

MOUNT SINAI MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

MONDAY EVENING BIBLE STUDY

Psalm 3

Triumphant Trust

Quote

“Faith is a living, daring confidence in God’s **grace**, so sure and certain, that a man could stake his life on it a thousand times.”

Martin Luther

I. Introduction

Every personal trial teaches believers to trust the Lord more fully. Even what others mean for **evil**, God intends for good. This was certainly the experience of the psalmist in Psalm 3, “a psalm of David.” It is a hymn of individual lament, written to paint a clear picture of what triumphant **faith** looks like when it is tested in the fires of adversity. The superscription above this third psalm reveals that it was written when David “fled from his son Absalom” (2 Sam. 15–18).

Leading a political coup against his father, Absalom won over the hearts of many in the country, forcing David to flee from his palace. In the midst of this ordeal, surrounded by innumerable enemies, David called upon the Lord with absolute trust, believing that God would rescue him. This psalm clearly conveys that God is Lord over life, even in times of adversity. He always works for his glory and for the good of his people. Thus, Psalm 3 is a psalm of both lament and confidence.

II. Commentary

MAIN IDEA

In the midst of his **trials**, David turned to the Lord in absolute trust, knowing that **faith** in God leads to triumphant living.

A David’s Problems (3:1–2)

3:1. In one of the great **trials** of his life, the revolt of his son Absalom, David called out to God, **O Lord, how many are my foes!** The word *many* is repeated three times in verses 1–2 and represents the growing opposition against David that

was led by Absalom and involved many enemies who were loyal to Absalom. What began as a secret, covert rebellion by David's son, Absalom, escalated into a full-blown, public revolt by many of Israel's citizens. During this time of international peace under David's reign (2 Sam. 7:1), his greatest danger came from *within* Israel, even from within his own household. **How many rise up against me!** Outnumbered, David found himself a part of a minority that seemed to be shrinking.

3:2. Quoting his oppressors, David lamented, **Many are saying of me, "God will not deliver him"** (cp. 2 Sam. 16:8). Their arrogant belittling of Israel's king implied that God had abandoned David. Worse, their taunting words attacked the honor of God himself because they claimed there was no **salvation** with God. A unique feature of this psalm is the threefold repetition of **selah** (vv. 2, 4, 8), a musical term that apparently indicated a pause, a crescendo, or an interlude, inviting the reader to stop and consider carefully the magnitude of what was being said.

B David's Protection (3:3–4)

3:3. In the crucible of this crisis, David made the right choice. Turning to the Lord, he boasted, **But you are a shield around me, O Lord**. Using the language of the battlefield, he asserted that God was his impenetrable defense. Many times in the past, David had used a shield in battle to turn away the deadly arrows, spears, and swords of his enemies. David exclaimed that this shield (Heb. *magen*, used in Ps. 5:12) is what God was to him—an unassailable protection in the midst of danger (cp. Pss. 7:10; 18:30; 28:7). Furthermore, he declared, **You bestow glory on me**, meaning that he trusted God to restore his crumbling life and grant deliverance in the midst of his humbling experience. Confidently, he claimed that the Lord would **lift up** his head with courage and peace that only God could provide (Ps. 9:13).

3:4. As a man after God's own heart, David affirmed, **To the Lord I cry aloud** (cp. 2 Sam. 15:30). This king looked to a greater king—heaven's sovereign Lord—and called upon him. With a decisive, resolute **faith**, he committed himself to the Lord, testifying, He answers me from his **holy** hill. The Lord's **holy** hill refers to the place of the Lord's sanctuary, Mount **Zion**, the temple mount in **Jerusalem** where David had brought the ark that represented the presence and power of God (cp. 2 Sam. 6). Ultimately, this refers to the heavenly throne room where God sits enthroned, presiding over his troubles. In marked contrast to his enemies' taunts,

David knew that God heard and answered his plea for help from his throne room in heaven.

C David's Peace (3:5–6)

3:5. Because he had committed his soul and this desperate situation to the Lord, David was at peace, confessing with confidence, I lie down and sleep; I wake again, because the Lord sustains me. Knowing that God was always awake to protect him, he slept the sleep of peace, able to awake refreshed. Left to his own strength, David would have tossed and turned through sleepless nights, agitated over his troubling circumstances. But because the Lord was his shield, quiet sleep was possible.

3:6. With a deep sense of security, David declared, I will not fear the tens of thousands drawn up against me on every side. Because a great multitude had followed Absalom in his revolt (2 Sam. 15:13; 17:11; 18:7), David was severely outnumbered (cp. “many,” vv. 1–2), and he was joined by only a few loyal supporters. Nevertheless, David did not fear because he was fortified by the **truth** that God was his all-sufficient protector.

D David's Petition (3:7–8)

3:7. David's heart cry was really a battle cry, a confident appeal to God to rally to his defense and defeat his enemies: Arise, O Lord! Deliver me, O my God! Likening his pursuers to wild animals, David called upon the Lord, Strike all my enemies on the jaw; break the teeth of the wicked Motivated by righteous indignation and a zealous passion for God's glory, his prayer was an urgent plea for divine intervention (2 Sam. 15:31).

3:8. With a confident trust in the Lord, David confessed, From the Lord comes deliverance. This bold statement countered what his enemies were saying, but more than that David invoked God's blessing upon all who put their trust in him when he said, May your blessing be on your people. This request for deliverance was not only for himself but for the stability and greater good of the nation of Israel. As Israel's leader, God's rescue of him in this dark hour would result in divine blessing upon all the people.

III. Conclusion

In the midst of adversity, the believer should trust in God, knowing that deliverance comes from him. Even when a Christian suffers because of wrong

choices in his past, God causes all things to work together for the good of those who love him (Rom. 8:28). In the torrent of life's storms, God speaks peace to troubled hearts and is able to calm the tempest. Whatever the trial, the righteous should lean upon the Lord, knowing he is a shield and strength to his people.

But when believers try to live in their own strength, they are easily defeated. The arm of the flesh can never save us from troubles. When the godly entrust themselves to God, however, he will empower them to stand strong in their troubles and deliver them to safety. In every trial and difficulty, believers need not fear. Instead, they should trust the Lord. Such **faith**, when tested and toughened in the flames of adversity, results in victory and deliverance.

IV. Teaching Outline

- A. David's Problems (1–2)
 - 1. Many foes resist me (1)
 - 2. Many foes ridicule me (2)
- B. David's Protection (3–4)
 - 1. God is my shield (3a)
 - 2. God is my sovereign (3b)
 - 3. God is my strength (3c)
 - 4. God is my savior (4)
- C. David's Peace (5–6)
 - 1. God sustains me (5)
 - 2. God secures me (6)
- D. David's Petition (7–8)
 - 1. Rise up, Lord (7a)
 - 2. Rescue me, God (7b, c, d)

3. Restore us, Lord (8)¹

¹ Steven Lawson, [*Psalms 1–75*](#), ed. Max Anders, vol. 11, Holman Old Testament Commentary (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2004), 28–32.