

Dr. Bruce Waltke, Psalms, Lecture 14

© 2024 Bruce Waltke and Ted Hildebrandt

This is Dr. Bruce Waltke in his teaching on the book of Psalms. This is session number 14, Petition Psalms, Psalm 3.

So, isn't it amazing that our mouths can set air in motion and those waves in certain ways reach our ears and they form words and thoughts? We realize that the words that I will speak, teaching this, can reach our ears and we can be tone deaf and not hear the spiritual things.

Or it can simply go into our cognitive thinking. But Lord, it has to go beyond that. It needs to be conjoined with your Holy Spirit in order that it may reach our human spirit.

Your Holy Spirit will take these words, spiritual words from your text, and transform them into our character. Transform them so that we become more like our precious Savior, Jesus Christ. And that we may live out and become his body here upon the Earth with his words and his empowerment.

This is our cry. Thank you that we're dealing with this doxology of theology, that your people have voiced their faith in you and celebrated who you are and what you have done. You've been pleased to take that sort of inspiration and return it to us as the word of God.

So, help us then to hear their praises and to join in with them, to hear their petitions and join with them, to hear their instruction and be rebuked and learned. Thank you, Lord, that we are part of a great history of your people from the very beginning of creation till today. Your word is spoken and formed your community by your word and by your Spirit. We're part of that Catholic church and we praise you for it in Christ's name. Amen.

All right, we're looking at various approaches to the Psalms.

On the first day, we looked at the historical approach and kingship in the Psalms. Then we moved into form critical approach. We began that more broadly by talking about Hebrew poetry and that how you read Hebrew poetry.

You look for how lines are related to one another and yet how they can be differentiated from one another. They're very sophisticated differentiations and it's well worth a while to meditate on parallelism. So, we've spent a bit of time on that.

More narrowly, there are various forms of Psalms. They are basically, in my judgment, four kinds. There's the hymn that celebrates God's sublimities, his incommunicable attributes of eternity and omnipotence, and so forth.

And his communicable attributes of his faithfulness, a grace that we can participate in. It's great theology. We've been looking at that.

So, there is a hymn. Then the second kind is petitions. This is where the Psalmist is in distress and he cries out to God in his distress for deliverance to intervene because it's right.

So, you have petition Psalms. Then you have songs of trust, and grateful praise. These are songs where God has answered your prayer specifically.

So, that whereas the hymn is in the temple and you're just praising God for who he is and what he has done. In the grateful song of praise, you're thanking God for what he has done for you specifically in a specific deliverance. And the fourth kind we have, therefore, hymns, and I should have put second, grateful praise petitions.

And the fourth kind that kind of punctuates the Psalter is instruction Psalms such as Psalm 1. It's neither praise, it's not a petition, it's not a grateful song, but it commends, blessed is the man who rejects the counsel of the wicked and will spend time in the law of the Lord. And he will become fruitful. So, those are the various kinds of Psalms.

We notice the distinct motifs of praise Psalms, namely the call for praise, cause for praise, where you get the theology. The motifs of the petition Psalm are basically there's direct address. You turn immediately to God and to turn anywhere else in distress is sin because you're dependent upon something other than God.

Whatever that else is, it's going to get praise. People praise their doctors and I think rightly so, but it ends up with praising something else other than God. And we saw that we had been elected to give him praise.

And if we didn't praise him, humanly speaking, God would die because no one would know about him. So, theoretically, what the press is trying to do is kill God. So, nobody talks about him.

Therefore, God would effectively die. They are trying to kill God, but it won't work. If Satan were able to silence every mouth, Jesus says, the rocks would cry out.

There will always be praise, but he's not using rocks. He's using us. And we're here.

Our purpose here is to give praise to God. So, you have that address where we go to God and he's going to get all the praise. And that's the point of the address.

And then we notice that they have a lament section and they're very honest with their lament. And so, we listed all the different situations in which they find themselves. And so, that's the lament.

And then we notice they move into confidence. Before you get into the petition, there's a transition of mood from a complaint. But wait a minute, we've got a great God that we can depend upon.

And we know who we are. We are the people of God. And so, the Spirit changes in the confidence section.

And with renewed confidence, we pray with confidence. And then we have the conclusion which, and here's where I got in trouble at the end of the last lecture, in which they come up with sometimes absolute certainty that God would answer their prayer. And there's a total transformation.

And we were on page 162 and we had read from Luther to Melancthon, who was the Lutheran theologian. And then Calvin's formulation after that. And so, Luther writes to Calvin, this is on the top of page 162, I prayed for you.

I felt the Amen in my heart. So, he prayed until he had Amen, certainty. And from this experience, Calvin formulated the rule of prayer in the midst of misgivings, fear, and wavering.

We should force ourselves to pray until we find illumination, which calms us. If our hearts waver and are disturbed, and we may not give up until faith proceeds victoriously from the battle. So, you pray through and you're absolutely confident.

