

Psalm 4

How to Get Relief from Adverse Circumstances, Psalm 4:1-8

Psalm 4:1-8 (NKJV)

¹ Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness! You have relieved me in my distress; Have mercy on me, and hear my prayer.

² How long, O you sons of men, *Will you turn my glory to shame? How long will you love worthlessness And seek falsehood? Selah*

³ But know that the Lord has set apart for Himself him who is godly; The Lord will hear when I call to Him.

⁴ Be angry, and do not sin. Meditate within your heart on your bed, and be still. *Selah*

⁵ Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, And put your trust in the Lord.

⁶ *There are* many who say, “Who will show us *any* good?” Lord, lift up the light of Your countenance upon us.

⁷ You have put gladness in my heart, More than in the season that their grain and wine increased.

⁸ I will both lie down in peace, and sleep; For You alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety.

2. (**Psalm 4:2-5**) Call upon your enemies to repent.

Psalm 4:2-5 (NKJV)

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Theological Introduction

Psalm 4 presents a profound movement from **prayer to proclamation**. David begins by calling upon God (**v.1**) but then turns to address his enemies—not with vengeance, but with a **call to repentance**.

This reflects a deeply theological reality:

- God’s anointed king represents God’s rule.
- To oppose God’s chosen servant is ultimately to oppose God Himself.
- Yet even in rebellion, God extends mercy through a call to repentance.

This passage reveals several core doctrines:

1. **Divine Sovereignty** – God establishes His chosen servant (**v.3**).
2. **Human Responsibility** – People are accountable for their rebellion and deceit (**v.2**).
3. **Repentance over Judgment** – God’s desire is not immediate destruction but restoration.
4. **True Worship** – External religion without genuine trust in God is empty (**v.5**).

David becomes a type of Christ here—the **rejected king who still calls his enemies to repentance rather than destruction** (cf. **Luke 23:34**).

Luke 23:34 NKJV

³⁴ Then Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.” And they divided His garments and cast lots.

Modern-Day Introduction

We live in a culture shaped by:

- **Cancel culture instead of repentance**
- **Slander instead of truth**
- **Emotional reaction instead of self-examination**
- **Religious appearance without genuine faith**

When people are wronged today, the instinct is:

- “Defend yourself.”
- “Destroy your enemies.”
- “Win the narrative.”

But **Psalm 4** shows a radically different response: The godly do not merely defend themselves—they **call others to repentance while trusting God for vindication**.

This passage is especially relevant for:

- Church conflict
- Leadership opposition
- Personal attacks and misunderstandings

It teaches us that the real battle is not against people—but against **sin**, **deception**, and **misplaced trust**.

2. (Psalm 4:2-5) Call upon your enemies to repent.

Psalm 4:2-5 (NKJV)

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³ But know that the Lord has set apart for Himself him who is godly; The Lord will hear when I call to Him.

⁴ Be angry, and do not sin. Meditate within your heart on your bed, and be still. *Selah*

⁵ Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, And put your trust in the Lord.

David turned from calling upon the Lord to address his enemies on God's behalf. Notice that his attitude is different than in many psalms when he calls upon God to pour out unmerciful wrath upon his foes. His attitude toward those opposing him supports the view that Absalom's rebellion is the setting for this psalm. David's enemies were his son and his countrymen, former friends and leaders in his administration and army. He did not desire their destruction, but their repentance.

a. Turn from the slander and ruin of God's king (v. 2).

Psalm 4:2 (NKJV)

² How long, O you sons of men, Will you turn my glory to shame? *How long* will you love worthlessness And seek falsehood? *Selah*

Psalm 4:2 KJV

² O ye sons of men, how long will ye turn my glory into shame? how long will ye love vanity, and seek after leasing? *Selah*.

David's enemies were slandering and damaging his reputation. *How long* is a call to repent, a call to cease their sinful behavior. Sons of men is a Hebrew term that refers specifically to men of rank, the leaders in Israel. Absalom had stolen their hearts, and they were using their influence to turn others against David.

David realized that God was the sole source of his glory (Psalm 3:3).

Psalm 3:3 NKJV

³ But You, O Lord, *are* a shield for me, My glory and the One who lifts up my head.

