

## THE PSALMS

### Series: Selected Psalms Phase 2

### Psalm 42/43: Devastation or Distress Radically Taunts You . . . God is Your Answer!

### Today's Study—Psa. 42/43 Part A: Desperate Desire for the Almighty God! Psa. 42:1-11

1. Desire for God's Presence . . . Call on Him! Psa. 42:1-5.
2. Despite How Desperate the Situation Stay Focus on God! Psa. 42:6-11

#### INTRODUCTION

##### 1. Book 2 of the Psalms

- (a) The Psalms are divided into five books, Psalm 42 begins the second division, and referred to as "**Book 2.**" Book 2 includes Psalms 42-72; of these 31 psalms, eighteen are attributed to David, contrasting with Book 1 in which David is the only author. Other authors of Book 2 are attributed to Solomon (Psalm 72), and the remaining psalms credited to the "Sons of Korah," who were temple musicians and assistants.

Book 2 of the Psalms is about the fears people face and the paths they take to seek help, it also teaches about true and false reasons for hope in an uncertain world. In Book 2, we also note Israel's ruin and their redemption in the latter days. For example, Psalm 42 describes crying out for God's presence in a dry wilderness experience, while many of the following psalms relate how God is able to save His people.

One of the important highlights noted in Psalm 42/43, we have: *A prayer of a person who lives outside of Israel's borders and longs to be with the community of believers who worship God in the temple in Jerusalem.*

#### NOTE:

You will observe that the main caption for our studies, "**Selected Psalms Phase 1**" is now "**Selected Psalms Phase 2**". In Phase 1, a study was not done on all the psalms in Book 1 (Psalm 1-41); likewise, in Phase 2, I will be selecting specific psalms for our study. Most likely and as God leads, I will put on hold "Selected Psalms Phase 2" only for a specific period; during this period, I will break to present a short series on love . . . "**The Love Series.**"

It has been suggested that for Book 2 of the Psalms, Psalm 46:1-2 serves as a key verse for memorization

**Psa. 46:1-2 NKJV**

*“God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear, Even though the earth be removed.”*

**2. Psalm 42**

**(a) Title**

The title of Psalm 42/43 contains the familiar phrase seen in some other psalms, **“To the Chief Musician, Maschil, for the sons of Korah”** (KJV). The NKJV has it as: **“To the Chief Musician. A Contemplation of the Sons of Korah.”**

The title also describes the psalm as **“Maschil,”** meaning: “instruction” and has been used in thirteen psalms.

Spurgeon notes:

*“It is called Maschil, or an instruction ode; and full as it is eminently calculated to instruct those pilgrims whose road to heaven is the same trying kind as David’s was. It is always edifying to listen to the experience of a thoroughly gracious and afflicted saint.”*

**(b) Author**

The authorship of Psalm 42 is unclear, and remains a heavily debated topic. As noted above, the NKJV has the title as: **“To the Chief Musician. A Contemplation of the sons of Korah.”** Similar references are made in other translations, notably: “. . . of the sons of Korah” (for example NIV, LASB, etc.); while others say “. . . for the sons of Korah” (example Thomas Nelson King James Study Bible). The Latin Vulgate (Latin translation of the Bible) renders it as: *“A poem of the sons of Korah.”*

**Note the following quotes:**

**(1) Barnes**

*“. . . So far as the title is concerned, it may mean either that the psalms were dedicated to them (The sons of Korah . . . insert mine), or they were submitted to them for arranging the music, or they were designed to be employed by them as leaders of music; or that they were the authors of these psalms, that is, the psalms thus indicated emanated from their body, or were composed by one of their number.*

**(2) Some scholars believe that David is the author and it was written possible when Absalom rebelled against him (2 Sam. 15-19). Spurgeon notes:**

*“Although David is not mentioned as the author, this Psalm must be the offspring of his pen; it is so Davidic, it smells of the son of Jesse, it bears the marks of his style and experience in every letter. We could sooner doubt the*

*authorship of the second part of the Pilgrims Progress than question David's title to be the composer of this Psalm."*

(3) Preacher's Outline & Sermon Bible (P.O.S.B.) notes:

*"The fact is, we do not know for certain who wrote these songs. But we do know the purpose for Psalms 42 and 43, they are Maschil psalms, songs of instruction and teaching. . . . ."*

(c) **The Occasion**

The occasion on which the psalms (42/43) were written is unknown. For those who ascribe them to David, believe they are associated with Absalom's rebellion (noted above). This was when David was driven from his throne, and from the place which he had appointed for the worship of God, after he had removed the ark to Mount Zion (2 Sam. 6, NB Vv. 12-23), and when he was a wanderer beyond Jordan (2 Sam. 15-18).

P. O. S. B. notes:

*"Whatever his circumstances, the author was suffering through a period of intense trials, trials so severe that they plunged him into deep depression. Psalm 42 and 43 are inspired by God's spirit to teach us what to do when we find ourselves in the deep pit of despair."*

(d) **Meaning/Subject**

Sometimes we do not understand what God is doing or His reason behind it. Human beings are feeling based creatures. In many situations, we know that our feelings and our hearts will deceive us. **The psalmist asks God why his heart is so sad and why he must go through a time of oppression by his enemies. God never asks us to understand, He asks us to obey and glorify Him. He asks us to be mission-minded and to look at every situation as an opportunity to evangelize.**

The psalmist is a great example of the attitude that we should have. He does not understand, but he chooses to hope in God rather than trust his feelings. **We must hold fast to the truth over emotions.**

G. Cambell Morgan notes:

*"This is the song of an exile, and, moreover, of an exile among enemies who have no sympathy for his for his religious convictions. He cries after God with all intensity of one who knows God and cares supremely for the honor of His name. His greatest grief is their mocking inquiry after his God. By contrast he remembers being in the midst of worshipping multitudes, their leader and companion."*

**(e) Psalm 42/43**

Because of the similarities noted with Psalms 42 and 43, most scholars agree that originally, they were one psalm; but there is no explanation when or why they were separated.

