

## Psalm 3

**Title:** A Morning Prayer of Trust in God

**Author and Date:** David

**Key Verse:** Psalm 3:5

### **Outline**

- A. The plight of the psalmist: the adversary is against me (verse 1-2).
- B. The peace of the psalmist: the Lord is for me (verse 3-6).
- C. The petition of the psalmist (verse 7-8).

### **Notes**

Title: Psalm 3 is the first psalm with a title or superscription: “A Psalm of David, when he fled from Absalom his son.” The title or superscription is verse 1 in the Hebrew Bible. The word “psalm” is from the Heb. *mizmor* meaning “melody”. There are 57 psalms with titles containing the words: “A Psalm of David”. For David’s flight from Absalom, see 2 Samuel 15-18.

Verse 1: About one half of all the references to “adversaries” found in the Bible are found in the book of Psalms. Prayer for help against “adversaries” is a common theme in Psalms. For David’s “many” adversaries on this occasion, see 2 Samuel 17:1. Psalm 3 is the first “lament psalm” in the book. A “lament” is a cry to the Lord for help.

Verse 2: Note the word “Selah” after verse 2, 4, and 8. This word occurs 71 times in 35 psalms, three times in Habakkuk (3:3, 9, 13), and one time in Isaiah (16:1; the word here refers to Petra). The exact meaning of this term is disputed, but some believe that “Selah” is from the Heb. *salal* meaning “lift up”. This word may be a musical notation possibly denoting a pause or interlude in the singing. The people pause to reflect on what has just been sung and the instruments play louder.

Verse 3: “Shield” is a symbol of divine protection (see Gen. 15:1).

Verse 5: This is not the sleep of exhaustion, but the peaceful sleep of complete trust in God. This is not sleep in a comfortable bed, but out in the wilderness on the run from adversaries.

Verse 7: “Arise, O Jehovah” are words said right before a great event (see Num. 10:35).

Verse 8: “Thy blessing be upon they people” are words of benediction (see Num. 6:23-27).

## **Questions**

1. What occasion causes the psalmist to pray to God for help (verse 1)?
2. What were the psalmist's adversaries saying to him (verse 2)?
3. How does the psalmist describe the Lord (verse 3)?
4. What things does the psalmist do that demonstrate his complete trust in the Lord (verse 4-5)?
5. What is it that the psalmist does not fear (verse 6)?
6. What does the psalmist petition of the Lord for himself and why (verse 7)?
7. What belongs to the Lord and what does the psalmist petition for the people (verse 8)?

## **Applications for Today**

1. God's people will have adversaries (verse 1-2). Who caused problems for Paul (1 Cor. 16:9; Phil. 1:28)?
2. There were "many" adversaries against the psalmist, but he had God on his side. One with God is always a majority (verses 1-2). Who is on the side of the Christian (Rom. 8:31; 1 Jn. 4:4)?
3. A tactic of the adversary is to discourage us and cause us to lose faith in God (verse 2). What was said to Jesus while he was on the cross (Mt. 27:42-43)?

4. In reality, it is man, not God, who does not help (verse 2). Who is not to have our trust (Psa. 146:3)?
  
5. The righteous should have confidence that God will shield them, sustain them, and save them in time of trouble (verses 3-7). What does Paul say about this (Rom. 8:31-39)?
  
6. When our adversaries get us down, the Lord lifts us up and keeps us going (verse 3). What does the Lord do even at “the gates of death” (Psa. 9:13)?
  
7. Make it a habit to pray all the time; the Lord answers the prayer of the righteous (verse 4). What attitudes are to accompany our prayers (Mt. 7:7; Jas. 5:13; 1 Pet. 3:12; 1 Jn. 5:14)?
  
8. Don’t stay awake worrying, go to sleep. The Lord will take care of it because he never sleeps (verse 5). How does the psalmist describe the Lord (Psa. 121:3-4)?
  
9. Those who trust in God are not fearful (verse 6). What removes fear (Psa. 56:4, 11; Isa. 12:2)?
  
10. When adversaries “rise up” against us, the Lord will “arise” to help us (verse 7). What does the Lord show toward the adversaries (Psa. 7:6)?
  
11. Salvation (victory) belongs to the Lord (verse 8). What is God praised for (Rev. 7:10; 19:1)?
  
12. Pray for yourself and then pray for others. It is good to ask God to bless others (verses 7-8). What prayer of blessing is mentioned in Numbers 6:23-27?