BibleProject

Psalms 3-8 E1: Psalm 3: A Deposed King's Desperate Plea

Official Transcript

Speakers

Hosts: Jon Collins and Tim Mackie

Credits read by audience: Vincent, Myla, and Shawna

[Overview of Psalm 3 (0:00–14:35)]

[BibleProject theme song, "Defender" by TENTS]

Jon: Welcome to BibleProject podcast. Today, we're going to read Psalm 3. Earlier this year, we read Psalm 1 and 2, which together work as an introduction to the entire Psalms scroll. The next psalm, Psalm 3, begins a short series of Psalms that all work together as a bundle. In the next few weeks, we'll go through each of those one by one and see how they work together. These are Psalms 3 through 8. Psalm 3 starts off with a heading that tells us the background for the poem: "A psalm of David, when he fled from his son, Absalom."

Tim: [audio clips from the episode below] There's more than just a claim of authorship going on here. Somebody arranged these poems in precisely this order with just these headings, saying, "*Dear reader, you should read this poem in connection to this story*." This is a glowing hyperlink.

Jon: The hyperlink in question is 2 Samuel chapters 13 through 19. This is an era in King David's story that's shameful and tragic. His family's falling apart, and his kids are doing unthinkable things to each other, creating a mess. And—

Tim: [audio clips from the episode below] David remains silent during the whole thing. Like, he just refuses to get involved. It's horrible. So David's a real loser at this point in his life.

Jon: David's son Absalom leads an uprising to kick David off the throne and take it for himself. So David's on the run, without power, a family destroyed. And in this desperate moment, he turns to God and prays—

Tim: [audio clips from the episode below] "You are a shield in front of me. You are my honor. You are the lifter of my head." There's remarkable honesty and remarkable hope in the face of a really, really terrible situation.

Jon: David asks God to rise up and rescue him, recalling how he did so in the past. And the psalm ends with David saying, "May your blessing be on your people." So [exhales] how does David have so much faith that God will restore him to the throne, especially in light of how much David has failed?

Tim: [audio clips from the episode below] David's role was always about more than David. It was a representative who would represent before God the covenant people through whom God said, "I'm going to bless all nations through you and your seed." So what's true of the king is true of the people.

Jon: Today, Tim Mackie and I read Psalm 3, a hope-filled prayer in a dark hour. Thanks for joining us. Here we go.

[Musical break: BibleProject theme song, "Defender" by TENTS (2:28–2:31)]

Jon: Hi, Tim.

Tim: Jon Collins.

Jon: Here we are. We're going to read Psalm 3.

Tim: Mhm. Yes. But then also, we are paying attention to *bundles* of Psalms—

Jon: Right.

[BibleProject theme song, "Defender" by TENTS, fades out]

Tim: —as intentional little units, mosaic collections, that have—at least, the claim, the hypothesis is: They've been put together on purpose in these little arrangements.

Jon: Yeah, you said we're going to look at Psalms 3 through 8 together.

Tim: Yeah, Psalms 3 through 8 is part one of an even larger bundle— [laughs]

[Jon and Tim chuckle]

Tim: —that runs from Psalms 3—but really Psalm 1—all the way to 18.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: So let's just recap. When we looked at Psalms 1 and 2, what we found was two very different kinds of poems. Like, really different. And I won't try and summarize. You all listening can go back if you want.

Jon: Mmm. But about the good life and about the nations raging.

Tim: [Jon backchannels throughout] Exactly. Yes. And the good life is found by meditating on God's Torah, God's instruction, that is a source of unending life that can turn a person into a garden of Eden tree of life. In contrast to: Any other ways of living in the world that are not sourced in God's instruction inevitably end up on a path towards ruin and lostness. And that's the way of the wicked, Psalm 1. Psalm 2 is the picture of our world.

[Jon and Tim laugh]

Tim: [chuckles] But on a scaled version.

Jon: Why do they rage, the nations?

Tim: Why do the nations rage? Violent, plundering, self-elevating nations, all in collusion against each other, but allied together against the Kingdom of God and God's Messiah.

Jon: And: What's God going to do about it?

Tim: Yeah, God has done something that makes him actually laugh at the silly rebellion of violent human kings. He's set in motion a plan. He's appointed a king on Mount Zion called "Messiah." And he's going to bring justice on those rebel kings, defend the poor, become a refuge and protector for those who will turn to him and come under his leadership.

Jon: I don't remember "defend the poor" in that poem.

Tim: Mmm. Sorry, I was reading Psalm 72 [laughs] into it—

[Jon and Tim laugh]

Jon: [laughs] You're hyperlinking.

Tim: But: "*For anybody who's tired of living under the rebel empires, you can come under the refuge of this king and find life and protection*."

Jon: Yeah. Right.

Tim: Yeah. And the good life.

Jon: The Son.

Tim: And the good life.

Jon: Oh.

Tim: The last line of Psalm 2—

Jon: Oh, yes.

Tim: —is, "The good life is for those who take refuge in the Son of God's Kingdom," as opposed to the kingdoms of the rebel empires.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Yep. That's Psalm 1 and 2.

Jon: Mhm.

Tim: So apparently, God's instruction can give life and guidance, *and* God's instruction is closely connected to the promise and purpose of God to install a Son of God, a merging of divine and human rule, here on Earth that will deal with violence and provide a refuge for those who want out of the violent regime. [pause] Psalm 1 and 2. So that's the first little bundle. They don't have headings, like superscriptions—

Jon: Right.

Tim: Like, "of David." But that's going to change real quick as we turn to Psalm 3. So Psalms 3 through 8 are a little bundle that come together for a number of reasons. Psalm 3 is going to have our first—well, I'm going to just call it superscriptions. It's not really a normal English word. [pause] "Heading."

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: And the heading of Psalm 3 has this information. It tells us, one: "A song *le*David." [chuckles]

Jon: *Le*.

[Tim laughs]

Jon: That sounds French.

Tim: And a little preposition in front of David's name is the Hebrew letter *le*.

Jon: *Le*. Hmm.

Tim: [laughs] So *le* means "to" or "for" or "about."

Jon: "To," "for," or "about."

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: Why do we have three words for one word?

Tim: You know, different languages have different ways of organizing how they talk about space.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: If I am going from my house to yours, I would say I'm walking *to* your house.

Jon: Yes. And you wouldn't say I'm walking *for* your house.

Tim: Mmm. No, exactly. I'm walking *to* your house. But I can also say I'm going to buy you a new lamp *for* your house.

Jon: Mmmmm. I'm walking *to* your house with the lamp I have *for* your house.

Tim: *For* your house, while you and I are talking *about* your house.