It has been observed that there are three strong indications why they are regarded as one:

**(1) There is a common theme and continuity of both psalms.**

- Both psalms present a prayer, in 42 there is a thirst for God and in 43 we have, hope in God who delivers from the unjust. In other words:
  - In Psalm 42 we have the desire to commune with God and such was an urgent and vital need.
  - In Psalm 43 we have hope in God who can vindicate and rescue His people.
- Life Application Study Bible notes the theme for both psalms as follows:
  - Psalm 42: *“A thirst for God, when you feel lonely or depressed, meditate on Gods kindness and love.”*
  - Psalm 43: *“Hope in a time of discouragement. In the face of discouragement, our hope is in God.”*

**(2) Psalm 43 is the only psalm in Book 2 without a title.**

The assertion by some scholars is that it is without a title because it is the conclusion of Psalm 42. At the same time, it stands by itself as a prayer and in unison with Psalm 42.

**(3) There is also the repetition of the theme noted in 42:5, 11 and 43:5.**

As we will see throughout these two lessons (for Psa. 42 & 43), the author was battling depression because of his exiled status. The message contained in these verses (42:5, 11 & 43:5) is that people should put their confidence in God, who will show Himself faithful as their salvation; He is the source of their joy, peace, patience and the hope for their future.

**3. Divisions for Psalm 42/43:**

(a) The Psalm is divided into three parts:

- (1) **Psalm 42:1-5: Desire for God’s Presence . . . Call on Him! Psa. 42:1-5**
  - (2) **Psa. 42:6-11: Despite How Desperate the Situation Stay Focus on God! Psa. 42:6-11.**
  - (3) **Psa. 43:1-5: Depression Overcome, Deliverance Focused on God! Psa. 43:1-5**
- You will observe that each section closes with the same refrain.

(b) Division for our study:

- (1) **Part A: Psa. 42:1-11 Desperate Desire for the Almighty God!**
- (2) **Part B: Psa. 43:1-5 Depression Overcome, Deliverance Focused on God!**

## THE EXPOSITION

## Psalm 42/43: Devastation or Distress Radically Taunts You . . . God is Your Answer!

### Part A Psa. 42:1-11: Desperate Desire for the Almighty God

#### A. Desire for God's Presence . . . Call on Him! Psa. 42:1-5

##### 1. Sobering Reality of One's Emotional and Spiritual Deficiency Psa. 42:1

*"As the deer pants for the water brooks, So pants my soul for You, O God" (Psa. 42:11 NKJV).*

(a) Graphic illustration to convey his desire, his urgent need! (Psa. 42:1a).

*"As the deer pants for the water brooks, . . ." (42:1a NKJV).*

(1) Making reference to the deer, the psalmist presents an expressive illustration of his deepest desire.

- ***"As the deer pants"***; the Hebrew renders ***"pant"*** as ***"brayeth"*** and used only in this text and in Joel 1:20, where it is applied to the beasts of the field as "crying" to God in a time of drought.
- In our text reference is being made to the intense desire of the deer, in the heat of the day, for water and as in Joel the desire for water in a time of drought.

(2) There was that great thirst for water because its (deer used to illustrate) life depended on it—especially when pursued relentlessly by hunters as may have been the case of the psalmist by his opposers.

(3) The illustration given here by the psalmist (Psa. 42:1) is powerful in its presentation and nothing could more beautifully or appropriately describe the earnest longing of a soul after God, than what we have presented in our text.

(4) Spurgeon notes:

*". . . Ease he did not seek honor, he did not covet, but the enjoyment of communion with God was an urgent need of his soul; he viewed it not merely as the sweetest of all luxuries, but as an absolute necessity, like water to a stag.*

*Like the parched traveler in the wilderness, whose skin bottle is empty, and who finds the well dry, he must drink or die—he must have God or faint. His soul, his very self, his deepest life, was insatiable for a sense of divine presence.*

(b) God focused; God centered desire being exemplified (Psa. 42"1b).

*". . . So pants my soul for You, O God" (42:1b NKJV).*

(1) With earnest desire, he sought the LORD to enjoy His presence and favor.

- He was deeply aware of his need and that his soul needed that which genuinely satisfies.
  - There is no desire of the soul more intense than which the devoted heart has for God; there is no want more deeply felt than that which is experienced when one who loves God is cut off by any cause from communion with Him.
- (2) Just like a dehydrated deer, searching greatly for water in the wilderness, the psalmist's soul was yearning for the vitalizing resources found only in God, his hope, strength and joy! Being fully aware that he was emotionally and spiritually dehydrated, he earnestly cried out to God from the bottom of his heart.
- (3) Matthew Henry notes:  
*"If God, by His grace, has wrought in us sincere and earnest desires towards Him we may take comfort from these when we want those ravishing delights we sometimes had in God, because lamenting after God is as sure evidence that we love Him as rejoicing in God."*

## 2. **Spiritual Thirst, The Earnest Desire for Genuine Help Psa. 42:2.**

*"My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?" (Psa. 42:2 NKJV).*

(a) Spiritual thirst . . . focused on the True and Living God (Psa. 42:2a)