And my hesitancy was they're not always ending that way. And my problem was the way I was articulating was not right because I wasn't distinguishing between confidence in God and confidence he will answer the prayer exactly as you asked it. And that's, I mean, what I read here, I can upgrade that you pray until you absolutely have faith and confidence, but your confidence in God.

And you may have confidence he's going to answer that prayer, but you may end up with Jesus, not my will, but your will be done. And so that's what I was really struggling with. Many of them end up with a vow.

If you answer my prayer, they don't end up with the certainty that that prayer will be answered. So, by ambiguity yesterday, as I thought about it, what went wrong here? And where did my thinking go wrong? I realized that what went wrong was that I

didn't distinguish between absolute confidence in God and absolute confidence that he was going to answer the prayer exactly the way I wanted. So that may help to clarify that point on 162.

We move then into part two, after looking at prayers broadly and that massive material that Gunkel amasses, we look specifically at the imprecatory prayers. These are prayers that there are 50 lament psalms or petition psalms. And of the 50, 35 go beyond just asking for deliverance.

They're asking for God to punish the enemy. And we grappled with that at the end of the last hour, because these prayers to bash babies against rocks and whatnot are offensive to the Christian and contradict the Sermon on the Mount and the example of Jesus. So, we grappled with how do we as Christians handle these kinds of prayers? I'm suggesting, laying out my data, I don't believe scholarly popes.

I believe that we all lay out our data for all of us to examine it, argue it with love and come to some conclusion. I laid it all out. I concluded they are necessary for sound doctrine.

They assure us that there is a God of justice, that he distinguishes right from wrong, that there is ethics and they are based upon firm faith in God. I listed some nine points. I think they're a very great doctrine.

On the other hand, for our dispensation, I argued, they're not appropriate. They're good for teaching that we learn how to use theology, but they're inappropriate in light of what Jesus taught because we know that justice is now this ultimate justice that is by faith in the final judgment when Jesus returns. He's not exacting ultimate justice now.

So, that was how we tried to resolve the invocatory psalms. Just a word about theology proper about prayer. One of the points that were petitions is that we made the point that petitions are always doxological.

That with all of the complaints, it's always with praise and they never lose confidence in God. It's always with praise. I suggest that that's the difference between Job and the psalmist.

Both of them protest strongly. It's unjust. It's unfair.

I don't know why I'm going through this, but Job has no praise until the very end. Whereas the psalmist, there is always a praise motif. Even the black sheep of the psalter, Psalm 88, if you think about it still makes reference that God saves, but that's the black sheep of the psalter.

The third book of the psalter is known as the black sheep. It's the darkest book of the five in the book of Psalms. So, they're always doxological.

We'll see that as we work our way through specific psalms. The other point is that they're always expressing deep humility. They are dependent upon God.

And we'll talk about that. We'll see it in Psalm 3, dependent upon God. But do you use means in connection with your dependence upon God? Does dependence upon God mean, for example, if you're sick and you depend upon God, does it mean you don't use medicine? Can you have medicine and doctors in connection with dependence upon God? I'm going to grapple with that just a bit when we do Psalm 3. I think we'll get some clarity on that point.

The fourth final one is that they usually end with a wish for others, especially the king is going to wish for the blessing on God's people. So, they don't end with self or they may, but they normally involve other people receiving a blessing through it and more extensive. I shared with Mike the other day, a joke among the, well, not a joke, but a parable amongst the Hasidim and the Hasidic.

They're the very Orthodox conservative Jewish sect that has these curly, don't cut their hair according to Deuteronomy. The rabbi says, if you see a fire engine rushing in the direction of your house, and you know, there's a fire, do not pray that it's not my house. He gives two reasons why that's the wrong prayer.

Why you ought not to pray it's not my house. The first reason is the prayer can't be answered because if it is your house, it's on fire. So, it's a kind of stupid prayer.

So, the other reason is if it's not your house, it's somebody else's house. So, in effect, you're praying, don't be my house, but somebody else's house. How does that square with loving your neighbor as yourself? So, it's a very bad prayer to pray it's not me, oh Lord, that has the answer to the prayer.

So, we have to pray conscious of other people for God's blessing upon them. I don't know how that's going to work with sports, but I'll let you figure it out whether you're going to root for Houston or the Oilers. What is it now the Oilers here at the football game? Texas.

Oh yeah, that used to be in Dallas. The Texans were in Dallas originally. That's the whole story.

Anyway, or you're going to root for the Seahawks. So, should I root for my home team? Implicitly then I'm hoping the other team will lose. So, I have a profound theological problem, but I'll let you all solve it.

Okay. Now we're up to looking, our approach has been to look broadly at an approach and then zero in on specific Psalms. And so today, having looked at it very broadly with seven-league boots and getting a feel for the Psalter as a whole, we're now going to today be looking at individual Psalms, various kinds of petition Psalms.

