

• *David's Psalm collection*

• *Believers experience troubles*

• *Troubles should not make us feel burdened with guilt and rejection*

**1. Laying our problems before God**

• *Absalom's rebellion drove David out of the capital city*

• *The shame and embarrassment of being removed from office*

• *Jesus also faced great opposition*

• *Prayer in the morning and the evening*

**2. But God...**

The psalms are well edited. Psalms 1 and 2 have been an introduction. Now we come to the 'psalms of David's troubles'. 'Book 1' of the psalms are mainly about David and his difficulties. Psalms 3-9, 11-32, 34-41 all claim to be in David's psalm-collection. Immediately we discover that David could be in deep trouble! The **heading** of this psalm tells us it was written at (or shortly after) a time when David was brought into distress because of a rebellion led by his son, Absalom. We remember the story as it is told in 2 Samuel 15:13-17:24. There is nothing unusual about a believing person finding himself or herself in deep trouble! We should not feel burdened with guilt, when it happens. Maybe we might have brought in upon ourselves (as David's troubles with Absalom came because of his sin with Bathsheba). But we need not be weighed down with a sense of rejection.

1. **We learn to lay our problems before God.** David did so. He had many foes in the land <sup>1</sup>. Absalom had been slandering David for a long time, and people had been listening to him. Now David is driven out of his capital city, and many have given up all hope that David will ever be king again. They certainly do not think God is likely to do anything to rescue David <sup>2</sup>.

Do not think that you can have a trouble-free life! David was a man after God's own heart, but he had many problems and difficulties.

<sup>1</sup>O Lord, how many are my foes!  
Many are rising against me;  
<sup>2</sup>many are saying of my soul,  
"There is no salvation for him in God."

You remember the story of how Absalom slowly stole the kingdom from David <sup>1</sup>, and then finally he got such power that he was able to remove his father from the throne. Imagine being betrayed and opposed by your own son! He was removed from office. Has that happened to you? He was brought into a situation of great shame and embarrassment.

And it is not only David! Look at the life of Jesus. What opposition he faced. See how they wanted to remove him from any position of influence. See what shame and embarrassment there was for Jesus as he was crucified.

What does David do? He takes the problem to God. Morning and evening he was spending time in taking these difficulties to God. It is clear that he is praying early in the morning <sup>1</sup> and late at night. That is why he refers to sleep or to going to bed <sup>2</sup>. Psalm 8 is a record of a song at night-time. David tackles these problems of his in a very prayerful spirit.

2. **We learn to say 'But'.** A turn of thought comes in verse 3. 'But you...' <sup>1</sup>. One always enjoys the 'Buts' of the Bible. When men think all is lost in the kingdom of God, God is likely to act. God has always been a shield to David, and David knows this is God's settled character. God is 'my glory' for David, the One he regards as glorious, the One He delights in. God is 'the lifter of my head'. When David left Jerusalem, fleeing from Absalom, he and the people had their heads covered in distress <sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> 3:1

<sup>2</sup> 3:2

<sup>1</sup> 2 Samuel 15

<sup>1</sup> Psalm 5:3

<sup>2</sup> Psalm 4:8;  
6:6

<sup>1</sup> 3:3

<sup>2</sup> 2 Sam.15:30

• *God's protection*

God will give us protection. *But you, Yahweh, are a shield around me...* God knows how to protect you when he wants to. Pray for protection when your enemies press you.

• *God's peace*

God will give a new perspective. He will become your glory. He will change your perspective, your outlook. For much of the time we are very preoccupied with what people think about us. But sometimes something happens to us where we have to forget all about people and think only of God. David finds complete peace. *I lay down and slept; I woke again, for the Lord sustained me.*<sup>1</sup>

• *Confidence*

God will give us confidence. He is 'the one who *lifts up my head*'<sup>1</sup>.

**3. We find ourselves being given strength**

3. **We find ourselves being given strength.** There is a new **resolve**. David is determined to make his plight a matter of prayer<sup>1</sup>. He will cry to God. God (who appears in glory in the tabernacle in Jerusalem) will hear David's prayer. Of that he is sure<sup>2</sup>. There is **fearlessness**. David lies down and goes to sleep. The psalm fits into the context of the first night of David's flight from Absalom. Ahithophel thought David might be weary and discouraged<sup>3</sup>. But David sleeps soundly<sup>4</sup>. He is ready to give himself to **prayer**. He prays that his enemies might be rebuked (struck on the face) and stripped of their power (broken teeth)<sup>5</sup>. Even before the answer comes, David is sure that it will come<sup>6</sup>!

• *David – a shadow of Jesus prays*

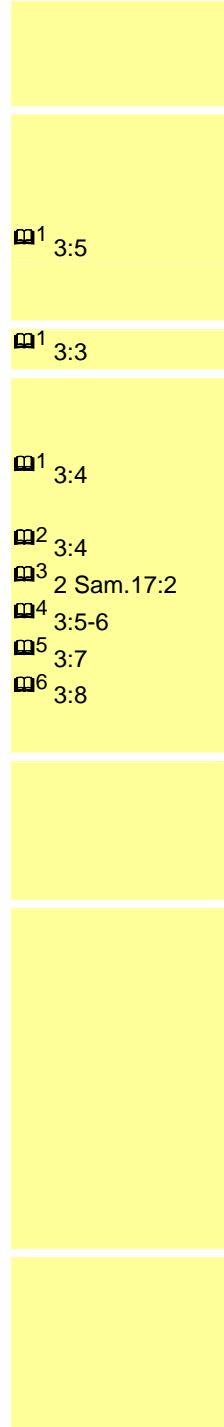
*<sup>7</sup>Arise, O Lord!  
Save me, O my God!  
For you strike all my enemies on the cheek;  
you break the teeth of the wicked.*

• *We pray forgiveness and blessing on our enemies*

Should we pray this way? Should we be expecting God to strike our enemies on the cheek and break their teeth? No! We love our enemies and pray for our persecutors. But remember this is David speaking – and David is God's son and a shadow of Jesus. It is not that **we** pray this way, but Jesus does! Jesus is the judge. When we are in trouble we pray for the forgiveness and the blessing of our enemies, but God's king – Jesus – might well pray judgement upon our enemies. We end up praying 'Lord, please have mercy on them!' We eventually feel sorry for our enemies when we see them being judged so severely.

• *David experienced God's peace then the return of his kingdom*

This is how David copes in the many tribulations of life. David finds complete peace. He is able to lay down and sleep; he is not full of anxieties. He has a Father who helps him lift up his head. You know what happened in the end. Absalom was defeated and David got his kingdom back!



1 3:5

1 3:3

1 3:4

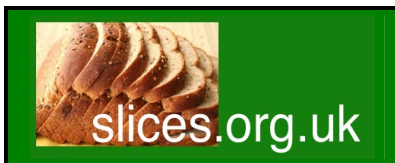
2 3:4

3 2 Sam.17:2

4 3:5-6

5 3:7

6 3:8



Dr Michael Eaton is highly respected internationally as a theologian, author, preacher and teacher. He lives in Kenya where he is one of the leaders of the Chrisco Fellowship. His *Preaching Through The Bible (PTTB)* books are highly popular worldwide. Michael Eaton puts the theological and practical meaning of the Bible in a clear and down-to-earth way so that what is written can be easily understood by the reader.



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