

Psalm 3

A Psalm of David, when he fled from Absalom his son.

“Psalm 3”: The historical background to the psalm is described (in 2 Sam. chapters 15-18). Though David petitioned (in verse 7), Arise, O Lord; save me”, it is clear from (2 Sam. 15:32-37), that David shrewdly sent his friend Hushai back to Jerusalem to deceive Absalom. David used means but trusted only in God.

Verses 1-8: This psalm intermingles both lament and confidence. In its sweeping scope, it becomes a pattern for praise, peace and prayer amidst pressure. As it unfolds through 3 interrelated historical phenomena, David shares his theological “secret” of having assurance in the face of adversity.

1. The Psalmist’s Predicament (3:1-2);
2. The Psalmist’s Peace (3:3-6);
3. The Psalmist’s Prayer (3:7-8).

The first of 73 psalms attributed to David by superscription. Further information connects its occasion with the Absalom episode (2 Sam. chapters 15-18), although many of its features are more descriptive of persecution in general.

Verses 1-2” “Increased ... many ... many”: The psalmist begins on a low note with his multiplied miseries.

Psalm 3:1 “LORD, how are they increased that trouble me! Many [are] they that rise up against me.”

He might well say so, for the party that sought his ruin was very numerous and very formidable. Absalom his son had stolen away the hearts of the generality of the people, and was at the head of them. Ahithophel, his counsellor, sought his ruin. Shimei, with others of his enemies, reproached him as utterly forsaken of God. While many of his friends, undoubtedly, trembled for his safety, and, had Ahithophel’s advice been followed, his ruin, morally speaking, would have been unavoidable. No wonder then that he was in great trouble, as he certainly was in great danger. But in the midst of it he takes the right method, and has recourse to God, his strong helper. As he went up the Mount of Olives, with his head covered and barefoot, he wept and prayed, wept and believed, and God heard him from his holy habitation.

This Psalm was sometimes called THE MORNING HYMN, or A MORNING PRAYER. We know the sadness in David’s heart when he fled from his own son. This is a similar feeling that the Lord Jesus felt when the Hebrews turned against Him. Many believers in Christ in our day, feel those we thought to be friends, hating us. The sorrow we see David feeling here, is felt by many of us who have made an unshakeable stand for the Lord Jesus. As we said, part of the sadness from David, was that his own flesh and blood was trying to kill him and take over.

As I have said in previous lessons, we must find the application of this Scripture to our lives today, for it to be of help to us. Today in our society, you can easily alienate those around you by professing your Christian faith. It is not a popular thing to be a true believer in the Word of God. If you carry your Bible with you, you are called a Bible toting so and so. If you read your Bible on a regular basis, you are thought of as a fanatic. Praise God! I am a fanatic for Jesus.

The statement above, made by David, was true. Many people sided with Absalom against David. The majority sided against Jesus also. The majority of people around the world today are not true believers.

2 Timothy says [having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof].

David asked: How can this be? We also ask, LORD, how can this be? The first thing we must remember is that, Jesus won the battle at Calvary. We are still in this world, but we are not of this world. The only battle that we are to fight is the good fight of faith. Though the world seems to be coming apart around us, look up, for our redemption draweth nigh.

Verses 2-3: No help for him ... but thou ... a shield for me”: There is a strong contrast between the allegation and the psalmist’s assurance. David’s attitude and outlook embraces the theology that Paul summarized (in Rom. 8:31). Psalm 3 also introduces Divine Warrior language (compare Exodus chapter 15 as a background).

Psalm 3:2 "Many [there be] which say of my soul, [There is] no help for him in God. Selah."

An active believer, the more he is beaten off away from God, either by the rebukes of providence, or the reproaches of enemies, the faster hold he will take, and the closer will he cleave to him. A child of God startles at the very thought of despairing of help in God. See what God is to his people, what he will be, what they have found in him, what David found in him.

1. Safety; a shield for me; which denotes the advantage of that protection.
2. Honor; those whom God owns for his, have true honor put upon them.
3. Joy and deliverance. If, in the worst of times, God's people can lift up their heads with joy, knowing that all shall work for good to them, they will own God as giving them both cause and hearts to rejoice.

“Selah”: Here signifies a lifting up of the voice, to cause us to consider the sentence as a thing of great importance.