So, the first one on page 174 is the very first lament Psalm or petition Psalm, which is Psalm 3. Psalms 1 and 2 are the introduction to the book of Psalms. And Psalm 1 is the wicket with the gate that you have to pass through to get to the celestial city that the Psalms are going to bring us to. And so that you have to come with ethics and delight in the law of the Lord, meditate in his word.

And if you're in that spirit of ethics, then you are in a spiritually fit state of entering the Psalm. As we saw in the petition Psalms, songs of praise or hymns from unclean hands and uncircumcised hearts are an abomination to God. And so, therefore, we have to come up with a fit to enter into the Psalter.

The second Psalm introduces us to the leading figure, which is the king. It's a coronation Psalm. And we're going to talk about that.

Today, I have set my king upon Zion, my holy hill. And we're introduced to the one, ask of me, my son, and I'll give you the heathen for your inheritance. The ends of the earth is your possession.

And so, he tells the king to pray, to pray that his kingdom will extend to the ends of the earth. And it's in the context of nations raging and throwing off the rule of God and throwing off the rule of the anointed king. We might've thought the kingdom of God will come on a balmy cloud and you pray, Lord, bring your kingdom.

And it's going to come just like that with rainbows and sunshine. Next thing we know, we have rain poured on our picnic. And we hear the Psalm say, Oh Lord, how many are my foes, how many rise up against me?

And we suddenly realize that it's not going to come easily. It's going to come with struggle and it's going to be a struggle of faith to bring about the kingdom of God. And so, this is a morning prayer when he offers it, but it has a temple in view.

He's praying toward the holy mountain. He's not at the temple, but he's praying toward the temple with the temple in mind. The other day we looked at Psalm 4, which is an evening prayer.

So, these two are pairs. One is a morning prayer. One is an evening prayer.

In both cases, it's his own people that are rebelling against him. And in this Psalm, it's in Absalom's revolt and the whole nation has turned against him without cause. And in Psalm 4, his own leadership has lost faith in him.

And so, you begin right away within his own nation, this rejection of him and how he struggles with it. And we learn the spiritual struggle of faith and prayer in the midst of what seems to be an impossible circumstance of the whole nation turning against him. Now look at our political situation.

It seems utterly impossible to me. And then you have the next one, you have his own leadership is betraying him. So that's the context.

So, let's go and then we'll read the Psalm. And what I'll probably do more of today is instead of going through all the notes, I'll probably, we'll just stay together and we can move a bit more quickly. We'll just stay with the Psalm and keep the translation.

If I'm saying something that I know is not in your notes, I'll probably call your attention to it. So otherwise, you don't have to worry about writing too much. It's going to be in your notes when you go back over it at another time, if you wish to.

So, we begin with the superscript and the historical approach. We spent some time on validating the credibility of the superscript against normative academic scholarship. This is Psalm of David.

And this is one of the 14 Psalms where we are given a historical situation that prompted the composition of the Psalm. We're told it's when he fled from his son, Absalom. And we'll come back to that.

So, it's there for a purpose. And it's there assuming that you know the book of Samuel, where we have the story of his flight, his exile from Jerusalem due to his own son usurping the throne from him. I am.

Oh, and as you're reading, think about the motifs I said. Where's the address? Where's the lament? Where's the confidence? Where's the petition? You'll find them all here. And it might be useful for us to identify those different sections so we can reflect better upon the theology of the psalm.

So, pay attention to that as we go through it. And when we're finished, I'm going to ask you, where's the lament? Where's the confidence? Where's the petition? And where's the praise or the wish? Okay. I am.

How many are my foes? Many rise up against me. Many are saying of me, God will not deliver him. But you, I am, are a shield around me.

You are my glory, the one who lifts up my head. I cry aloud to I am and he answers me from his holy hill. I lay down and slept.

I awoke because I Am sustains me. I do not fear the tens of thousands of troops who are drawn up against me on every side. Arise, I Am, deliver me, my God, strike all my enemies on the cheek, break the teeth of the wicked.

Deliverance belongs to I Am. Your blessing be on your people. And then the postscript, for the director of music with stringed instruments, that's found at the beginning of Psalm 4. I believe it belongs with Psalm 3. Okay.

Let's go back up. Before we get into the psalm, I want you to hear a bit of the voice of the church. It goes back centuries and here's what someone said throughout church history.

At Easter, the commemoration of Psalm 3.5 was most intently celebrated, namely 3.5. I lay down and slept. I awoke again because I Am sustains me. In the early church, a cross country came directly to Jesus.

They saw in that Jesus in death, I'm going to lie down, go to sleep. But I awoke at Easter. Good Friday, he lay down in death.

Easter Sunday, he awoke because the Lord sustained him through death. So, that's how they would read the psalms. I read it typically.

