

# The Scrolls

Helping CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond V24 N52 December 25, 2022

# **LIGHT HAS COME**

"Light of Hope" Psalm 4:1-8

# THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

#### Hope

I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with him.

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade."

1 Peter 1:3-4





Hope enables us to cope with the challenges life brings our way. In troubled times hope lets us sleep at night—a hope that is rooted in an understanding of our God and our future. This can be illustrated from the life of David. While it isn't always necessary to identify the historical occasion behind a psalm, in some cases recognizing the situation that prompted the psalmist to pen his prayer can be. Take Psalm 3 for example, thought to have been written by David in the face of Absalom's attempted coup d'état, as attested in the superscription—"A psalm of David. When he fled from his son Absalom."

The psalm is often labeled "a lament psalm," namely, a prayer for help in a time of distress. Such psalms typically — but not rigidly — reflect the following five elements: 1) an introductory cry to God; 2) a lament or complaint, describing the crisis from which the speaker desires deliverance; 3) a petition or supplication; 4) a statement of confidence in God; and 5) a vow to praise or simply praise of God (see Leland Ryken, *How to Read the Bible as Literature*, 114-15).

On the historical situation that occasioned Psalm 3, one commentator explains: "The psalm finds David at a low point in his life. Because of his sin with Bathsheba (2Sa 11-12), his life was torn apart by family troubles (2Sa 12:15-14:33) and his kingdom wrenched from his grasp by Absalom's rebellion (2Sa 15:1-19:43). The hearts of Israel were with Absalom (2Sa 15:13). The anointed of the Lord [i.e., David] (cf. Ps 2:6) was forced to flee Jerusalem and wait out the crisis at an encampment across the Jordan (2Sa 17:24). Thus the psalm reflects the national situation as well as the personal feelings of David" (Willem A. VanGemeren, *Psalms*, The Expositor's Bible Commentary, rev. ed., 5:99).

The sequence of events surrounding Absalom's rebellion began with Amnon's rape of Tamar and unfolded over more than a decade. Amnon was Absalom's brother from a different mother; Tamar was Absalom's sister. Two years later following the rape (2Sa 13:1-22), Absalom devised and executed a scheme to kill Amnon (vv. 23-38), after which he fled to Geshur, a small country east of the upper Jordan River in Syria where he stayed for three years. With the help

of Joab (14:1-24), Absalom returned to Jerusalem where he lived for two years without seeing his father's face (v. 28). After burning Joab's field to get his attention, Absalom persuaded Joab to get him an audience with David (vv. 29-33). When they met, Absalom bowed down to his father in a show of repentance, and David in turn kissed his son in a show of forgiveness. But the story did not end happily there.

"In the course of time," Absalom schemed to usurp the throne (15:1). For four years he patiently courted the favor of Israel, with a view to having himself proclaimed king in Hebron (vv. 2-12)—ironically, the very place where David was first proclaimed king and where Absalom was born. Hearing of his son's treachery, "David said to all his officials who were with him in Jerusalem, 'Come! We must flee, or none of us will escape from Absalom. We must leave immediately, or he will move quickly to overtake us and bring ruin on us and put the city to the sword'" (15:14). Exactly how long David remained in exile is unclear, but only after Absalom's forces were defeated and he himself was killed (18:6-18) does David return to Jerusalem (20:3).

The links between Psalm 3 and David's distress in the face of Absalom's threat are numerous. One author writes: "Note that the opponents of the author are numerous (vv. 1, 2, 6); note the same situation in II Sam. 15:13. Again, the attitude of some of David's opponents was that he had forfeited all right to hope for divine aid; cf., II Sam. 16:8. V. 2 of our psalm says the same thing. That David directs his prayer to the holy hill (v. 4) agrees well with the situation as outlined in II Sam. 15:25, where David had taken steps to have the ark, which marked the presence of God on the holy hill, returned to Jerusalem rather than to have it taken along with him on his flight. Lastly, the thought that the issues of this whole experience rested with God (cf. v. 9) is the very thought expressed in II Sam. 15:25" (H. C. Leupold, Exposition of the Psalms, 59). Throughout the Absalom debacle, David in hope could say every morning, "I lie down and sleep; I wake again, because the LORD sustains me. I will not fear though tens of thousands assail me on every side . . . From the LORD comes deliverance" (Ps 3:5-6, 8a; cf. 4:8).

