

Psalm 3

Introduction: This psalm seems to have emphasis for the morning portion of our days (3:5), whereas Psalm 4 seems to emphasize the evening portion (4:8). This parallels the “day and night” theme of Psalm 1:2. This psalm illustrates the struggle of the believer when their personal experience seems to contradict the clear promises of God (cf. Ps. 2 explanation of the promises of 2nd Sam. 7:12-17).

Remember the theme of book 1 of the Psalms: God is faithful to His Word, that He is, despite all evidence to the contrary, on the side of the righteous and that He does fulfill His promise to support His king. (Grogan)

- 1) Title: *A psalm of David, when he fled from the face of Absalom his son.*
 - a) The historical context is 2nd Samuel 15-18.
 - b) The rebellion of the nations (2:1-3) has been replaced by the rebellion of a family member.

- 2) David’s prayer concerning his threatening situation—3:1-2 ¹ *O Yahweh,*
 - NB the many uses of the first person pronoun (me, my, etc.)
 - a) They are **many**; they harass him collectively—*how numerous are my adversaries!*
 - i) They are trying to restrict (put the squeeze on) David
 - ii) Cf. 2nd Sam. 17:11
 - b) They are **mean**: they rebel against his rightful authority—*Many are rising up against me.*
 - i) They have no sanction or authority to remove David. But still the crowd is siding with Absalom (cf. 2nd Sam. 15:13).
 - c) They are **mouthy**; they taunt his vulnerability—² *Many are saying of my soul, ‘There is no deliverance ☉ for him in God.’*
 - i) As David’s adversaries close in for the kill, David desires some space to breath and maneuver.
 - ii) The enemies are not so much questioning God’s ability to rescue David but God’s willingness to do so. David wrestled with this temptation as well (cf. 2nd Sam. 15:26).
 - d) He pours out his anguish at the feet of a God who is not supposed to care. (Davis)
 - e) *Selah.*
 - i) The first of approximately 70 uses in the Psalms, and again in Hab. 3:3, 9, 13. It is perhaps a musical term. Some suggestions include: raising the voice in volume; raising a voice to higher pitch; to change voices; or perhaps to pause; etc. The LXX translates it as “pause.”

- 3) David’s confidence in God’s protection—3:3-4
 - NB the significant shift from first person to second and third person
 - a) He talks to God as his Sustainer—3:3 ³ *But **You** (emphatic), O Yahweh,*

- i) Protects us—*are a shield round about me*, (which no literal shield can do)
 - (1) While his numerous enemies surround David
 - ii) Honors us—*my glory*,
 - (1) While his enemies attempt to dishonor David; he has lost earthly glory
 - iii) Restores us—*and the One who lifts my head*.
- b) He tells others about his audible prayer to the accessible God—3:4 ⁴ *I cried to Yahweh with my voice, and He responded to me from His holy hill* (where the tabernacle sits on Mt. Zion)
- i) While Absalom has seized Mt. Zion, David is not able to be in Jerusalem
 - ii) However, David's enemies do not control the situation; God does!
- c) In face of the threats and ruckus and theological opinions of his enemies David turns his eyes to his protecting, honoring, restoring, and accessible God. The God-centeredness of his gaze keeps him steady while his enemies try to decide what precise level of scum he is. (Davis)
- d) *Selah*.
- 4) David's restful response of faith—3:5-7
- a) David tells others that faith sleeps—3:5
- i) What three things happened?
 - (1) He went to bed—⁵ *I* (emphatic) *laid down*
 - (2) He slept—*and slept*;
 - (a) Not everyone who lies down goes to sleep
 - (3) He was protected while he slept—*I awoke*,
 - (a) Not everyone who goes to sleep wakes up
 - ii) Why? *for Yahweh* (emphatic) *supports me*. (even while I sleep)
 - (1) Yahweh can look after His own kingdom. (Davis)
- b) David tells others that faith is fearless—3:6 ⁶ *I am not afraid of the multitudes of people* (cf. 3:1-2) *who have positioned themselves against me all around*.
- i) David's adverse situation has not changed.
- c) David's faith prays—3:7
- i) Prayer—3:7
 - (1) What two requests does he make of God?—3:7a
 - (a) ⁷ *Arise, O Yahweh!*
 - (i) Just like his self-righteous adversaries who rise up against him (cf. 3:1)
 - (ii) But when God arises, others will have to fall
 - (b) *Deliver* @ *me, O my God!* (this is the result of God's rising up)
 - (i) Contrary to the self-righteous judgment of his adversaries (cf. 3:2)
 - (2) What two things has God done?—3:7b *Because (or indeed) ...*
 - (a) Public disgrace—*You have struck all my enemies on the cheek*;
 - (i) Even though they are too many to count
 - (ii) Cf. 1st Kings 22:24

- (b) Disarming defeat—*You have broken the teeth of the wicked.*
 - (i) They are disarmed like a toothless lion, allowing the intended prey to go free.
 - (ii) There are some professing Christians who get upset about verses like this that indicate his enemies will need to go to the dentist! (Davis) They want a tame God.
 - (c) For David to have salvation, his enemies will need to be destroyed. (Davis)
- ii) Praise—3:8
 - (1) For God’s deliverance—⁸ *The deliverance* ③ *belongs to Yahweh*; (cf. 3:2, 7)
 - (a) Regardless of what others may say
 - (2) For God’s blessing—*Your blessing is upon Your people.*
 - (a) The blessing includes God’s deliverance, protection, vindication, restoration, and sustained life. (NET Bible)
 - (b) NB the blessing mentioned in 1:1 and 2:12.
- iii) *Selah.*

5) Things for us to remember:

- a) There is no confession of sin in this psalm. David has already confessed his sin in the circumstances regarding Bathsheba. God has forgiven him, but there are still consequences from sinful choices. Forgiveness does not automatically erase the scars from our sin.
- b) Someone has said, “If you can’t sleep, don’t count sheep—talk to the Shepherd.”
- c) Remind yourself and God of His promises. (cf. Rom. 8:31)