*"My soul thirsts for God, for the living God . . ." (42:2a NKJV).*

- (1) As the deer thirsts for the running water, even so **"My soul thirsts for God..."**
- The psalmist wasn't thirsty for water, but for God. Drinking and thirst are common pictures of man's spiritual need and God's supply. Here the emphasis is on the **desperation of that need!**
  - Psa. 63:1 NKJV  
*"O God, You are my God, Early will I seek You; My soul thirsts for You; My flesh longs for You In a dry and thirsty land Where there is no water."*
- (2) **"For the living God"**: God, not merely God without anything more specified, but God considered as living, as Himself possessing life, and having the power of imparting that life to the soul.
- He yearns for God, he had an extreme thirst for God, not the ordinances themselves, but the God of the ordinances!
  - Psa. 42:2a Amp. Bible:  
*"My inner self thirst for God, for the living God. . . ."*
- (3) Spurgeon notes:  
*"Because He lives, and gives to men the living water, therefore we with great eagerness, desire Him. A dead God is a mere mockery; we loathe such a monstrous deity; but the everlasting God, the perennial fountain of life and light and love is our soul desire!" (Emphasis mine)*

- (b) Seeking that which is most essential (Psa. 42:2b NKJV).
- (1) The psalmist felt alienated from God because he was away from his sacred place. Therefore, he asked God how much longer it would be before he would be able to return to Jerusalem to stand before Him.
  - (2) The desire was intense, he was accustomed to worshipping in the sanctuary!
    - When shall I be restored to the privilege of again uniting with the people in public prayer and praise?
    - The psalmist evidently expected that this would be; but to one who loves public worship the time seems long when he is prevented from enjoying that privilege.
  - (3) Matthew Henry notes:
 

*“He longs to come and appear before God, –to make himself known to Him, as being conscious to himself of his own sincerity, – to attend on Him, as a servant appears before his master, to pay his respects to him and receive His commands, – to give an account to Him, as one from whom our judgment proceeds.”*

### 3. Scoffers Deride in Order to Afflict and Confuse Psa. 42:3

*“My tears have been my food day and night, while they continually say to me, ‘Where is your God?’ . . .”* (Psa. 42:3 NKJV).

- (a) Tears flow ceaselessly because of the adverse opposition (Psa. 42:3a)
- “My tears have been my food day and night . . .”* (42:3a NKJV).
- (1) Overwhelmed by adversarial conditions the psalmist’s painful experience resulted in continuous tears, plenteous and bitter tears and seemingly a lack of appetite.
    - The KJV uses **“meat”** other translations use **“food”**: the word literally means **“bread”** and is used here (42:3a) signifying **“food.”**
    - The idea conveyed here (Psa. 42:3a) is, that instead of eating, he wept.

**Psa. 6:6 Amp. Bible**

*“I am weary with my groaning; all night long I soak my pillow with tears, I drench my couch with weeping.”*

    - The situation presented here describes that which occurs so often when excessive sorrow takes away the appetite, or the delight for food.
  - (2) Matthew Henry notes:
 

*“Even the royal prophet was a weeping prophet when he wanted the comforts of God’s house. His tears were mingled with his meat; nay, they were his **meat day and night**; he fed, he feasted, upon his own tears, when there was such cause for them; and it was a satisfaction to him that he found his heart so much affected with grievance of this nature.”*
  - (3) Spurgeon notes:
 

*“Perhaps it was well for him that the heart could open the safety valves; there is a dry grief far more terrible than showery sorrows. His tears since they*

*were shed because God was blasphemed, were honorable dew, drops of holy water as Jehovah putteth into His bottle."*

- (b) Taunting by his unmerciful, persistent and hateful advocates (Psa. 42:3b).  
*"... While they say to me, "where is your God?"" (42:3b NKJV).*
- (1) One of the methods used by the enemy was to torment him by ridiculing his faith in God.
- As he continually cries out to God, it seemed as if his adverse situation remained unchanged and this, they also used to relentlessly provoke him and without mercy.
  - The psalmist was deprived, in a great measure, of the inward comfort he usually had in God; he now went mourning, he went on panting, desiring the fellowship that he once enjoyed.
- (2) He was in exile, and deprived of so many things but most of all his access to fellowship with the people of God, encountering the awesomeness of the Almighty God.
- His enemies assumed that he was deprived of his God (Psa. 42:3), and similarly even so the enemies of the believers are mistaken to believe that if we are deprived of the Bible, ministers, etc. and our solemn assemblies they have robbed us of our God.
  - The psalmist's enemies were also mistaken to believe that because he (the psalmist) did not experience immediate deliverance, that he was forsaken by God (Psa. 42:3). Likewise, believers are never forsaken but are guaranteed the abiding presence of God and His ultimate protection, and He will deliver by His own timing (Psa. 25:5; 27:14; 62:5; 123:2; Isa. 8:7; 40:31).

#### **4. Sanctuary . . . The Place of Fellowship and Divine Communion Passionately Anticipated Psa. 42:4.**

*"When I remembered these things, I pour out my soul within me. For I used to go with the multitude; I went with them to the house of God, With the voice of joy and praise, With a multitude that kept a pilgrim feast Psa. 42:4a).*

- (a) Reproaches of the enemy stirs up the desire of his soul (Psa. 42:4a).
- (1) The devotional area of the psalmist's life was aggravating; he was disheartened because he didn't see an immediate solution that would turn around his heart-wrenching condition.
- There was also the fact that at the time, he could not return to Jerusalem to worship God with his beloved people.
  - His intensified craving to be in God's presence, greatly increased because of the lingering memories of the wonderful and blessed times of celebrating, adoring and magnifying the Almighty God!
- (2) ***"When I remember these things"*** (Psa. 42:4a)-referring to: These sorrows; this banishment from the house of God; these reproaches of my enemies.