The condition of a man's soul is known only by him and God. Others may speculate, but only he and God know whether he is right with God or not. So many times, it is easy to look at another and say he isn't saved, because he has committed sin. This was the case with these accusing David. They were reminding him of his sin with Bath-sheba. They were saying God had not forgiven him. Many today try to bring up sins in a person's life that are already forgotten by God.

When you are saved, your sins are washed away by the blood of the Lamb. You or anyone else, are not to go back and drag them up again. Only you and God know if you were truly repentant or not. No one, then or now, can judge another. God is the Judge of all.

“Selah”: The Amplified Bible adds “pause and calmly think about that” to each verse where “Selah” appears. When we see the word in a psalm or (in Habakkuk 3), we should pause to carefully weigh the meaning of what we have just read or heard, lifting up our hearts in praise to God for His great truths.

Psalm 3:3 "But thou, O LORD, [art] a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of mine head."

“The lifter up of mine head” could be translated “raises my head high”, a testimony to the encouragement God provides (9:13; 27:6). The dejection David felt when he looked at his circumstances stands in sharp contrast.

All who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, have the Lord for their shield. We are told to take the shield of faith to fight the devil.

Ephesians 6:16 "Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked."

David is expressing his faith in the Lord to protect him. We know, that without faith, it is impossible to please God. We must have faith to be counted righteous in God's sight. The word translated shield here, could have just as easily been translated protector or buckler. This means then, that this was not just a covering for the chest area, but for his entire being. The word glory could have also been translated splendor. (Lifter up of mine head), shows that God will even yet elevate David back to his former glory. Looking at this from the standpoint of the Christian: We see God is our protector, we are saved by His grace and not by our works. Jesus Christ will come back to this earth to reign as King of kings and Lord of lords for 1000 years. Jesus brings Christians with Him, who will reign with Him as His subordinates. Jesus Christ is the lifter of the Christian's head.

Psalm 3:4 "I cried unto the LORD with my voice, and he heard me out of his holy hill. Selah."

“His holy hill” refers to Jerusalem, the place where God installed both the Ark and David as king, the earthly symbol on His throne, His covenant (2:6). The hill was a place where God’s glory resided in a unique way. Still, David knew that God’s glorious presence in this holy place did not mean He was inaccessible, unconcerned, or absent. God always hears the cries of His people (4:3).

We can see from this that, David cried out in prayer. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. We are told in the Scriptures that God knows the desires of our heart even before we ask. Just the same, God hears and answers quicker, it seems, when we cry out in

anguish to Him. God came to the rescue of the Israelites in Egypt, because He heard their cries. A very good example of calling out to God in prayer is the following Scripture (in 2 Sam).

2 Samuel 22:7 "In my distress I called upon the LORD, and cried to my God: and he did hear my voice out of his temple, and my cry [did enter] into his ears."

How beautiful it is for God to hear our prayer and answer! An answered prayer is a joy indeed.

Psalm 3:5 "I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for the LORD sustained me."

"I laid me down and slept": Since God is known for His sustaining protection, David could relax in the most trying of circumstances.

We see in the fact that David slept, that he had every confidence in the LORD. He knew that he had done all he could, when he prayed. He also believed that God had protected him and answered his prayer. This sleep was not a fitful sleep, but total rest. David knew that his safety was in Almighty God, not in the armies. Remember the protection that David had previously known when Saul was trying to kill him. God protected him from Saul, and God protected David from Absalom. The question that I would like to ask my Christian friends is, do we have that much confidence in God? Can we lie down at night and rest, knowing that God's protection is upon us? Is it God we do not have confidence in, or is it guilt that causes us to doubt? I have said before that, trust is a state beyond faith. We must learn to trust God in our affairs.

Psalm 3:6 "I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people, that have set [themselves] against me round about."

David was a man of courage from his youth. The instances of his attacking the lion and the bear, when he kept his father's sheep, his engaging with Goliath, and his military exploits, show it. And though there were now many thousands up in arms against him, and his own son at the head of them; all the tribes of Israel were revolting from him, and he was only attended with a few of his friends, yet he was not dismayed. For that he refers to this insurrection appears by what follows.

Leviticus 26:8 "And five of you shall chase a hundred, and a hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight: and your enemies shall fall before you by the sword."

You see, one, with God is a majority. We have nothing to fear, if God is on our side.

