

January 18, 2026

Psalm 3

¹O Lord, how many are my foes! Many are rising against me; ²many are saying of my soul, “There is no salvation for him in God.” Selah

³But you, O Lord, are a shield about me, my glory, and the lifter of my head.

⁴I cried aloud to the Lord, and he answered me from his holy hill. Selah

⁵I lay down and slept; I woke again, for the Lord sustained me. ⁶I will not be afraid of many thousands of people who have set themselves against me all around. ⁷Arise, O Lord! Save me, O my God! For you strike all my enemies on the cheek; you break the teeth of the wicked. ⁸Salvation belongs to the Lord; your blessing be on your people! Selah

“What a divine trio of mercies is contained in this verse! —defense for the defenseless, glory for the despised, and joy for the comfortless. Verily we may well say, ‘there is none like our God’.”

-Charles Spurgeon

“Sleep in dangers is a remarkable proof of the divine protection.”

-John Calvin



Rest When Enemies Rise Psalm 3

BIG IDEA: In those moments when life surrounds you with provocation and problems, the best sleep aid is your belief in the sustaining power of the Divine Warrior and his eagerness to answer when you cry for help.

OUTLINE

1. Our Provocations and Problems

2. Our Shield and Glory

3. Our Sustaining Rest

DISCIPLESHIP DURING THE WEEK

These “Sermon Discussion Questions” are designed for study during the week for believers in a wide variety of ages & stages in their walk with Christ.

1. What keeps you awake at night? How have you dealt with sleeplessness?
2. Refer to Psalms 3:1-2. Have you had a season in life that was so tough you thought, “God is not for me”? What are the first two words of Psalm 3? What encouragement can you find from David’s circumstances to honestly cry out to the Lord as he did?
3. Refer to Psalm 3:3. Meditate on verse 3 for a moment. How does the phrase, “But you, oh God...” shift David’s focus away from ruminating on his woes? What is God to David?
4. Refer to Psalm 3:3. What protection does a shield provide? What doesn’t a shield do? How is God David’s shield and a shield for you?
5. Refer to Psalm 3:3. The Hebrew word for glory means “to be heavy, or weighty.” Refer to 1 Corinthians 4:17-18. In light of this verse, can David’s troubles be seen in a different light? In what ways has God been preparing you for “an eternal weight beyond all comparison?”
6. What is another way to say that God is the lifter of my head? How does it help in the midst of trouble for God to “lift your head?”
7. From Psalm 3:4-6, in what ways did God care for David in his moment of distress? How might these verses equip you to comfort a friend who is facing super-hard circumstances?
8. Psalm 3:7 is an expression of David’s complete trust in the Lord (refer to the Historical Context). How can David’s prayer serve as a model for you?

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Psalm 3 has a title that is written above the Psalm that gives us specific insight into the provocation and problems of the Psalmist. We know from the title that this is a Psalm of David. And that he wrote this Psalm while he was fleeing from his own son, Absalom. Absalom, driven by resentment and ambition, won the hearts of Israel and launched a swift coup, forcing David—who was older, wounded by past failures, and betrayed by trusted companions—to flee Jerusalem with only a few loyal followers. Psalm 3 rises from the context of this dark moment of humiliation and heartbreak over his own son’s rebellion.

-Pastor Bill

Psalm 3:7 is a part of a group of songs called the imprecatory psalms, which are Spirit-inspired prayers in which God’s people cry out for His righteous judgment against evil and injustice. They express deep trust in God as the only true Judge, refusing to take vengeance into human hands while appealing to Him to defend His name, His people, and His kingdom.

Far from reflecting personal vindictiveness, these psalms teach believers to long for God’s justice, to hate what He hates, and to hope in the final day when He will set all things right. Therefore, the imprecatory Psalms are compatible with Jesus’ command to love our enemies because they surrender judgment to God rather than taking vengeance into human hands. Christians pray for both the restraint of evil and the repentance of their enemies, which expresses holy hatred of wickedness alongside genuine love for those who oppose us. In this way, believers obey Jesus by entrusting all vengeance to God while seeking the salvation of those who stand against His kingdom-

-ESV Gospel Transformation Study Bible.