- Actually, the fact being conveyed here is that his (the psalmist) current calamities would be remembered and he would pour out his soul within him. **The sorrows and afflictions which had overwhelmed him were the things he would remember.**
  - **“Pour out my soul”** ... Adam Clarke notes:  
*“My soul is dissolved, becomes weak as water, when I reflect on what I have had, and on what I have lost.”*
- (b) Relating to the joy of worship and the desire to be re-engaged (Psa. 42:4b).  
*“. . . For I use to go with the multitude; I went with them to the house of God ...”*  
 (42:4b NKJV).
- (1) It was not the remembrance of the special privileges that he once enjoyed, or the entertainment of his own house, from which he was now banished, that afflicted him (the psalmist), but the remembrance of the free access he formerly had to God’s house and the pleasure he had in attending the sacred assemblies.
  - (2) If the psalm was attributed to David, we do remember that during his days they worshipped God in a tent. However, the meanness and inconveniency of the place did not lessen his esteem of that sacred symbol of Divine presence. He went up **with the multitude** and didn’t consider it a discredit to his nobility to lead the **multitude** in praise and adoration of God.
  - (3) Spurgeon notes:  
*“Painful reflections were awakened by the memory of past joys; he had mingled in the pious throng, their numbers had helped to give him exhilaration and to awaken holy delight, their company had been a charm to him as with them he ascended the hill of Zion. . . .”*
- (c) Rejoicing with the people of God anticipated (Psa.42:4c).  
*“. . . With the voice of joy and praise, With a multitude that kept a pilgrim’s feast.”*
- (1) The psalmist being lonely and depressed, had an intense feeling of longing to worship with the congregation once more, just as they use to march together toward the temple on the holy festive days, as were ordained by God. He greatly missed those times of singing, dancing and glorifying he Almighty God.
  - (2) He acknowledged that, he participated, he not only led in sequence the music, chanting the songs with shouts and praises, not only in his heart but with outward proclamation and dedication, honoring his God!  
**Matthew Henry notes:**  
*“When we wait upon God in public ordinances, we have reason to do it with cheerfulness and thankfulness, to take to ourselves the comfort and give to God the glory of our liberty of access to Him.”*
  - (3) Those special days (**“holydays”** KJV; **“pilgrim feast”** NKJV; **“festival”** Amp. Bible . . . Psa. 42:4c) were not celebrated as a mere ritual or formality, in vain amusement but in reverence and adoration to God . . . **Oh, the beauty and**

**blessedness of solemn assemblies where God is sincerely honored and glorified!!**

5. **Soul Challenged, to Focus on the Divine Helper Psa. 42:5.**

*"Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise Him For the help of His countenance."* (42:5 NKJV).

(a) Grieve not unnecessarily, irrespective of the challenging situation (Psa. 42:5a)

*"Why are you cast down, O my soul? . . ."* (42:5a NKJV).

(1) **Briefly** explaining: **"Why are you cast down . . ."** (Psa. 42:5a).

- The original is said to be, **"bowed down."** The KJV, NKJV and Amp Bible render it as **"cast down"** and the NIV has it as, **"downcast."**
- The Hebrew word means, *to bow down, to incline oneself: then usually to prostrate oneself as in public worship; and finally, to sink down under the weight of sorrow' to be depressed and sad.*

(2) In addition to the above discussion, note that the Septuagint presents this phrase as **"Why are thou grieved?"**

- This is an earnest rebuke addressed to his own soul, summoning himself to see if there is any reasonable cause for such excessive depression, or why was he acting as if he had cherished his grief improperly.
- There was a brighter side, and he must turn to that, and take a more cheerful view of the prevailing matter. Unfortunately, he was focusing only on the dark side, seeing only the discouraging factors. Now he must look on the brighter side and such positive attitude was a duty he owed himself and the cause of his religious persuasion.

(3) One of the comments made by Barnes on Psa. 42:5a: (a partial quote)

*". . . it is the duty of the people of God to look at the bright side of things; to think of the past mercies of God; to survey the blessings which surround us still; to look to the future, in this world and the next, with hope; and come to God, and cast the burden upon Him.*

***It is a part of religious duty to be cheerful. And a man may often do more real good by a cheerful and submissive mind in times of affliction, than he could by much active effort in the days of health, plenty and prosperity.***

***Every sad and desponding Christian ought to say to his soul, 'Why art thou cast down?'"*** (Emphasis mine).

(b) Grumbling, moaning ceaselessly or remaining hopelessly sad is futile (Psa. 42:5b).

*". . . And why are you **disquieted** within me? . . ."* (42:5b NKJV).

(1) Facing the facts beloved, the psalmist knew that he was trapped in the quagmire of depression, overcome with a feeling of hopelessness and despair that enslaved him in spiritual and emotional turmoil.

- (2) **“Disquieted”** (Psa. 42:4b), in general usage the Hebrew usage means: (a) to make a loud sound, (b) to be in great commotion or tumult, to rage, war, moan, clamor, make a noise, rage, be in uproar, etc.
- (3) The phrase **“... and why are you disquieted within me ...”** (NKJV): some ideas associated are: “to growl as a bear”; “to sound, or make a noise as a harp, rain, waves”; “to be agitated or anxious in mind: to moan internally.”
- (4) Some similarities in regards to the effects of having troubling agitation have been noted in Scripture for example in Isa. 16:11, where we note:  
**“Wherefore my bowels shall sound like a harp . . .”** (KJV)
- **“. . . my bowels . . .”**, is an expression of deep grief of the prophet (Isaiah) as he foresees the calamities which were coming upon Moab. **Note also: Bowels** in Scripture generally represent sympathy and tender mercy (Gen. 43:30; etc.).
  - As noted, in Scripture, **bowels** have been used in different ways, for example: Lam. 1:20; Jer. 30:27. In Job 30:27, Job notes: **“. . . my bowels boil and rested not . . .”** (KJV); in other words, there was great agitation, deep feeling (see also Jer. 4:19).
- (5) **“. . . And why should you moan over me and be disquieted within me?”** (Psa. 42:5b Amp. Bible) . . . or, “You are disquieted in confusion and dishonor; now why are you in such a state?!”
- “Why do I as a consequence dishonor God by my melancholy dejections?!”
  - “Can I give a good account of this tumult?!”
- (c) Give it all to God, glorify Him, He is our help! (Psa. 42:5c)  
**“. . . Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance”** (42:5c NKJV).
- (1) **“Hope in God . . .”**, this is summons to trust in God with the expectation that He will interpose and be restored to the privileges and comforts that were experienced in the past.
- Herein, the soul turns to God when all other hope fails, and finds comfort in the belief that God will definitely help as needed!
  - Matthew Henry notes:  
*“A believing confidence in God is a sovereign antidote against prevailing despondency and inquietude of spirit. And therefore, when we chide ourselves to hope in God; when the soul embraces itself it sinks; if it catches hold on the power and promise of God, it keeps the head above the water. Hope in God.”*
- (2) As exemplified by the psalmist (Psa. 42:5c), he sought to take authority of his emotions instead of allowing them to control him!
- **By attempting to encourage himself in God, he lifted himself out of the awful pit of depression, darkness, and doom.**

