

## Psalm 42

**42:1 As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.**

*I have seen large flocks of these panting harts gather round the water-brooks in the great deserts of central Syria, so subdued by thirst that you could approach quite near them before they fled. (Thomson, *Land and Book*, p. 172).*

“Panteth” -- the original word expresses an eagerness and fervency of desire. Thirst is more vehement and biting than hunger. Nothing compares to a keen thirst being quenched by cold water or, for that matter, cold watermelon. This word can also be translated “brayeth”, and appears in the Bible only twice: Here, and Joel 1:20: **The beasts of the field cry also unto thee: for the rivers of waters are dried up, and the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness.**

It should also be observed that escaping to bodies of water also served as a safe harbor for hunted animals.

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The picture deepens when considering the reference to hart, which is a female deer or gazelle. *These animals are so timid, so gentle, so delicate in their structure, so much the natural objects of love and compassion, that our feelings are drawn toward them as to all other animals in similar circumstances. We sympathize with them; we pity them; we love them; we feel deeply for them when they are pursued, when they fly away in fear, when they are in want. The following engraving will help us more to appreciate the comparison employed by the psalmist. Nothing could more beautifully or appropriately describe the earnest longing of a soul after God, in the circumstances of the psalmist, than this image. (Barnes).*

**<sup>2</sup> My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?**

First, notice that God is the object of this thirst. If you have God, many benefits naturally flow, such as knowledge, wisdom, righteousness, power, salvation, and so on. The focus must be on the living God, the Almighty Creator and Judge of all things.

The “thirst” metaphor, again, is strong, as reflected in comments on verse 1 above. That metaphor is also used in the opening verse of **Psalm 63** which one could say supplements our present verse: **O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is.** O yes, we abide in a dry, barren, dying and thirsty land; if your soul does not scream out to and for God, you have no hope.

And what is longed for here? Answer: An appearance, in the body, before that self-same God. **Three times in the year all thy males shall appear before the Lord God.** (Exodus 23:17). There is no substitute for this personal appearance, which will be glorious indeed! Lawyers in this present corrupt legal system “appear” for their client, but in some circumstances the client himself must also appear. We appear regularly before God; we are doing so this day. **Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee. Selah. \* \* \* They go from strength to strength, every one of them in Zion appeareth before God.** (Psalm 84:4, 7). Appearing before God in public worship, when the church meets, is clearly vital for the saints of God.

A secondary meaning to this verse, though just as important if not more so, is in regard to that time when each child of God meets face-to-face with his savior in glory. **In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.** (John 7:37).

<sup>3</sup>**My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, Where is thy God?**

Food is necessary to live. A significant percentage of our time is spent planning, preparing and eating meals. This writer is in such despair he perceives his tears – his grief, his anguish – supplanting food and the role it plays in living. The idea here is that instead of eating, he had wept, like Hannah who **wept and did not eat.** (1 Samuel 1:7). This woeful condition is the exact opposite of this: **And also that every man should eat and drink, and enjoy the good of all his labour, it is the gift of God.** (Ecclesiastes 3:13).

What could be the cause of such distress? The verse answers: Those round about continually taunt, where is your God? Why can't we see your God (like we can see ours), and why has your God let you fall into such a sad place without providing relief? This mocking is nothing new; we experience it daily and we are assured it will only worsen as the last days ripen. **Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying,**

Where is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. (2 Peter 3:3, 4).

This Psalm, #42, is authored by David for or to the sons of Korah, who were known for their singing praise to God. (See 2 Chronicles 20:19). Frankly, this particular verse doesn't feel like good material for a hymn. Maybe it will look more sing-worthy as we move forward.

**4 When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me: for I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holyday.**

David is still in the dark place described in the preceding verse. He is remembering sorrows, banishment and reproaches. His soul is dissolved and become as poured water. Terrors are turned upon me: they pursue my soul as the wind: and my welfare passeth away as a cloud. And now my soul is poured out upon me; the days of affliction have taken hold upon me. (Job 30:15, 16).

The remainder of this verse suggests David has been banished by one way or another from worshiping with the people of God at the Lord's house, yet he anticipated a return to that privilege. *The meaning is, that he would join with the multitude in the joyful celebrations of public worship. This was the bright anticipation before him in exile; this cheered and sustained his heart when sinking in despair.* (Barnes). "I will remember," &c.,—that is, the recollection of this season of distress will give greater zest to the privileges of God's worship, when obtained. (Jamieson-Fausset-Brown).