The glory to which he referred in this verse is his kingly glory, the glory God had bestowed upon him in His ascension to Israel's throne. Remember that David's path to the throne began with his glorious victory over Goliath, a victory given by God. The people's rebellion against David was rebellion against God; they sought to overthrow the man God had chosen to be their king. The same disloyal people who were quick to exalt David over Saul now transferred their cheap allegiance to the charming son of David (1 Samuel 18:7).

1 Samuel 18:7 NKJV

⁷ So the women sang as they danced, and said: "Saul has slain his thousands, And David his ten thousands."

David never sought the throne of Israel. It was the Lord who had removed Saul as king and replaced him with the young shepherd. *Turn my glory into shame* lends

insight to their specific accusation against David. They were now attacking him because of the way he—in their eyes—became king. To them, David was getting a dose of his own medicine: Absalom's ambitious campaign to dethrone him was justice for his alleged overthrow of Saul.

Shimei said to David's face what the people were saying behind his back:

2 Samuel 16:7-8 NKJV

⁷ Also Shimei said thus when he cursed: "Come out! Come out!

You bloodthirsty man, you rogue!

⁸ The Lord has brought upon you all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose place you have reigned; and the Lord has delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom your son. So now you *are caught* in your own evil, because you are a bloodthirsty man!"

Psalm 4:2 (NKJV)

² How long, O you sons of men, Will you turn my glory to shame? How long will you love worthlessness And seek falsehood? Selah

Psalm 4:2 KJV

² O ye sons of men, how long will ye turn my glory into shame? how long will ye love vanity, and seek after leasing? Selah.

The enemies' attempt to ruin David was *vanity* or *delusion*, a worthless pursuit. They were wasting their time and destroying their nation for something that could not possibly come to pass. If they continued, precious lives would be lost in battle for no good reason. The rebels needed to stop slandering David and to stop destroying the nation with their lies. Leasing (KJV) **deception** is an Old English word for lie or falsehood.

Point A: Turn from Slander and Falsehood (v.2)

Psalm 4:2 (NKJV)

² How long, O you sons of men, Will you turn my glory to shame? How long will you love worthlessness And seek falsehood? Selah

Old Testament Illustrations (5)

1. Joseph and His Brothers (Genesis 37:18–28)

His brothers slandered and betrayed him out of jealousy, yet their actions were rooted in falsehood and envy.

Genesis 37:18-28 NKJV

¹⁸ Now when they saw him afar off, even before he came near them, they conspired against him to kill him.

¹⁹ Then they said to one another, "Look, this dreamer is coming!

²⁰ **Come therefore, let us now kill him and cast him into some pit; and we shall say, ‘Some wild beast has devoured him.’ We shall see what will become of his dreams!”**

²¹ **But Reuben heard *it*, and he delivered him out of their hands, and said, “Let us not kill him.”**

²² **And Reuben said to them, “Shed no blood, *but* cast him into this pit which *is* in the wilderness, and do not lay a hand on him”—that he might deliver him out of their hands, and bring him back to his father.**

²³ **So it came to pass, when Joseph had come to his brothers, that they stripped Joseph of his tunic, the tunic of *many* colors that *was* on him.**

²⁴ **Then they took him and cast him into a pit. And the pit *was* empty; *there was* no water in it.**

²⁵ **And they sat down to eat a meal. Then they lifted their eyes and looked, and there was a company of Ishmaelites, coming from Gilead with their camels, bearing spices, balm, and myrrh, on their way to carry *them* down to Egypt.**

²⁶ **So Judah said to his brothers, “What profit *is there* if we kill our brother and conceal his blood?**

²⁷ **Come and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he *is* our brother *and* our flesh.” And his brothers listened.**

²⁸ **Then Midianite traders passed by; so, *the brothers* pulled Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty *shekels* of silver. And they took Joseph to Egypt.**

2. Korah’s Rebellion (Numbers 16:1–3)

Korah falsely accused Moses of exalting himself when God had appointed him.

Numbers 16:1-3 NKJV

Rebellion Against Moses and Aaron

¹ **Now Korah the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, with Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, and On the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took *men*;**

² **and they rose up before Moses with some of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty leaders of the congregation, representatives of the congregation, men of renown.**

³ **They gathered together against Moses and Aaron, and said to them, “*You take* too much upon yourselves, for all the congregation *is* holy, every one of them, and the LORD *is* among them. Why then do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the LORD?”**

3. David and Shimei (2 Samuel 16:5–8)

Shimei slandered David with false accusations, misinterpreting God's providence.

