

ADONAI, You are a Shield Around Me, the Lifter of My Head

Psalm 3:1-8

A psalm of David. When he fled from his son Absalom.

DIG: Who are David's foes (Second Samuel 15:13-30)? Why does he flee the City rather than fight? What must have happened to transform David's "weeping" eyes and bowed head in verses 3-5? From where did David find his peace, victory and blessing? Likewise, his anger and anxiety?

REFLECT: When did you last feel abandoned by friends or family members? By God? What happened? What "foes" are you facing right now? From what are you praying for deliverance? How will you know when that prayer is answered?

Every morning when we wake up, the choice stands before us: fear or faith? All of us, like David, have our own enemies and battles to fight. We can identify with the complaint of this psalm: **ADONAI, how many enemies do I have!** This trouble may come from people who attack us, from spiritual opposition, or from our own emotional wounds. So although David wrote this psalm in the heartbreak over his son's rebellion, it is our psalm too.

A. Lament Over Enemies: **ADONAI, how many enemies do I have! How countless are those attacking me; how countless those who say of me, "There is no salvation (Hebrew: *yeshuah*) in God (Psalm 3:1-2 CJB). His enemies cursed him (Second Samuel 16:7-8) or sarcastically concluded that David had been abandoned by the very God whom he had served so faithfully and in whom he had put his trust. During an era of international peace for David's kingdom, his enemies had arisen from *within* Israel. They joined together with great viciousness and hatred toward their king.³⁹⁰ But whenever adversity strikes we have a choice: we can run *from* God or run *to* God. We can use suffering to justify unbelief, or we can use suffering to spur us to faith.**

The skepticism of others and our own self-doubts can cause our faith to falter. As evil overwhelms us and our own frailty becomes more and more evident, the lie that **there is no salvation in God** sounds like the truth. If we are going to fight against this lie we must remember its origin. **Yeshua said of the Adversary: He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he**

speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies (Yochanan 8:44). Therefore, the origin of any doubts about the goodness of ADONAI, or His ability to save us is demonic. That is why Rabbi Sha'ul encourages us to take the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one (Eph. 6:16). This is exactly what David did in the next verse. We must turn from the lie to the living God.³⁹¹

Selah. It occurs 71 times in the Psalms and was likely a term of direction to the musicians who accompanied their recital, probably an indication that instrumental music was to be introduced at this point. But its precise significance in Isra'el's worship remains unclear. It could possibly mean *to lift up* or *exalt*.

B. Prayer to the LORD: David now moves from the character of his enemies to the character of God. **But You, ADONAI, You are a shield for me.** The king put his confidence in the protection that YHVH alone can provide, because his glory is greater than any human power. **You are my glorious One, ADONAI-Tzva'ot,** with a multitude of angels at His command that cannot be counted. This Psalm expresses confidence that the LORD will lift David's head high when he is victorious over his enemies. His fear is met by faith: **With my voice I call out to ADONAI, and He answers me from His holy mountain,** where the presence of the Great King is symbolized by the ark of the Covenant (Psalm 3:3-4 CJB). **The recollection of God's saving power in days past drove away any feeling of despair that David might have had. He had been compelled to flee from the Holy City where God dwelt among His people, but divine help would be extended to David wherever he went and whenever he called.**

We now pray to a person, the Lord Jesus Christ, rather than toward a place. His risen body is our temple. He is our mediator, and we have access to the Father in His name: For there is one God and one Mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus (First Timothy 2:5).

Selah. *Lift Him up and exalt Him.*

C. Trust in the LORD: I lie down and sleep, then wake up again, because ADONAI sustains me. **The knowledge that he had God as his shield made it possible for him to sleep at night, when the danger of sudden attack was greatest.** Because ADONAI sustained him, he was ready for battle. He called upon the LORD to fight and was confident of the outcome. **I am not afraid of tens of thousands set against me on every side (Psalm 3:5-6 CJB).** **Conscious that God was on his side, the numerical strength of his enemies did not alarm him.** David's commitment to the

LORD resulted in David surrendering his problems to God. Though he faced many enemies, prayer renewed his confidence in the One who would be victorious over the many. Far too often, our plans come before our prayers. How many blessings we miss by dreaming up our own schemes only to see the Eternal One frustrate them and later work out His own plan.³⁹²

B. Prayer for Deliverance: At this point, the psalm moves with a quickened rhythm: **Rise up, ADONAI!** This is reminiscent of Moshe's prayer when the ark of the Covenant went ahead of Isra'el (Numbers 10:35). He prayed that YHVH would move the enemies out of the way of the Ark, symbolic of the LORD's presence, as it went ahead of the people. But God's presence was not limited to the Ark, which at this point in David's life was in Zion. Ha'Shem's presence was with His anointed.

