



Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States



# The Holy Book of Psalms

Psalm 43

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# Introduction

- There is no title to this Psalm in the Hebrew version
- According to the Septuagint version the title is *A psalm of David*
- Therefore, David is the author
- And according to the Syrian version, it is, *A palm of David when Jonathan told him that Saul intended to slay him*
- Some claim that Psalms 42 and 43 are one Psalm
- It is because Psalm 43 bears a very strong resemblance, in its general spirit and in its structure to Psalm 42
- The same circumstances appear to lie in the background, and the tone, spirit, and language are the same throughout



# Introduction

- However, there is no explanation of how they got separated
- It would be impossible to explain that they had become separated in the majority Hebrew manuscripts if they had originally constituted one Psalm
- The occasion may have been the narrative of the rebellion of his son Absalom
- This Psalm portrays the person at prayer in the midst of simultaneous despair and hope
- In the midst of the despair of the crisis, there is still God's persistent love and trustworthiness





# Introduction

## Psalm Outline

- David Cries Out to God in Prayer 43:1-3
- The Psalmist's Response to God's Coming Answer 43:4-5

# David Cries Out to God in Prayer 43:1-3



- Verse 1 describes what is going on in the psalmist's life
- The psalmist repeated a familiar theme in psalms – a cry for *vindication*
- He felt unjustly accused and took his feeling of injustice to the throne of God, and he left his vindication up to God, the supreme Judge of the whole world
- David knew the difficulty of dealing with *deceitful* and *unjust* people, because they not only do wrong, but they also know how to cover it up with deceit
- In such a tough situation the psalmist cried out to God

# David Cries Out to God in Prayer 43:1-3



- He calls his enemies a *nation*, because of their great numbers
- When people are *ungodly*, no wonder that they are unjust
- Those who are not true to God Himself cannot be expected to deal rightly with His people
- He who deceive and betray will not fear to slander and offend
- *deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man*, This would apply well to the case and character of Absalom, or perhaps more directly and properly to the character and counsel of Ahithophel, among the leading conspirators in the rebellion of Absalom, 2 Samuel 15:31,16:23,17:14,23



# David Cries Out to God in Prayer 43:1-3



- According to the scholar Origen, this is our Lord Jesus Christ, asking for judgment between Him and the Jews, whom He calls *an ungodly nation*, and between Him and Judas who delivered Him the “*deceitful and unjust man*”
- Some think that David, by the spirit of prophecy, wrote this psalm for the use of the Jews in their captivity in Babylon, and that the Chaldeans are the ungodly nation here meant
- *the God of my strength*, David now went mourning, deprived of spiritual joys, but he found God to be the God of his strength

# David Cries Out to God in Prayer 43:1-3



- Because He is a strong and mighty God and the only One that is able to deliver and save him, as well as to *plead* his *cause*
- God is the author and giver of strength, natural and spiritual
- David did love the Lord, and his trust was in the *strength* of God and not his own strength – so he wondered where God was at his critical moment of need
- His heart is divided between saying *You are the God of my strength* and *Why do You cast me off? Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?*
- Part of his heart is taking refuge in God



# David Cries Out to God in Prayer 43:1-3



- But he is perplexed why God would allow his enemies to get the upper hand this way
- He was ready to conclude he was *cast off* and rejected of God, because he was afflicted and left in a desolate condition by Him, and He did not immediately arise to his help and deliverance
- God never cast off anyone that trusted in Him
- The repeated asking of *why* is familiar to the tested believers
- David speaks to God in verse 3 and asks for God to lead him not mainly out of trouble, but to God

# David Cries Out to God in Prayer 43:1-3



- He confesses that he needs God to lead him because he is in the dark
- He knows he is in the dark because his heart is divided
- God is his refuge, but he feels forsaken
- He feels rejected and he knows God does not reject those who take refuge in Him, *"He is a shield to all who trust in Him."* (Psalm 18:30)
- The psalmist knew that *his* light and *his* truth were not enough
- He needed the *light* and *truth* of God
- It wasn't within him, so if God did not *send* it, he would not have it

# David Cries Out to God in Prayer 43:1-3



- He knows the cause of this darkness
- He is spiritually blind to something
- So, the first part of his prayer is for light and truth
- In his exile it was David's most earnest desire to revisit the tabernacle which he had set up on Mount Zion, where God's presence dwelt, and prayer was most acceptably offered (2 Samuel 15:25; Psalm 42:2)
- He had made his being brought back to it a test of the return of God's favor (2 Samuel 15:25-26)



# David Cries Out to God in Prayer 43:1-3



- Some comment that by light is meant, not the law, but the Messiah, the sun of righteousness, and light of the world; whose coming into the world is often signified by being sent into it
- *Let them lead me*, This was a prayer of submission
- He began in depression, but he will end up praising God
- It all began with the *light* and *truth* of God leading the way
- David wanted to go to God's *tabernacle* because he knew the Lord was there is a special way
- He knew that God's people were there and he knew that it was a place where he could focus on God