2 Samuel 16:5-8 NKJV

Shimei Curses David

⁵ Now when King David came to Bahurim, there was a man from the family of the house of Saul, whose name was Shimei the son of Gera, coming from there. He came out, cursing continuously as he came.

⁶ And he threw stones at David and at all the servants of King David. And all the people and all the mighty men were on his right hand and on his left.

⁷ Also Shimei said thus when he cursed: "Come out! Come out! You bloodthirsty man, you rogue!

⁸ The LORD has brought upon you all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose place you have reigned; and the LORD has delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom your son. So now you *are caught* in your own evil, because you are a bloodthirsty man!"

4. Naboth and Jezebel's False Witnesses (1 Kings 21:8–13)

Lies were used to destroy Naboth for political gain.

1 Kings 21:8-13 NKJV

⁸ And she wrote letters in Ahab's name, sealed *them* with his seal, and sent the letters to the elders and the nobles who were dwelling in the city with Naboth.

⁹ She wrote in the letters, saying, Proclaim a fast, and seat Naboth with high honor among the people;

¹⁰ and seat two men, scoundrels, before him to bear witness against him, saying, "You have blasphemed God and the king." *Then* take him out, and stone him, that he may die.

¹¹ So the men of his city, the elders and nobles who were inhabitants of his city, did as Jezebel had sent to them, as it was written in the letters which she had sent to them.

¹² They proclaimed a fast, and seated Naboth with high honor among the people.

¹³ And two men, scoundrels, came in and sat before him; and the scoundrels witnessed against him, against Naboth, in the presence of the people, saying, "Naboth has blasphemed God and the king!" Then they took him outside the city and stoned him with stones, so that he died.

5. Job's Friends (Job 4–22)

They falsely accused Job of hidden sin, turning suffering into slander.

New Testament Illustrations (5)

1. Jesus Before the Sanhedrin (Matthew 26:59–61)

False witnesses attempted to condemn Christ through lies.

Matthew 26:59-61 NKJV

⁵⁹ Now the chief priests, the elders, and all the council sought false testimony against Jesus to put Him to death,

⁶⁰ but found none. Even though many false witnesses came forward, they found none. But at last two false witnesses came forward

⁶¹ and said, “This *fellow* said, ‘I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days.’”

2. Stephen’s Accusers (Acts 6:11–13)

Fabricated charges led to his martyrdom.

Acts 6:11-13 NKJV

¹¹ Then they secretly induced men to say, “We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God.”

¹² And they stirred up the people, the elders, and the scribes; and they came upon *him*, seized him, and brought *him* to the council.

¹³ They also set up false witnesses who said, “This man does not cease to speak blasphemous words against this holy place and the law.

3. Paul Falsely Accused (Acts 24:5–9)

Religious leaders distorted truth to oppose him.

Acts 24:5-9 NKJV

⁵ For we have found this man a plague, a creator of dissension among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes.

⁶ He even tried to profane the temple, and we seized him, and wanted to judge him according to our law.

⁷ But the commander Lysias came by and with great violence took *him* out of our hands,

⁸ commanding his accusers to come to you. By examining him yourself you may ascertain all these things of which we accuse him.”

⁹ And the Jews also assented, maintaining that these things were so.

4. Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1–5)

Their deception revealed love for falsehood over truth.

Acts 5:1-5 NKJV

Lying to the Holy Spirit

¹ But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession.

² And he kept back *part* of the proceeds, his wife also being aware of *it*, and brought a certain part and laid *it* at the apostles’ feet.

³ But Peter said, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back *part* of the price of the land for yourself?

⁴ While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God.”

⁵ Then Ananias, hearing these words, fell down and breathed his last. So great fear came upon all those who heard these things.

5. False Teachers in the Church (2 Peter 2:1–3)

They spread destructive lies for personal gain.

2 Peter 2:1-3 NKJV

Destructive Doctrines

¹ But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, *and* bring on themselves swift destruction.

² And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed.

³ By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber.