



# Psalm 3: Belief in the Midst of the Battle

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## Introduction:

David developed as a leader and into a king through the school of hard knocks. He stepped out in faith and slew Goliath. He led armies. He faced unwarranted opposition from his king and yet remained loyal to him. Through all of this, David was being grown into a great man, leader, and king. Sadly, his son Absalom did not want to take the same path. Instead of the long, hard road of leadership development and growth, he decided to take a short cut of flattery and rebellion. In **II Samuel 15**, he started whittling away at David's constituency by telling everyone who came to the king for judgment that he would rule in their favor if he were king. He developed a following through this flattery. He developed a conspiracy by pulling Ahithophel into the mix. By the time David was made aware of what was happening, there was no way to set up a defense. Absalom was on his way to Jerusalem and David had to flee with his remaining supporters. Somewhere in the midst of this flight, he wrote **Psalm 3**.

We've learned in the past that the individual psalms are not to be taken as doctrinal theses. Rather, they are snapshots. They are pictures of the psalmists in a moment. Some snapshots reveal a psalmist at the height of confidence because it seems everything has gone their way by God's grace. Other snapshots reveal a psalmist at the lowest of lows because he simply can't figure out why God is letting things happen the way they are. This one sees the psalmist David in the midst of trouble and turmoil, but he is hanging on to his faith. We see his confidence in the midst of conflict, his belief in the midst of the battle. Examine this psalm with me to help maintain your faith in the face of your foe.

## Discussion:

### I. Don't be surprised by the foe and his attacks.

- A. We often have the idea that life as a child of God should be easy. There should be no problems. Everyone should like us. But it just doesn't work that way. David had foes (**Psalm 3:1**). Amazingly enough, in this context his foe was from his own family. We will have foes who attack. It may take the form of family members who abandon the Lord and turn on us. It may take the form of co-workers who stab us in the back. It may take the form of neighbors who gossip about us. It may take the form of persecution. But be prepared, there will be foes and they will attack.
- B. As Christians though we need to remember who the ultimate foe is—Satan. He is the accuser of the brethren (**Revelation 12:10**). He is a roaring lion seeking to devour us (**I Peter 5:8**). We must be aware of his schemes (**II Corinthians 2:11**). Anything we face that tempts us to turn from God is an attack from him. Consider his attack on Job in which he taunted God saying Job only served him because of the blessing (**Job 1:9-10**). Loss of loved ones, financial turmoil, spiritual attack, betrayal of friends, sickness—Satan will use them all to get us to turn from the Lord. Don't be surprised when he attacks.

### II. Don't be worried by the numbers.

- A. In the ESV, the word "many" is used 4 times in reference to the enemies, twice in **vs. 1**, then in **vss. 2** and **6**. David had many foes, many rising against him, many who were taunting him, many thousands setting themselves against him. In **II Samuel 15:13**, the hearts of the men of Israel had gone after Absalom. The majority of Israel wanted Absalom to rule.
- B. But David was not swayed by the numbers (**Psalm 3:6**). He would not be afraid though it was thousands and thousands. Why? Because his hope was based on God, not on people. This is really demonstrated in **II Samuel 15:25-26**. Zadok the Levite wanted to carry the Ark of the Covenant with David, but David said if God wanted him back, he would be back. We need to see the point that David understood. It didn't matter how many enemies faced him. What mattered was his relationship with God. If God was on his side, then thousands could not stop his victory. On the other hand, if God was not on his side, then thousands couldn't bring him victory.
- C. Thus, when we are in the midst of the battle, don't worry about the number of enemies. Our only concern should be that we never make God our enemy.

### III. Remember the covenant.

- A. **Psalm 3:8** ends the psalm by saying, "Salvation belongs to the LORD; your blessing be on your people!" (ESV). This last sentence actually sets a greater context for this whole prayer even bigger than just Absalom's rebellion. This last sentence places the psalm in the context of God's covenant with His people and His covenant with David in particular. First, consider **Deuteronomy 28:1-14**, especially **vs. 7**. God's covenant with all of Israel was that if they remained faithful to the covenant, He would bless them which included protecting them from their enemies. David sees that as a covenant with him as the king of God's people, even if the enemy comes from within. But also see **II Samuel 7:8-17**. God made a specific covenant of blessing with David himself. As David ends this psalm, he is calling that covenant to mind. He is God's child and God has promised to bless him. Because he remembers the covenant agreement he has with God, he is able to face the foe with faith.
- B. We have a covenant agreement with God. He sent His Son to die on a cross to ratify that agreement. As **Romans 8:32-39** demonstrates that we may face accusers, tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, danger and sword, but we will be victorious over all of this because of Jesus Christ and the covenant agreement we have with Him. If God let Jesus die to bring us into this covenant, how much more will He give us all that we need to overcome and endure? No matter what we face, no matter what Satan hurls at us, we can hang on to the covenant that God has established with us. If we continue to seek first His kingdom and righteousness, He'll take care of us (**Matthew 6:33**).

### IV. Don't be persuaded by the nay-sayers.

- A. In **Psalm 3:2**, David said that many were saying, "...there is no salvation for him in God" (ESV). Some translations say "help." In fact, for David, some of the enemy were not only saying there was no salvation, but that what David was facing was judgment from God's hand (cf. **II Samuel 16:7-8**). Think of Job and his three friends. When the chips were down, they started telling him the same kinds of things.
- B. There will always be those who try to get you to lose your faith in God's care and kindness. In some cases, they will be enemies like Shimei; in others they may be friends who mean well like Job's friends. In either case, don't let the nay-sayers get you down. Keep your faith in God's promises. He will care for you.

