

# The Dark Hour of Sunrise

## Psalm 3 (KJV)

**1** Lord, how are they increased that trouble me! many are they that rise up against me. **2** Many there be which say of my soul, There is no help for him in God. Selah. **3** But thou, O Lord, art a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of mine head. **4** I cried unto the Lord with my voice, and he heard me out of his holy hill. Selah. **5** I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for the Lord sustained me. **6** I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people, that have set themselves against me round about. **7** Arise, O Lord; save me, O my God: for thou hast smitten all mine enemies upon the cheek bone; thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly. **8** Salvation belongeth unto the Lord: thy blessing is upon thy people. Selah.

## The Background of The Third Psalm:

There are some things that we see in this psalm that have not been present in the previous two. The real crux of the psalms is about to get started with this third psalm. What we also begin here is the first of a collection of psalms written by David. They cover Psalms 3-41.

It is the first psalm that has a historical title – A Psalm of David, when he fled from Absalom.

It is the first psalm that is actually entitled “a psalm.” It is the first psalm that is considered a psalm of lament. A psalm of lament is one that is charged with emotional pain and a plea for divine deliverance from trouble. We often look to the psalms as a place of singing and worship, but there is something about lament, pain, disappointment that adds a depth to our worship that we otherwise would not grasp. It is the first psalm that is identified with morning worship. It follows a pattern from Psalm 1-2 in that both are related to each other. Psalm 3 is a psalm of morning worship and Psalm 4 is one for evening worship.

Our days should begin and end with worship to the Lord!

It is the first psalm that introduces us to the word, ‘Selah’ (vv. 2, 4, 8). This word is most likely a signal for a pause so that the musical instruments can be changed or that a new voice is to take up the song.

The word “psalm” comes from the Hebrew word, mizmor, which has to do with the cutting and pruning of unfruitful branches.

One of the powerful things about the word of the God is the ability to cross-reference it and pin-point historical occurrences with the words we read. This psalm is exactly in that category. The title tells us that this is a time when David was fleeing from Absalom.

The parallels from this psalm to the history in 2 Samuel fits in this manner:

3:2—David’s enemies say he is to be forsaken by God—2 Sam. 16:7-8

3:3—David’s head, covered on Mt. Olives, will be raised by God—2 Sam. 15:30

3:5—David’s danger and confidence in the night—2 Sam. 17:1, 16

3:6—David’s situation of being greatly outnumbered—2 Sam. 15:13; 17:11

3:8—David’s victory is always secured in the Lord—2 Sam. 19:1-2

We see that this psalm was written as a morning psalm, but in the beginning of it, it appears that David is facing the dark hour of sunrise with a host of trouble trying to erase him from the throne and ultimately from the world.

This psalm was written by David after running from Absalom. It was most likely written on the first night when he was fleeing from his own son. What a terrible thing to have been confronted with. While David had been running the affairs of the nation, his son had been working the people and drawing their allegiance away from his father. The whole matter is laid out in 2 Samuel 15-18.

That is the way that life often works. It just keeps on coming at you! You are working diligently to fulfill your obligations and responsibilities and in the background, someone is working against you. David appears to not have even had a hint of suspicion that this was taking place.

Before we get to the end of this psalm, we will be able to see that the Lord is the Lord over life and has every path worked out before we ever get to it. Adversity, disappointment, setbacks, rebellions, obstacles, and a host of other matters will be a portion of every life, but we can take confidence in the Lord.

Just as with the other psalms, I would set forth an outline for you so that you can get it set in your mind for later. I borrow this outline from John Phillips in his commentary on Psalms called Exploring the Psalms—Volume 1.

## **David's Trial**

### **Psalm 3:1-2 (KJV)**

**1** Lord, how are they increased that trouble me! many are they that rise up against me. **2** Many there be which say of my soul, There is no help for him in God. Selah.

David sums up his trial when he says that he has a multitude of enemies who have sided against him. There is even more to their dark presence when they begin to tell him that God will not be of any help to him.

The onset of the trial had been so sudden that it was unnerving. David had been working in Jerusalem and his rebellious son had been working in Hebron.

To be in the minority is a huge test of nerve no matter what cause that you have taken up. It is even more when they are gathering strength. David says, “They are increased that trouble me!” but even more difficult, he notes is the rising in their numbers.

When we read of the account in 2 Samuel, we also realize that when our faith is under attack that it can skew our perspective on life in general. David may have felt like there were no supporters and that he only had enemies pursuing him, but there were some faithful men who were with him. They had been with him for a long time. In fact, some of them went back as far as thirty years to the cave days of Adullam.

