

Psalm 3:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

I cried unto the LORD with my voice, and he heard me out of his holy hill. Selah.

Analysis

This verse records answered prayer: '**I cried unto the LORD with my voice**' emphasizes vocal, audible prayer. The Hebrew **qara** (cried) suggests urgent appeal, not casual mention—this is desperate supplication. The addition '**with my voice**' underscores prayer's reality and intensity; David didn't merely think toward God but articulated his need.

The response is immediate and complete: '**and he heard me**' uses **anah** (answer/respond), suggesting not just reception but active response. God's hearing is never passive—He hears in order to act. The location '**out of his holy hill**' references Zion, where ark and tabernacle resided, representing God's dwelling. Though David fled Jerusalem, God remained enthroned—exile didn't distance David from divine presence or power.

The concluding '**Selah**' (occurring 71 times in Psalms) likely signals musical pause for reflection. This moment invites meditation: God hears and answers from His throne. The psalm's structure moves from complaint (v.1) to confession of faith (v.3) to testimony of answered prayer (v.4)—modeling faith's progression. Christ in Gethsemane similarly cried to the Father and was heard (Hebrews 5:7), demonstrating prayer's effectiveness even in extremity.

Historical Context

David's flight from Absalom involved crossing Kidron Valley and ascending the Mount of Olives (2 Samuel 15:23,30)—physically moving away from Zion/Jerusalem. Yet this verse affirms theological truth: God's presence wasn't limited to geographical location. Though the ark remained in Jerusalem and David couldn't worship there, prayer bridged the distance. This challenged ancient Near Eastern assumptions that deities dwelt exclusively in their temples.

The phrase 'his holy hill' reminds David (and readers) of God's covenant presence in Jerusalem—the place of worship, sacrifice, and divine-human encounter. Yet God answered from there even when David couldn't be there, establishing that faith maintains access regardless of physical location. Jesus later affirmed this: 'True worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth' (John 4:23). The temple's ultimate destruction (AD 70) demonstrated that God's people worship anywhere through Christ, our access to the Father (Ephesians 2:18).

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. What does David's vocal, urgent prayer teach about the nature of effective prayer, especially in crisis?
2. How does God's hearing from His 'holy hill' assure believers of constant divine access regardless of physical location or circumstances?
3. What is the significance of the 'Selah' here—what truths should we pause and meditate upon regarding prayer's effectiveness?
4. How does Christ's prayer in Gethsemane parallel David's experience, and what does this reveal about prayer in suffering?
5. What gives us confidence that God hears our prayers, and how should this shape both prayer content and frequency?

Interlinear Text

מִן־רִקְעַנִּי	וְלֹא־אֶלְעָנָה	אֶל־הָיָה־יְהוָה	אֶל־אֶלְעָנָה	וְלֹא־יְהוָה־יְהוָה	מִן־רִקְעַנִּי
with my voice	H413	unto the LORD	I cried	and he heard	hill
H6963		H3068	H7121	H6030	H2022

מִן־רִקְעַנִּי	וְלֹא־אֶלְעָנָה	אֶל־הָיָה־יְהוָה	אֶל־אֶלְעָנָה	וְלֹא־יְהוָה־יְהוָה	מִן־רִקְעַנִּי
me out of his holy	Selah				
H6944	H5542				

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 34:4 (References Lord): I sought the LORD, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.

Psalms 91:15 (Parallel theme): He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him.

Isaiah 65:24 (Parallel theme): And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.

Psalms 34:6 (References Lord): This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.

Psalms 2:6 (Holy): Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.

Psalms 43:3 (Holy): O send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles.

James 5:13 (Parallel theme): Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms.

Psalms 99:9 (Holy): Exalt the LORD our God, and worship at his holy hill; for the LORD our God is holy.

Psalms 138:3 (Parallel theme): In the day when I cried thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul.

Psalms 50:15 (Parallel theme): And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.