- He anticipated such a great change that he vowed to glorify God; to him it was a wonderful change in his spirit and his heart, as a result of such hope he would greatly rejoice in God, and be well pleased!
- (3) The word **“hope”** (42:5c), as used here, carries a stronger meaning than **“having a positive attitude towards the future.”** **It is a firm assurance that God will do what He has promised according to His perfect timing.**
- **Hope** is the reality of what is yet to come! It rejoices in promises of God that have not yet been fulfilled (Rom. 4:7; Heb. 11:6; James 1:6; 2 Cor. 5:7; etc.).
  - This unshakeable confidence, strengthens us to wait and endure until The LORD performs what He has promised (Psa. 27:14; 62:5; Isa. 40:31; etc.).
- (4) One of Spurgeon’s comments on Psalm 42:5c, is as follows:  
*“. . . This grand cheer. This verse, like the singing of Paul and Silas, loses chains and shakes prison walls. He can use such heroic language, in his gloomy hours will surely conquer. In the garden of hope the laurels of future victories, the roses of coming joy, the likes of approaching peace.”*

**Psalm 42:5c closed the first part of Psalm 42/43**, expressing the confident belief of the psalmist that God would yet intervene, and his troubles would have an end; resting entirely and confidently in God as the only source of hope; and he expressed the feeling that when that confidence becomes a reality, his soul shouldn’t be despondent or be cast down!

## **B. Despite How Desperate the Situation, Stay Focused on God! Psa. 42:6-11.**

### **1. Despondent, But Will Remember God’s Goodness Psa. 42:6.**

*“O my God, my soul is cast down within me, Therefore I will remember You from the land of Jordan, And from the heights of Hermon, From the Hill Mizar.”* (42:6 NKJV).

(a) Anguish experienced and acknowledged; sadness confessed (Psa. 42:6a).

*“O my God, my soul is cast down within me . . .”* (42:6a NKJV).

(1) Here in 42:6a, evidently clear is the expression of a soul in anguish regardless that he (the psalmist) proposed not to be cast down and was fully convinced of the dire necessity to cherish his hope.

- I know how we saw the psalmist in the proceeding verse (42:5), and despite the facts, it cannot be denied that he was sad but not hopeless. . .

**“O my God, my soul is cast down within me . . .”**

- Barnes notes:

*“His troubles come rushing over his soul, they all returned at once; his heart is oppressed, and he is constrained to confess that, notwithstanding his solemn purpose not to be sad, and the conviction that he ought to be cheerful, and his wish to be and appear so, yet his sorrows get the mastery over this, and his heart filled with grief.”*

(2) The psalmist’s soul was depressed, and he goes to God and admitted his true condition: **“O my God, my life is cast down upon me [and I find the burden more than I can bear]; . . .”** (42:6 Amp. Bible).



**times of adversities than for us to focus on desiring and experiencing God's holy presence!!**

As it relates to these facts of desiring, seeking and getting into the very presence of God, there are so many wonderful hymns that we can focus on. Note for example:

**How Sweet the Name of Jesus**

By John Newton (*Partial quote*):

*How sweet the name of Jesus sounds  
in a believer's ear!*

*It soothes our sorrows, heals our wounds,  
And drives away our fear.*

*It makes the wounded spirit whole  
And calms the troubled breast;  
'tis manna to the hungry soul,  
And to the weary, rest.*

Think of other hymns such as: (a) "Draw Me nearer" by Fanny Cosby (b) "What a Friend We have in Jesus" by Joseph M. Scriven; etc.

(4) Matthew Henry notes:

*"Wherever he was he retained his affection for the courts of God's house; from the land of Jordan, or from the top of the hills, he use to look a long look, a long look, towards the place of the sanctuary, and wish himself there. Distance and time could not make him forget that which his heart was so much upon and which lay so near to it."* (Emphasis mine).

**2. Deluge May Be Threatening, Creating Havoc and Hopelessness! Psa. 42:7.**

*"Deep calls unto deep at the noise of Your waterfalls; All Your waves and billows have gone over me."* (Psa. 42:7 NKJV).

(a) Water (The) are deep, troubling, raging, and boisterous! (Psa. 42:7a)

*"Deep calls unto deep at the noise of Your waterfalls; . . ."* (42:7a NKJV).

(1) **"Deep calls unto deep . . ."**: This is implying that the psalmist was near some overflow of water, most likely some rapid river or waterfall, which appropriately illustrates the **waves of sorrow** that overwhelmed his soul.

- Although we have some locations mentioned in previous verse (verse 6), some scholars believe that it is not possible to determine the precise location referred to in our text. Other scholars believe that the psalmist watched over the large rocks of Hermon and into Jordan and he felt like the waterspouts or waterfalls were violently pouring on him, and as if he was struggling to survive in the turbulent flow.