Praise to Jesus – Praise the Lord for our rest, which comes from knowing that our God is the God of salvation. He rescues us from our enemies. He was willing to go so far in giving His only Son to the Cross to rescue us from our greatest enemy (sin/death). This God of salvation will rescue us from the lesser enemies of rebellion, frustrations, and problems of this life. Praise Him for the great blessing of knowing God is with us, over us, and for us in the midst of all these things!

Repent through Jesus – Confess and repent for the times when you trusted in other things rather than the safekeeping God, who neither slumbers nor sleeps. Confess moments when fear of people overwhelmed you and caused you to respond by retreating or actively seeking revenge rather than trusting God to defend you.

Consecration for Jesus – When enemies rise up against us, let us proclaim with David, “But you, oh Lord, are a shield about me, my glory, and the lifter of my head!” Our rest comes from our God, who is the God of salvation. He rescues us from our enemies; he was willing to give His only Son to the Cross to rescue us from our greatest enemy (sin/death). Then surely this God of salvation will rescue us from the lesser enemies of rebellion, frustrations, and problems of this life. Let us face our fears and encourage others to trust our great and loving head-lifter.

FOR FAMILIES AND YOUNG CHILDREN

These questions are written to aid parents in leading family devotions with their children.

1. Have you ever had trouble going to sleep? What caused that?
2. What is the title or superscript for this Psalm? (Point out to your children that some psalms, such as this one, have titles or superscripts that give us information on the psalm's author and/or the circumstances for this psalm. For Psalm 3, we read, "A Psalm of David When He Fled From Absalom His Son." This circumstance is described in 2 Samuel 15-17 when Absalom rebels against his father, David, in order to become King. This psalm tells of how King David reacted when he was sad and afraid. Make sure to tell your children that this psalm can help us in our prayers when we are sad and afraid.)
3. What does it mean when we read in verse 3 that the LORD is "a shield about me, my glory, and the lifter of my head"? (The shield is an image of protection from enemies. The phrase, "my glory," speaks to the honor of serving God. "The lifter of my head" is an image of encouragement. Putting this all together, this verse reminds us that God is with us and that comes with many benefits, such as protection and encouragement. It is meant to give us as God's people peace and strength.)
4. How does the phrase in verse 8, "Salvation belongs to the LORD," give us comfort when we are sad and afraid? (Since salvation is the LORD's, then we can have peace when we face struggles in our broken world. We can rest assured that our salvation is in God's hands and not ours. This doesn't take away the struggles of life but gives us strength to get through our struggles.)

Recommended Resource to study the Psalms with your children:

WonderFull: Ancient Psalms Ever New by Marty Machowski

Scriptures for further study:

Ephesians 6:16

Psalm 121

1 Corinthians 15:57-58

Colossians 2:14-15

FOR STUDENTS

Scriptures for further study:

2 Samuel 15 -17

Ephesians 6:16

Psalm 121

1 Corinthians 15:57-58

Colossians 2:14-15

1. Read Psalm 3:1–2. What are some of the “many” pressures, voices, or problems in your life right now that feel overwhelming? What does verse 2 say those voices were claiming about David’s relationship with God?

2. According to verse 3, how does David describe the Lord? What does it mean for God to be your “shield,” “glory,” and “lifter of your head?” Which of these descriptions feels especially important to you right now?

3. In verse 4, David cries aloud to the Lord. When you’re in a moment of fear, stress, or sadness, what is your first instinct—do you turn inward or cry out to God? Why do you think it’s hard to ask for help, even from the Lord?

4. Read verse 5 again. David says he “lay down and slept” even with enemies surrounding him. Why do you think trust in God helped him rest? What keeps you from resting—either physically or spiritually?

