

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.

Theological Introduction

Psalm 4:3 (NKJV)

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

Psalm 4:3 reveals one of the most comforting and sobering truths in all of Scripture: God distinguishes between the righteous and the wicked. The Lord **“sets apart”** those who belong to Him. The phrase **“set apart”** carries the idea of **separation, distinction, consecration, and divine ownership.**

God marks His people as His own possession. David’s confidence **was not rooted in self-exaltation, military strength, popularity, or political strategy—it was rooted in covenant relationship with God.** David’s enemies opposed him as though they were merely resisting a man, but in reality they were resisting God’s ordained servant. **This is why their rebellion was ultimately futile.**

This is the KEY:

To oppose the godly is to oppose the purposes of God Himself when that godly person is walking in obedience to the Lord.

This passage **does not** teach sinless perfection in believers, nor does it imply that every religious person automatically has divine approval. Rather, **it teaches** that God sovereignly **calls, preserves, hears,** and **defends** those who belong to Him through covenant grace. David was not king because of **selfish ambition**; he was king because God **chose him, anointed him,** and **established him.**

Theologically, this points beyond David to the greater King—Jesus Christ. Christ is the perfectly righteous One whom men **rejected, opposed, betrayed, mocked,** and **crucified.** Yet God vindicated Him through resurrection and exaltation. Therefore, throughout Scripture, those who oppose God’s true servants eventually discover that they are fighting against God Himself.

Acts 5:39 NKJV

³⁹ **But if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it—lest you even be found to fight against God.**

The principle is clear:

- **God hears** the prayers of **His** people.
- **God preserves His** covenant servants.
- **God opposes** those who oppose **His** righteous purposes.
- **God vindicates His** people in His timing.

Thus, **Psalm 4:3** becomes both:

- A comfort to the faithful.
- A warning to the rebellious.

Modern-Day Introduction

We live in a culture that increasingly **mocks holiness, resists biblical truth,** and **opposes those who desire to live godly lives.** The godly are often labeled as **intolerant, extreme, narrow-minded, judgmental,** or **outdated** simply because they refuse to compromise with sin.

In **schools, workplaces, politics, media,** and even **churches,** many believers experience pressure to remain silent about biblical truth. Yet **Psalm 4:3** reminds believers that popularity is not the measure of truth—God’s approval is. The **world** may **reject** the godly, but **heaven recognizes** them. Many today mistakenly assume that power belongs to the **loudest voices, largest movements, richest influencers, or strongest institutions.** But Scripture repeatedly shows that God works through those who are **set apart** unto Him.

A **praying grandmother** may possess more spiritual influence than a **celebrity**. A **faithful pastor** preaching truth in a small church may be more honored in heaven than a **famous public figure**. A **teenager standing alone** for Christ in school may be stronger spiritually than an **entire rebellious crowd**.

Modern culture often encourages people to:

- oppose biblical conviction,
- ridicule holiness,
- undermine faithful leadership,
- attack spiritual authority,
- and resist those calling for repentance.

Yet **Psalm 4:3** reminds us:

The Lord still knows those who are **His**. The Lord still hears the prayers of the **godly**. And the Lord still stands with those **who stand with Him**.

b. Do not oppose the godly (v. 3)

Psalm 4:3 (NKJV)

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

David's enemies could not **prevail against him** because **God was with him**. The Lord had **set apart** or separated the **godly** king unto Himself. He was God's choice, and the Lord had made a covenant with Him to confirm it (**2 Samuel 7**).

In no way did he ambitiously and violently seize the throne from Saul; God had placed him there. **"Only a man who is conscious of his innocence could dare to raise an issue of this sort."** David had received a clear word from the Lord that **sustained** and **supported** him, and proved his enemies to be liars:

2 Samuel 7:8 NKJV

⁸ **Now therefore, thus shall you say to My servant David, 'Thus says the Lord of hosts: "I took you from the sheepfold, from following the sheep, to be ruler over My people, over Israel.**

2 Samuel 7:15 NKJV

¹⁵ **But My mercy shall not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I removed from before you.**

The rebels had convinced themselves that God was on their side, for, as with most soldiers about to engage in battle, they surely had called upon the Lord to help them. However, David was unshakably confident of whose prayers God would

hear and **answer**. Along with his enemies' futile ambitions, their prayers were also in vain. God would respond when **he**—not they—called unto Him. **God would hear David, not because God was on his side, but because David was on the Lord's side.** He had followed God's will in becoming king, and he had done nothing wrong.

Point:

b. Do Not Oppose the Godly (Psalm 4:3)

The Lord has set apart for Himself him who is godly

10 Old Testament Illustrations

1. Cain Opposing Abel

Cain hated Abel because Abel's sacrifice was accepted by God while his own was rejected (Genesis 4:3–8).