- The word **deep**, in general Hebrew usage means a wave, billow, surge; also, mass of water—a flood—the deep, the main sea or the subterranean water supply.
- **Deep** as used in Psa. 42:7a, most likely meaning is: a wave or billow, perhaps the waves of a rapid stream dashing on one shore, and then driven to the opposite bank or the torrents pouring over rocks in long and constant streambeds.
- The essence of the message conveyed in 42:7a, is making reference to the roaring water of a swollen river. The word **“calls”** (NKJV), **“calleth”** (KJV); means that one wave seemed to speak to another or one wave respond to another.

(2) Holman Old Testament Commentary notes:

*“The phrase “deep calls to deep” pictures one wave of the deep calling out to another wave of the deep to coordinate a conspiracy in their effort to drown the psalmist, figuratively speaking. . . . Like a stranded sailor clinging to a piece of driftwood in a raging storm, he was tossed back and forth, taking in water, sinking fast with no hope of rescue.”*

(3) Commenting on **“Deep calls unto deep”** F. B. Myers, notes:

*“Whatever depths there are in God, they appeal to corresponding depths in us. And whatever the depths of our sorrow, desire, or necessity, there are correspondences in God from which supplies may be obtained. The deep of divine redemption calls to the deep human need. The deep of Christ’s wealth calls to the saint’s poverty. The deep of the Holy Spirit intercession calls to the deep of the church’s prayer.”*

(b) Waves of sorrows and anguish of the soul are mind-boggling (Psa. 42:7b).

*“. . . All your waves and billows have gone over me.” (42:7b NKJV).*

(1) The psalmist used the phrase: **“. . . all Your waves and billows have gone over me”** to explain the intense anguish of his soul.

- The rushing, and heaving, and restless waters furnished the psalmist with an illustration that clearly presents the deep sorrow of his soul.
- We have similarly made reference to our sorrows with such thoughts as: (a) “flood of grief” . . . “flood of tears” (b) “ocean of sorrow” as if waves and billows swept over us. We also speak of being “drowned in grief”; or “in tears.”
- In Psalm 124:3-7, we have four metaphors used to describe the enemy, referred to as some huge monster (see verse 3); note verses 4-5, he mentioned a destructive flood of **“swollen waters”** ... source of threatening destruction.
- Affliction refers to the state of being in pain or and such being experienced in different ways. Scriptures make mention of: **“The waters of affliction”** . . . we do not have time for a detailed discussion on the



topic of **affliction**, however see Psa. 42:7; 69:1; 88:7; 124:4-5; Isa. 30:20; Jonah 2:5; etc.

(2) Matthew Henry notes:

*“Whatever waves and billows of affliction go over us at any time we must call them God’s waves and billows, that we may humble ourselves under His mighty hand, and may encourage ourselves to hope that though we be threatened, we shall not be ruined; for the waves and billows are under divine check. **The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters. Let not good men think it strange if they be exercised with many and various trials, and if they come thickly upon them; God knows what He does, and so shall they shortly.**”* (Emphasis mine).

### 3. Deliverance Assured Through the Almighty God Psa. 42:8.

*“The LORD will command His lovingkindness in the daytime, And in the night His song shall be with me—a prayer to the God of my life”* (Psa. 42:8 NKJV).

(a) Commanding into effect His bountiful lovingkindness in daytime, . . .” (Psa. 42:8a)

*“The LORD will command His loving kindness in the daytime, . . .”* (42:8a NKJV).

(1) Here, in Psa. 42:8a, the psalmist acknowledged that: “By day the LORD will commend His mercy;” that is, He will so order or direct His mercy or favor.

- The word **“daytime”**, as used here refers evidently to prosperity; and the expectation of the psalmist was that of a time of prosperity would return; that he might hope for better days; that the lovingkindness of God would again be manifested to him.
- Irrespective of the prevailing situation the psalmist did not wholly despair; he expected to see better times, and base on such awareness, he was confident that God will replace his calamity with rejoicing.

(2) Spurgeon notes:

*“Lovingkindness is a noble life-belt in a rough sea. The day may darken into a strange and untimely midnight, but the love of God ordained of old to be the portion of the elect, shall be by sovereign decree meted out to them. No day shall ever be dawn on an heir of grace and find him altogether forsaken of his Lord: The Lord reigneth, and as a sovereign he will be reserved for his chosen.”*

(b) Consultation with God will be relentlessly pursued (Psa. 42:8b).

*“. . . And in the night His song shall be with me –A prayer to the God of my life”* (42:8b NKJV).

(1) Irrespective of any adverse, discouraging, prevailing circumstances, even in the dark night of the situation, I will glorify God! The psalmist confidently affirms that the LORD would give him a perception of Himself and such will enhance his gratitude and results in his spontaneous praises to God.

(2) The psalmist determined that in response to lovingkindness of the LORD, he will wholeheartedly welcome it with his best affections and devotions.



- He will rejoice in the LORD. “. . . **in the night His song shall be with me ...**” (Psa. 42:8b). The mercies that we receive during the day, we should not hesitate to praise God for at night (Psa. 119:62).
    - In silence and solitude, when we retire from the hustle and bustle of the world, we must find it a pleasure to focus on the goodness of God!
    - **Even in tribulation the saints can rejoice in hope of the glory of God, sing in hope, and praise** (Rom. 5:2,3).
  - He will seek the LORD constantly, depending on Him: “. . . **A prayer to the God of my life**” (Psa. 42:8b).
    - Our believing expectation of mercy must not supersede (replace, displace, etc.), but quickens our prayers for it.
    - God is the God of our life, in whom we live and move, the author and giver of all comforts, and therefore to whom shall we apply by prayer, but to Him? And from Him what good may we expect?
- (3) In this verse (Psa. 42:8), the psalmist focused on the covenant name of God as “**LORD**” (Yahweh, Jehovah).  
The following is a quote from P.O.S.B.:  
*“ Lovingkindness’ is God’s covenant love for His people, demonstrating His mercy, His steadfast love.  
 During the psalmist difficult days, he sent His unfailing love sweeping over His dear follower, keeping him afloat in the rushing current of trials. In the dark nights, the LORD comforted him with His song, like a mother singing lullaby to her frightened child. It was God who sustained him to endure the severe trials.”*