5. Verse 6 speaks about not being afraid even when “ten thousands” surround you. What would it look like for you to live more courageously because you trust the Lord is near?

6. Read verse 8. “Salvation belongs to the Lord.” What does this verse tell us about whom we can trust when life feels uncertain? How can that truth change the way you face hard things this week?

FOR NON-BELIEVERS OR NEW BELIEVERS

1. We know that the background to Psalm 3 is David's flight from his son Absalom, which we can read about in 2 Samuel 15ff. Regardless of the nature of David's troubles, the fact is that David felt that many people were coming against him. Note the repetition of the word "many" in verses 1-2.

Question: Can you think of a time when it felt like there were "many" things or "many" people all coming against you from every side? How did you handle that situation?

2. Though David certainly sinned in ways that brought trouble into his life, it is also true that, as believers, sometimes we face troubles in this life even when we are doing all the right things.

Reflect: Look at Jesus's one life. He was perfect, yet he suffered at the hands of others. How should this inform our own expectations about life as a follower of Christ? Also, what can we learn from Hebrews 5:7, 9 about how Jesus approached his challenges?

3. Verse 3 reminds us of the relative unimportance of earthly esteem compared to finding that esteem in what God says about us.

Question: Do you tend to look more to other people to affirm or validate you, or do you instead tend to look to God for your identity, worth, and esteem?

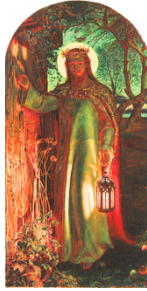
4. This Psalm shows us that the way to approach our problems is not through self-reliance but through prayer to the one who alone can deliver us (verse 8).

Question: Can you think of a time when you tried to handle your problems by yourself without asking the Lord for help? How did it go?

5. Verse 5 speaks of how we end each day and how we start the next.

Question: Why do you think it would be a great practice to start each day and end each day in prayer?

The Blessed Life: A Study of the Psalms



"The Light of the World" (1851-1853) by William Holman Hunt

Psalms Introduction

The Book of Psalms is the sacred place where the living God meets His people in the most intimate and personal of ways. He invites them to know Him not merely as an idea, but as their refuge, portion, shepherd, and King. From the opening doorway of blessedness in Psalm 1 to the climactic Hallelujahs of Psalm 150, the Psalter reveals that the truly happy life is one rooted in the person and work of Almighty God, whose steadfast love holds His people through every season of the soul. As the Psalter moves from anguish to adoration, from darkness to dawn, it becomes a mirror of the Christian life itself. It teaches us to pray honestly, to hope stubbornly, and to sing faithfully, even when night seems long. In the deepest valleys, the Psalms give voice to the church's groan; on the highest heights, they train the church's doxology. And in every line, every cry, and every hallelujah, Christ Himself comes near, revealing the light of the world in the dark night of the soul and leading His people into the blessedness that only His grace can give.

– Pastor Bill

About the artwork and artist.

The Light of the World, 1851-1853, is an iconic allegorical painting by William Holman Hunt. The painting depicts Jesus Christ as a regal figure in flowing robes, wearing a crown of thorns, holding a glowing lantern, and preparing to knock on a weed-overgrown wooden door with no external handle. This illustrates Revelation 3:20 from the Bible: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him..." The artist William Holman Hunt is showing us that Jesus is the divine door to the living God who meets His people in the most intimate and personal ways. The closed, overgrown door → representing the human soul or "obstinately shut mind" that has long ignored spiritual calling. There is no handle on the outside → the door can only be opened from within, emphasizing free will and personal invitation to faith. The lantern → Christ as the light of the world (John 8:12), illuminating darkness and offering salvation. The work marked Hunt's deepening Christian faith (from earlier agnosticism) and became one of the most reproduced and devotional images of the Victorian era, inspiring oratorios, hymns, and widespread popular piety. It's often called a visual sermon on personal salvation.