

PSALMS: DIARIES OF GODLY OLD TESTAMENT SAINTS

Psalms Forty-Two And Forty-Three: Handling Depression Over A Godless Secular Environment (Psalm 42,Psalm 43)

I. Introduction

- A. The believer is called to be light in a dark world and salt in an unsavory world, Mtt. 5:13-14. The Bible also tells us that as light and salt, the true believer is in the vast **minority**, Mtt. 7:13-14.
- B. Putting these truths together, we conclude that, according to Jesus, it was going to be tough to stick out as God's salt and light in a world mostly savorless and dark, cf. Mtt. 5:10-12.
- C. Psalms 42-43 teach us just **how** to handle depression from the pressure of the world's secular environment.

II. Handling Depression Over A Godless Secular Environment, Psalm 42:1-11; 43:1-5.

- A. Psalms 42 and 43 really go together, and were probably originally a single psalm, B.K.C., O.T., p. 825.
- B. The core trouble faced by the psalmist is offered at its climax in Psalm 43:1-2a: an ungodly host had made life miserable for the psalmist that threatened his welfare.
- C. Some commentaries claim that the problem is itemized in Ps. 42:3b and 10: it is the continual taunt that the psalmist's God doesn't exist or is impotent as He is not helping the psalmist! **In other words, the anti-light, anti-salt darkness of the psalmist's secular foes has beaten him down into depression!**
- D. Besides, the psalmist feels inundated by the anti-God environment as he is a long ways away from the throngs of the temple faithful where he had formerly enjoyed edifying worship, Ps. 42:2b, 4b, 6b.
- E. The solution to the depression of this prolonged, anti-God taunting in the midst of a godless environment is solved in the psalm as follows:
 1. The psalmist freely admits that he needs his God for life itself, Ps. 42:2.
 2. He recalls his former joy at temple services when he joined the faithful in worship of God, Ps. 42:4b.
 3. He repeatedly uses his recollections of past edifying at the temple as a hope that he will yet again be edified in his faith and joy upon returning to worship in a godly environment, Ps. 42:5,11; 43:5.
 4. As he repeatedly uses these recollections for building his hope, his faith in God grows.
 5. Accordingly, he pours out his heart to God on his concerns, Ps. 42:6,8-10; 43:1-4:
 - a. The climax of the two psalms is the request made in Ps. 43:1-2, Leupold, Psalms, p. 342.
 - b. En route to this climax, the psalmist pours out his heart over the trouble he faces upon being taunted by surrounding groups of godless people, 42:9-10.
 - c. He asks for divine vindication and deliverance from these taunts by God's showing His hand, 43:1-2.
 - d. He depends upon God's loyal love for this prayer to be answered, Ps. 42:8.
 - e. He anticipates being able to return to worship the Lord in triumph due to this deliverance, 43:2-4.

Lesson: *Life in a dark secular environment can be depressing for one who stands just OPPOSITE the wrong beliefs and attitudes of the ungodly. The solution is to recall the blessings of being with God's people in worship in the assembly of the righteous, and to look to the Lord for deliverance from oppression of secular environments and a rebuilding when he is back in the assembly once again.*

Application: *(1) Hebrews 10:25 charges us not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together, for we need the mutual encouragement and edification that such an assemblage gives to counter the taunts of our secular environs during the week. If we are oppressed by our secular environments, God wants us to look to Him for strength and to anticipate the hope of meeting again with God's people for mutual edification and appreciation of our Lord! (2) On the other hand, the believer must keep in mind that his spiritual welfare in the midst of environmental persecution for the faith comes directly from the Lord, Ps. 42:2. He must seek GOD!*