#### 4. Dependable Help, Irrespective of Any Challenge Psa. 42:9.

*“I will say to God my Rock, Why have You forgotten me? Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?” (Psa. 42:9 NKJV).*

- (a) Calling on God, enquiring if He has forgotten his (the psalmist) plight (Psa. 42:9a)  
*“I will say to God my Rock. Why have You forgotten me” . . .” (42:9a NKJV).*
- (1) The psalmist appeal to God his defense, helper and Savior! Indeed, God was his helper in the time of storm! This prayer (Psa. 42:9) is a continuation of the prayer he said in 42:8.
  - (2) The psalmist knew of the victories that he experienced because of God’s compassion and continued care. Here in verse 9, he cried out to God enquiring why his enemies were allowed to persecute him. He felt abandoned, just like when we feel despondent. The reality is, God has never and will never forsake us; **He cannot forget us because we are indelibly imprinted on the palm of His hands (see Isa. 49:14-16).**
  - (3) In actuality, the psalmist had confidence in God, and he knew that he could freely and honestly take his feelings to God and ask, **“Why have you**

***forgotten me?***” Faith allows us to enquire of our God, He is a refuge and help and we can **always** take our burdens to Him and leave them there!!

(b) Concerned about ongoing oppression of his enemies (Psa. 42:9b).

*“ . . . Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?”* (42:9b NKJV).

(1) ***“ . . . Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?”*** (42:9b

Amp. Bible)—Going about mourning conveys the idea of being bowed down, made sad, deeply afflicted, as one who has been forsaken.

(2) The enemy oppressed him to such a degree that he went mourning from day to day, from place to place.

- Despite the abusive condition that continued, he did not break into improper passions, instead, he silently wept out his grief, mourning throughout the experience. He was grieved, he devotedly loved his country, the blessedness of worship and all other wonderful things about his homeland.

- While he greatly missed his beloved homeland, he was also deeply annoyed and frustrated with persistent oppression of the enemy.

**Note briefly**, the Hebrew usage for **“mourning”** and **“oppression”** (Psa. 42:9b).

- **“Mourning”**- several definitions are associated, for example: to mourning the sense of being dark with sadness or gloom (Job. 5:11; Psa. 35:14; Jer. 8:21).

- **“Oppression”**- the word means distress, affliction, straits (Job 36:15; I Kings 22:27; Isa. 30:20). “Strait” ... among other definitions for strait is: “to be distress, example 2 Sam. 24:14.

- The verse (Psa. 42:9) presents to us the deep passionate prayerful sigh for deliverance flowing out of a burdened heart.

*“Sometimes I ask God, my rock-solid God, ‘Why did You let me down? Why am I walking around in tears harassed by enemies?’”* (Psa. 42:9 Message Bible).

##### 5. Dismal and Dreaded Times . . . Even Then Hope in God! Psa. 42:10.

*“As with a breaking of my bones, My enemies reproach me, While they say to me all day long, ‘Where is your God?’”* (42:10 NKJV).

(a) Reproach and crushing effects (mentally) of the enemy (Psa. 42:10a).

*“As with the breaking of my bones, my enemies reproach me, . . .”* (42:10a NKJV).

(1) “The persecution of the enemy felt like I was literally been slaughtered; it was as if my life was on the line, staring at death in the face!”

- It is noted that the original referred to, **“As with a sword in my bones ...”** (KJV) as **“killing.”** The treat which I received in their reproaches is like death.

- **“Sword”** (42:10), as used in the KJV, speaks of killing, breaking in pieces, crushing. This thought is conveyed only here and in Ezekiel 21:22, where

it is rendered **“slaughter.”** (Note: Ezek. 21 covers Nebuchadnezzar’s war campaign that included Jerusalem).

- The idea (for Psa. 42:10) conveyed in the Hebrew and as seen in the Amplified Bible and noted above is: The enemies’ reproaches were like breaking or crushing his very bones.
- (2) The enemies reproached him as if he was forsaken by God, as one suffering justly under His displeasure. Their argument was, that if he was truly the friend of God, He would not leave him in such a state, and the fact of him being abandoned proved that he was not a friend of God.
- (3) Spurgeon Notes:  
*“Cruel mockers cut deeper than the flesh, they reach the soul as though a raiper (“raiper”—an Old English . . . referring to a light, long pointed two-edged sword . . . insert mine) were introduced between the ribs to prick the heart. If reproaches kill not, yet they are killing, the pain caused is excruciating. The tongue cuts to the bone, and its wounds are hard to cure.”*
- (b) Repetition of the enemy’s sarcasm, impiety, and callousness (Psa.42:10b).  
*“. . . While they say to me all day long, ‘Where is your God?’” (42:10b NKJV).*
- (1) The psalmist mentioned before, that this reproach was what really touched him (see verse 4) . . . it was extremely grievous because it reflected a dishonor upon God.
- (2) These taunting words were repeated to him daily and was done with the objective to discourage his hope in God, which he had enough to keep up in any measure, although their relentless scoffing **may** have tempted him to ask the same question they asked: **“Where is your God?”**

#### 6. Divine Helper . . . God Our Hope, Reaffirmed! Psa. 42:11.

*“Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God; For I shall yet praise Him, The help of my countenance and my God.” (42:11 NKJV).*