I start with David and what it meant to David. Then I understand that David is a type of his greatest son, the son of God. So, he lay down in a crisis, in the revolt of Absalom.

He awoke. That is a type to me of Jesus when the whole nation rejected him and put him upon a cross. He went into the sleep of death and he awoke again and triumphed because the Lord sustained him.

So, they did not have our historical consciousness as much as we do today. The Desert Fathers take us back into the fourth century. In the daily recitation of the psalms, commonly 12 psalms, they sang 12 psalms in the morning prayer within their own cells and 12 psalms at night.

That became their daily practice beginning in the early morning with Psalm 3. That's how they started the day. So, this psalm has been celebrated with people of God in church history. This was critical.

It began the day, the Desert Fathers who wanted to be a part of and be as close to God as they could be and not be contaminated by the world. I think it was bad

theology, but they had great hearts for God. So, they would begin with reciting Psalm 3. I can learn from them.

And then Schumann goes on with Psalm 63 and they would end with Psalm 140 and other prayers at the third, sixth, and ninth hours. Such became the origin and long tradition of the liturgical hours with its variants and diverse monastic foundations, east and west. During the manual labor of the day, the psalms were constantly chanted.

Palladius reports that around 3 PM, one can stand and hear the divine psalmody issuing forth from each cell and imagine one is high above in paradise, that is with the angels. This was the time of the day for the main meal or in more ascetic forms, the single meal of the day. So, that's just one taste that I think often we who are more independent, we don't have a sense of our history.

I must say one of the things I'm enjoying about Anglicanism is that I have, I really have a sense more now that I'm part of a very historic church. So, anyway, I find it useful. The whole liturgical hours, I find it useful that four times a day you go through a liturgy and each day you do a different section of the Bible.

I find that very salutary. I don't do it as well and perfectly as I wish I did, but it's an ambition. At least I know what I'm striving for.

The Germans would talk about sitzenbuch and I read that is how this sets within the structure of the book of Psalms. I already commented how you have Psalm 1, 2, and then you end up here at 3, at 4, and all of these laments. Then you get the first praise psalm in Psalm 8. And we did that because that was the first praise psalm.

Okay. Now let's go back. We won't go, don't go to page 176.

From here on in, what I'd like you to do is simply let's, well, let's just go and enjoy the psalm. Let's begin with, it's a psalm of David. Let me ask you, what in the psalm suggests this is a prayer by a king? Anything you look at? Is there anything there that would suggest this is not by just Mr. Everyman, but by a king? I would suggest verse three, where it talks about that you're the shield around me, my glory, and the one who lifts up my head.

Okay. I think that the shield around me, I think could be used for anybody, but the one who lifts my head above everything, I think that's a step. And I think, Landon, that's a helpful one.

I would too, verse six, I do not fear the tens of thousands of troops drawn up against me. That's not Mr. Everyman. No, this is a military scene.

If I take it at face value and not as metaphor, and I see no reason to take it as metaphor. The superscript also prevents me. It's unnatural to take it to me as metaphor, as Mr. Everyman.

And now hyperbole, I'm surrounded by 10,000 troops in my imagination. So, I think it's more likely this is a king and it would fit the Absalom revolt very nicely. So, what he's asking us to do by the superscript is to go back to 2 Samuel verses chapters 14 through 16, where we have the story of Absalom.

Actually, the battle is in chapters 17 and 18. But when David fled, that story is in 2 Samuel 14, 15, and 16. And the background to the whole thing, of course, is the next Psalm we're going to look at is Psalm 51.

And that is a real turning point in David's career. He's in a funk after that sin with Bathsheba, and murdering the husband. And he turns out he's just not perceptive.

He seems to be in sleep. He seems to be in a funk. He had passion of sex and had adultery, murder, and killing the husband.

And that had its effect evidently because the heir apparent to the throne would have been Amnon, the next one, the oldest. And he rapes his sister and models his father, sexual passions and rapes Tamar. And then you have Absalom, the next one, the heir to the throne.

Since David doesn't act, Absalom takes it into his own hand to avenge the wrong instead of going through the right process and having the father do it. He's the one who avenges himself, which is forbidden. And so he murders Amnon.

And now we have a murderer. And as a result of that, Absalom has to flee. He goes into exile.

And eventually, David invites him back. There's never a clear confession or righting of the wrong. There's a coldness between the father and the son.

And so, Absalom revolts against the father. Absalom is really wicked. He is the enemy.

He is truly wicked. You could see that the very fact he wants to usurp the throne from his own father, which will entail he's going to murder his father in order to take the throne. And the way he gets his gathering, you could see how he just fracked.

He has no regard for God. He uses God as a pretense. And so he needs to get a gathering around him and he can't do it in Jerusalem.