[Jon laughs]

Tim: In Hebrew— [pause]

[Jon laughs]

Tim: —you would say: You and I are walking *le* your house with a lamp that is *le* your house as we talk *le* your house. [laughs]

Jon: Hmm. Okay.

Tim: [laughs] So it's a wider range of meaning, and you have to use context to figure it out.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: You actually have to imply the nuanced meaning. So it means "to," "for," or "about." You could take this as a sense of *belonging* to. *Le* David, David's song, meaning, by him.

Jon: Okay. Yeah.

Tim: But it's not the most common use *at all* of *le*. But—

Jon: Oh, okay. That's how it's usually translated, "A song *of* David"?

Tim: It's how it's usually translated. It's usually translated with the English word "of."

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: A Psalm *of* David, which I think for most people means—

Jon: David wrote the psalm.

Tim: [Jon backchannels throughout] —he wrote the psalm. And maybe that is the claim being made. Whether David directly wrote every Psalm, I— [exhales] I mean, you can go back and forth. David was known as a musician, even as a famous musician. In the days of the prophet Amos, hundreds of years after David, he has this mention about how the music players in Jerusalem of his day are just like David was when he played his harp. So like, he was known as a songwriter-musician. So I'm not at all, like, doubting that many of these poems come from David. But what comes after this in the heading of Psalm 3 tells you there's more than just a claim of authorship going on here. So let's keep going.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: It says, "A song *le*David [laughs] when he fled from before the face of his son, Absalom." Somebody arranged these poems in precisely this order with just these headings, saying, "*Dear reader, you should read this poem in connection to this story. Oh, and you can find it in this collection. Right before,* [laughs] *you have scrolls*."

Jon: Oh.

Tim: "*It's called the Samuel scroll*." It's a hyperlink.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: This is a glowing hyperlink.

Jon: [Tim backchannels throughout] Yeah. And the point, then, is to pull up that story, and pay attention to words and ideas, and then compare them together.

Tim: Yep. It's an explicit invitation to read this poem and then go read and meditate on that section of the Samuel scroll.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Yep. So let's just do a reading of Psalm 3, shall we?

Jon: Okay. [jokingly] “A Psalm *le* David”—

[Jon and Tim laugh]

Tim: [chuckles] “To,” “for,” or “about.” [laughs]

Jon: —“in his fleeing from the face of Absalom, his son. Yahweh, how many are my opponents? Many are rising up against me. Many are saying about my life-being, ‘There is no rescue for him from Elohim.’ Selah.”

Tim: Selah, yeah.

Jon: “But you, yourself, Yahweh, are a shield in front of me, my honor, and the one who lifts up my head. My voice, to Yahweh, I cry out, and he answered me from the mountains of his holiness. Selah. As for me, I laid down, and I slept. I woke up, because Yahweh would sustain me. I am not afraid of the many multitudes of people who all around have set themselves against me. Rise up, O Yahweh. Rescue me, my Elohim. For you hit all my enemies on the cheek. The teeth of the wicked you broke. To Yahweh belongs rescue. May your blessing be upon your people. Selah.”

Tim: So [exhales] first impressions.

Jon: Oh. [exhales]

Tim: Things that stick out to you. What do you notice?

Jon: Okay, well, the most noticeable thing is breaking people’s teeth.

Tim: Oh, asking God to break someone’s teeth? [laughs]

Jon: [chuckles] Yeah, I mean, that just—

[Tim laughs]

Jon: —jumps out at me.

Tim: Mhm. Okay. God? *God* breaking teeth.

Jon: God breaking some teeth.

Tim: Yeah. Right? Because if it was, like, “My army commander, Joab, broke the teeth.”

Jon: That’s still just a pretty, like, visceral image—

Tim: I see. Okay, yeah.

Jon: —of teeth breaking. [laughs]

Tim: Yeah. Yeah, you’re slamming someone’s face with a mace or a fist. Breaking teeth.

Jon: [Tim agrees throughout] Yeah. Right, I think a fist can't break teeth, right? I mean, that's a pretty big impact to break some teeth.

Tim: Yeah, okay, so very vivid, violent image—

Jon: Very violent.

Tim: —ascribed to *God*.

Jon: Yeah. [chuckles]

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: [Tim agrees throughout] I think my biggest reflection—I read a Psalm like this, and I think the Psalm as a whole will feel a little bit uncomfortable to me, and I won't know what to do with it. But then I get to a line like verse 3—becomes this really personal line.

Tim: Mhm. Verse 3 is, "You're a shield in front of me. You are my honor. You're the one who lifts my head."

Jon: [Tim agrees throughout] Yeah. So you could take a verse like that, pull it out, and you're like, "*Whoa, that—there's so much beauty and resonance, and I can sing that*." And that to me is like: "*Cool, I'll just grab that verse, and that'll be my reflection on this Psalm—*"

Tim: Yeah, yeah. Got it.

Jon: —"*that God is my shield before me. He lifts up my head. And I can*"—

Tim: Yeah. And that's great. That's awesome.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: I love that.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: That's—I mean, that's a vivid image.

Jon: Mhm. And then the whole teeth-smashing thing or the fleeing in the wilderness, I just be kind of like, [rising pitch] "*Yeah*"—

Tim: [rising pitch] "*Yeah*."

Jon: [rising pitch] —"*okay*."

Tim: [Jon backchannels throughout] Yeah. So maybe the opportunity is that this is how Psalms strike many Christian readers of the Bible. There's beautiful lines that I want to hold in my heart and memorize them, and they bring me comfort or perspective. And

then there's other parts that are, like, really jarring, God smashing people's teeth. I don't know what to do with that, and so we kind of end up having an edited version of it in my mind.

Jon: Yes.

Tim: And the editing principles are: What do I like, and then what do I not like?

Jon: [chuckles] Yeah.

Tim: Yeah. I think that's a very common—very common approach. And I can say there's —that's not alien to me, too. Like, I have that same kind of repulsion and attraction to different elements in the Psalms. So maybe we could just say: The opportunity of meditating on a psalm is holding together all of the parts that were put together by the poet—

Jon: Right.

Tim: —and integrating them all into a bigger picture and whether there's some more meaning to discover. So maybe let's do that. How do we hold together God as my shield and honor and head lifter with God as the teeth breaker of my enemies?

["Solace" by Lofi Sunday feat. Ahmo fades in]

Tim: How do I hold that together?

Jon: Mhm. And this idea of multitudes of enemies rising up against me—

Tim: Yeah. Yeah. Okay. So let's go back to the heading.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Because somebody wants us to read this poem in connection to a very specific moment in the story of David.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: So let's upload that story, and find out who's supposed to be in my mind when it comes to these opponents and enemies.