- (a) Cast down spirit and losing confidence doesn’t help (Psa. 42:11a).  
*“Why are you cast down, O my soul? . . .” (42:11a NKJV).*
- (1) What we have here in this verse (42:11) is the appropriate response to every temptation to despair.
- (2) The psalmist knew that God was his Rock and he was privileged to approach Him with the assurance of a gracious audience; he therefore repeated what he said in verse 5, **“Why are you cast down, O my soul?”**
- (3) His griefs and fears were clamorous and troublesome; they were not silenced though they were again and again answered. As the oppression of the enemy continued, so the psalmist would continue to speak to himself and challenge his own sense of discouragement.
- (b) Complaining and murmuring, also accomplish nothing! (Psa. 42:11b).  
*“. . . And why are you disquieted within me? . . .” (42:11b NKJV).*

- (1) The general use for **“disquieted”** in the Hebrew, has a variety of definitions: (a) to make loud sound, (b) to be in great commotion or tumult, to rage, (c) be in uproar (d) etc.  
 The E. S. V. translates 42:11b as:  
*“ . . . And why are you in turmoil within me? . . . ”*
- (2) Spurgeon notes:  
*“In the rehearsal of his sorrow, he finds after all no sufficient ground for being disquieted. Looked in the face, his fears were not so overwhelming as they seemed when shrouded in obscurity.”*
- (3) **Beloved, we must avoid bitterness!** Hardship can tempt people to become bitter and defeatist, but base on the psalmist’s response to prevailing situations, we are taught that we are to look to the LORD God Almighty, instead of becoming depressed, disquiet and dejected.
- (c) Commit it all to God with supplication and thanksgiving! (42:11c)  
*“ . . . Hope in God for I shall yet praise Him, The help of my countenance and my God”* (42:11c NKJV).
- (1) **He exhorts himself, therefore; he charges his own soul to hope in God!**  
 He expresses again the assurance that he still be permitted to praise Him. He now regards God as the **“salvation of his countenance,”** or as his Deliverer and Friend, and expresses the conviction that he would yet make such manifestations of himself to clear up and illuminate his countenance, that became dark and saddened, that became dark and saddened by affliction; and he now appeals to Him, his God!
- (2) **“Hope in God . . .”** Spurgeon notes:  
*“Let the anchor still keep its hold. God is faithful, God is love, therefore there is room and reason for hope.”*
- (3) Beloved, the psalmist has reached the true source of comfort to the afflicted and the sad—the Living God as his God; and his mind is calm.
- Why should a man be sorrowful when he knows that he belongs to God?
  - Why should his heart be sad when he can pour out his sorrows before Him?
  - Why should he be cast down and be gloomy when he can hope for the favor of God, hope for immortal life in the world to come?
- (4) Spurgeon notes:  
*“Thus, faith closes the struggle, a victory in fact by anticipation, and in heart by firm reliance. The saddest countenance shall yet be made to shine, if there be a taking of God at His word and an expectation of his salvation.”*

**DO NOT JUST READ THE BIBLE, STUDY AND READ IT!**

**2 Tim. 2:15 NKJV**

“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

**2 Tim. 3:16-17 NKJV**

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

**PSALM 42/43 PART A**  
**Review Questions**

1. In regards to “Book 2 of the Psalms”, (a) What are the psalms found in this book? (b) What are some of the main lessons taught in “Book 2 of the Psalms”?

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2. While the actual occasion on which Psalm 42/43 was written is unknown, what is obvious about what the author was experiencing writing the psalm?

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3. Briefly note three strong indications showing why Psalm 42/43 are regarded as one.

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4. (a) What the word **“pant”** indicates as used in Psa. 42:1 and Joel 1:20? (b) What was the reason why the thirst he (the psalmist) experienced to have been so intense?

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5. The psalmist longed for fellowship in God’s presence, how would you describe his yearning in comparison to a dehydrated deer?

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6. Complete by choosing the correct answer.  
A partial quote from Spurgeon’s comment on Psa. 42:2a.

*“ . . . Because He lives and gives to men the living water, therefore we with great eagerness, desire Him. A dead God is a mere mockery; we loathe such a monstrous deity; but the everlasting God, the perennial of life and love \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_.”*

- (a) not our soul desire.
- (b) is sinner’s great delight.
- (c) is our soul desire.
- (d) is our last choice.

7. Describe the psalmist’s condition as observed I Psa. 42:3a.

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8. Briefly note some of the reasons why the psalmist’s life was aggravated as noted for example in verse 4?

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9. What thought is conveyed in the phrase: **“When I remember these things . . .”** (Psa. 42:4a).

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10. Complete by choosing the correct answer:

From a thought shared on Psa. 42:4c.

“ . . . . . Oh, the beauty and blessedness of solemn assemblies where \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ .”

- (a) God is served as one desire.
- (b) God is sincerely honored and glorified.
- (c) God is sometimes honored and glorified.
- (d) God’s people worship by any standard.





14. What is evidently made clear in Psa. 42:6, in contrast to what we saw in verse 5?

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15. Complete by choosing the correct answer:

Thought taken from one of the comments on Psa. 42:6b.

“... . . . The best way to forget the sense of our miseries is to \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.”

- (a) Remember that we are sometimes forgotten.
- (b) Remember that we have help periodically.
- (c) Remember God may be bust with others
- (d) Remember the God of our mercies.

16. **“Deep calls unto deep”** . . . explain the message conveyed as used in Psa. 42:7a.

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17. Complete the following:

A quote by Matthew Henry, commenting on Psa. 42:7b (A partial quote).

“... . . . . The Lord on High (a) \_\_\_\_\_ than the (b) \_\_\_\_\_  
of many (c) \_\_\_\_\_. Let not good men think it (d) \_\_\_\_\_ if  
they be (e) \_\_\_\_\_ with many and various (f) \_\_\_\_\_, and if  
they come (g) \_\_\_\_\_ upon them; God (h) \_\_\_\_\_ what He does,  
and so shall they (i) \_\_\_\_\_.”



