

David's Prayer in the Morning: Psalm 3

Grace Chapel

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INTRODUCTION

THE ARRANGEMENT OF THE PSALTER

Book 1: 1–41

Book 2: 42–72

Book 3: 73–89

Book 4: 90–106

Book 5: 107–150

PSALMS 3–4 IN THE ARRANGEMENT OF THE PSALTER

Psalm 3:

Psalm 4:

Date of Composition

Historical Background

David born 1041 BC

David became king over Judah in Hebron 1011 BC

Amnon born in Hebron ca. 1010 BC

Absalom born in Hebron ca. 1008 BC

David became king over all Israel in Jerusalem 1004 BC

Birth of Solomon 990 BC

Amnon, one of David's sons raped his half-sister, Tamar (2 Sam 13) 987 BC

Two years later, Absalom, another son of David, avenged Tamar by
killing Amnon (2 Samuel 13:23, 28–29) 985 BC

Absalom went into exile for three years (2 Sam 13:37–38) 985–982 BC

Absalom returned to Jerusalem, avoiding his father for 2 yrs
(2 Sam 14:28) 982–980 BC

Absalom gained people's confidence for 4 years (2 Sam 15:7) 980–976 BC

Absalom rebelled against David (2 Sam 15:13ff.) 976 BC

David died 971 BC

Psalm 3 was written in 976

Psalms are poetry set to music. Each stanza has a movement within it, but stanzas are not necessarily listed in a chronological or narrative sequence.

Type of Psalm: Scholars call it a Lament (Complaint) = “Prayer for deliverance”

Superscription–verse 2: The bad guys are in control & You are getting bad press

Vss 3–4: You are my protector, so I pray to You, confident of deliverance

Vss 5–6: I slept well & am alive because of Your protection & do not fear the enemies

Vss 7–8: Lord , defeat my enemies and bring deliverance to Your people

Superscription–verse 2: The bad guys are in control and You are getting bad press

Superscription (verse 1 in the Hebrew): David wrote psalm while fleeing from Absalom

Verse 1: Many have arisen to oppose David (the Lord’s anointed)

Notice the synonymous parallelism (Hebrew poetry loves various types of parallelism):

Lord, how they have increased who trouble me!

Many are those who have risen against me.

This was written after the Davidic Covenant was given (979 BC)

It was written after Psalm 2 was written

When people have arisen to oppose David, they opposed God’s anointed

Verse 2: Many say that God will not help David

Very possibly, many people joined Absalom, because

David was old

David’s military exploits were in the past

David fled hurriedly before Absalom (2 Samuel 15:14)

Absalom had cultivated many friends

God did not seem to be protecting David (cf. 2 Sam 16:7–8)

However, those who followed Absalom were mistaken

Vss 3–4: God is David’s protector, so he pray to Him, confident of deliverance

Verse 3: God is the One who protects and will exalt David

Synonymous parallelism:

But You, O Lord, are a shield for me,

My glory and the One who lifts up my head.

The idiom: lift the head

Genesis 40:13 and 20

Verse 4: David knows that the Lord heard his petition and will rescue him

His holy hill is a reference to the Temple Mount, where the Temple would be built by Solomon & where the tabernacle was placed (2 Sam 6:16ff.)

Vss 5–6: David slept well & live because of God’s protection & did not fear the enemies

Verse 5: David slept (soundly) and awoke because the Lord protected him

Verse 6: David will not fear the multitudes who surround him

Vss 7–8: David petitioned the Lord to defeat His enemies & deliver His people
v 7: David asked the Lord to deliver him & as He always did (to crush His enemies)

Verse 8: It is the Lord who delivers and blesses His people
David affirms that it is the Lord who delivers

CONCLUSION

We, like David in 976 BC, live in unstable times, but we should pray for national deliverance that His Word can be freely proclaimed. Unlike David's time, we are under a duly constituted government, but (like in David's time) it is easy to lose hope as we look at the world around us. It is only as we look to the Lord and to the ministry that we have reason for optimism and reason to share the wonderful message of life that He has entrusted to us.

1 Timothy 2:1*ff.* is an excellent New Testament exhortation that has much in common with David's prayer in Psalm 3. 1 Timothy was written in AD 62. Nero had begun his reign in 54, but his insane rampage began in 59 (three years before 1 Timothy was written). In other words, the time that Paul urges believers to pray that their government allow them to live a quiet and peaceable life was after Nero worked to make believers' lives anything but quiet and peaceable.