[Musical break: "Solace" by Lofi Sunday feat. Ahmo (13:57–14:35)]

[Verses 1–4 and the Story Behind the Psalm (14:35–31:44)]

Tim: Okay, so we're looking at the story that is one of the last episodes in David's sad ending of his life, the last years.

Jon: Mmm.

Tim: So David has had his David and Goliath phase, right? Golden boy—

["Solace" by Lofi Sunday feat. Ahmo fades out]

Tim: —rose to power, didn't seize power in the days of Saul who invited him into the royal court in the first place because of his harp-playing abilities.

Jon: Right, he could soothe Saul's, like, crazy mind.

Tim: Yeah. That's right. Saul goes crazy, dies in a battle against the Philistines, then all the tribes come to David and say, "You be our king." And here begins the—at least in Samuel's presentation—the golden age of David. He becomes king of all the tribes, capital city in Jerusalem, sets it up, builds a palace, brings the ark of the covenant—right?—and the tabernacle. Things are going great.

Jon: Mhm.

Tim: And he is finally able to get an upper hand against all of the neighboring tribal groups and nations that have been stronger than them for a lot of years. So it kind of carves out a spot for Israel as a small little ascending kingdom—

[Jon chuckles]

Tim: [Jon backchannels throughout] —in the eastern end of the Mediterranean. There you go. Until David and Bathsheba. In the prophetic retelling of David's story in Samuel, it was his moral failures against Bathsheba and murdering her husband, forcing himself on her, that began the downfall of his life. And then, all of a sudden, his life just goes on this [exhales and makes crashing noise] just train wreck after train wreck. So after that story, he has a bunch of sons from a bunch of women, including Bathsheba. One of

those sons rapes one of David's daughters, so his half-sister. It's a *horrific* story of Amnon and Tamar. And then Tamar goes to another of her half-brothers, Absalom, and Absalom hears about what happened, and Absalom cooks up a plan to murder and assassinate his brother, Amnon, who did that. So then David remains silent during the whole thing. Like, he just refuses to get involved—

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: —with these—stuff with his—it's horrible. So David's a real loser. [laughs]

Jon: In this story?

Tim: Yeah, at this point, you're just like: "*What on Earth?*" And then Absalom flees, and he ends up living on the east side of the Jordan for a number of years. And David refuses to ever engage him, invite him back, talk to him. And so it's a guy named Joab, who's one of David's army generals, who cooks up a plan to get David to bring Absalom back.

Jon: And sorry, so Absalom is the son who murdered his brother?

Tim: His brother, *the* brother who raped his sister.

Jon: The sister.

Tim: Yep.

Jon: And then he kind of was in exile.

Tim: Yep.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Yep. And then Absalom was in exile. David didn't engage him or try to even do anything to him. He just left him hanging out there. And so one of David's army generals finds a way to bring him back.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: [Jon backchannels throughout] Absalom comes back. And what we're told is that he starts hanging out near the city gate of Jerusalem, where the elders gather. And he wants to be the king, and he's a prince. And as he starts smooth-talking his way, with all the channels of power at the main entrance of the city every day—in the narrative, he's just like, "*If I was king, here's what I'd be doing. Notice my dad's not doing that favor for you? Let me, I'm going to do that. I'll get this done for you.*" And so he spends a couple years doing that.

Jon: He's running for election.

Tim: And the narrator says, “He stole the hearts of the people of Israel.”

Jon: Okay.

Tim: So that’s the backstory.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Then one day, Absalom gets together a private militia he’s been organizing, storms into Jerusalem—

Jon: Mmm. “*I’m taking over*.”

Tim: —and is like, “*I’m coming for you, Dad. I’m going to take you out*.” So David flees.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: [laughs] That’s the story.

Jon: This is the story.

Tim: That’s the story, yes.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: So there’s an actual moment in the story, 2 Samuel chapter 15, verse 14: “David said to his servants and those with him in Jerusalem, ‘Get up, let us *flee*. . .’” It’s the same word used in the heading of Psalm 3. “. . .let us flee, otherwise, none of us will escape from the face of Absalom. Let’s get out of here quickly. He’ll overtake us and bring calamity on us and strike the city with the edge of the sword.” So Psalm 3 is hyperlinking this exact sentence in the story.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: So all of a sudden, the enemies and the opponents and what they’re saying—

Jon: Mmm. It’s very personal to David. I mean, this is his son.

Tim: [whispers] This is his son.

Jon: Yeah. This is—

Tim: So let’s just try and—David’s a bad—he’s not a good guy at this point in his life, but, like, let’s try and enter into his experience of that moment.

Jon: Yeah, not only has his son risen up against him, but in such a powerful way that David, the only thing he could do is flee.

Tim: Run for his life.

Jon: Run for his life.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: That must have been—

Tim: That is a low—

Jon: —a pretty, like, dramatic—

Tim: Mmm. [pause] What a terrible moment in your life.

Jon: [Tim agrees throughout] —moment. "*Not only is my own son against me, I'm now at a point in my life where I have lost my influence and power, and the only thing I can do is run*." It's a crisis on both those levels.

Tim: [Jon agrees throughout] Yeah. You could say, since he was in his teenage years, he's been a part of the royal court. His whole life has been participating in power—right? —and all of the benefits that come along with that. And out there, people praising him, singing songs about him. And it's all—this is a broken moment.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: And so let's go back to verses 1 and 2: "Yahweh, how many are my opponents? Many are rising up against me. Many are saying about my life-being, 'God's done with this guy. There's no rescue for him from God.'" This is the propaganda Absalom is spreading against David.

Jon: Ah.

Tim: "*If God was with him in the past, not anymore*."

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Yeah. "*He's washed up*." But then, he pivots and gets very intimate. And he says, "You, yourself, Yahweh, here's who you are to me."

Jon: Okay.

Tim: "Here's who you've been to me." And he uses three images: "You are a shield in front of me." So he uses a military image.

Jon: He knows very intimately what a shield does for him in battle.

Tim: Yep. He's been using them most of his life now. So "You're my shield. You are my honor." Many English translations will say "my glory." So we'll come back to that. And the third thing he says is, "You are the lifter of my head." "One who lifts up my head."

Jon: Mmm. If your head is down, you're feeling discouraged or shamed.

Tim: Mhm. Yeah, so we would associate lifting up the head with honor versus shame. Shame would be looking down. We often look away from each other when we're embarrassed or ashamed.

Jon: Okay. Mhm.

Tim: Yeah. Yes. So you can actually do a little word search on this phrase "lifting up the head" in the Hebrew Bible. And there are some occasions where being unable to lift your head means that you are dishonored.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: There's an example in Judges 9 and Zechariah 1. However, in both those cases, the reason why you're dishonored is because people more powerful than you have defeated you and taken your stuff. [laughs] So it's an image of conflict. You hang your head when somebody's exerted power over you and you can't do anything about it.

