

PSALMS 42

Thirsting for God in Trouble and Exile.

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Roy H. Enoch (6-15-94).
- B. "Why Are You Cast Down, O My Soul?"
- C. Ash expresses the general consensus that these two psalms should be one.

"Though Psalms 42 and 43 are numbered separately, there is a general consensus that they are actually a single psalm. Beside the thrice-repeated refrain in 42:5, 11, and 43:5, parts of 42:9 and 43:2 are virtually identical. The meter, thought, language and problems are the same. Further, Psalm 43 is the only one (except Psalm 71) in this section of the Psalter (Psalms 42-72) without a heading, which probably indicates that it was not intended to stand separately." (Anthony Ash, Vol. X, PSALMS, in The Living Word Commentaries, p. 153.)
- D. The text of the combined psalms divide into three sections: Psa. 42:1-5; 42:6-11, and 43:1-5, each ending with the refrain, "Why are you cast down, O my soul?" with an expression of hope, determination to worship and praise God and confidence in His help.
- E. The psalmist seems to be exiled away from Jerusalem, and unable to attend the feasts and worship with his people. We do not know when this was.

COMMENTS.

- A. Thirsting for Opportunity to Worship God with Others (42:1-5).

As the deer pants for the water brooks,

So my soul pants for You, O God.

2 My soul thirsts for God, for the living God;

When shall I come and appear before God?

3 My tears have been my food day and night,

While *they* say to me all day long, "Where is your God?"

4 These things I remember and I pour out my soul within me.

For I used to go along with the throng *and* lead them in procession to the house of God,

With the voice of joy and thanksgiving, a multitude keeping festival.

5 Why are you in despair, O my soul?

And *why* have you become disturbed within me?

Hope in God, for I shall again praise Him

For the help of His presence.

[v1] "As the deer pants for the water brooks,..." Panting for water may have been for two reasons: one, it may have been chased by an enemy, or predator, or two, it may be a hot, dry season with little water available. Both of these reasons would be appropriate for one exiled in a foreign land.

[v2] "My soul thirsts for God, for the living God." If exiled in a foreign land, the religion would have been idolatry, and he wanted to be able to worship THE LIVING GOD. God had designated Jerusalem as the place to worship. As this psalm is a prayer, it indicates that he could pray anywhere, but he longs for fellowship and worship in God's temple.

- B. Oppressed in Exile by Taunts, "Where is Your God?" (42:6-11).

O my God, my soul is in despair within me;

Therefore I remember You from the land of the Jordan

And the peaks of Hermon, from Mount Mizar.

7 Deep calls to deep at the sound of Your waterfalls;

All Your breakers and Your waves have rolled over me.

8 The LORD will command His lovingkindness in the daytime;

And His song will be with me in the night,

A prayer to the God of my life.

9 I will say to God my rock, "Why have You forgotten me?"

Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?"

10 As a shattering of my bones, my adversaries revile me,

While they say to me all day long, "Where is your God?"

11 Why are you in despair, O my soul?

And why have you become disturbed within me?

Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him,

The help of my countenance and my God.

[v6] seems to saying that the psalmist remembers God from the time when he was in the region of Jordan, from Mt. Hermon and from the Hill Mizar (which is unknown). Some suggest that he is in this region now, but at least he is oppressed by an enemy and unable to go to Jerusalem and worship (v. 9).

[v10] He seems to compare the constant taunting by the enemy, "Where is your God?" to a breaking of his bones. The more we love God, the more painful is a reproach against God.