

## *PSALMS 3 and 4*

The third psalm was composed by David during the rebellion of his son Absalom, which caused him great affliction as a father and great political difficulty as a monarch. It shows his trust and confidence in Yahweh, which were always uppermost in David's mind, and also brings before us a lesson--that we may not only apply to God in our temporal difficulties but also as an incitement to prayer for God's gracious assistance when temptations assail our spiritual welfare. Our foes, like David's, may be "those of our own households." Our dearest relatives, instead of walking with us in the ways of God, may vex and oppose us. In such cases, let us in meekness and the spirit of charity refer the matter in prayer to God. Thus, in the most stormy night of trouble, we shall be enabled to take our rest, confident that the Lord will sustain us.

### Psalm 3

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

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

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In the fourth psalm we find David addressing, first, his righteous God in terms of thanksgiving and prayer; and second, his rebellious subjects in terms of rebuke and warning, entreating them to commune with their own hearts, to offer the sacrifice of righteousness, and to put their trust in Yahweh. In every circumstance of human life, this self-communion is an exercise of the most salutary nature. It tends to restrain us from vice, to cherish the seeds of virtue, to lead us to consider how far the tenor of our lives is in conformity with God's law, and to make us "stand in awe and sin not." Happy--thrice

happy!--is that Christian who lays himself down to rest full of the joys of a good conscience and of a sincere faith, and is thus prepared to resign himself to his Maker's care whether in life or in death, whether in the expectation of arising from his bed on the following morning or from his grave in the still more glorious morning of the last day.

#### Psalm 4

**For the choir director; on stringed instruments. A Psalm of David.**

- 1 Answer me when I call, O God of my righteousness! You have given me relief when I was in distress. Be gracious to me and hear my prayer!
- 2 O men, how long shall my honor be turned into shame?  
How long will you love vain words and seek after lies? Selah
- 3 But know that YAHWEH has set apart the godly for himself; YAHWEH hears when I call to him.
- 4 Be angry, and do not sin;  
ponder in your own hearts on your beds, and be silent. Selah
- 5 Offer right sacrifices, and put your trust in YAHWEH.
- 6 There are many who say, "Who will show us some good?  
Lift up the light of your face upon us, O YAHWEH!"
- 7 You have put more joy in my heart than they have when their grain and wine abound.
- 8 In peace I will both lie down and sleep; for you alone, O YAHWEH, make me dwell in safety.

#### PRAYER

*O God, author of all righteousness, from whom all grace and safety and glory proceed, in mercy look upon our infirmities. Grant that in all our troubles we may put our whole trust and confidence in you. And may we evermore serve you in holiness and pureness of life to your honor and glory. Enable us not to place our desires and hopes upon the perishing and unsatisfying things of this world, but upon those everlasting joys which are at your right hand. Give us a lively sense of the blessings of a pure conscience, so that when we lay ourselves down to our nightly rest, we may commit ourselves into your hands with a perfect, though humble, trust and assurance of your gracious protection in this life, and of your mercy toward us in the life to come, through Jesus Christ, our only Lord and Saviour. Amen.*