Jon: Hmm. Okay.

Tim: And lifting of the head is most often used in battle stories, military contexts, in the Hebrew Bible. Or there are a couple occasions where it's about somebody getting elevated to a position of honor. So you remember when Joseph is in prison, and he meets those two guys, the baker and the cup carrier of the king?

Jon: Mhm. Mhm.

Tim: And then when those guys get hope to be reinstated back to their positions in the royal court, they describe it as "Pharaoh lifting my head."

Jon: Hmm. Okay.

Tim: So it is about elevation versus lowering.

Jon: They were in prison. They get to go back and be reestablished into their role.

Tim: Mhm. Yeah. It's about social rank.

Jon: It's about social rank.

Tim: Maybe that's what unites all these.

Jon: Okay, so in this story, this is about power politics.

Tim: Mhm. Yes.

Jon: And so "to lift up your head" means "*You're going to let me remain king*." Right?

Tim: Yes.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Yeah, because “Yahweh, you’re a shield in front of me.” That’s protection. “You’re the lifter of my head.” That is, “You’re going to restore me to a place of power and influence and honor.” And then what he says in the middle is, “You are my *kavod*.”

Jon: Mmm. “My *kavod*.”

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: My “heaviness”?

Tim: My weightiness.

Jon: My weightiness.

Tim: Yes.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Yeah. Which is interesting because that’s also about social standing.

Jon: Mmm. That metaphor is?

Tim: Importance. To be weighty is to be important.

Jon: Yes.

Tim: Which is about how *other* people think about you.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Yeah. But what he doesn’t say is, “*You’re a shield in front of me because my crown is my kavod”*—

Jon: Oh.

Tim: —“*and you lift my head*.”

Jon: But when you say “crown,” what does crown mean?

Tim: It would be very easy if you have been a king [laughs] of any size kingdom for decades to become attached emotionally and in terms of your identity—

Jon: Oh, okay.

Tim: —to your role as king and the privileges and the influence that come with having that role.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And then when it's taken from you, you could easily imagine an existential crisis—

[Jon and Tim chuckle]

Tim: —on a personal level, setting in that "*My honor has been taken from me*."

Jon: "*My honor of being king*."

Tim: "*My honor of being king*." Yeah.

Jon: Mmm. And you're saying, David, here, is saying, "My honor is actually that I serve you, Yahweh"? Or that: "I"—

Tim: "You, yourself, are my honor, my source of honor."

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: I mean, it's—I wonder if here we're meant to imagine that as his whole life and kingdom—right?—the institution of power that he's been at the center of is crumbling and falling apart, there's sort of like this moment of honest recognition that actually, the only thing that ever brought him into any of this is not his own abilities as such. It's this remarkable series of events that God did for him that he could have never engineered for himself. I think this is a moment of confession, of honest—hmm, not confession of wrongdoing, but—or maybe you could say a realization of truth.

Jon: Hmm. Yeah, it is sandwiched between: "You're going to protect me," and "You're going to reestablish me as king." So—

Tim: Yeah. Trust. He trusts.

Jon: He trusts.

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: And he thinks, "*Okay, what has been my success this entire time? Is it my songwriting abilities?*" [chuckles]

[Tim laughs]

Jon: [Tim agrees throughout] "*Is it, like, my battle abilities? Is it my strategic abilities? Well, what's going to get me back?* And it's like: "*No, it's just Yahweh*." Is that what he's realizing, you're saying?

Tim: I think so.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: I think that's what we're meant to see here. So this is the successful career professional who's so used to winning, you know, [chuckles] but it's actually become a

really unhealthy, imbalanced lifestyle, and it's hurting all their relationships, and then their career just falls apart. And there's some moment of recognition amidst all that pain that, like, "*Whoa, maybe*—let's say it's a follower of Jesus. [laughs] Right? It's the moment of saying, "*My identity has been wrapped up in a thing that is crumbling. Who am I really if I don't have all that?*" And it's a recognition that "*You, Yahweh, are really the only thing I have that would give me a sense of elevation*." Now, it is wrapped in these two other images of: "You're going to—you are my protector"—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: —and "You are the one who's going to restore me" in some way.

Jon: Yeah. Right. [chuckles] So you know—

Tim: This is honest, man. This is, like, real.

Jon: Ah. It is real. He's like, "*I'm going to get back. How am I going to get back? It's not going to be my power right now. That's gone*."

Tim: Mhm. Yeah.

Jon: [Tim agrees throughout] "*It's not going to be my strategic thinking—like, my son outsmarted me. What's going to get me back? What actually has even gotten me here in the first place? And maybe I've started telling myself a story that it was all my abilities, but it is a recognition that it can't be that at this moment. But God, you will restore me*."

Tim: "*It's got to be you. It can only be you*."

Jon: Why—and I guess, why, at this point wouldn't David just be like, "*I guess my time's done*"?

Tim: [intrigued] Mmm. Right. Yeah.

Jon: Like: "*I guess I let this unravel too far, and God, you're just letting me, now, lay in the bed that I made*."

Tim: Mhm. Yeah.

Jon: He's like, "*I'm going to get back*."

Tim: Yeah, that's right. And then the next line after, in verse 4, where he says, "Listen, my voice, I'm crying out to Yahweh, and he answered me." Like, he—it's even put in a—

Jon: Past tense?

Tim: A past tense of, like: He is really banking on the fact that God's going to come through and turn this situation around. So there's remarkable honesty and remarkable hope in the face of a really, really terrible situation. That's the first part of this poem—

Jon: Okay. [chuckles] Yeah.

Tim: [Jon backchannels throughout] —verses— [laughs] yeah, 1 through 4. Maybe just a side note: This is why David is such a remarkable character in the Hebrew Bible. He is extremely morally and emotionally complex—actually, the most emotionally complex character in the whole Hebrew Bible *because* the Psalms offer these little windows into the inner life of a character. And you get a lot of David's inner life just in the story about him in the Samuel scroll. But the poems offer this additional window, and David becomes one of the main ways the authors of the Hebrew Bible meditate on the human condition. [chuckles]

Jon: Hmm. Yeah, it is complex, and I feel the complexity in: I want to both really marvel at that David is coming to the self-realization that his honor comes from God or his glory comes from God.

Tim: Yeah. Yeah.

Jon: That's beautiful. It takes some real—

Tim: Mhm. Soul searching to get there. Yeah.

Jon: Soul searching. But then, I also want to think: Man, at this point in David's story, I think he should just kind of be like, "*Woe is me*."

Tim: Yeah. Mmm.

Jon: Like: "*I'm being corrected*." Like: "*Let me just pause and, like, learn from this*."

