

## Psalm 3 – He Answered Me from His Holy Hill



- Psa 3:1 O YHWH, how many are my foes!  
Many are rising against me;
- Psa 3:2 many are saying of my soul,  
“There is no salvation for him in Elohim.” *Selah*
- Psa 3:3 But you, O YHWH, are a shield about me,  
my glory, and the lifter of my head.
- Psa 3:4 I cried aloud to YHWH,  
and He answered me from His holy hill. *Selah*
- Psa 3:5 I lay down and slept; I woke again,  
for YHWH sustained me.
- Psa 3:6 I will not be afraid of many thousands of people  
who have set themselves against me all around.
- Psa 3:7 Arise, O YHWH! Save me, O my Elohim!  
For You strike all my enemies on the cheek;  
You break the teeth of the wicked.
- Psa 3:8 Salvation belongs to YHWH;  
Your blessing be on your people! *Selah*

## Structural Analysis

Psalm 3 is organized as a chiasm with many layers of meanings. Let's explore and see what we can find. First, let's identify the chiasm.

- A** O YHWH, how many are my foes! Many are rising against me. (1)
- B** Many are saying of my soul, "There is no salvation for him in Elohim." *Selah* (2)
- C** But You, O YHWH, are a shield about me, my glory, and the lifter of my head. (3)
- \*** **I cried aloud to YHWH, and He answered me from His holy hill.** *Selah* (4)
- C** I lay down and slept; I woke again, for YHWH sustained me. (5)  
I will not be afraid of many thousands of people who have set themselves against me all around. (6)
- B** Arise, O YHWH! Save me, O my Elohim! For You strike all my enemies on the cheek; You break the teeth of the wicked. (7)
- A** Salvation belongs to YHWH; Your blessing be on Your people! *Selah* (8)

Now let's look at the parallels:

- Vs 1 Many foes are rising against me  
Vs 8 YHWH is my salvation

Contrasting parallel – Although many are seeking to destroy David, he only needs YHWH. YHWH will deliver him.

- Vs 2 My enemies say there is no Elohim  
Vs 3 YHWH (his Elohim) will strike his enemies

Contrasting parallel – David's enemies deny Elohim and His deliverance, but David knows YHWH will save him.

- Vs.3 YHWH is my shield  
Vs.5-6 I am not afraid

Continuing parallel – Since YHWH will protect David, David is not afraid.

### **Vs 4 I cried out to YHWH and He answered me**

The center – The center of a chiasm is the topic sentence, the point of the whole section. This statement reaffirms David's faith; YHWH answered him in his need. It is also written as a contrasting parallel, whose beauty and structural acuteness we will examine in the next section.

## **Complex Analysis**

"I cried out to YHWH and He answered me from His holy hill." In this very simple verse, we find a key to revealing a deeper layer of his psalm. The first half of this statement is a lament. David is crying out, his enemies are increasing and rising up against him. The second part of the statement is praise. YHWH answered David.

This pattern mirrors a secondary organization of the poem. The first three verses are negative. Then we have the center statement which is negative and positive. The final four verses are positive. Let's look a bit closer.

- 1 O YHWH, how many are my foes! Many are rising against me.**
- 2 Many are saying of my soul, "There is no salvation for him in Elohim." *Selah***
- 3 But You, O YHWH, are a shield about me, my glory, and the lifter of my head.**
  
- 4 I cried aloud to YHWH, and  
He answered me from His holy hill. *Selah***
  
- 5 I lay down and slept; I woke again, for YHWH sustained me.**
- 6 I will not be afraid of many thousands of people who have set themselves against me all around.**
- 7 Arise, O YHWH! Save me, O my Elohim! For You strike all my enemies on the cheek;  
You break the teeth of the wicked.**
- 8 Salvation belongs to YHWH; Your blessing be on Your people! *Selah***

Verse 3 may appear positive because it is an affirmation of David's faith. However, notice David's physical condition; he cannot lift his own head (David does not trust in his own strength), but rests assured in the justice YHWH is about to deliver.

This deliverance is explained in the last four verses: YHWH sustains him, saves him, and strikes his enemies. Salvation belongs to YHWH. For greater insight into the events surrounding this psalm, read 2 Sam 15:13 – 18:9. Absalom, David's son, is trying to seize the kingdom. Absalom ultimately dies by getting caught in the branches of a tree. His death is not by David's hand, but by YHWH's will. Salvation belongs to YHWH.

## **Interpretive Analysis**

"I cried out to YHWH and He answered me **from His holy hill.**" The phrase "holy hill" is a metaphor. A metaphor is a type of figurative language. Specifically, a metaphor is a word or phrase used to represent some other idea.

His holy hill (Mt. Zion) is used metaphorically all throughout Scripture as the place where YHWH dwells and from which His actions flow. However, it is important to examine metaphors because each metaphor is intentional and hints at a deeper teaching.

Absalom died in the fields of Ephraim, nowhere near Mt. Zion and YHWH was not sitting on Mt. Zion. Is there a time when YHWH will be on Mt. Zion? Yes! At Yashua's second coming! Let's see if there are any more references to this future event.

First, in verse 2, there is no salvation for David's soul. Although the idea of salvation of our souls is a theme found throughout Scripture, it is not explicitly taught in Torah. That idea is explained more thoroughly as part of the new/renewed covenant. The soul usually references our eternal being that will live forever in the kingdom.

Next, in verse 5, David says, "I lay down and slept; I woke again, for YHWH sustained me." YHWH did sustain David while Absalom was trying to abscond his kingdom.

However, death is often referred to as "sleeping" (Jn 11:11, Act 13:36, 1Cor 11:30, 1Cor 15:51, 1Thess 4:14). It is highly probable that this "sleep" refers to David being at rest (Salvation belongs to YHWH) but also the resurrection from "sleep" into eternal life.

"For You strike all my enemies on the cheek." We are familiar with the idea of being struck on the cheek, but this idea is only mentioned a handful of times. Usually, Israel is being struck by the nations as punishment from YHWH (Job, Lamentations, Micah). Unlike these other examples, here YHWH is striking the wicked on the cheek. You may be thinking about Yashua.

Mat 5:39 But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.

We are to turn the other cheek, but in this psalm, YHWH does NOT. When will He strike the wicked? At the judgement!

The psalmist goes on to say, "You break the teeth of the wicked."

Mat 13:49-50 So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Yashua clearly mentions the gnashing of teeth after judgment.

At this point, there is no denying the prophetic layer within this psalm. Salvation belongs to YHWH. In the end, Yashua (our salvation) will descend upon the holy hill and answer our cries. At that time, our enemies will have increased, and nations will rage against YHWH's people. Many of us will sleep and wake again – die and be resurrected - into an everlasting life.

At the appointed time, Yashua will strike the cheeks of our enemies, He will separate the righteous and the wicked. The righteous will enter the kingdom and the wicked will go where there will be gnashing of teeth.

**He** will do that. It is not our battle. Salvation belongs to YHWH and the battle has already been won. Blessings will be upon His people as we enter the everlasting kingdom.

### **In Conclusion**

YHWH Was, and Is, and Is To Come. Whatever battles we are facing, in this day or the one to come, YHWH is our shield and salvation. We do not need to lift our heads; He will lift them for us. We do not need to attack our enemies; He will deliver us. All we have to do is trust, wait, hope, rest in the faithfulness of YHWH.

I pray that you cry out to YHWH. He will hear you and answer you and I pray you hear the voice of YHWH calling you to His plan, His purpose, His kingdom.