

**INTRODUCTION**

**PSALMS 3–4 IN THE ARRANGEMENT OF THE PSALTER**

Psalm 3:

Psalm 4:

**David wrote the psalm at a point where adversaries had the upper hand, so those with him were becoming discouraged. The solution is to leave things in the Lord's hands.**

Verse 3, where David refers to himself as *hasid*, dates this is after David became king and probably after 2 Samuel 7, so this probably refers to Absalom's revolt

**ARRANGEMENT OF PSALM 4**

<sup>1</sup> To the Chief Musician. With stringed instruments.

**David's personal address to God: verbs & personal nouns are singular**

A Psalm of David. Hear<sub>s</sub> me when I call, O God of my righteousness! You have relieved<sub>s</sub> me in my distress; Have mercys on me, and hear<sub>s</sub> my prayer.

**David addressing people (from God's standpoint): verbs & personal nouns are plural**

<sup>2</sup> How long, O you sons of men, Will you turn<sub>p</sub> my glory to shame? How long will you love<sub>p</sub> worthlessness And seek<sub>p</sub> falsehood? Selah

**David addressing his loyalists: verbs & personal nouns are plural**

<sup>3</sup> But know<sub>p</sub> that the LORD has set apart for Himself him who is godly; The LORD will hear when I call to Him. <sup>4</sup> Be angry<sub>p</sub>, and do not sin<sub>p</sub>. Meditate<sub>p</sub> within your heart on your bed, and be still<sub>p</sub>. Selah <sup>5</sup> Offer<sub>p</sub> the sacrifices of righteousness, And trust<sub>p</sub> in the LORD. <sup>6</sup> There are many who say, "Who will show us any good?" LORD, lift up the light of Your countenance upon us.

**David's personal address to God: verbs & personal nouns are singular**

<sup>7</sup> You have put<sub>s</sub> gladness in my heart, More than in the season that their grain and wine increased. <sup>8</sup> I will both lie down in peace, and sleep; For You alone, O LORD, make<sub>s</sub> me dwell in safety.

**Superscription: David wrote this psalm & gave directions for incorporating it into worship**

**(1) David prays to the Lord that He graciously deliver Him as He has in the past**

The NIV & some other translations mishandle the second verb in verse 1 (underlined) by treating it as a command

*Answer me when I call to you, O my righteous God. Give me relief from my distress; be merciful to me and hear my prayer.*

The NIV's rendering lacks an explicit statement of confidence (until verses 7–8)

The NKJ correctly handles the second verb in verse 1 (underlined). It is a past tense.

*Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness! You have relieved me in my distress; Have mercy on me, and hear my prayer.*

How should we handle the past tense? Two possibilities exist (neither creates a problem):

1. David could treat deliverance as *so certain* that it is as if it had already happened
2. David could express that God's past deliverances give proof that He *will deliver*

Either option for the past tense is fine, but my outline accepts the second

**(2) David expresses wonderment that people dishonor God in their love of worthless lies: (the effort to overthrow the one with whom the Lord has a covenant)**

What he says applies broadly:

It is true of unbelievers

It is true of believers who have little regard for the Bible

It even describes believers who are normally serious about the Word  
(when sin causes them to get out-of-step with the Lord)

**(3) David's loyalists are to know that the Lord has set apart the one with who He has covenanted loyalty, so the Lord will answer his prayer for deliverance**

**(4) It is appropriate for (David and his) loyalists to have righteous indignation (about offenses inflicted against God's righteousness), but they are not to sin: specifically, they are to reflect on God (who will deliver) and to await (His deliverance)**

Defining contextually *righteous indignation*

Defining contextually *when righteous indignation ceases to be righteous & becomes sin*

Defining contextually *what it is that one is to meditate (reflect) upon*

Defining contextually *why David's advisors were to remain still*

**(5) (David and) his loyalists were to offer righteous sacrifices and to trust the Lord**

The sacrifices of which this passage speaks is the thanksgiving offering (Lev 7:11–15)  
(David is not assuming that his loyalists will ignore his advice—not assuming sin)

Let us look at a few of these:

Jonah 2

Psalm 22

Explaining the thanksgiving sacrifice in the context of Psalm 4:5

**(6) Many (even among David’s loyalists) doubt that God will deliver them, so David prays for the Lord (to convince the doubters and) to make all rejoice (by delivering them)**

**(7) The Lord has made David glad beyond the gladness at the time of bountiful harvest**

David expresses confidence. He has given (or plans to give sacrifice of righteousness)

**(8) [As a result of making the sacrifice of righteousness] David will in peace and security that the Lord gives to him**

**Citation of Psalm 4:4 in Ephesians 4:26–27**

## **CONCLUSION**

David prayed to the Lord, confident of His deliverance (because of God rescuing him in the past and because of God's covenanted loyalty to him), so he urged his loyalists to (join him in) worship the Lord in confidence of His deliverance, rather than letting righteous indignation (over assaults to God's honor) degrade into sin