So, he's going to go down to Hebron and install himself as king at Hebron, the ancient capital where David began. So how does he go down there? He lies to and says to his father, I have made a vow to offer sacrifices at Hebron. And so, David said, okay, you can go down there and offer your sacrifices at Hebron.

But he's using the sacrifice as a pretense to usurp the father's throne and to kill the father. He's actually being utterly deceptive about this whole thing because he has another agenda in mind. So, he sets up there and he goes down there.

Many of the people there didn't know what was up. They just knew the king's son was offering up a sacrifice. And the text says that while he's offering up his vow and his sacrifice to God, he is sending out messengers telling the kingdom that he is the king and he is now the king at Hebron.

So, while he's sort of like the godfather, while they're baptizing the baby, the godfather is murdering everybody off. So, while he's offering up his sacrifice, he's working to undermine David and destroy David. This is taking God's name to vanity.

This is misusing God's name. And so, and then as he's offering the sacrifice, he secures the number one intellect in the country, Ahithophel, the Gileadite. And Ahithophel, best I can tell, Ahithophel is Bathsheba's grandfather.

He is the father of Ilium, who is the father of Bathsheba. I think he never forgave David. And so, he is willing to conspire with Absalom to overthrow David.

There is a, I don't know if I should connect that he's the grandfather of Bathsheba and he's the one that wants to destroy David. Although I think the dots can be connected between them. So anyway, he now becomes the counselor and he is so brilliant as a counselor that it says, David considered him equal to a prophet.

He could tell what was going to happen. He had an insight into people and he knew what would occur. It reminds me of when I was on the faculty of Dallas, we had a dean, and a counselor and very insightful.

I was on the disciplinary committee one year and we had a case with a student. So, before we brought the student in to the dean, the counselor said, I'm going to go through 11 to 14 questions. I forget which it was.

He said, I'm going to say this. He's going to say that. I'm going to say this. He's going to say that. And when we get to the 11th or the 14th, I forget which, if he blows up, he's guilty. So, I sat there, sure enough, just as he said, he says this, he says that.

And it's going along just as he said. And now we come to the crucial question and the student absolutely blew up, stood up and he wasn't going to sit there listening to this. It was amazing to me that the counselor could anticipate exactly.

That's how I see Ahithophel. He was that brilliant and insightful. And when David flees and he learns that Ahithophel is part of the conspiracy, he immediately prays.

And he says, God frustrated the counsel of Ahithophel and they're evil. So, when they come in, they're not only going to murder the father, but the first counsel of Ahithophel is to take your father's harem and have sex with them on the roof of the palace. In other words, that's the news broadcast.

You do that. Everybody knows this revolt is real and that you made yourself a stench in your father's nostrils. So, that gives you an idea of the evil of these people, of adultery, murder, and misusing God's name.

And the nation is following them and he steals the hearts of the people. That's another thing it says, and he stole the hearts of the people by lying about his father. He's a typical politician.

Everyone who comes, your case is good. And so, I'll give you whatever you want. And they all elect him.

There's a typical, not you, Mike, not Mike. Right. Okay.

So, that's Ahithophel. And you could see the evil that David is up against. So, this is a spiritual war, not just simply a military war.

And the writer wants us to read that history and understand what this war is all about. It's a war, as I said, as in the whole Bible, it's a war between good and evil, justice, injustice, might or right, and so forth. That's the struggle.

Now let's take a look. We also need to know what was happening with David at this time. And when David learns of the coup and he learns everybody's following him, then David realizes it's not safe to stay in Jerusalem because he has too many spies there.

Someone could poison him. Somebody could do treason. It just was not safe in Jerusalem.

And he's better off being out of the city in order that if there is a battle, he can have a real battle. So, David flees the city. Interestingly enough, he has these different encounters as he leaves the city.

And this isn't that germane, but it is part of the typology. It's interesting that Ittai, the Gittite joins him with total loyalty. And here's the picture.

His own people are rejecting him. And here is the Gentile, the Gittite from Gath where Goliath came from. He's loyal to David.

And that's a tremendous picture of Jesus, where his own people put him on a cross. And those who go with him today are almost all Gentiles. That's not a put down of the job, just saying that's the picture.

And that's the reality. I'm not politically correct sometimes, but that's the truth of what I see. And as he goes, the next person he meets is the priest, Zadok.

And when he meets Zadok, he says to Zadok, you'll just be a burden. You won't do me any good here. And he says to him, are you a seer? By which he means, can you give me prophecies and give me advice? Because I need a prophet to direct me in the battle as often occurred.

And so, he says, can you direct me? Are you a seer? Can you give me a prophecy? Can you help me in the battle? And he says, no, take the ark back to Jerusalem. And in Psalm, he says, God will heal me from his holy hill. You go back there, go back to Jerusalem with the ark.