Tim: Go be a monk.

Jon: Yeah. [laughs]

[Jon and Tim laugh]

Jon: [laughs] Yeah.

Tim: [chuckles] Yeah.

Jon: [Tim agrees throughout] Like: "*I need to put my emotional house in order. I need to restore a relationship with some kids. And then maybe in the future—I'm not even going to think about it right now—but maybe in the future, God will restore me as king. But man, if I think about that right now, I'm missing the point*."

Tim: Yeah, that's good. Yep. That's really good. [pause] Yeah, I agree. And that's what I mean by the moral complexity.

Jon: Right. Yeah.

Tim: Because the heading reminds you of a story where you're like, "*I don't feel bad for this guy at all*."

Jon: Oh, sure. Yeah.

Tim: You know?

Jon: He's on the run.

Tim: Yeah. But then the poem gets you into: But he's a *human*. *Anybody* who's made horrible decisions didn't get there immediately.

Jon: Mmm. Yeah.

["Gentle Lamb" by Lofi Sunday feat. Yoni Charis fades in]

Tim: It was a long story leading up to it, and they are a *human*. And the inner emotional experience of that self-caused disaster, it's *painful*. And we can learn from people, even really, what we think are terrible people—

Jon: Mhm.

Tim: —working through the consequences of their decisions. There's wisdom there for anybody to learn.

Jon: Mmm. Mhm.

Tim: I think that's what's going on here.

[Musical break: "Gentle Lamb" by Lofi Sunday feat. Yoni Charis (31:09–31:44)]

[Verses 5–7 and Comparisons to Psalm 2 (31:44–1:01:22)]

Tim: Should we look at part two of the poem?

Jon: Mhm.

Tim: Okay. So he just said, “I cried out to you when all this was happening, and you answered me.”

[“Gentle Lamb” by Lofi Sunday feat. Yoni Charis fades out]

Tim: Verse five: “So as for me, I laid down, and I slept. I woke up, because Yahweh would sustain me. I am not afraid of”—mmm—“many multitudes”? *Rivevot*. It seems like it’s a Hebrew word for a decade, a ten of thousands. A myriad, I think, is an old Latin word for that. But it comes from the same root as “many,” which is the “many” who are my opponents and “many” are saying about me. It’s the same Hebrew word.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: So “I’m not afraid of the many manys of people who have all around me set themselves against me.” So he’s in the same position that he was in the opening line of the poem: “There’s many who are against me.”

Jon: Mhm. Yeah.

Tim: And he was, you know, freaking out, saying there’s no rescue for him in God.

Jon: That’s what they were saying?

Tim: That’s what they’re—that’s the propaganda. He turns to God and says, “*I’m convinced you’re not done with me, and I know that you hear me*.”

Jon: Mhm. And then he’s able to sleep.

Tim: And so then we get this, “I lay down.” Mhm. Yeah, he’s able to sleep. Here’s what’s fascinating. The Absalom story, in 1 Samuel, it’s really quite long. It takes up all of 1 Samuel 16 and 17, and even into 18. It’s *one* night.

[Jon chuckles]

Tim: Absalom comes into Jerusalem on a day—

Jon: Okay.

Tim: —there’s a long story of his flight from Jerusalem and all the people he meets along the way—he has all these long conversations with, like, about half a dozen people on the way out of town—

[Jon chuckles]

Tim: [Jon backchannels throughout] —he gets to the top, crosses the Jordan River, gets to the top of what we would call—well, it's modern-day Jordan. And it's the middle of the night, the sun's rising, and he lays down to take a nap. The next day, then, is the battle. There's a battle the next day. So the whole long story, it's just two days with one night. And it's very interesting: Psalms 3, 4, 5, and 6 all mention sleeping and morning and night around the pivot of one day, one night, and the next day. It's as if they've been gathered together—

[Jon chuckles]

Tim: —as a little bundle—

Jon: Okay.

Tim: —to meditate on David's prayer life [laughs] during the two days and the night of Absalom's rebellion.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: So the sleeping, here, is actually a really key moment.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: So he says, "I actually slept pretty good that night."

[Jon and Tim laugh]

Jon: Yeah. [chuckles] Good for him.

Tim: He's waking up the next morning, and he's saying, "I slept last night. And you know what? Today, I'm waking up, and who knows what today holds, but I'm not afraid."

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: That's basically—

Jon: I mean, that's a gift, to be emotionally wrecked, but also just to be, like, in a position of potential harm. Like, your mind can't rest.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: And like, sleep is going be uneasy *if* you get it. So what a gift to be able to sleep.

Tim: Yeah, man. The gift of sleep. Untroubled sleep. Whew. [exhales]

Jon: Yeah. And then to wake up from it.

Tim: He gets a great night's sleep—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: —that night. And that surely is meant to be a paradox at the heart of the narrative because there's nothing about that in the story in Samuel, about the quality of his sleep. [laughs]

[Jon chuckles]

Tim: But when he wakes up—he wakes up not afraid.

Jon: Mhm.

Tim: Okay. That's the middle of the poem. So the first is: what the many are saying about me, who you are to me—regardless of what the many say, here's who you are to me—and: I know that you're going to answer me. Got a great night's sleep.

Jon: [chuckles] Right in the middle. Okay.

Tim: On what could have been the most—

Jon: Yeah. Why would you sleep that night?

Tim: Most people just wouldn't sleep.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Totally. Yep. So verse 7. It's as if he's waking up, and what he knows is: "*Absalom has taken over Jerusalem. He's organizing more forces, and he's coming for me, and he knows where I am. I'm not hard to find*." So verse 7 through 8: "Rise up, Yahweh. Rescue me." Mmm, that's—when the many said there's no rescue for him in God back up in whatever verse that was—and that's the word *yeshu'ah*. It's Jesus's name. "The many who rise up against me say, 'There's no *yeshu'ah* for him.'"

Jon: Mmm.

Tim: That was the end of part one. Here's the beginning of part three of the poem saying, "Rise up. Get up."

Jon: So "Yahweh, rise up. Rescue me."

Tim: [Jon backchannels throughout] Now, "You rise up and rescue me"—that's Jesus's name as a verb—"my Elohim. For"—and then he remembers something from the past—"you *hit* all my enemies on the cheek." This is past tense. "And the teeth of the wicked, you have broken." Past tense. So he's actually remembering all of the ways that God has given him really surprising, you might even say miraculous, victories in the past. I wonder if I can think of a couple of those.

[Jon and Tim chuckle]

Jon: Mhm. Yeah.

Tim: David and Goliath would be the first.

Jon: Mhm. And then there's many battles that David will win. What is this image of the striking on the cheek and uhm—

Tim: Oooh, yeah, remember cheek is about shame and dishonor. Shaming someone.