Joab—His commander-in-chief. He knew how to order an army and inspire bravery.

Benaiah—A valiant man and the son of a valiant man. A man filled with courage who had slain a lion on a snowy day.

Abishai—The brother of Joab and both were cousins of David. He had once killed three hundred men in a battle with a spear.

The Mighty Men—Somewhere were that noble 30 whom had helped David to do the will of the Lord.

Here is what we often forget... Even amidst the challenges and calamities of life, moments when our faith is under attack, and our spiritual equilibrium has been turned upside down, there are men of God who are surrounding us. Just their presence adds something to our lives!

There is something to be said for fellowship of a brother! There needs to be great value placed on the fact that we worship the Lord in a church with spiritual support around us. It very well could be that you may be sitting on a pew in this service thinking that your enemies have gotten the best of you and that things are grim. But you are surrounded by mighty men who shall see to it that God will bring you out... even if you can't see it or believe it!

But there is another factor involved here. Some malicious voices are also factoring God out of the equation! This may have been a reference to the voice of Shimei in 2 Samuel 16. He cursed David in front of his own men at this troubling time in his life.

Some biblical scholars believe that the motivation of this statement was the dark sin that David had committed with Bathsheba. They were throwing his past in his face.

*“If all the trials which come from heaven, all the temptations that could ascend from hell, and all the crosses which arise from the earth, could be mixed and pressed together, they would not make a trial so terrible as that which is contained in this verse. It is the most bitter of all afflictions to be led to fear that there is no help for us in God.” – Charles Spurgeon*

The enemies of the righteous often have voices that do their best to squash every bit of the faith out of us that they can.

Noah had to deal with the mocking voices as he built the ark under the orders of God. Nehemiah had to contend with the mockery of Sanballat and Tobiah as he built his wall. Bartimaeus had to turn a deaf ear to those calling him from the healing of his blind eyes. Mary was chided by Judas for anointing the Lord with the perfume from the alabaster box.

But great faith often is strengthened instead of stifled when we face discouragements head on with the trust in the Lord. Trials will come, be prepared for them. Discouragements will face you, get ready for them. Yet one of the most difficult wrestling's of our faith is when our hope in God seems to have been brought into question.

The banter starts up at times from the enemies:

You haven't received the Holy Ghost!  
You don't deserve to be with these good people of the church!  
You have no salvation from the Lord!  
You are a fake, a sham, a hypocrite!  
You don't think you will be presented faultless before the Lord, do you?  
The blood of Calvary could never wash away that sin!  
There has never been a real conversion to take place in your life!  
You don't think the Lord is going to hear your prayer, do you?

We are often just like David and tend to believe what we are hearing! I have told you this before... I tell you again... Perhaps from an overactive and fertile imagination... But when I get to heaven, I am hoping the Lord has kept a record of every demonic lie that has come from the demon liars which they have nudged in my direction over my lifetime. It is my purpose to make sure that they see me in the most victorious spiritual state that I will have ever been in... a redeemed son of God with a new body, new mind, and new home!

We know from John 8 that the devil is the father of all lies and there needs to be a revolt in worship against that kind of thing... Keep building, Noah... Keep working, Nehemiah... Keep crying out, Bartimaeus... Keep worshipping, Mary!

## David's Trust

### Psalm 3:3-4 (KJV)

**3** But thou, O Lord, art a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of mine head.

**4** I cried unto the Lord with my voice, and he heard me out of his holy hill. Selah.

What was it that changed the tone of David's lament? It was prayer! In Psalm 3:1, he cries out the first prayer of the Psalms... O Lord... There are enemies who have the upper hand... Then his faith starts to be engaged because he gets his eyes off the enemy and turns to the Lord... in prayer!

**1 Timothy 2:1 (KJV)** I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men;

The nature of true faith is to draw near to God. The nature of true faith is to see God as a sufficient source against every evil that befalls us. The nature of true faith is to see that God in His goodness and power can draw any saint out of the lowest condition wherever he may be. The nature of true faith is to seek God with a conscience that says He will save me. The nature of true faith is one that will stir up earnestness, affection, and feeling in our prayer.

One other thing about this prayer... I cried... Our relationship with God is not an academic pursuit. This pulpit is not an educational lecture as such nor is this sanctuary a lecture hall where we have dry discussions about God. The trend to remove our emotions from our relationship with God in worship moves wholly against much of the Bible.