And you'll be there with another priest by the name of Abiathar. Abiathar has a son by the name of Jonathan and Zadok has a priest by the name of Ahimaaz. And what he's setting up, what David is doing is he's setting up a whole counter-spy system.

He's setting up that Zadok will be his eyes and ears and telling him what's going on. And how he's going to learn what's going on is that Zadok is going to tell David through these two fleeted, thank you. And these sons with fleet feet, that's my problem.

Anyway, that's the wine coming there. Right. Okay.

So, they're going to be runners and they're going to tell David, who's now going to be down toward the Jordan, exactly what's going on in the King's palace. And so he sends Zadok back and he's setting up the spy system. So, he'll know what Absalom is up to.

And he can take counter measures and know how he should flee or where he should flee. And he'll know what Absalom is up to. So, he's a general and wants to know what the enemy is going to do.

As he gets to the top of the mountain, and this is very worthwhile talking about the people he meets on the different stages of the mountain, but he gets to the top of the mountain. And that's where he learns that Ahithophel has joined the conspiracy. And immediately he prays, God frustrates the counsel of Ahithophel.

And at that moment in the providence of God, another counselor, very brilliant, is Hushai. And he says, Hushai, you'll just be a burden to me out here. I want you to go back and frustrate the counsel of Ahithophel.

And this is altogether crucial. And so, what happens is they now have Absalom out in the providence of God. As Absalom is entering the city, Hushai is entering the city.

It's just the providence of God. And Hushai, I wish I had time to develop Hushai. He's so brilliant, so clever.

He begins and he says, long live the king. Of course, he means David, but Absalom thinks he means him. So, everything he says, Absalom hears it as praise for him.

And everything he says is also appropriate for David. That's very brilliant. So, Absalom and his pride can't hear what's really going on.

Well, anyway, Ahithophel, his counsel is, while your father is weak, he's exposed, he's tired. He doesn't have an army really organized yet. This is the time to strike him.

Hushai knows that's right, but he has to defeat that counsel. And so, he comes back and he says, you know how clever your father is. He's a wily fighter.

When he kills a few of your soldiers, they will all depart because they were all fear of David. So, my counsel is that you gather all of Israel with a great big army. You'll be at the head of them and you'll become like snow over them.

You're just overwhelmed. And if they're in a city, we'll get ropes and tear down the walls. They will have no escape, but there'll be such power that he can't escape.

Absalom likes their counsel better than the counsel of Ahithophel. Ahithophel is so bright. He knows that's utterly the wrong counsel.

He knows the course is over. He goes home and hangs himself because he's going to be put to death. He knows David will win as a result of that counsel.

Now that's the background to the story. Do you get the theology? If you read just the psalm and prayed, you would think there were no means, but when this narrative is there, that you get another view of what's going on. David doesn't praise Hushai.

He doesn't praise anyone but God, but he doesn't deny that behind this scene of providence, God is at work. So, for me to help illustrate that when our children were very young, we used to play out the Bible stories. One of the Bible stories that my daughter loved was David and Goliath.

So, I would stand on one end of the living room and she would stand on the other end of the living room. I would raise my sword and I would say, I'm Goliath and this is my sword. I challenge you to a battle.

She would say, I trust in God. Well, we had in the corner of the room, we had a dish towel and we had five ping pong balls. So, we would go over in the corner of the room and we would pick up the five ping pong balls and we'd square off again.

I'm Goliath and this is my sword. I would challenge you to a battle. She would say, I trust in God.

Whereupon after saying she trusted God, she would swing the towel and the ping pong ball went who knows where. I would fall down and she'd run over and jump on me and the best part was cutting off my head. So, that's how we played David and Goliath.

When we first began learning the Bible story, when we squared off the second time, she would normally forget to say, I trust in God. So, she'd swing the sword, take the towel, ping pong ball. Interestingly enough, David had five, but in any case, I wouldn't fall down, of course, because she didn't say, I trust in God.

But one evening when we squared off, she said, I trust in God and did nothing. I didn't fall down. She said to me, Daddy, I said, I trust in God.

I said, I know, but you didn't swing, you didn't throw the ping pong ball. Faith works. It may take more faith to go on to the knife of a doctor than to lie on your bed and say, I trust in God.

Do you see the theology that you're getting two different viewpoints here that in the narrative? It could be David's means, but he prayed. And at the opportune moment, God sent him Hushai, but it wasn't without human means. I think that's profound theology that I remember I heard one of our students at Dallas preached on this psalm, but he didn't deal with the superscript.

It was all, we just trust God. I know many people who just trust God and will die of cancer, for example. Without using any means, not that you're going to be cured, but I'm just saying, I think it's a false dichotomy.

The spiritual necessity is that we really have an amen in our hearts that God is going to work. However, he's going to work. It doesn't mean we don't do anything.

Faith works. So, that's a suggestion. All right.

Now we look at the psalm itself and we've got through the superscript so far. We're going to do faster than that. Okay.