Jon: You—if you slap someone on the cheek?

Tim: That's right. Yeah, but also, to hit them on the cheek—I mean, you're trying to take someone out if you're punching them in the face.

Jon: Yeah, with a fist. Yeah.

Tim: Totally, that's right. But these are phrases—breaking the teeth—this isn't the only time it occurs. It occurs a number of times in the Hebrew Bible. I should have looked it up.

[Jon chuckles]

Tim: I normally—this is normally the kind of thing I look up. Do you want to look it up?

Jon: Sure.

Tim: How often do teeth get broken in the Hebrew Bible? Teeth appear fifty-five times in the Hebrew Bible.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: Where you can talk about how white teeth are. Mhm. We can talk about—oooh, yeah, teeth—

Jon: Oh yeah, tooth for tooth.

Tim: Yeah, eye for eye, tooth for tooth. That's about if your tooth gets knocked out. Job talks about the teeth of lions being broken. You can gnash or grind your teeth. That's somebody in Job.

Jon: Yeah. I do—I do that.

Tim: Oooh, the skin of your teeth.

Jon: That's weird.

Tim: That's a metaphor that comes from the book of Job.

Jon: Mmm. Oh, yeah.

Tim: It entered English through the King James.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: That's a cool one. Mmm. Trying to think. Teeth of the wicked, gnashing, grinding teeth out of anger. Oooh, Psalm 58: "O God, break the teeth in their mouth, break off the fangs of young lions, Yahweh." But he's talking about bad guys. So there's breaking teeth again.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Mmm.

Jon: That's the only other one in the Psalms.

Tim: There's more grinding teeth than breaking of teeth.

Jon: So far, just two.

Tim: Only two. Two teeth breaking in the Hebrew Bible.

Jon: Both in relationship to dealing with enemies.

Tim: Dealing with enemies, yeah. But I think your point's well taken. There are probably cultural layers of meaning here, but your point that, instead of just saying destroy them —

Jon: Mhm, "*Crush their skulls*."

Tim: Yeah, we're talking about hitting them in a way that doesn't just take them out, but it also disfigures them. It's about honor. I really think there's something about honor here.

Jon: Yeah. Yeah, it seems like it.

Tim: And maybe that's an inversion of, then, the dishonor that he is experiencing. It's sort of like saying: "*Do to others what they've done to me*." But he's leaving that in the hands of God.

Jon: Hmm. Okay.

Tim: So actually, this is important. David himself doesn't go in the battle against Absalom in the story. He tries to. And all his army commanders say, "No, you're worth 10,000 of us," they say. [laughs]

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: "You stay here." And David says, "Whatever you guys do, don't kill Absalom. Don't kill him. Take him alive." And then his army commander Joab breaks that command and finds Absalom and thrusts a bunch of spears through his heart. It's a horrible story.

Jon: [exhales] Hmm.

Tim: So I think what's interesting here is David isn't appealing to his own agency to vindicate himself. He's trusting God's past deliverance of him. "*In the past, you've not only defeated my enemies, but, like, taken them out, and lowered them socially*. *And so do that again. I trust that to you*." And so verse 8, that's the end of the poem: "To Yahweh belongs my rescue. May your blessing be upon your *people*. Selah." Mmm. That's interesting.

Jon: That he switches from "*this has been about me*" to, "*actually, this is about your people*"?

Tim: Yeah, just the last line. Somehow, Yahweh rescuing him is equated with blessing on God's people.

Jon: Yeah. Yeah, because I think one of the things I've been wondering is: We just came off of Psalm 2, which is about the son. Right?

Tim: [excited] Yeah. Okay. Let's go there.

Jon: [chuckles] Okay.

Tim: Great. Let's do it.

Jon: All right. And when we talk about the son, we're talking about a king who will rule from Jerusalem, who will put all the nations in their place, and will be how Yahweh brings justice. And—

Tim: Mmm, and the divine son of God will be the one shattering the bad guys—

Jon: Oh, yeah.

Tim: —breaking them—

Jon: Oh, right.

Tim: —like pottery.

Jon: That's right. With his scepter or with his—

Tim: Yep. Mhm.

Jon: [inhales] So [pause] in the biblical imagination, the person who is most closely associated with the son is David. Right?

Tim: Is David himself. That's right. Yeah.

Jon: And ultimately there is a son who will be *from* David. And then the Hebrew Bible ends with: Well, none of David's sons actually rise up to this.

Tim: Yeah. Yeah. Including David. [laughs]

Jon: Including David. And so in reality, you're thinking: Okay, this is something more than David, a new type of David. And maybe, I've been told to think this way, which is: Well, now when I read these Psalms of David, I'm also supposed to be considering: Is this also about the future son in some way?

Tim: Yeah. The Messiah. Yes. Yeah, totally. Yeah, so let's ponder. The heading of the Psalm clearly wants us to read this in light of the actual story of David in the Psalms scroll. That's what the heading was for.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: But this was the poem right after Psalm 2, which said, "A king appointed in Mount Zion, Jerusalem, by God as the son," which is all hyperlinked to God's promise to David. About a son of David who would be appointed as a son of God to rescue the people, plant them in Jerusalem, no longer fearing your enemies will oppress you, and his Kingdom will last forever. That's your takeaway from God's promise to David. Psalm 2 calls that up again. And then you read this poem. [laughs]

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Which is also about a father and a son.

Jon: Oh.

Tim: So Psalm 2 is about God the Father appointing a king as a son, and they're like—they're two peas in a pod, right?

Jon: [chuckles] Oh, sure.

Tim: One's the representative of the other. They work in cooperation.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Right? Psalm 3 comes along and says, "*Here's another father and son, like, the guy that God made that promise to*."

Jon: Right. And his son.

Tim: Yeah, and it's a fractured relationship.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And so that—somebody's for sure doing something by showing us that the actual historical David failed to ever live out the full realization of that promise. And the son of David, Absalom, who you thought maybe God was talking about when he said, "A son

will come from you, and he'll rule forever, and he'll be my son." And you're like, "*Oh, jeesh*."

Jon: Not that guy.

Tim: Not that guy. So this is how I think David can become a mouthpiece for the voice of the Messiah in and through this poem. But it's precisely by him being disqualified and his son being disqualified as the ones who lived out the fulfillment of God's promise to him in Psalm 2. Does that make sense? Help—

Jon: Yeah, I think so. Well, and— [exhales] hmm. So—and then I would wonder then: When is it appropriate to then view something that David's saying or thinking as being more than just David? And when we get to the end of this poem, when he says, "May your blessing be upon your people"—

Tim: "Your people," yeah.

Jon: —to me, then that triggers that David sees his role as king as being important to this promise.