**5 Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance.**

**6 O my God, my soul is cast down within me: therefore will I remember thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the hill Mizar.**

This person is in a world of hurt; it's undeniable. Cast down, which is to say sunk down under the weight of sorrow, depressed and sad. You will notice the reference to his soul being cast down appears in each of these two verses, back-to-back, emphasizing the woeful condition.

Added to that unpleasant condition is “disquieted.” It is very disquieting to be disquieted. **Wherefore my bowels shall sound like an harp for Moab, and mine inward parts for Kirharesh.** (Isaiah 16:11). Your internal organs, your heart, etc. vibrate like the chords of a harp used at funerals. **My bowels, my bowels! I am pained at my very heart; my heart maketh a noise in me; I cannot hold my peace, because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war. Destruction upon destruction is cried; for the whole land is spoiled[.]** (Jeremiah 4:19, 20). Very descriptive; very real.

And the remedy: The help of his countenance. [*L*]iterally, *"the salvations of his face," or his presence. The original word rendered help is in the plural number, meaning salvations; and the idea in the use of the plural is, that his deliverance would be completed or entire - as if double or manifold.* (Barnes).

We close out these two verses with a study in ancient Israel geography, the land of Jordan, the land of the Hermonites and the hill Mizar. The idea here includes wherever life may take the Psalmist, he will remember his God. Also, whether it is desert land, lush scenery or high mountains, “I remember thee.”

Incidentally, some writers believe the reference to “Mizar” is Zoar, which was near Sodom & Gomorrah. **The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar. Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven; and he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground.** (Genesis 19:23-25). It seems the traveling saint simply cannot avoid exposure to such perversion while traveling through this barren wilderness.

**<sup>7</sup>Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts: all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me.**

Striving to dramatically describe the troubles coming one upon the other, the Psalmist resorts to descriptive and metaphorical language harking back to the great flood when the upper deep, or collection of waters in the clouds and atmosphere, called for the lower deep, that being waters collected in the seas, rivers and bowels of the earth. **In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights.** (Genesis 7:11, 12).

David is drowning in afflictions, compared to deep waters for their multitude and being overwhelming in nature. The Lord, though, is in charge! Consider these words of the Lord (containing many rhetorical questions) answering Job out of the whirlwind: [W]ho shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth, as if it had issued out of the womb? When I made the cloud the garment thereof, and thick darkness a swaddlingband for it, and brake up for it my decreed place, and set bars and doors, and said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed? \* \* \* Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea? Or hast thou walked in the search of the depth? \* \* \* Who hath divided a watercourse for the overflowing of waters, or a way for the lightning of thunder; to cause it to rain on the earth, where no man is; on the wilderness, wherein there is no man[.] \* \* \* Canst thou lift up thy voice to the clouds, that abundance of waters may cover thee? \* \* \* Who can number the clouds in wisdom? Or who can stay the bottles of heaven[?] (Job 38:8-11, 16, 25, 26, 34, 37).

**<sup>8</sup> Yet the LORD will command his lovingkindness in the day time, and in the night his song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life.**

**<sup>9</sup> I will say unto God my rock, Why hast thou forgotten me? why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?**

These two verses, taken together, discuss the antidote to the condition just described, and a frightful condition it was. Specifically, David considers the Lord's loving kindness, his song and the power of prayer. *Still he relies on as constant a flow of divine mercy which will elicit his praise and encourage his prayer to God.* (Jamieson-Fausset-Brown).

Scripture abounds with passages relating to singing praises to God; here are a few samples: O come, let us sing unto the Lord: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. (Psalm 95:1). O sing unto the Lord a new song: sing unto the Lord, all the earth. Sing unto the Lord, bless his name; show forth his salvation from day to day. (Psalm 96:1, 2). O sing unto the Lord a new song; for he hath done marvelous things: his right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory. (Psalm 98:1). Sing unto the Lord with the harp; with the harp, and the voice of a psalm. (Psalm 98:5). And so on.

Remember the context. Singing praises to the Lord in the midst of overwhelming troubles has a medicinal effect.