All right. First of all, I asked you to analyze the psalm. So, I think the address is obvious.

Oh, I am straight off the bat. So, where is the lament? Where's the confidence? Where's the petition? And the conclusion of the psalm? Does anybody want to help us here? No, I cheated. Pardon? I said, I cheated and looked at the next page.

Oh, well, I do that all the time on crossword puzzles. All right. Well, then if you did that, okay, go ahead.

The lament is verses one and two. It's the lament. How many are my foes? Many, many say it against me.

Right. So, that's the lament. Okay.

You're doing well so far. You got an A. And verse two also. Yes.

As part of that, God will not deliver him. Okay. Now what? So, we've got verses one and two so far.

It looks to me that three begins with confidence. Yeah. But you, I am, you are a shield.

You see that, but you is often the signal we've moved into confidence. Here's the situation, but I have you. That's the confidence section, but you are the shield who protects me.

Okay. How far do you want to extend the confidence? It looks like the confidence goes down through six at least. You're right.

Okay. You're right because I agree. You're right.

I would say three through six is the confidence section. Okay. What happens in verse seven? Petition.

We get the petition. Deliver me, the crucial word. Notice how, not only deliver me, notice what happens in the grief part of it.

Punish the enemy. You see, strike them on the cheek. So, we have a double petition that we dealt with, with the implicative Psalms.

All right. And then we, yeah, that's the praise, deliverance. There's the praise.

Deliverance belongs to the Lord. And it ends with the wish your blessing be on your people. So, there you can see, it might help you to understand a psalm.

And when you understand the elements that go into the psalm, in addition to seeing the parallelism of how many are my foes, and that's a very close to synonymous parallelism, the foes and those who rise up against me. So, in other words, the point is, they're not only enemies, but they're attacking him. So, the bit of escalation, how many are my foes and they are attacking me.

And then they are saying to me, and they add to that, and there you see their unbelief and their rejection of the anointed King. You have to understand David is the anointed King and everybody knew he was the anointed King. And the ingratitude of the people, this man who defeated Goliath, this King who had given them their kingdom and from the Euphrates River to the river of Egypt had done all this good for them with total ingratitude.

They want to put him to death. You could see the pathos of that and the typology of it. God will not deliver him.

It's just exactly what they said of Jesus on the cross. And so, they have no faith, which is being shown here. No faith in God, no faith in their King.

God will not deliver him. I'm just curious about the petition, unlike maybe some other petitions, he is not asking for his enemies to be killed. You know, the enemy was seeking to kill him.

The lament seems to be a strong rebuke in the sense of not asking for their death. Is that because of who they were and because they were part of Israel? What I do know, Cody, is he's asking for their defeat. I think there's maybe some validity to that elsewhere in the Psalms.

They do pray for the death of the enemy. It could possibly be he's not asking for the death of his own people. That's a possibility.

I think it's a helpful comment. So, yes, it's possible that he doesn't go all the way, but we'll come back to that. We'll talk more about it when we get there.

So, you have the confidence in verses three through six. I would say there are two parts to the confidence. The first part is his statement of his confidence in God.

You are the shield around me. And his confidence is expressing, I cry aloud who I am. And he answers me from his holy hill.

And then, as I understand it, he validates and demonstrates his confidence that in the midst of the battle and the danger, he goes to sleep. I mean, can you think of the whole world coming out against you? And he lies down and goes to sleep. That's an unusual person.

So, when he says the confidence, this is both you, I Am, and by the way, the I am is used seven times, which is not unusual. But anyway, but you, I Am, and you are the shield around me. And this is the light infantry shield.

And he not only knows who God is, he's the shield around him. He also knows who he is. That is, you are, his glory is that he belongs to the covenant-keeping God.

And they, his part, they're united. His glory, that which gives him glory, social esteem in his victory. You are the one who lifts up my head above the surging foe.

And so, he knows who he is. He knows he's the king. So, he knows God is going to protect him.

He knows who he is as the son of God. He knows God will hear his prayer when he prays and God will honor him and bestow glory on him. So, I say this here, the confidence is based upon God.

I think on his own election that our confidence is in Christ. We have to know who we are and you and I, we are the children of God. And God called him.

You see, if God, we talked about how does he know he's king? I said it was the prophet, Samuel, who said, you are the king. Somehow or another, he didn't consider Samuel a madman. He heard it as the voice of God.

It came to him as the word of God. In his innermost being, he knew that was the word of God. It took a tremendous amount of faith, I think, I mean to say he's going to risk his whole life on this because the king said so.

Then something happened. The Spirit of God came down upon him when he poured the oil upon him and he became different. He went out and did the works of God.

Now the point is, it seems to me, and that's the same, humanly speaking, Jesus had the voice of John the Baptist and the great prophet. He had the Spirit of God come on him. He had the voice of God.