Psalms 91:5-7 "Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; [nor] for the arrow [that] flieth by day;" "[Nor] for the pestilence [that] walketh in darkness; [nor] for the destruction [that] wasteth at noonday." "A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; [but] it shall not come nigh thee."

We are also told, that the fearful and unbelievers will be lost.

Revelation 21:8 "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."

To be saved we must have faith in God. Our faith will be counted unto us as righteousness. Our faith and trust must be in Jesus Christ, who is the author and finisher of our faith.

Psalm 3:7 "Arise, O LORD; save me, O my God: for thou hast smitten all mine enemies [upon] the cheek bone; thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly."

"Arise, O Lord": This is a battle cry for God to engage the enemy and defend His soldiers (compare Num. 10:35; Psalm 68:1).

Save me, is the cry of all mankind. Jesus is the Savior of the world. He is the Savior of all who will believe. We see, in this Scripture above, that the enemies of David have been rendered helpless to harm him (broken the teeth of the ungodly). Notice David did not render his enemies harmless, God did. All believers need to remember that Satan was defeated by the LORD Jesus Christ on the cross at Calvary. Jesus won the victory for us. All we have to do is stand against the devil, and he will flee from us. The word (arise), could mean many things, but I believe it indicates Jesus rising from the grave. We are assured of life after death, because Jesus arose from the grave. O, death, where is thy sting?

Psalm 3:8 "Salvation [belongeth] unto the LORD: thy blessing [is] upon thy people. Selah."

"Salvation belongeth unto the Lord": This is a broad-sweeping, all-inclusive deliverance, whether in the temporal or eternal realm.

Jesus Christ our Lord is Salvation for all who will believe. In the first verse (of chapter 1 of Psalms), we read of blessings. There is only one way to obtain salvation.

Romans 10:9-10 "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

We could work every day of our life and still not be saved. Salvation is by the free gift of the grace of God. We were actually purchased by the precious blood of the LORD Jesus Christ. He was our atonement in full, there is no more to pay. All mankind has their own free will to receive Jesus as our Savior, or to deny Him and be lost. Each individual is a free moral agent. We can choose life through belief in Jesus, or death by denying Him. He came to save all, but only those who accept Him belong to Him. We find in the next Scripture that Jesus prays for His own.

John 17:9 "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine."

In some glorious way, God has called us by His grace, justified us by the blood of Jesus, and quickened us by His Spirit. God blesses whom He will. I often compare the calling of God to a

young man seeking a wife. He calls her, sometimes several times, it is up to her to answer that call. All believers in Christ are His bride

Psalm 3 Questions

1. Who wrote this Psalm?
2. Who was David fleeing from in this chapter?
3. What were 2 names this 3rd Psalm was known by?
4. What was possibly the greatest sadness David felt in his flight?
5. What is an easy way to alienate worldly friends today?
6. If you read your Bible on a regular basis, you are called what?
7. Did Absalom have any followers?
8. What is the only fight Christians should fight?
9. The condition of a man's soul is known only by whom?
10. What are some of the things people believe that Selah means?
11. What sin of David's were they reminding David of?
12. What happens to our sins, when we are saved?
13. What is God to David in verse 3?
14. Who is the Christian's shield?
15. What are 2 other things that the word here translated shield, could have been translated?
16. Shield was not just a covering for the chest, but in fact what?
17. What was another word that could have been used instead of glory?
18. What does (lifter up of mine head) mean to David?
19. Who is the lifter of the Christian's head?
20. The effectual fervent prayer of a _____ _____ availeth much.
21. I laid me down and _____.

22. What message can we get from David sleeping here?
23. David knew his safety was in whom?
24. Do we have as much confidence in God as David did?
25. What is a state beyond faith?
26. How many does Leviticus chapter 26 say that five can chase?
27. What things from chapter 91 of Psalms should we not be afraid of?
28. Who does Revelation chapter 21 say shall have their part in the lake of fire?
29. What will be counted unto us as righteousness?
30. What is the cry of all mankind?
31. Who is the Savior of the world?
32. What does (broken the teeth of the ungodly) mean?
33. What is a message that all believers need to remember?
34. What is one of the things arise could mean?
35. _____ belongeth unto the LORD.
36. What was every Christian purchased with?
37. Who is our atonement?
38. In some glorious way, God has called us by His _____.