Worshippers, prayer warriors, and saints of necessity must be given to crying out to the Lord. David wrote that he cried out to the Lord... Notice what took place in a span of two verses. The enemies of the godly said, "God has no help for you!" But when he engaged in prayer... in crying prayer... all of that changed... David says, "He heard me..."

**1 John 5:14 (KJV)** And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:

Who heard David?

My Shield! Although the fiery darts have been flung at me, the shield will consume them! My Glory! Although I have been driven from the kingdom in shame, I will return in glory! The Lifter of Mine Head! Though I may hang my head in sorrow and trouble, the Lord will lift my head in victory and joy will return!

God hears us in the most terrible predicaments of life! There is no cry that escapes our lips that the Lord Jesus Christ does not hear!

## **David's Triumph**

### **Psalm 3:5-8 (KJV)**

**5** I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for the Lord sustained me. **6** I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people, that have set themselves against me round about. **7** Arise, O Lord; save me, O my God: for thou hast smitten all mine enemies upon the cheek bone; thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly. **8** Salvation belongeth unto the Lord: thy blessing is upon thy people. Selah.

Here is the pattern of the Dark Hour of Sunrise... From this psalm, we see the pattern... Trial, Trust, and then Triumph!

David said that he laid down and slept. It was a long sleep of rest. Not one of tossing, turning, fear, and worry, but one of sweetness. He said that when he woke up, the Lord had sustained him. That means that while we sleep, the Lord is dealing with the enemies of your soul.

The enemies may have had the numbers, but David had God! Ten thousand enemies may seek our life, but the Lord will prevail!

Here is what David had no way of knowing... In the council chamber of Absalom, the dark advice he received from Ahithophel was being dismissed. On the other hand, God was using one of David's trusted advisors who was serving as a secret agent, a man named Hushai, the Archite, to talk some sense into Absalom... (1 Samuel 17:5-8, 14-15).

Ye fearful saints fresh courage take, The clouds ye so much dread; Are big with mercy and shall fall in blessings on your head.

David's enemies, Absalom and all those he had managed to get to shift their allegiance toward him and away from David, were now about to take a punch to the cheek bone and have their teeth knocked out!

Right now, this very minute, God is working in my behalf... He is working in your behalf! But the liar from the pit does not want you to see it or believe it!

He will smite the enemies in the face... He will break the teeth of the ungodly. It is nothing more than a foreshadow of a greater event to come!

### **Revelation 20:1-3 (KJV)**

**1** And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. **2** And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, **3** And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.

**Revelation 20:10 (KJV)** And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

### **A Saint's Waterloo**

One of the most famous battles in history took place at a small village in Brussels, Belgium. It is one of the most famous military battles of all time. It is a place called Waterloo. The two opponents were Napoleon Bonaparte who had amassed around 74,000 troops and was armed with infantry and artillery. Against him was the Duke of Wellington who had only 67,000 troops, but was in a very strong defensive position.

Only a few months prior to this, Napoleon had been in exile off the coast of Italy. He determined to gain his position of power back. To do this he would have to escape his island prison and return to France and rally his men to take back the crown. All those actions would lead up to a huge fight at Waterloo.



A heavy rain the night before had forced Napoleon to wait until noon on June 18 before he could attack. His delay would prove to be fatal to him. The extra time allowed a group of Prussian troops to arrive and reinforce the army of Wellington. By the evening, the defeat of Napoleon was a certainty. France had suffered 40,000 casualties and Wellington had lost but 23,000. The shocking defeat pushed Napoleon into a retreat and Napoleon lost his hold on world power.

Four days later, General Wellington sent news back to England of his great victory. A series of stations, one within the sight of the next had been established to send coded messages across England to notify the country of the outcome of the battle. The people of England were totally dependent on the primitive Morse-code like delivery of the messages.

One such station was high atop the tower of the Winchester Cathedral in London. Late in the day, the first word was relayed... Wellington.. the next was defeated. At that precise moment, a thick London fog rolled in across the English Channel. It became impossible to read the rest of the message telling of England's decisive victory. Instead, all of England received the message "Wellington Defeated."

News of the supposed defeat spread quickly through the city. A somber mood fell across the land and the English were greatly disheartened and discouraged. Their general and his army had lost the war. Then the fog lifted... The rest of the message could be seen. The message had four words... not two. The complete message... Wellington defeated the enemy.

What a difference! In only minutes the news spread throughout the countryside. Sorrow turned to joy. Despair turned to hope. Victory had been snatched from the jaws of defeat. (Adapted from Faith Under Fire, Steven Lawson, pp. 207-208).

The enemy says God cannot help you...

God says... Salvation belongeth to the Lord... Thy blessing is upon thy people.