

“He Heard Me”

Psalm 3

The text for the title comes from verse four (4) – “I cried unto the LORD...and he heard me...” This statement defines the difference between opposing world views – the view of a world without Christ and the view of a world with Christ.

There is often (if not always) more than one point of view for any situation in life. There are two views seen here as to the spiritual life one can have in God – the view of the world (or the lost) – one of hatred and hinderance; and the view of the believer – one of happiness and hope. The psalm concludes with the help available to those with the right point of view.

For the believer today, it is important to get a perspective of what the world is going to do so we are better able to battle against its worldview. It is equally important to have the Saviour's perspective so we can be successful in that battle. If we have the two points of view in mind, then our point of view will be one of happiness and hope. If one or the other is out of view, then so will ours be.

The title of this Psalm, although not inspired, has been connected with it since the compilation of the book of Psalms centuries before the time of Christ. It's entitled, “A Psalm of David, when he fled from Absalom his son,” and is actually the first verse in the Hebrew Bible. The occurrence referenced is found in the historical account of Second Samuel 15.

2 Samuel 15:6

⁶ And on this manner did Absalom to all Israel that came to the king for judgment: so Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel.

Each section of this psalm (a strophe, an antistrophe, and an epode) is marked by the word "selah" at the end of each section. The word is simply transliterated out of Hebrew – סֶלָה – and it's exact meaning is unknown. Much has been written on the word and it seems there is no real agreement other than that it marks a pause in the poem or song and is thought by many conservative Biblicists to mark a point that is to be considered – "think about that," for instance. Some see it as our "amen," but that doesn't carry as close to the meaning as the pause to think does. The context of its use throughout the Psalms, barring a few exceptions, would support this idea of pause and reflection.

Although there's a natural division to the psalm, marked by that word "Selah," we will divide it in a way to demonstrate the teaching the psalm provides.

I. THE WORLD'S POINT OF VIEW – VS. 1-2

A. View of distress – vs. 1 – "that trouble me"

1. The word for "trouble" (צָר) means, among other things, to distress a person as one's enemy. When we got saved, we became the enemy of the world, and their goal is to cause us as much distress and trouble as they can.
2. The word for "trouble," in its initial, literal sense means to be in a tight, narrow place – which is where the idea of the distress of the enemy. Closed in on the sides with only one way to go – that's what the world is doing to us, as believers.

3. This is the New Testament word "distress," as found in Romans 8:35.

Romans 8:35

³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

B. View of destruction – vs. 1 – "that rise up against me"

The ultimate purpose of the Devil and the world is to destroy the Christian. They are seen as an innumerable force "rising up" in strength against us. Without the Lord's help, the battle would seem too great, and we would give up, and ultimately be destroyed.

C. View of discouragement – vs. 2 – "which say"

One of the greatest ploys the Devil uses to get us to quit living for the Lord is to use discouragement, and the way he does that is to get people "to say" things about us, or to us. They are often things that are not true, but they are meant to destroy us, or at the very least to disarm us.

II. THE CHRISTIAN'S POINT OF VIEW – VS. 3-7

A. View of confidence – vs. 3-5

1. Confident we will be protected and helped in time of trouble – vs. 3
 - a) "Shield" – protector
 - b) "Lifter up" – the One who promotes us over the enemy's attack

Psalm 18:2

² The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.

Psalm 62:7

⁷ In God is my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God.

2. Confident our prayers will be heard – vs. 4

a) The wording used here shows that the psalmist wasn't just looking to have his prayers heard but was demonstrating absolute confidence that they not only would be heard when he voiced them, but that they would be answered.

b) "And He heard me" – וַיִּשְׁמָעֵנִי – this is a verb meaning to answer, to respond. It wasn't just that the Lord heard him (that would be a different Hebrew word (שָׁמַע)), but that He answered him in the affirmative to his prayer.

Psalm 34:6

⁶ This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.

Psalm 50:15

¹⁵ And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.

Psalm 91:15

¹⁵ He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him.

3. Confident because of peace – vs. 5

The use of “sleep” in this psalm is to show that he had peace enough to not let the troubles he was enduring deprive him of rest. It shows both the peace he had, as well as the strength that sleep provided – “I awaked for the LORD sustained me.”

Psalm 4:8

⁸ I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, LORD, only makest me dwell in safety.

Psalm 127:2

² It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so he giveth his beloved sleep.

Proverbs 3:24

²⁴ When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid: yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet.

B. View of courage – vs. 6

1. Courage enough to know that no matter what comes against us we can be victorious.
2. “Ten thousands of people” (מֵרִבּוֹת עָם) – a term used for a myriad of people – not always a specific number. Used simply for a large number of people.

Psalm 118:10

¹⁰ All nations compassed me about: but in the name of the LORD will I destroy them.

Romans 8:31

³¹ What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?

C. View of completion – vs. 7

Our victory will be a complete one with the Lord's help.

The terms used for “hast smitten” and “has broken” are past tense, showing that the psalmist was calling on the Lord to do for him again what he had done for him in the past (most likely referencing David’s deliverance from King Saul’s attacks).

III. THE SAVIOR’S RESPONSE – VS. 8

A. One of belonging – “*Salvation belongeth unto the LORD*”

1. The salvation spoken of here was one of an historical, practical view in the episode of David’s life from which this Psalm originates – when Absalom had put David to flight. David knew that the only way out of the physical danger he was in was through his faith in the LORD.

On the practical side, the same is true for us today as we face the trials of life, and the attack by the enemies that rise up against us. David’s enemy was one from within his own family, and it is often the case today that our most difficult challenges come from within, and they are quite often very damaging in numerous ways.

Psalm 41:9

⁹ Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I

trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me.

2. On the spiritual side, our soul salvation rests solely on the Lord as well. We had nothing to do with it. It was simply by His grace.

Isaiah 43:11

¹¹ I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no saviour.

Hosea 13:4

⁴ Yet I am the LORD thy God from the land of Egypt, and thou shalt know no god but me: for there is no saviour beside me.

Jonah 2:9

⁹ But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that that I have vowed. Salvation is of the LORD.

Acts 4:12

¹² Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

B. One of blessing – "Thy blessing is upon thy people"

The blessings we enjoy as a child of God are all because of His mercy and grace. This is spoken in this psalm of the children of Israel, but by clear application it is applied to the child of God today as well.

Ephesians 1:3

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:

1 Peter 3:8–9

⁸ Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous:

⁹ Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.

Conclusion: What is your "Point of View"?

A minister visited a nobleman in a Russian prison. He read a passage of Scripture and prayed, but his words met with solemn contempt. Before leaving, the pastor gave the man a Bible and urged him to read it. No sooner had the minister left than the angry prisoner kicked the Book into the corner. He thought, the Word of God, indeed! Why is this God not meting out justice to the tyrants who are abusing me? As the days passed, a terrible loneliness nearly drove him out of his mind. Snatching the Bible from off the floor, he opened it. His first glance fell on these words from Psalm 50:15, "And call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee." He was surprised and touched by such a pointed invitation, yet pride prompted him to shut the Bible and drop it. The next day desperation compelled him to seek the only companion of his solitude. This time he began to study its pages. Seeing himself as a sinner, he opened his heart to Christ. His waking hours which were formerly spent wallowing in self-pity and bitterness now were being given to his newfound Friend. The shadows of death and injustice gave way to new light from another world.