

It had to have been the worst day in King David's life. There had been nothing but fame and fortune in his life following his decapitation of Goliath. Things were a bit rough when Saul tried to kill him out of jealousy...but he survived and eventually became King of Israel. Which was quite a jump to go from little brother herding the sheep to the King. One of those going from the outhouse to the penthouse stories.

However, the worst day of his life was when his son Absalom was marching to Jerusalem with his own army with the intent of taking over the throne...which usually included decapitating the existing king...so it was a "what goes around comes around kind of thing."

Instead of gathering his own forces to defend himself he runs away. The title of this 3<sup>rd</sup> psalm, which is actually in the Hebrew scriptures says "A Psalm of David, when he fled from his son Absalom." The first two verses are clear...

"Lord, how my enemies have increased!  
Many are rising up against me.  
<sup>2</sup> Many are saying of my soul,  
"There is no salvation for him in God."

Absalom is attempting a coup d'etat and it would have been a bloody battle with no actually winner. Either Absalom survives but in doing so kills his father, he had already killed his half-brother Amnon who had raped his sister Tamar. Or he is killed himself. So, things were quite unsettled in David's family which proved to be far beyond David's abilities as a father.

Notice what David says next in Psalm 3...

*"But **You, Lord, are a shield around me,**  
My glory, and the One who lifts my head.  
I was crying out to the Lord with my voice,  
And He answered me from His holy mountain. (Selah)*

*I lay down and slept;  
I awoke, for the Lord sustains me.  
I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people  
Who have set themselves against me all around."*

This idea of God being a shield for us is mentioned in a number of other passages as well.

So here is today's What If...?

**"What if God is truly a shield around you  
and you knew that nothing impacts your life  
without His knowledge and His permission?"**

I will never forget this passage because of what happened to me the night after I preached a message on this passage in the Sunday evening service at Hinson Memorial Baptist Church in Portland on October 18<sup>th</sup>, 1981.

It was a big deal for the youth pastor to get to preach at Hinson in any service, so I created a good message, and it all went well...until I was driving home. It was a rainy night as I headed home on the 4-lane road feeling good about being able to preach when suddenly, out of nowhere a person wearing a brown leather coat stepped right in front of my car and I instantly hit her. Other than the coat the only other thing I remember was her having a head of gray hair...and elderly woman.

My front bumper hit her as I was going 35 mph in my Honda Civic. Her body flew up and her head hit my windshield as she flew over my car landing on the pavement. In absolute shock I pulled over to the side and sat in my car stunned. Almost immediately, it seemed, an ambulance and fire truck were on the scene with the woman lying in the street and me still in my car shaking in my car greatly afraid I had just killed her.

The EMT came over to my car and I rolled down my window. He told me she was alive and was trying to stand up however, her leg was broken. He took my name and information and said I could leave. Apparently she was seriously drunk and was walking in the road carrying a lime jello mold with whipped cream on top. Some of which I found inside my car since the windshield was broken into the car cutting my knuckles on the hand gripping the steering wheel. The next day I also found her earrings inside my car.

That night was a sleepless night for me. Our first son had just celebrated his 1<sup>st</sup> birthday and instead of rejoicing in that event I was gripped with fears of what might happen next to me for hitting this drunk elderly woman walking down the middle of a 4-lane road on a dark and rainy night.

Until I remember the message I had preached that night...the Lord is a shield around me...and now I had to trust if that would be true. Obviously it was not true for the woman since alcohol apparently lifts the shield of God from around you and you are unprotected...no...sorry, I was just kidding...I know bad humor.

As it turned out she survived the accident with only a broken leg. I found out where she lived and returned to her caretaker the earrings.

That accident taught me the lesson of this passage. I declared to God in prayer that I believed He was a shield around me, and the accident only happened because He allowed it to pass through His shield to impact my life for a reason.

So, what if...God really is a shield around you and nothing will impact your life without His allowing it to happen? And if that is true...as the Bible teaches us...then no matter what happens we can thank Him by faith that He continues to be a shield around us to protect us from evil. The shield is there but does not keep us protected from the consequences of our bad choices.

Are there times when He has to discipline us as a loving Father? Yes, He does but it shows us He loves us because He is teaching us how to live...just as we teach our children how to live and for them to not make mistakes or foolish choices.

Instead of seeing your life as a tragic mistake what would it mean for you to believe that God is and has been a shield around you and begin giving Him thanks even for the difficult lessons we need to learn?