Tim: Yes, yeah, about—yes, exactly right. About God and his covenant people, Israel.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Yes.

Jon: [Tim backchannels throughout] And so I guess in one reading, I would say, "*David, you screwed up. Sit it out. Be done. Learn some lessons. You and God are going to work some things out, but, like, don't chase after this kingship thing right now*." But in David's mind, or at least in this poem, him being restored is connected to a much bigger promise.

Tim: Yes. Yes. The word blessing is the key word from Genesis, from the Eden blessing to the blessing given to Abraham, then the blessing given to Judah, one of Abraham's grandsons, about a king who would come from Judah's line to bring peace to the nations.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: [Jon backchannels throughout] So the blessing is directly connected to this son from David's line. What we're saying is that David's role was always about more than David. It was a representative who would represent before God the covenant people through whom God said, "I'm going to bless all nations through you and your seed." So what's true of the king is true of the people. And so it's that moment where David is giving voice to this theme of: It was always through a covenant people, but being led and represented by their royal king, who would restore the Eden blessing to the nations.

So "*Restoring me in this moment of crisis is how your blessing comes on the people*." It's like a one-and-the-many relationship. And I love your instincts, because you're right. The fact that this is the last line of the poem is very intentional, or signaling that "*Your rescue of me, Yahweh, is a part of this bigger story of what you're doing in the world with your people and through your people*."

Jon: Now, [pause] the promise is to David's son.

Tim: Mhm. Yeah, that's right.

Jon: So why is David thinking: "*I have got to be king still*?" Why isn't he thinking, "*Well, maybe it's time for one of my sons*"?

Tim: Yeah. [inhales] I mean, I guess if we're being invited to imagine the story, it's that: "*If you restore me, one of my other sons must be the one through whom the promise will come*."

Jon: It can't be Absalom.

Tim: It's not going to be Absalom. Nope. It's going to be Solomon.

Jon: Mhm. Right.

Tim: Mhm. And that's what's going to happen when—

Jon: So it's clear to David that this can't be Absalom.

Tim: Yeah, I think as the reader, that's definitely what we're supposed to think.

Jon: Yeah. And so "*For your promise to hold true, it's not me ceding power to this son*."

Tim: Right.

Jon: "*And so restore me so that the promise can come to the right son*."

Tim: Mhm. Yeah. When we were trying to empathize with him, earlier—your life's falling apart—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: I think there's probably a lot of moments when my life's falling apart from decisions that I've made where it is a severe mercy from God for me to, like: Time to check out—fundamentally change—

Jon: Right. Learn something from this.

Tim: [Jon backchannels throughout] Let go of the life I thought I was building to be my source of honor. And so why didn't David do that? [laughs]

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: So it seems like what—and what you're sensing all along is: "Mmm, but you're my shield. You're the one who restores me. Rescue me. Bring me back." And from one angle, you could say, "*Man, he seems like maybe he's still attached*." [laughs]

Jon: Yeah, this is a guy bent on restoring his power.

Tim: [chuckles] Totally. And man, that can be even more destructive.

Jon: Right.

Tim: And like a total lack of self-awareness.

Jon: Yes.

Tim: So I'm not sure we're supposed to psychologize to that level.

Jon: [laughs] Okay.

Tim: I think we're also supposed to recognize the Psalm 2 promise and see what David is trusting here is, I think, less about his unhealthy attachment to his— [laughs] his career path, [laughs] and more is trusting in God's promise, which is why he connects his rescue with God's blessing coming upon the people in the last line of the poem. That's at least how I currently would put the pieces together. What, for us, is just the shocking fact that the creator of Heaven and Earth would attach his purposes and name and reputation to a human and their family—

Jon: Mmm. Mhm.

Tim: Maybe that's, at the core, what we're wrestling with here.

Jon: Mmm.

Tim: God's attached himself to this guy's family and line.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And this guy—

Jon: And at this point in this guy's story, in David's story, he's a mess.

Tim: Mhm. He's a mess. And he's done everything to thwart that promise and purpose of God.

Jon: Mhm.

Tim: But it's very interesting how God-focused his thoughts are. He really isn't saying, like, "*You're going to restore me so that I can have it back again*." Like, that's not the focus. The focus really is on God. "You're the shield"—

Jon: Yeah, the blessing and the blessing for the people.

Tim: Yes. "You're the shield. You're my honor. You're the head lifter. I cry out to you. The only way out of this is because of you. So rescue me so that your blessing can come on your people."

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: So it really is about God and his people. And David sees himself in this hinge role between God and God's blessing going out to other people. And that's the source of his cry.

Jon: Yeah. There's this realization of: "*God made a promise to all of Israel through me*." So there's that. And at the same time, I get a little whiff of—

Tim: Yeah. [laughs]

Jon: —this guy just really likes his power. And—

Tim: [laughs] Yeah, totally. He's still probably attached. Yeah.

Jon: —like—yeah, that's all he knows.

Tim: Yes.

Jon: Because at this point in the story—he comes back. He's not going to be much better, right? It's not—

Tim: [Jon agrees throughout] No. The ending of David's life is really sad and tragic. And his final will and testament to Solomon, who becomes king, is, like, a hit list. He gives a hit list of, like, who to go assassinate. So yeah, I mean, this is why I love [chuckles] the Hebrew Bible. It's so honest about the mixed character of human beings and of—our best and our worst are always so intermingled. And that's a part of the picture that we're being invited to see here *by the heading*.

Jon: Ah.

Tim: If this didn't have the heading—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: —about when he fled from his son Absalom, we wouldn't know. We would just—

Jon: We'd put whatever enemies in there.

Tim: Yeah, but by connecting it to Absalom, which is a disaster that happened from his own disastrous choices, it gives it this quality that: You can't put this into moral binaries. And this is why I think David was the perfect character for the shapers of the Hebrew Bible to give the most airtime to, out of all the characters. Because it is what the Adam and Eve story is about—

Jon: Mmm. Hmm.

Tim: Is the moral complexity of human life and of the decisions that we face and of their consequences that we— [exhales] right? This is the human condition.

Jon: That's interesting. You're saying: Take Adam and Eve. They're made in God's image. God blesses them and puts them in a position of authority. And what we see them do is not know how to handle that power.

Tim: Yeah. Yep. I'm convinced that's a part of why David is who he is in the Hebrew Bible. He's the most filled-out version of the picture of human nature that began with the Adam and Eve story.

Jon: Now he's also an image of the coming son.

Tim: Yeah, that's right. Yes.

Jon: Connect those two ideas for me because they feel a little separate, but I feel like they're also connected.