Genesis 4:3-8 NKJV

³ And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the Lord.

⁴ Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the Lord Respected Abel and his offering,

⁵ but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell.

⁶ So the Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen?

⁷ If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it."

⁸ Now Cain talked with Abel his brother; and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him.

Opposition against the godly often springs from conviction and jealousy.

2. Pharaoh Opposing Moses

Pharaoh repeatedly resisted Moses, but Moses was God's appointed servant.

Pharaoh's opposition ultimately became opposition against God Himself (Exodus 5–14).

3. Korah Opposing Moses and Aaron

Korah challenged God's appointed leadership and was judged severely when the earth swallowed the rebels (Numbers 16).

4. Saul Opposing David

Saul viewed David as a threat, yet David was God's anointed king. Saul's warfare against David became warfare against God's sovereign plan (**1 Samuel 18–26**).

5. Goliath Defying David

Goliath mocked David, but David declared:

1 Samuel 17:45 NKJV

⁴⁵ Then David said to the Philistine, “You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. **But I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied.**

Opposing the godly youth was ultimately opposing God.

6. Absalom Rebelling Against David

Absalom attempted to steal the kingdom through manipulation and rebellion, but God preserved David because David was God's covenant king (**2 Samuel 15–18**).

7. Jezebel Opposing Elijah

Jezebel sought to destroy Elijah because Elijah confronted idolatry and wickedness. Yet God preserved His prophet supernaturally (**1 Kings 19**).

8. Haman Opposing Mordecai

Haman's hatred for Mordecai eventually resulted in his own downfall. The gallows prepared for the righteous became the place of judgment for the wicked (**Esther 5–7**).

9. Nebuchadnezzar Opposing the Hebrew Boys

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego refused compromise. The king opposed them, but God stood with them in the fire (**Daniel 3**).

10. Daniel Opposed by Jealous Officials

Daniel's enemies manipulated political power to destroy him, but God shut the mouths of the lions and vindicated His servant (**Daniel 6**).

10 New Testament Illustrations

1. Herod Opposing John the Baptist

John preached truth boldly against sin, and Herod silenced him through execution—but John remained God's faithful prophet (**Mark 6:17–29**).

Mark 6:17-29 NKJV

¹⁷ For Herod himself had sent and laid hold of John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife; for he had married her.

¹⁸ **Because John had said to Herod, “It is not lawful for you to have your brother’s wife.”**

¹⁹ **Therefore Herodias held it against him and wanted to kill him, but she could not;**

²⁰ **for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just and holy man, and he protected him. And when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly.**

²¹ **Then an opportune day came when Herod on his birthday gave a feast for his nobles, the high officers, and the chief *men* of Galilee.**

²² **And when Herodias’ daughter herself came in and danced, and pleased Herod and those who sat with him, the king said to the girl, “Ask me whatever you want, and I will give *it* to you.”**

²³ **He also swore to her, “Whatever you ask me, I will give you, up to half my kingdom.”**

²⁴ **So she went out and said to her mother, “What shall I ask?” And she said, “The head of John the Baptist!”**

²⁵ **Immediately she came in with haste to the king and asked, saying, “I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter.”**

²⁶ **And the king was exceedingly sorry; yet, because of the oaths and because of those who sat with him, he did not want to refuse her.**

²⁷ **Immediately the king sent an executioner and commanded his head to be brought. And he went and beheaded him in prison,**

²⁸ **brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl; and the girl gave it to her mother.**

²⁹ **When his disciples heard *of it*, they came and took away his corpse and laid it in a tomb.**

2. Religious Leaders Opposing Jesus

The Pharisees opposed Christ because His holiness exposed their hypocrisy. Yet Christ was vindicated through resurrection (**Matthew 26–28**).

3. Judas Betraying Jesus

Judas opposed the Son of God for personal gain, demonstrating that proximity to holiness does not equal true devotion (**Matthew 26:14–16**).

Matthew 26:14-16 NKJV

Judas Agrees to Betray Jesus

¹⁴ **Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests**

¹⁵ **and said, “What are you willing to give me if I deliver Him to you?” And they counted out to him thirty pieces of silver.**

¹⁶ **So from that time he sought opportunity to betray Him.**

4. Saul of Tarsus Opposing the Church

Before conversion, Saul persecuted believers. Jesus told him:

“Why are you persecuting Me?” (Acts 9:4 NKJV).

Acts 9:4 NKJV

New King James Version

⁴ Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?”

Opposing Christ’s people was opposing Christ Himself.

5. Elymas Opposing Paul

Elymas attempted to hinder the gospel, and God judged him with temporary blindness (Acts 13:8–11).