# **EXAMIN**

# **EXAMINE GOD'S WORD**

## Read Psalm 4:1-8

- 1 Answer me when I call to you, my righteous God. Give me relief from my distress; have mercy on me and hear my prayer.
- 2 How long will you people turn my glory into shame? How long will you love delusions and seek false gods?
- 3 Know that the LORD has set apart his faithful servant for him self;

the LORD hears when I call to him.

- 4 Tremble and do not sin; when you are on your beds, search your hearts and be silent.
- 5 Offer the sacrifices of the righteous and trust in the LORD.
- 6 Many, LORD, are asking, "Who will bring us prosperity?" Let the light of your face shine on us.7 Fill my heart with joy when their grain and new wine abound.
- 8 In peace I will lie down and sleep, for you alone, LORD, make me dwell in safety.

#### Read in another translation

- 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 the LORD has set apart the godly for himself, the LORD hears when I call to him.
- 4 Be angry, and do not sin;ponder in your own hearts on your beds, and be silent. Selah5 Offer right sacrifices,and put your trust in the LORD.
- 6 There are many who say, "Who will show us some good? Lift up the light of your face upon us, O LORD!" 7 You have put more joy in my heart
- 8 In peace I will both lie down and sleep; for you alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety. (ESV)

than they have when their grain and wine abound.

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Underline the imperatives "Answer me," "Give me relief," "have mercy on me," and "hear my prayer" in v. 1.
- Bracket "my righteous God" in v. 1.
- Underline "Give me relief" in v. 1.
- Circle "people" in v. 2.
- Circle "glory" in v. 2.
- Circle "false gods" in v. 2.
- Circle "faithful servant" in v. 3.
- Circle "Tremble" in v. 4.
- Circle "Many" in v. 6.
- Highlight v. 7.

What one word would you use to describe the TONE of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

What one thing do you not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the THEME of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, "This text is about \_\_\_\_\_."

Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. God is "righteous." What does that suggest to David? 2. Explain the *significance* of verse 2, "You have given me relief when I was in distress" (ESV). 3. Identify the "people" ("men" ESV) to whom David refers and what they're up to in verse 2. 4. According to verse 3, these men "love vain words and seek after lies" (ESV). How so? 5. David refers to himself ("faithful servant") in verse 3, but not exclusively. Explain. 6. Who is David addressing in verse 4 and why? 7. Identify the "many" mentioned in verse 6. 8. Where does the "prosperity" that many seek come from? 9. "You have put more joy in my heart, than they have when their grain and wine abound" (v. 7 ESV) contains a comparison. Explain it.

10. **Discussion:** The point of Psalm 4 is expressed in the final verse. Talk about it.

# **EXPLORE RESOURCES**



# **Commentary On The Text**

Like Psalm 3, Psalm 4 is an individual lament psalm, thought by many commentators to have been written by David when he fled from his rebellious son, Absalom, based on the superscription to the third psalm, "A psalm of David. When he fled from his son Absalom" (cf. 2Sam 13-19). The close connection between the two is described by one commentator: "Because of the parallels with Psalm 4 ('sleep,' 3:5; 4:8; 'glory,' 3:3; 4:2), these psalms (3 and 4) may be read together. It has been suggested that Psalm 3 is a morning psalm (cf. v.5) and Psalm 4 an evening psalm (cf. v.8)" (Willem A. VanGemeren, *Psalms*, vol. 5, The Expositor's Bible Commentary, rev. ed., 99). Another concurs: "Bible students have widely recognized that this psalm [Ps 4] is closely connected with Psalm 3. The two psalms, based on the similarities in their expression and structure, may have stemmed from the same crisis. If so, then David may have written Psalm 4 after he spent the night in the midst of danger (cf. 3:1, 5-6). The connection between the two psalms is not certain. However, the message of Psalm 4 is as follows: having cried out to God for help, the psalmist warned his enemies not to sin against God by wronging him, because God had set him apart in protective care, a fact that caused him to rejoice in the face of opposition" (Allen P. Ross, "Psalms," in The Bible *Knowledge Commentary: Old Testament, 793-94*).

These comments may lead the reader to wrongly believe that Psalm 4 is about David and David's experience alone. However, the nature of psalms in general, namely, that they are hymns, which were used liturgically in Israel's worship services, and certain details in the psalms themselves, for example, the reference to "your people" in 3:8, and "the godly" (ESV) in 4:3, suggest that David's experience is to be understood *representatively*. Put differently, David's distress (v. 1) represents the distress faced by godly people in general, and David's peace represents the peace enjoyed by godly people in general. Like David, the godly face opposition, hardship, and persecution, and in the midst of these, the LORD gives them peace, like he does David.

In the opening verse, the psalmist utters his cry to God. The NIV captures that cry in four imperatives: "Answer me," "Give me relief," "have mercy on me," and "hear my prayer." Some translations render the third verb as a perfect that speaks to God's character, "You have given me relief, "or put differently, "You have made a spacious place for me," suggesting that God has gotten him out of "tight places" in the past. In the words of one commentator: "The idea being that he had been pressed into a tight place; that now the confining influence has been removed, and he has ample room: he is 'set free'" (H. C. Leupold, Exposition of the Psalms, 67).

In verses 2-5, somewhat surprisingly, the psalmist addresses his opponents, using a figure of speech known as apostrophe, "a direct address to someone or something absent as though the person or thing were present and capable of listening" (Leland Ryken, How to Read the Bible as Literature, 98). In other words, David addresses his opponents not for their benefit but for the benefit of his readers. He is making a point. His influential opponents ("O men" v. 2 ESV) are undermining the LORD's anointed and spreading disparaging lies about him (cf. 2Sa 15:1-12; 16:5-12) – "false gods" (v. 2) is better translated "lies" (ESV). They need to be reminded that the LORD has set David apart, as he sets apart all the godly (v. 3 ESV) for his protection. That said, he goes on to advise, even warn, them though angry (v. 4 ESV) to reflect on this fact on their beds and stop sinning, that is, stop undermining his rule by spreading disparaging lies about him. Instead, they should "Offer the sacrifices of the righteous and trust in the LORD" (v. 5). Apparently, Absalom launched his treachery on the heels of offering of sacrifices (cf. 2Sa 15:11-12), causing one commentator to write: "That basic piece of hypocrisy had to be disavowed. David's plea to make such a disavowal is found in the words 'bring true sacrifices,' in the sense: substitute for your unholy act a sacrifice brough in a spirit without guile and for the purpose of expressing your own contrition for your wrongdoing. Only when men are motivated by such a spirit dare they 'trust in Yahweh' and feel assured that His favor rests upon their enterprise" (Leupold, 69).

In verses 6-7, the psalmist acknowledges that many are disturbed by the present state of affairs. Because of the slander being spread, many want to know who will restore well-being to the nation. In the face of their concern, David turns to the LORD, asking him to bless the people, confessing that the LORD has put joy in his own heart (again the Hebrew verb should be rendered as a perfect in the ESV not an imperative in the NIV). "Knowing he was God's chosen servant, and that those who sought to overthrow him were acting contrary to the will of God, brought great joy to David's heart. He said he felt more joy than he experienced during Israel's harvest festivals, which were some of the happiest occasions in the year" (Thomas L. Constable, "Notes on Psalms," 2022 ed., 46, planobiblechapel.org/tcon/ notes/pdf/psalms.pdf).

The point of Psalm 4 is succinctly expressed in the final verse. "In peace I [representing the godly] will lie down and sleep, for you alone, LORD, make me dwell in safety." "But it was not until Jesus came that the godly had reason to hope for the fullness of the blessings God had bestowed on them through the Anointed One" (VanGemeren, 108).

