



**I**S any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms.

(James 5:13)

### A Psalm of David, when he fled from Absalom his son.

**L**ORD, 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. (Psalm 3)

The American patriot of our day could doubtless identify with the sentiments expressed in this Psalm by David who feels that the whole world is allied against him in the Wilderness. When we view the political corruption and social immorality in our midst, it is easy for us to feel the same sentiments. At such moments as these, let us recall that there remain thousands among us who have yet to kneel the knee to Baal or Mammon. Even as the hordes gather in siege, and the battlements are erected against our walls, we may see by faith the legions of Angels assembled in glorious array about our perimeter defenses.

It is not in moments of ease that we most clearly sense the Lord's protection, but in times of peril and billowing darkness. It is then that the Holy Spirit calls to our memory that "*Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me.*" It is in the dark valley of the shadow of death that the heavenly stars are most starkly illumined in the heavens above.

The Author of this Psalm is God, and the scribe, David. The tune is Martydom, composed by Hugh Wilson (1766 – 1824). Public Domain.

### Psalm 3

O Lord, how are my foes increas'd?  
against me many rise.  
2 Many say of my soul, For him  
in God no succour lies.

Yet thou my shield and glory art,  
th' uplifter of mine head.  
I cry'd, and, from his holy hill,  
the Lord me answer made.

I laid me down and slept; I wak'd;  
for God sustained me.  
6 I will not fear though thousands ten  
set round against me be.

Arise, O Lord; save me, my God;  
for thou my foes hast stroke  
All on the cheek-bone, and the teeth  
of wicked men hast broke.

Salvation doth appertain  
unto the Lord alone:  
Thy blessing, Lord, for evermore  
thy people is upon.

The following devotion on this psalm is by John Brown of Haddington and appears in the Scottish Metrical Psalter of 1650. Bear in mind that Psalms were the hymns of choice by the early Church and many of the Reformation period:

Notes by John Brown of Haddington:

A Psalm of David, when he fled from Absalom his son:

Having beheld the royal dignity of my Redeemer, let me here behold the joy, the peace, the safety of the redeemed, amidst their distresses innumerable.

Here David, driven from his holy capital and high throne, by his rebellious son Absalom,

1. Complains to his God of the number and malice of his enemies, ver. 1-2.
2. He encourageth himself in his God, as the source and subject-matter of his safety, joy, and honour, ver. 3.
3. He recollects, how, on former occasions, his troubles had driven him to his prayers; how he had always found God ready to hear and grant his requests; how safe and easy he had lived under his protection; and how effectually he had broken the power and restrained the malice of his enemies, ver 4-5, 7.
4. Triumphantly trusting in God, as the salvation and blesser of his people, he silenceth all his fears, and pours forth his prayers for new protection and deliverance, ver. 6, 8.
5. Think, my soul, of Jesus, who, when bulls of Bashan compassed him about, trusted in God, that he would deliver him. In all my distress, let me pour out my heart before him, believing in him as God, even my God. Let me always rejoice in the great God my Saviour. Let me trust in him at all times, that as he hath delivered, and doth deliver, so he will deliver me.

When I consider the America I read about in history – from its primitive founding to the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War - I read of a nation whose values were clearly defined and whose character was molded by an acknowledgement of a Sovereign Providence.

I view the military records of heroic citizen-soldiers, such as Audie Murphy of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry fame, and wonder what has happened, since such men walked the earth, to our great nation. Have we forgotten the Divine Benefactor and Grantor of our freedoms? Do we even value our freedom today more than we value a false promise of security from government? Have we loosed wild desires untempered by moral constraint? Have we come to accept vice and corruption as merely the ordinary course of business, the burning and destruction of private properties and holdings as just measures of protest?

The judgment of God is not always to destroy but most often intended to remind us of the lessons of our past days when we walked with Him by the banks of Jordan – a time when He lifted our unbecoming yokes in the days when great men such as Patrick Henry thundered the warnings of impending bondage, or Thomas Jefferson (in the greatest document of political inspiration ever written) recalled to our memory these words written in flames of fire on the patriots' breast – words that a recent Presidential candidate could not seem to accurately recall:

*We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That, to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That, whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness<sup>1</sup>.*

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<sup>1</sup> The Declaration of Independence – the Founding Document of our American Republic