Acts 13:8-11 NKJV

⁸ But Elymas the sorcerer (for so his name is translated) withstood them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith.

⁹ Then Saul, who also *is called* Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him

¹⁰ and said, “O full of all deceit and all fraud, *you* son of the devil, *you* enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord?

¹¹ And now, indeed, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you shall be blind, not seeing the sun for a time.” And immediately a dark mist fell on him, and he went around seeking someone to lead him by the hand.

6. The Philippian Authorities Opposing Paul and Silas

Paul and Silas were imprisoned unjustly, yet God shook the prison with an earthquake and saved the jailer (Acts 16:16–34).

Acts 16:16-34 NKJV

Paul and Silas Imprisoned

¹⁶ Now it happened, as we went to prayer, that a certain slave girl possessed with a spirit of divination met us, who brought her masters much profit by fortune-telling.

¹⁷ This girl followed Paul and us, and cried out, saying, “These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation.”

¹⁸ And this she did for many days. But Paul, greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, “I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.” And he came out that very hour.

¹⁹ But when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged *them* into the marketplace to the authorities.

²⁰ And they brought them to the magistrates, and said, “These men, being Jews, exceedingly trouble our city;

²¹ and they teach customs which are not lawful for us, being Romans, to receive or observe.”

²² Then the multitude rose up together against them; and the magistrates tore off their clothes and commanded *them* to be beaten with rods.

²³ And when they had laid many stripes on them, they threw *them* into prison, commanding the jailer to keep them securely.

²⁴ Having received such a charge, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.

The Philippian Jailer Saved

²⁵ But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.

²⁶ Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone’s chains were loosed.

²⁷ And the keeper of the prison, awaking from sleep and seeing the prison doors open, supposing the prisoners had fled, drew his sword and was about to kill himself.

²⁸ But Paul called with a loud voice, saying, “Do yourself no harm, for we are all here.”

²⁹ Then he called for a light, ran in, and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas.

³⁰ And he brought them out and said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”

³¹ So they said, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.”

³² Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house.

³³ And he took them the same hour of the night and washed *their* stripes. And immediately he and all his *family* were baptized.

³⁴ Now when he had brought them into his house, he set food before them; and he rejoiced, having believed in God with all his household.

7. Diotrophes Opposing Godly Leadership

Diotrophes rejected apostolic authority because he loved preeminence (**3 John 9–10**). Pride often fuels opposition to the godly.

3 John 9-10 NKJV

Diotrophes and Demetrius

⁹ I wrote to the church, but Diotrophes, who loves to have the preeminence among them, does not receive us.

¹⁰ Therefore, if I come, I will call to mind his deeds which he does, prating against us with malicious words. And not content with that, he himself does not receive the brethren, and forbids those who wish to, putting *them* out of the church.

8. The Sanhedrin Opposing the Apostles

The apostles were commanded not to preach Christ, yet they answered:

“We ought to obey God rather than men” (**Acts 5:29 NKJV**).

Acts 5:29 NKJV

²⁹ But Peter and the *other* apostles answered and said: “We ought to obey God rather than men.

9. Alexander the Coppersmith Opposing Paul

Paul warned Timothy about Alexander because he greatly resisted apostolic teaching (**2 Timothy 4:14–15**).

2 Timothy 4:14-15 NKJV

¹⁴ Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm. May the Lord repay him according to his works.

¹⁵ You also must beware of him, for he has greatly resisted our words.

10. The World Opposing Faithful Believers

Paul declared:

“Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution” (**2 Timothy 3:12 NKJV**).

2 Timothy 3:12 NKJV

¹² Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.

Opposition against the godly remains a continuing reality until Christ returns.

Practical Applications

1. Be Careful Whom You Oppose

Sometimes people think they are merely criticizing a pastor, teacher, parent, or faithful believer, when in reality they are resisting someone God is using.

2. Godly People Are Not Perfect—but They Are God’s

David was flawed, yet he belonged to God. God disciplines His people Himself.

3. Opposition Often Reveals the Heart

Jealousy, pride, rebellion, bitterness, and conviction often motivate hostility toward the godly.

4. God Hears the Prayers of His People

The greatest strength of the godly is not earthly power but divine access through prayer.

5. The Godly Must Respond Biblically

Believers should not seek revenge but trust God's justice, timing, and vindication.

Romans 12:19 NKJV

¹⁹ **Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but *rather* give place to wrath; for it is written, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord.**

Closing Exhortation

Psalm 4:3 is both a warning and a comfort.

To the rebellious:

Be careful opposing those who belong to God.

To the believer:

Do not fear opposition from men when you belong to the Lord.

The same God who defended David still:

- hears prayer,
- preserves His people,
- strengthens the faithful,
- and vindicates those who walk with Him.