Deliver (Hebrew: *yasha*) **me, my God!** For the people of God, the name of ADONAI was the assurance that His promises to David would be fulfilled. Notice that the skeptics had already concluded that **there is no salvation in God (verse 2)**. So here David calls on the LORD to prove his adversaries wrong. **Yes, You will strike all my enemies on the jaw**, an expression of humiliation (First Kings 22:24; Job 16:10; Lamentations 3:30; Micah 5:1); **You will break the teeth of the wicked (Psalm 3:7 NET)**. The metaphor of breaking of teeth likens his enemies to wild animals whose strength is taken away when their teeth are crushed (Psalm 58:6). **This is a prophetic perfect, whereby an event still in the future is described as already taken place.** It was as if David was saying, "I am certain a time will come when You will strike my enemies and defeat them."

This expression of vindication may seem harsh to us, but David paints a word picture of hope, that, regardless of what enemies may arise from *inside* or *outside* the kingdom of God, ADONAI will be victorious. The hope of the Church still lies in the coming of Yeshua Messiah and His victory over all of His enemies (see commentary **Isaiah Kg - The Second Coming of Jesus Christ to Bozrah**).³⁹³

A. Hope in the LORD: Salvation (Hebrew: *yeshuah*) **comes from ADONAI.** After his circumcision on the eighth-day, Miryam took Yeshua to the Temple and offered a sacrifice for her own ceremonial cleansing after childbirth. Then she would present her firstborn to ADONAI in recognition of God's ownership. This simple ceremony consisted of presenting the child to a priest (see commentary on **The Life of Christ Au - Jesus Presented in the Temple**). As providence would have it, she approached Shim'on. When he took the baby Jesus in his arms and praised God: Like Zechariah and Elizabeth before him, Shim'on was moved by the Spirit to declare: **Now, ADONAI, as You have promised in Isaiah, You may**

now dismiss Your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen Your salvation (Luke 2:28-30 and Isaiah 40:5). Shim'on was not speaking English but in Hebrew. The Hebrew word for salvation is *yeshuah*; the Hebrew word for Jesus is almost the same, *Yeshua*. Both come from the same Hebrew root *yasha*, which means *to save*. The only difference is the final letter "h" which is silent. Therefore, in Hebrew the word **salvation** and the word **Jesus** sound the same. In a real way, what he said was not only **my eyes have seen Your salvation**, but **my eyes have seen Your Yeshua**.

May your blessing rest on Your people (Psalm 3:8 CJB). The blessing of YHVH is the result of His gracious deliverance. He granted the blessing of His presence, protection, and prosperity, first, to Abraham, "I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you" (Genesis 12:2-3). Then Ha'Shem confirmed His blessing to Isra'el, "When you have come to the Land ADONAI your God is giving you as your inheritance . . . you are to say, 'My ancestor was a nomad from Aram. He went down to Egypt few in number and stayed. There he became a great, strong, and populous nation. But the Egyptians treated us badly; they oppressed us and imposed harsh slavery on us. So we cried out to ADONAI, the God of our ancestors. ADONAI heard us and saw our misery, toil and oppression; and ADONAI brought us out of Egypt with a strong hand and an outstretched arm, with great terror, and with signs and wonders. Now He has brought us to this place and given us this Land, a Land flowing with milk and honey. Therefore, as you see, I have now brought the firstfruits of the Land that You, ADONAI, have given me.' You are then to put the basket down before ADONAI your God and prostrate yourself before Him (Deuteronomy 26:5-10). To David, God promised the removal of wicked people and external enemies as well as the subsequent peace of His people (Second Samuel 7:10-11 and 29). David looked forward to the time of full blessing. In his hope, we have hope, for in Jesus' promises the victory and blessings of the LORD are assured.³⁹⁴

Selah. *Lift Him up and exalt Him.*