

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Psalms: God's Nurture Of The Inner Man In The Life Of Faith

XLII: A Lesson In Handling Depression Over Being Alienated From Godly Group Worship (Psalm 42:1-11)

I. Introduction

- A. Hebrews 10:25 directs us believers not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together, but circumstances or even foes can make this impossible at times, producing a nagging kind of depression in a believer's heart.
- B. The psalmist faced this challenge in Psalm 42:1-11, and he offered a lesson in handling such a trial.

II. A Lesson In Handling Depression Over Being Alienated From Godly Group Worship, Psalm 42:1-11.

- A. Scholars are divided over whether (1) Psalms 42 and 43 are one original psalm or whether (2) Psalm 43 was later added to Psalm 42, Joseph A. Alexander, The Psalms, 1975, p. 192-193. Many but not all of the Hebrew manuscripts present them as a single psalm as the same refrain appears in both psalms, B. K. C., O. T., p. 825.
- B. The two psalms appear in our English Bible as separate psalms, so, for clarification, we study them separately.
- C. The introductory remarks in the English Bible comprise verse one of the Hebrew text in Psalm 42, (Kittel, Bib. Heb., p. 1011), but we stay with the numbering system of the English Bible for clarification in this lesson.
- D. We thus translate Psalm 42:1-11 as follows:
 - 1. "As the deer pants for streams of water, so my life principle pants for You, O Elohim," Psalm 42:1.
 - 2. "My life principle thirsts for Elohim, for the living Elohim. When can I go and behold the face [presence] of Elohim [at the tabernacle]?" (Psalm 42:2)
 - 3. "My tears have been my food day and night; while men say to me all day long, 'Where is your Elohim?'" (Psalm 42:3)
 - 4. "These things I remember as I pour out my life principle: that I used to go with the multitudes, leading the procession to the house of Elohim, with shouts of joy and thanksgiving among the festive throng," v. 4.
 - 5. "Why are you downcast, O my life principle, [and why] are you so disturbed within me? Show a waiting attitude (*yahal*, B. D. B., A Heb.-Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 403-404; Hiphil = causative) for Elohim because I will yet again laud Him [in ritual worship meetings] for the salvations of His face [blessings in the high priest's benediction, Num. 6:25-26; Ibid., Alexander, p. 190]," Psalm 42:5.
 - 6. "O my Elohim, my life principle is downcast within me; upon the ground of such a condition, I will remember You, from the land of the Jordan, from the heights of Hermon, from Mount Mizar," Psa. 42:6.
 - 7. "Deep calls to deep in the voice of Your waterfalls; all of Your waves and breakers have swept over me [in reference to the psalmist's feeling deluged by his trials]," Psalm 42:7.
 - 8. "By the day Jahweh directs His loyal love and in then night His song is with me -- a prayer to the Elohim of my life," Psalm 42:8.
 - 9. "I say to Elohim, my Rock, 'Why have You forgotten me? Why must I go about mourning, oppressed by the enemy?'" (Psalm 42:9)
 - 10. "My bones suffer mortal agony as my foes taunt me, saying to me all day long, 'Where is your Elohim?'" (Psalm 42:10)
 - 11. "Why are you downcast, O my life principle? And why are you so disturbed within me? Show a waiting attitude (*yahal* again in the Hiphil stem, cf. v. 5) for Elohim because I will yet again laud Him [in ritual worship meetings], O Help of my face and my Elohim," Psalm 42:11.
- E. We note significant observations and applications of this psalm toward edifying believers in need (as follows):
 - 1. Psalm 42 is in two stanzas, the first in verses 1-5 and the second in verses 6-11, and though both present the same thought, the second stanza is more descriptive and stronger, indicating a growing tension.
 - 2. The psalmist's growing depression over being parted from the tabernacle worship is enhanced by the constant taunts of the psalmist's foes who nag him with the question, "Where is your Elohim?" (v. 3, 10)
 - 3. In both stanzas, the solution is the same, v. 5, 11: the psalmist must consistently show a waiting attitude for God Who will make it possible for him again to be able to worship with the godly at the tabernacle.

Lesson: *The psalmist felt increasingly depressed over being restricted from joining the godly at God's tabernacle, but he handled the trial by patiently waiting for God to make it possible once again for him to go there for worship.*

Application: *(1) May we not forsake the assembling of ourselves with other believers for worship for our needed edification, Hebrews 10:25. (2) If we are painfully restricted from such meetings, may we wait on God to help us.*