He had all of Scripture. He did the works of God. And that's us.

We know we are the children of God because the word of God came to us as indeed it is the truth, the word of God. We heard it as the word of God. We accept it as the word of God.

It's a gift to us. Faith is a gift that you hear it that way. The Spirit of God is with us.

He changed us. He's in us. He works with us and we live differently.

We're walking to a different drumbeat from the world. I know I'm different because of the grace of God operative with me. Now my point is for God to have moved so upon David's heart and his whole life and then saying, I abandon you.

He feels abandoned, but for that to be a reality, that would be wicked. That would be diabolical. He's risked his whole life on this and then said, sorry, I changed my mind and walked away from you.

For me, it would be diabolical almost that you give your whole life. You've been moved by the most religious sentiment to give your life to Jesus. And then when you die, God says, sorry, I changed my mind and walked away.

That would be wrong. God would never do that. But who am I to say God is wrong? It's just that I know he's not his nature.

He will never do that. I will never leave you. I will never forsake you.

Trust me. That's what makes us, makes Christ different. Trust me, even in death, hold my hand going through it.

So, he's confident that, and he got this tremendous picture that here is God represented by the ark on the top of the holy mountain, 2,500 feet above sea level. Here is he in the Jordanian Rift Valley, 2,500 feet below sea level. So, he is at the lowest, literally the lowest point of the earth when he's making this prayer.

And God is at the highest point, theoretically, you all know about science, not the highest, but it's pictured as the highest. So, what it's saying is space makes no difference to God. So that even though he is as pictured as in heaven and far above us, he is nigh to us.

And he hears our prayer and our prayer enters into amazingly into his very presence. He proves his faith now in verses five and six. As I say, he lays down, I lay down and slept and I woke because the Lord sustains me.

In your notes, there is a helpful comment here that may be helpful to you on page 178 at the bottom of the page. And I note, to sleep secure in trust is unique in the ancient Near East. Pharaoh says to his son, even when you sleep, this should be guard your heart because no man has adherence on the day of distress.

Never go to sleep because you have no one who's going to really stand with you. And here's David, he's going to sleep. What a contrast.

And you could see that, that you don't go to sleep. Remember the story of Saul when he's tracking David and then he, with Abner, goes to sleep and David and who was it that was with him? Anyway, they steal it. Pardon? Student's voice.

Joab, Joaziah, you're talking about his warden. No, it wasn't Joab. It was the younger brother of Joab.

Anyway, they steal into the camp while he's asleep. And David takes his water jar and his spear. In other words, he's saying to Saul, I have your life and death in my hands, the water jar and the spear.

And what's so amazing is to show his loyalty to the king. He gives Saul back his spear because he needs that to defend himself, but it doesn't give him the water jar to sustain him. It's just brilliant for loyalty.

So, he was asleep and David stole into the camp and took a spear and water jar from him. The greatness of his heart, talk about faulting him for imprecatory prayers. He would not touch God's anointed.

That's faith, tremendous faith on his part. There's another one who was, oh, we had in the poetry, Cicero went to sleep and Jao did him in. So, the fact he can go to sleep shows tremendous faith in God when you have all your enemies around you.

I think I might need a sleeping pill, but it's tremendous faith. I just love it. Then we have the petition.

First of all, we already discussed the word deliver. This becomes then a crucial inclusio. Note that it began with the enemy saying, God will not deliver him, but he doesn't despair.

So, at the end, he says, deliver me because it's right and my God. Now here in the imprecatory prayer, when he says, strike all my enemies on the cheek, as I

understand that, make them defenseless. If he could strike the enemy on the cheek, he has no defenses.

So, take away all their defenses, strike them on the cheek, humiliate them. So, he can't defend himself. Then, on the other hand, break the teeth of the wicked.

So, he can't be offensive and do damage. But I think Cody makes a good point that he didn't really pray for his death. He just said, render them so they are defenseless and also without any offense and just neutralize them.

Then he concludes with a praise, and deliverance. This is the key, deliverance belongs to I Am. He ends with a wish, with this communal sense, a wish for the people, your blessing be on your people.

And we are that people and David's blessing is on us. That's in a sense, I think, that David's blessing is on you and on me and God will honor it. What a privilege we are.

Then it's handed over to the postscripts and we're doing the right thing. We're using it for ourselves today and learning lessons from it. That is Psalm 3. It's wonderful words of God, isn't it? Rich, rich, rich.

Well, we'll get that back from Samuel. Yeah. You don't have that.

Yeah. You would miss all that. You don't have the context, which is projecting.

It's like needing something to project an alluvium. It really makes a big difference. You can see how devilish it is when you take these superscripts away. It's a tremendous loss in interpretation.

This is Dr. Bruce Waltke in his teaching on the book of Psalms. This is session number 14, Petition Psalms, Psalm 3.