### V. Trust the Lord to shield you.

- A. In **Psalm 3:3**, David explained his plan. "But you, O LORD, are a shield about me, my glory, and the lifter of my head" (ESV). He was going to turn to God for protection. As we read moments ago in **II Samuel 15:25-26**, David put his return to Jerusalem completely in God's hands. God would be his comfort, his rock, his protector.
- B. When times are tough, where do we turn for protection? Where do we turn for escape? Sadly, when times are tough is when Satan lifts up our favorite sins as an offer of protection. Some turn to their own pride to protect them. Some turn to immorality to find an escape from the pressure of the moment. Some turn to outbursts of wrath, some to drunkenness, some to gossip. When the struggle is up and the chips are down, where do you turn for comfort and protection? Sometimes it isn't always a strictly sinful comforter. Food can be a shield for some. Sometimes buying things can be. Sometimes sex, even within marriage, can be used this way. Sometimes work is used this way. Sometimes recreation.
- C. Regrettably, when times are tough, the first one we turn on is God. Instead of turning to Him in prayer as David did, we don't want to talk to Him because we think He is mistreating us or doesn't like us. Then we turn to some other protector or escape. Whether the thing in and of itself is sinful or not, it can become so when we let it become our God and source of comfort and hope. Trust the Lord. Turn to Him, not away from Him.

### VI. Count the blessings in the midst of the battle.

- A. **Psalm 3:5** is, to me, the most comforting verse of the whole psalm. And I think it really presents to us the mind of David in the midst of this battle. We see from this verse that it is a morning prayer. David starts his day with these thoughts. Yes, he is in the midst of turmoil, but he is aware of the blessings that God is providing in the midst of this battle. Yes, he has enemies. Yes, the fight is still on. Yes, he is away from Jerusalem and on the run. But, he went to sleep last night and woke up again this morning. He didn't die.
- B. On a very practical level, consider **II Samuel 17:15-16**. Hushai sent messengers to David to protect him. Don't spend the night at the fords, you won't survive the night if you do. Instead, cross over. In this we see a very real blessing of survival through the night because God was blessing David and David's people (cf. **II Samuel 17:14**).

- C. If you want to maintain belief in the midst of the battle, confidence in the midst of conflict, faith in the face of your foes, then count the blessings in the midst of the battle. Keep a gratitude list. Maybe you are having financial trouble, but did you eat today? Give thanks. Maybe you have sickness, but are you breathing today? Give thanks. Maybe you have enemies, but do you have any friends? Give thanks.

VII. Learn the difference between discipline and abandonment.

- A. This doesn't come from a verse in the psalm, but from the historical context. There is actually a bigger picture behind Absalom's rebellion than simply a rebellious son. It stems all the way back to David's sin with Bathsheba. When Nathan asked David what should be done with a man who stole his neighbor's ewe lamb, David said, "As the LORD lives, the man who has done this deserves to die, and he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity" (**II Samuel 12:5-6**, ESV). David stole Uriah's wife and then had Uriah killed. From his own mouth the sentence went forth. He eventually made a fourfold recompense for the life of Uriah. He lost four sons: the child born to Bathsheba, Amnon, Adonijah, and in this rebellion, Absalom. Think of why Ahithophel has thrown his lot in with Absalom. According to **II Samuel 23:34**, Ahithophel is the father of Eliam. According to **II Samuel 11:3**, Eliam is the father of Bathsheba. Do you think a man whose granddaughter was disgraced by the king might seek an opportunity to dethrone him?
- B. What is happening then in this rebellion? David is being disciplined. Even David seems to recognize this in **II Samuel 16:10-12**. Sometimes we go through discipline through the Lord. The Lord may even use foes and enemies to allow us to be disciplined. But remember God's promise in His covenant with David in **II Samuel 7:14-15**. While the specific statement was about David's son, no doubt it applied to him as well. God would discipline him, but not abandon him.
- C. It may well be that whatever battle, conflict, or foe you face is because of discipline from the Lord. But recognize the difference between discipline and abandonment. As **Hebrews 12:5-11** says, discipline doesn't mean abandonment from God; it means love. He is working on us. He is trying to produce in us the peaceful fruit of righteousness. As we go through it, it is painful. But in the end we will be able to see where it did us some good. I'm not saying that every troubling thing we face is the direct hand of God's discipline. I'm simply pointing out that if we will maintain faith, belief, and confidence, we need to see the difference between discipline and abandonment.

VIII. God hasn't abandoned you; don't abandon Him.

- A. In **Psalms 3:7-8**, David explains exactly where he will stay—with God. He didn't believe God had abandoned him. Why would he abandon God? He cried out to God because he knew where salvation is—with God.
- B. The same is true for us today. Salvation is in God. Help comes from God. There is no real help from any other source. Whatever you face, salvation comes from God so hang on to Him no matter what.
- C. I don't know if the Holy Spirit meant this connection or not. But I can't help but notice that the word translated "salvation" in **vss. 2 and 8**, is the Hebrew word "yeshua" from which the names Joshua and also Jesus come. Yeshua comes from God. Jesus comes from God. Salvation comes from God and if we can always look back to Jesus, then we can always maintain faith in the face of our foe, confidence in the midst of conflict, and belief in the midst of the battle.

Conclusion:

Conflict comes. Foes face us. Battles will rage. But the battle does really belong to the Lord. If we turn to Him, remembering our covenant, counting the blessings, hanging on to Him no matter what, we will win the victory. Our enemy will be defeated. We will win the victory.