

# Psalm 3

## May 22, 2022



### SCRIPTURE

- <sup>1</sup> LORD, how many are my foes!  
How many rise up against me!
- <sup>2</sup> Many are saying of me,  
“God will not deliver him.”<sup>[b]</sup>
- <sup>3</sup> But you, LORD, are a shield around me,  
my glory, the One who lifts my head high.
- <sup>4</sup> I call out to the LORD,  
and he answers me from his holy mountain.
- <sup>5</sup> I lie down and sleep;  
I wake again, because the LORD sustains me.
- <sup>6</sup> I will not fear though tens of thousands  
assail me on every side.
- <sup>7</sup> Arise, LORD!  
Deliver me, my God!  
Strike all my enemies on the jaw;  
break the teeth of the wicked.
- <sup>8</sup> From the LORD comes deliverance.  
May your blessing be on your people.

### COMMENTARY

**3:2** Selah, which may mean “lift up,” was an instruction for the musicians and was inserted when the psalms were adapted to temple service. It could refer to an interlude during which instruments played (see 1 Ch 15:16), but its meaning is uncertain.

**3:3** The line uses several metaphors—“shield” for God’s protection (Gn 15:1), “glory” for the evidence of His blessing of kingship (Ps 34:7; 91:11), and “lifts up my head” for the restoration to the throne (Gn 40:13; 1 Sm 2:7–8; Ps 110:7).

**3:4–5** The report of the deliverance calls for past tense translations even though the Bible text is in the present tense: “I cried” and “he answered me,” “I lay down and slept; I



woke again because the Lord sustained me.” Then, because he made it through the night, David expressed his renewed confidence and prayed for complete deliverance.

**3:7** The verbs “strike” and “break” refer to completed action and may be translated in the past tense. They could refer to previous victories of the king; more likely they refer to his future victory. To David the outcome was so certain that he stated it as having already happened. This use of the verb is called the “prophetic perfect” because it often appears in prophetic literature, presenting future acts in the past tense (e.g., lit. “a child will be born,” Is 9:6; “he was despised,” Is 53:3). The language is also poetic: smashing the jaw and breaking the teeth refer to combat resulting in a convincing victory (1 Kg 22:24; Ps 58:6; Is 50:6; Mc 5:1). The figures are metonymies (substituting the Lord for the armies); this means God will deliver this crushing blow, though it is the armies who will actually fight.

## **MAIN POINT**

We can be confident that the Lord will protect us and sustain us in the most difficult times.

## **INTRODUCTION**

*As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.*

**It is important to remember that the Psalms are poems. What does it say about our faith that the longest book in the Bible is composed of songs?**

**Have you ever felt like the world has turned against you? How can confidence in the Lord help in such situations?**

This Psalm was written by King David during a time of distress and betrayal. The Holy Spirit inspired this Psalm so that we, a few thousand years later, could learn that we can trust God when our own difficult days come. There will be times in everyone’s life when trouble is real and not just imagined. Jesus said, “You will have suffering in this world. Be courageous! I have conquered the world” (John 16:33), and the apostle Paul wrote to Timothy, “In fact, all who want to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted” (2 Timothy 3:12). Because we will experience these kinds of difficulties in life, the Psalms should be a treasure to us. They should offer us a refuge of hope in our own times of crisis.



## **UNDERSTANDING**

*Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.*

- ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ PSALM 3:1-2.

**When trial comes, why are we tempted to believe it is because God has abandoned us?**

**Why do some people still believe others suffer because God has abandoned them?**

**How prevalent is the teaching that if we have faith, God will bless us?**

**How do you think that kind of theology affects those who are suffering?**

**Why is it when one person attacks us or one thing goes wrong, it often seems that things just keep piling on?**

It would be a great mistake to skip the introduction to this Psalm, as those introductions are often part of the inspired text. We are told that this is “A psalm of David when he fled from his son Absalom.” David wrote this psalm at a point of highest despair. His own son had betrayed him and gathered an army to eliminate him. How much worse a betrayal could a person experience? Each day, it seemed like more and more people were against David. People began to believe that because David was in such a sad state, God must have turned His back on him. But David pled with the Lord. God has promised that He “will never leave (us) or abandon (us)” (Hebrews 13:5). Jesus said, “I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:20). We can be certain that our Lord will never leave us, even when things are going terribly wrong.

- ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ PSALM 3:3-6.

**What do you think it means for God to be our “glory” as David said?**

**If God is our shield, why do bad things still happen to us?**

**If God was David’s shield, why would He allow Absalom to betray him and temporarily usurp him?**

**In what ways do we take the Lord for granted?**

**How are sleeping and faith in God related, especially in times of stress?**

**Can you relate to a time when it felt that circumstances had “taken their stand” against you on every side? How was God faithful in that time?**



When Abraham had just come back from a battle against foreign kings, he was afraid. In that time, the Lord came to him and said, “Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield; your reward will be very great” (Genesis 15:1). God promised Abraham that even though he sojourned far from his original home in a land of strangers, God would be with him and protect him. God extended that same promise to David. In 2 Samuel 22:36, David wrote, “You have given me the shield of Your salvation; Your help exalts me.” God and His salvation are a shield to us in times of trouble.

- ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ PSALM 3:7-8.

**How urgently should we call upon the Lord in our times of need?**

**How can pride keep us from pleading our case before the Lord?**

**How is this kind of prayer worship?**

**Should we pray for the Lord to strike our enemies on the cheek today?**

**Does God always break the teeth of the wicked? What did David mean by this?**

**When we survive a difficult time, how important is it to remind ourselves that the remedy came from the Lord?**

**In your trials, how important do you think it is to pray for others as David did in the last verse of this Psalm?**

We should never be ashamed of pleading with the Lord. He invites us to cast our cares upon Him, and so we should. God understands, and expects, that our requests will sometimes be urgent and desperate. After all, we are currently engaged in a wrestling match “against the cosmic powers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavens” (Ephesians 6:12). Sometimes, crying out in desperation is essential!

This kind of prayer is worship because it acknowledges God’s greatness and His power to save us. It is worship because we admit that He is our only source of hope. It is worship to be humble enough to admit that a problem is too big for you but not too big for God.

## **APPLICATION**

*Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.*

**What effect does prayer have in your daily life?**

**Is it making a difference in how you face your problems? Why or why not?**



**How helpful would it be to remind yourself each day this week that God is your help and your shield?**

**How helpful would it be to remind yourself of all the times God has shown Himself faithful to you?**

**Commit to praying for others who are experiencing trials this week. How might this impact your outlook on your own problems?**

## ***PRAYER***

As you close your group time together, thank God for salvation through Jesus Christ. Ask for the Lord to be our shield and our help as we go through the next week. Pray that the Lord will deliver us all from evil and from temptation, and that the plans of the enemy will come to nothing. Pray for the Father to richly fill us with the presence of His Holy Spirit so we can have confidence in His care each day.

## ***LOOKING AHEAD***

*Encourage your group members to look ahead to next week's scripture passage:*

**May 29, 2022 --- Psalm 18**