# **Word Studies/Notes**

- v. 1 *Answer me* . . . "By a series of four imperatives, the psalmist pours out his heart before God" (Willem A. VanGemeren, *Psalms*, vol. 5, The Expositor's Bible Commentary, rev. ed., 108); cf. following note on rendering of the perfect verb.
- v. 1 *Give me relief* The verb is a *perfect* that literally means "you have broadened," which the NIV renders as an *imperative* since it appears in a list of imperatives, but other translations render as a *perfect* (cf. ESV, NKJV). Commentators like translators are divided on how the verb should be rendered. "The terms used to describe relief from distress picture moving out of a tight corner into an open space. 'You have relieved me,' is a better translation of the Hebrew perfect tense than the NIV's 'Give me relief'" (Thomas L. Constable, "Notes on Psalms," 2022 ed., 44, planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/psalms.pdf).
- v. 1 *my righteous God* "The designation 'righteous' is much more than a description of God's nature. The psalmist believes that, regardless of his own innocent suffering, God will act triumphantly in behalf of his servant. He is the God who *does* righteously in the spirit of Psalm 18:46-48 . . . True, God is righteous in himself, but his righteousness is expressed as he related to his people, as a father to his children" (VanGemeren, 108).
- v. 2 *people*Cf. "sons of men" (NKJV);
  "men" (NET); "exalted men" (HCSB). "The men belong to the class of prominent citizens. As a class they form the landowners, the wealthy, and the powerful in Israel's society (cf. 49:2; 62:9; Isa 2:9; 5:15; the English versions do not bring out the distinction as in Hebrew). The leadership has gone astray" (VanGemeren, 109). "David's enemies stand in contrast to God; they were sinners, but He was righteous. If they were the aristocrats who supported Absalom, or whoever they were, they were trying to turn David's honor as a godly king into a bad reputation with their lies (cf. 2 Sam. 15:3)" (Constable, 44, italics added).
- v. 2 *glory* "The leaders have scoffed at his 'glory'; i.e., they have despised the position of the king. 'Glory' is bestowed by God on his anointed king (3:3)" (VanGemeren, 109).
- v. 2 false gods Or "lies;" cf. "How long will you people ruin my reputation? How long will you make groundless accusations? How long will you continue your lies?" (NLT). "He [David] asked how long they would turn his glory into shame with their rebellion and lies ('lies' [NIV marg.] is preferable to false gods). The intrigue of Absalom, if this was in David's mind here, was partly an attempt to tarnish David's reputation (2 Sam. 15:3)" (Allen P. Ross, "Psalms," in The Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old Testament, 794).

- "Slanderous devices are being resorted to in order to make an honest man appear dishonorable. II Sam. 15:2ff. gives an example of the methods that had been employed" (H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of the Psalms*, 68-69).
- v. 3 *faithful servant* Cf. "the LORD has set apart the godly for himself" (ESV); "The Lord shows the godly special favor" (NET). "*Heb* 'that the LORD sets apart a faithful one for himself.' The psalmist states a general principle, though the singular form and the parallel line indicate he has himself in mind as the representative godly person" (*The NET Bible*, 12tn on Ps 4:3). "Hebrew  $h \square asid$ , which occurs 26 times in the Psalms (once of God: 145:17, 'faithful'; cf. 18:25) and is usually rendered (in the plural) in the NIV as 'faithful (servants/people)' It is one of several Hebrew words for God's people, referring to them as people who are or should be devoted to god and faithful to him (see note on 1Sa 2:9)" (*The NIV Study Bible*, note on Ps 4:3).
- v. 4 *Tremble* Cf. "be angry and do not sin" (NKJV); "tremble with fear and do not sin" (NET). "The psalmist warns his enemies that they need to *tremble with fear* before God and repudiate their sinful ways" (*The NET Bible*, 14sn on Ps 4:4). "Here David calls on the enemies to repent, with a view toward the bringing of righteous offerings and trusting in the Lord (v.50) . . . The sense of the clause is 'tremble with fear, and stop sinning.' The prohibition 'do not sin' is an exhortation for the enemies to repent from their evil way of life. Hatred of God's people is always wrong (cf. Jas 3:9), but it is especially reprehensible when directed toward God's anointed" (VanGemeren, 110).
- v. 6 *many* "The comment of many people, possibly including some of his own faithful followers, that David quoted in this verse, reflects the spirit of discontent with present conditions that had led the king's enemies to oppose him (cf. 3:2)" (Constable, 45). "Because of the slanders being spread, many are looking for another leader to replace the king" (*The NIV Study Bible*, note on Ps 4:6).
- v. 7 *Fill my heart* "You have put more joy in my heart than they have when their grain and wine abound" (ESV; cf. GNT, HCSB, NASB, NET). The Hebrew perfect should be rendered "you have put more joy in my heart" (ESV), rather than as an imperative "Fill my heart with joy" (NIV). "Perhaps David is thinking of his enemies. They have at their command all earthly means of support and enjoyment. He finds it difficult to collect supplies for himself and his army (2 Sam. xvi. 1, xvii. 26, &c.), yet God has given him a better joy than that of harvest or vintage" (J. J. Stewart Perowne, *The Book of Psalms*, vol. 1, *Psalms* 1-72, 129).