Tim: Well, think about how we've been talking about the Hebrew Bible as messianic literature over the years. Sometimes there's direct, hoped-for promises about a future king, messianic prophecy, you know, what we would typically think of as that. But so much of how the Hebrew Bible works is holding up characters that God makes a promise—cosmic promise of rule and blessing and Eden stuff, and you watch them have a few good days, and then you mostly watch them have terrible days that are their own—like, self-caused. So what is that?

Jon: Mmm.

Tim: And so over the years, I've been trying to name that together as we've read the Bible. [chuckles] It's the plot conflict. It's: Who these characters are on their best days are left behind after their failures as these examples of: Well, here's what's possible when a human really does image God well and trust God's wisdom and bring the life of Eden into the world. And what if there was a human who did that all the time? And that is, then, what these glowing messianic prophecies connect to and fill out. So both David's failure and his good days and his ideal setup relationship with God that through him would come a son that would be a son of God and bring the blessings of Eden—all that—but all that is on display in Psalm 3.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: Like, both the promise and the painful tragedy.

Jon: That's so interesting. You're saying what's really highlighted in this Psalm is that God is determined to work with a morally compromised person.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: [Tim agrees throughout] But through this person will be blessing. And that is just this theme throughout the Bible, even with Abraham, but then also with Adam and Eve. Right?

Tim: [laughs] Yeah. Yes. Abraham and Sarah and every generation. Yeah, that's right.

Jon: And so this is the story of us.

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: I could, like, then personalize this and think: God has called me up to represent him as his image. And I'm going to make a mess of it oftentimes—

Tim: [chuckles] Mhm.

Jon: —but God is determined to work with me.

Tim: Yeah. Yeah. "You are my honor." [pause] "*You* are my honor."

Jon: That's what someone who truly understands that they are an image of God would say.

Tim: Yes. Yeah.

Jon: "You are my honor."

Tim: Yeah. Any status, or gift, or privilege, or opportunity that I have isn't sourced in myself.

Jon: And so this feeling of "you will lift my head" is: "*You still will consider me your son. I can still be the image of God. I have not fully disqualified myself*." Like: "*This is still going to happen*."

Tim: Yeah. And you can hear that in a way and hear some weird, self-focused—

Jon: Yeah. Right.

Tim: [laughs] You know what I mean? And that's true.

Jon: Right.

Tim: But also—

Jon: But that's the grace of the story of the Bible.

Tim: This is what we call grace.

Jon: Yeah.

[pause]

Tim: [laughs] This is—in the New Testament that's—actually—

[Jon laughs]

Tim: —and it's in the Hebrew Bible. Often it's called grace, too. But that's what we're facing is God's generosity to work with really, really flawed human creatures. Yeah, that's what we're meditating on. That's where we've been led by Psalm 3. Hmm.

Jon: And it doesn't mean that, then, David is restored, everything's great—

Tim: No.

Jon: —brand new start, no problems—

Tim: No. No.

Jon: Like, David's life ends—

Tim: Yeah, it's permanently injured by this episode.

Jon: But David is still a representative of God, and through David, God will work.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: And that hasn't been lost.

Tim: Yeah. So—oh, that's perfect. Verse 8: "To Yahweh is *yeshu'ah*."

[Jon laughs]

Tim: It's Jesus's name.

[Jon and Tim laugh]

Tim: "And that's how blessing will come upon your people." So: There is a son of David who is coming to whom belongs Yahweh's rescue, and his name is "rescue." And that's how ultimately the blessing will come on your people. And so you could also imagine Jesus—I'm certain this poem was close to his heart. And you could imagine him praying this psalm in Gethsemane, the night of Gethsemane. He was praying the Psalms.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: The language of Psalm 42 comes out in what he says to his disciples in Gethsemane. So you could equally read these words as what he prayed. Although I think he would have tweaked verse 7 to say, "*I'm going to let my enemies hit me on the cheek*"—

Jon: Mmm. Mmm.

Tim: —"*and I'm going to let them break my teeth*."

Jon: Yeah. Yeah.

Tim: I think that's the flip.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: To read Psalm 3 as a follower of Jesus.

Jon: That's why it took Jesus to be able to get there. The way to power is not through exerting that kind of violent power.

Tim: Yeah, and that's the great inversion of the story of Jesus that flips over all of these depictions of divine violence in the Bible—I think is that ultimately God's defeat of violence happened through letting human violence defeat him for a moment—

[BibleProject theme song, "Defender" by TENTS]

Tim: —and then overcoming it with infinite life.

Jon: Hmm.

[Musical break: BibleProject theme song, "Defender" by TENTS (58:35–58:39)]

Jon: Thanks for listening to this episode of BibleProject podcast. Next week, we're going to read Psalm 4, where in the midst of prayer, David turns and speaks to those who have allied with his rebellious son Absalom.

Tim: [audio clips from Psalms 3-8 E2: Psalm 4: David's Confidence During a Coup] He's play-acting, as it were, addressing his opponents in prayer within his cry to God. It's a form of prayer to talk to them in my imagination as a part of how I'm talking to God.

Jon: BibleProject is a crowdfunded nonprofit, and we exist to help people experience the Bible as a unified story that leads to Jesus. Everything that we make is free because of the generous support of thousands of people just like you. Thank you so much for being a part of this with us.

[Phone beep]

Vincent: Hi, my name is Vincent, and I'm from Medford, Oregon.

Myla: Hi, my name is Myla, and I'm from Portland, Oregon. I first heard about BibleProject a few months ago.

Vincent: I first heard about BibleProject through my friend Ryan. I use BibleProject for further study and deepening of my understanding of Scripture.

Myla: I use BibleProject for learning about the Bible because I love the Bible. My favorite thing about BibleProject is that there's different voices, and I love how you guys are really creative.

Vincent: My favorite thing about BibleProject is how they're able to make complicated and complex things super understandable and simple for the average reader. We believe the Bible is a unified story that leads to Jesus.

Myla: BibleProject is a nonprofit funded by people like me.

Vincent: Find free videos, articles, podcasts, classes, and more—

Myla: —on the BibleProject app and at BibleProject.com.

Various background speakers: Yay! [claps and cheers]

[Phone beep]

Shawna: Hi, my name is Shawna Quezada. I am from Richmond, Virginia, and I work as a technical project manager in our internal Tech Ops team. I love the medium of film. I think it's a really important storytelling device. My husband and I—we have like 500

DVDs. We think it's really important for posterity. People like to do movies, you know, in their backyard with their families on the weekends and stuff. Even if it just builds community, that's really important. There's a whole team that makes the podcast come to life every week. For a full list of everyone involved, check out the show notes wherever you stream this podcast and on our app. Thanks, everyone!

[BibleProject theme song, "Defender" by TENTS, fades out]

[BibleProject sonic logo]