**<sup>10</sup> As with a sword in my bones, mine enemies reproach me; while they say daily unto me, Where is thy God?**

No matter how you slice or dice the opening words of this verse, there is pain involved. A sword up against bones cannot be a pleasant experience. So, we find Benson with these remarks: *As with a sword in my bones — Or, in my body, the bones being often put for the body, whereof they are a very considerable part. Or, as a sword which pierceth and cutteth my flesh even to the bones, and cutteth or breaketh the very bones also. So painful and vexatious are their reproaches.* Or Barnes: *As with a sword in my bones - Margin, killing. The treatment which I receive in their reproaches is like death. The word rendered "sword" - נצח retsach - means properly killing, slaying, breaking in pieces, crushing. It occurs only here and in [Ezekiel 21:22](#), where it is rendered slaughter.*

In reality, the old lyric “sticks and bones may break my bones but words will never hurt me” is not fully accurate. It is healthy to admit that harsh words from enemies of the cross are hurtful, but the key is to keep moving forward without allowing those reproaches to stop you.

And what is the most cutting of these daily taunts? Where is thy God? You are on a fool’s errand. Your “god” will never deliver and you are wasting your life worshiping such a “god.” Where is your “god” when he is needed? Take note: This mocking is “daily”; that is to say, it is frequently experienced. (See comments at verse 3 above also).

**<sup>11</sup> Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.**

If this verse sounds familiar, it might be because you have been paying attention and realize this verse is essentially the same as verse 5 above, with one exception now to be discussed. Please see earlier comments on verse 5.

The exception is the clause “the health of my countenance” instead of “the help of his countenance.” Countenance refers to one’s outward presentation to the world. The language here can be rendered “the salvations of my face.” God gives a shining face and cheerful countenance. *[A]s the bodily health of man is seen in the countenance, and for the most part to be judged of by it; so is the spiritual health of the saints, and which they have from the Lord; when he, as the sun of righteousness, arises upon them with healing in his wings, he, by his gracious presence, makes their countenances cheerful, fills them with joy*

*unspeakable and full of glory, and causes them to lift up their heads with an holy boldness and confidence, and without shame and fear[.] (Gill).*

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## 11th Hour Baptist Church

1 For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard.

<sup>2</sup> And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard.

<sup>3</sup> And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the marketplace,

<sup>4</sup> And said unto them; Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way.

<sup>5</sup> Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise.

<sup>6</sup> And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle?

<sup>7</sup> They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive.

<sup>8</sup> So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first.

<sup>9</sup> And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny.

<sup>10</sup> But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny.

<sup>11</sup> And when they had received it, they murmured against the goodman of the house,

<sup>12</sup> Saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day.

<sup>13</sup> But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny?

<sup>14</sup> Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee.

<sup>15</sup> Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good?

<sup>16</sup> So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen. (Matthew Chapter 20)

Observations (some obvious; some not so much):

- “Kingdom of heaven” intrinsically (naturally; essentially) involves laborers.
- Finite time; finish.
- God is the “goodman of the house”; it’s his house; it’s his vineyard; it’s his penny (money); they are his workers; it’s his “steward”; it’s ALL about him; he is “good.”
- While it might be initially understandable that those who had “borne the burden and heat of the day” were unhappy, they need to get over it already.
- What about this onerous “burden”; is it not called “the precious life” (Proverbs 6:26); is this not the “old paths” and a “good way” where we find “rest for (our) souls?” (Jeremish 6:16). In sum: It’s, in truth, a good way!
- What about these new 11<sup>th</sup> hour laborers/workers? Or, for that matter, the 3<sup>rd</sup>/6<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> hour workers? Get a clue! Don’t look a gift horse in the mouth. In other words, don’t look in a critical way (horse’s teeth) at something that has been given to you. Enjoy it! Appreciate it! Be thankful for it!
- Looking through the eyes of these new workers, we should ask: How has their life been? Doubtless, it has been a difficult and blind life. They have been bereft of peace with God, access to God, hope in God, triumph through God, the love of God and the Holy Spirit from God. Drugs; alcohol; etc.
- These new laborers are new to the vineyard. They are in the process of adapting to a new environment with much change. They deserve just as much love and charity as the “first” workers (old timers).