# **CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT**

Our LORD Jesus, the messianic Son of David, enables us to sleep peacefully, free from anxiety, knowing that we are secure in him.

# **CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE**

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



# **3 LIVING QUESTIONS**

The "Living Questions" are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?

2. What does this passage teach me about myself?

3. What does this passage lead me to do?



# **FAMILY TALK**

When I was growing up, my parents owned a restaurant. December was the busiest month of the year with special events and caterings stacked on top of normal business hours. I remember going with my mom to Mrs. Walsh's house to plan the menu for her grand holiday extravaganza. Mrs. Walsh always had a sweet and special ornament for me to take home; a nice treat for tagging along. I remember the seasonal decorations, festive lights and special holiday music. Mostly, I remember the anticipation and excitement for that one special day. What I don't remember is how the evening of December 24 would roll around and my mom would leave the restaurant to panic buy all our Christmas presents. As a child, Christmas was just a magical and special time. On this side of adulthood, I recognize the tension and pull my parents must have experienced. It's Christmas week. The to do list is long and two-day delivery is no longer guaranteed. There is a significant difference, however, from then to now. Today, as an adult follower of Christ, Christmas takes on a whole new meaning. I understand now that we're celebrating the birth of our King. Jesus was born in humble circumstances, lived a sinless life and died to bring new life to those who call on Him. Anticipation and excitement for Christmas morning still makes me giddy, but I now know that this hope is only a glimmer of the anticipation and excitement I have for Jesus' return. Merry Christmas, friends. May the love, peace, and hope of Jesus Christ fill your home. As always, we're praying for you!

# What Does The Bible Say?

## Read Psalm 4:1-8

- 1. What does the Psalmist (David) request of God in verse 1?
- 2. What does David want his heart to be filled with?
- 3. Who makes David dwell in safety?

# What Do You Think?

How hard is it to sleep when you're troubled? What makes David able to sleep well?

# What Do You Do?

Write a Psalm. Cry out to God and praise Him. Email your Psalm to kids@wearecentral.org for 3 extra tokens.

# **CORE COMPETENCY:** Hope

I cope with the problems of life and death with the help of Jesus.

# **MEMORY VERSE:** Isaiah 9:6

"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRALKids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.	I completed my Bible StuI memorized this week'sI brought my Bible to chuI brought a friend	verse	GHARA CHARACTER OF THE PARTY OF	
Questions: kids@wearecentral.org	CHILD'S NAME	GRADE	PARENT SIGNATURE	-

# **OUR CORE COMPETENCIES**

# **CENTRAL BELIEFS**

**Authority of the Bible** (2 Timothy 3:16-17) *I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.* 

Church (Ephesians 4:15-16)

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Eternity (John 14:1-4)

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

The Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9)

I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.

**Humanity** (John 3:16)

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

**Identity in Christ** (John 1:12)

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-4)

I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.

Life Purpose (Acts 20:24)

I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.

Personal God (Psalm 121:1-2)

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Salvation by Grace (Ephesians 2:8-9)

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.



# **CENTRAL VIRTUES**

Love (1 John 4:10-12)

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Joy (John 15:11)

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

**Peace** (Philippians 4:6-7)

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.

Patience (Proverbs 14:29)

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

**Kindness/Goodness** (1 Thessalonians 5:15) *I choose to do the right things in my relation-ships with others* 

Faithfulness (Proverbs 3:3-4)

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Gentleness (Philippians 4:5)

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Self-Control (Titus 2:11-13)

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Grace (Colossians 3:13)

I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.

Hope (1 Peter 1:3-5)

I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.

Humility (Philippians 2:3-4)

I choose to esteem others above myself.



# **CENTRAL PRACTICES**

Bible Study (Hebrews 4:12)

I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Biblical Community (Acts 2:44-47)

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Compassion (Psalm 82:3-4)

I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.

Disciple-Making (2 Timothy 2:2)

I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ

Evangelism (Acts 1:8)

I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gosnel.

**Generosity** (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)

I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.

**Prayer** (Psalm 66:16-20)

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-Mindedness (Matthew 6:33)

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts (Romans 12:4-6)

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Worship (Psalm 95:1-7)

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

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