-captives; and he sought help of God. He prayed, and he lifted up his voice; and thus showed his earnestness.

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PSALM 64: 2 Hide me from the conspiracy of the wicked, from the noisy crowd of the ones doing evil;

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Verse 2

Hide me from the secret counsel - They plotted his destruction, and then formed insurrections in order to accomplish it.

Workers of iniquity - Those who made sin their labor, their daily employment; it was their occupation and trade. It is supposed that by this title the Babylonians are intended. See Psa 6:3; Psa 14:4; Psa 36:12; Psa 53:4; Psa 59:2.

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PSALM 64: 3 who sharpen their tongue like a sword, and aim their arrows, deadly words,

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Verse 3

Who whet their tongue like a sword - They devise the evil they shall speak, and meditate on the most provoking, injurious, and defamatory words; as the soldier whets his sword that he may thereby the better cut down his enemies.

Their arrows - bitter words - Their defamatory sayings are here represented as deadly as poisoned arrows; for to such is the allusion here made.

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PSALM 64: 4 to shoot innocent men from ambushes. They shoot at him suddenly and fearlessly.

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Verse 4

That they may shoot in secret - They lurk, that they may take their aim the more surely, and not miss their mark.

Suddenly - When there is no fear apprehended, because none is seen.

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PSALM 64: 5 They encourage themselves in evil plans. They talk about laying snares secretly. They say, "Who will see them?"

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Verse 5

They commune of laying snares - They lay snares to entrap those whom they cannot slay by open attack or private ambush.

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PSALM 64: 6 They plot injustice, saying, "We have made a perfect plan!" Surely man's mind and heart are cunning.

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Verse 6

They search out iniquities; they accomplish a diligent search - The word **שׁוּפַח** chaphash, which is used three times, as a noun and a verb, in this sentence, signifies to strip off the clothes. "They investigate iniquities; they perfectly investigate an investigation." Most energetically translated by the old Psalter: Thai ransaked wickednesses: thai failed ransakand in ransaking. To ransack signifies to search every corner, to examine things part by part, to turn over every leaf, to leave no hole or cranny unexplored. But the word investigate fully expresses the meaning of the term, as it comes either from in, taken privately, and vestire, to clothe, stripping the man bare, that he may be exposed to all shame, and be the more easily wounded; or from the word investigo, which may be derived from in, intensive, and vestigium, the footstep or track of man or beast. A metaphor from hunting the stag; as the slot, or mark of his foot, is diligently sought out, in order to find whither he is gone, and whether he is old or young, for huntsmen can determine the age by the slot. Tuberville, in his Treatise on Hunting, gives rules to form this judgment, To this the next verse seems to refer.

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PSALM 64: 7 But God will shoot at them. They will be suddenly struck down with an arrow.

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Verse 7

But God shall shoot at them with an arrow - They endeavor to trace me out, that they may shoot me; but God will shoot at them. This, if the Psalm refer to the times of David, seems to be prophetic of Saul's death. The archers pressed upon him, and sorely wounded him with their arrows. 1Sam 31:3.

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PSALM 64: 8 Their own tongues shall ruin them. All who see them will shake their heads.

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Verse 8

Their own tongue to fall upon them-selves - All the plottings, counsels, and curses, they have formed against me, shall come upon themselves.

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PSALM 64: 9 All mankind shall be afraid. They shall declare the work of God, and shall wisely ponder what he has done.

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Verse 9

And all men shall fear - They endeavored to hide their mischief; but God shall so punish them that all shall see it, and shall acknowledge in their chastisement the just judgment of God. The wicked, in consequence, shall fear, and,

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PSALM 64: 10 The righteous shall be glad in the LORD, and shall take refuge in him. All the upright in heart shall praise him!

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Verse 10

The righteous shall be glad - They shall see that God does not abandon his followers to the malice of bad men. The rod of the wicked may come into the heritage of the just; but there it shall not rest. Calmet thinks that this is a prediction of the destruction of the Chaldeans, in consequence of which the Jewish people became highly respected by all the surrounding nations. But it may be applied more generally to the enmity of the wicked against the righteous, and how God counterworks their devices, and vindicates and supports his own followers.