# David Cries Out to God in Prayer 43:1-3



- His heart is only upon the *holy hill and the tabernacles*, not upon *an ungodly nation; or the deceitful and unjust man*
- He could bear any needs, but he is impatient to see God's tabernacles again
- When God sends His light and truth into our hearts, these will guide us to the heavenly things
- If we diligently follow that light and that truth, they will certainly bring us to the *holy hill* above
- He said light first then truth because light will lead him to the truth so he can see the true substance and reality of things

# David Cries Out to God in Prayer 43:1-3



- David's prayer in verse 3 reveals him as a man with much rich spiritual experience
- David was a man who has lived with God and knows God
- This is revealed by his words, his view of reality, the sequence of his thought, the God-centeredness of his goal, and the familiarity with the sanctuary
- There is not a hint here of praying for vindication over the enemy
- That is not in view anymore
- There is a much more important victory to be won than victory over people



# David Cries Out to God in Prayer 43:1-3



- According to many fathers, the light is love, and the darkness is hatred; the Lord Christ, the Light and the Truth, grants us the true spirit of love, to save us from the darkness of this world
- St. Augustine says, “Let Him come, vindicate us against an ungodly nation; and save us from someone deceitful and unjust. Let Him come to separate the wheat from the tares; and at the time of the harvest, send His angels to gather from His kingdom every evildoer, and cast him in the fire of Hades; while gathering the wheat together in His storehouse.”

# The Psalmist's Response to God's Coming Answer 43:4-5



- If God guide him to his tabernacles, if he restore him to his former liberties, he knows very well what he has to do, *will go to the altar of God*
- He will get as near as he can unto God, his exceeding joy
- Full of faith, the Psalmist anticipated God's answer to his prayer and declared that he would sacrifice (*go to the altar*) when the answer came
- *go to the altar of God*, As the special place where thanksgiving ought to be made, and sacrifice offered (2 Samuel 6:17; 1 Chronicles 16:1)

# The Psalmist's Response to God's Coming Answer 43:4-5



- The next part of his prayer is that this light and truth would lead him to God as his *exceeding joy*
- The final goal of life is God Himself, experienced as *exceeding joy*
- Every joy that does not have God as the central delight of the joy is an empty joy
- And authentic joy in God will overflow with praises
- Those that come unto God must come to him as their exceeding joy
- Instruments of music were commonly used in the worship of God



# The Psalmist's Response to God's Coming Answer 43:4-5



- David excelled at the harp (1 Samuel 16:16,18), and with that in which he excelled he would praise God for God is to be praised with the best we have
- It was not merely God as such that he desired to worship, or to whom he now appealed, but God as *his God*, the God to whom he had devoted himself, and whom he regarded as *his God* even in affliction and trouble
- Apart from the woes of the present, the psalmist has no doubt in respect of the future; he will yet have occasion to *praise* God, whom he feels to be *his God*

# The Psalmist's Response to God's Coming Answer 43:4-5



- The psalmist had hope of God's redemption, but it had not come yet
- In the meantime, he would not surrender to his feelings of depression and discouragement
- David first spoke to God and now in verse 5 he speaks to his own soul
- Instead, he *challenged* those feelings and brought them to God
- He said to those *cast down* and *disquieted* feelings, *Hope in God*
- He will faithfully answer again, because He has before

# The Psalmist's Response to God's Coming Answer 43:4-5



- We see that at the end of the psalm, none of the circumstances of the psalmist had changed – only his attitude, and what a difference that made
- The psalmist knew his *countenance* needed *help* – and God was just the one to bring it
- The peace and joy that comes from trusting and praising God will *help* our face
- He then calms himself in the believing expectation he had of giving glory to God (*Hope in God, for I shall yet praise him*) and of enjoying glory with God: He is *the help of my countenance and my God*



# The Psalmist's Response to God's Coming Answer 43:4-5



- When one feels forsaken, he ought to pray to God and preach hope to oneself when all circumstances are preaching despair
- We should not be discouraged or cast down in the troubles of life, but should hope in God, and look forward to better times, if not in this world, certainly in the world to come
- If we are His children, we shall *yet praise Him*
- We shall acknowledge Him as *The help of my countenance*, as One who by giving *help* spread joy over our countenance; as One who will manifest Himself as our God

# The Psalmist's Response to God's Coming Answer 43:4-5



- He who has an eternity of blessedness before him - he who is to dwell forever in a world of peace and joy should not be cast down - should not be overwhelmed with sorrow
- Though our deliverance be delayed, God has not forgotten to be gracious
- Though our deliverance appear to delay, we must wait for it
- In the end it will come, and will not be delayed
- Why then should we be discouraged?
- Let us continue to trust in God



# Discussion

- How does the psalmist view God in this Psalm?
- What are the psalmist's prayers in this Psalm?
- What are the psalmist's questions?
- What are the psalmist's resolutions?





# Discussion

- Psalm 43 points us to the true hope we can have in the midst of trouble. What is that hope?
- Why is it important for us to process our suffering and troubled times through prayer?
- What are the similarities between Psalm 42 and 43?