

"Where Is Thy God?" (part 2)

Psalm 43

As was pointed out when we studied Psalm 42, these two psalms are connected – most likely were the same psalm at one time. The question asked twice in Psalm 42 – "Where is thy God?" – is also relative to Psalm 43.

We find many of the same topics in this short psalm that we have seen several times already in our study of this great book, but we also see a few things that are unique to this psalm that add more detail or guidance to those repeated topics.

I. PRAYER FOR DELIVERANCE – VS. 1-2

A. The psalmist was surrounded by a corrupt culture – "an ungodly nation" – and is asking God to deliver him from that corruption, using terms as if he was in a court of law and God was his defense attorney pleading his cause.

1. This is seen in 1 John 2:1-2, where Jesus Christ is our advocate making defense for us when we sin.
2. This is the only time in the Bible the two English words, "ungodly nation" are found. The Hebrew (מִגֹּי לֹא-חֲסִיד) would literally be translated "from a nation not pious or not faithful (loyal)."

Isaiah 1:4

⁴ Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward.

Micah 7:2 [vs. 1-6]

² The good *man* is perished out of the earth: and *there is* none upright among men: they all lie in wait for blood; they hunt every man his brother with a net.

3. In a world increasingly marked by corruption and deceit, we still **desperately need** God to plead our cause and to vindicate us – **to judge in our favor** – just as the psalmist cried out for deliverance from a godless culture and unjust enemies.
4. The psalmist first pleads with God to vindicate him and defend his cause against a corrupt and godless nation.

He then pleads for personal deliverance from deceitful and unjust men who sought to bring him down by wicked means.

Facing external corruption and personal attack, he turns to God alone for defense and deliverance.

B. The psalmist struggles with feelings of being abandoned, recorded in verse two. This is honest emotion.

1. “For thou art the God of my strength: why dost thou cast me off?” – the psalmist acknowledges God’s strength but wrestles with the *feeling* of divine abandonment.
2. “Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?” – this speaks of the personal grief of being *overwhelmed by opposition*.

Though the psalmist affirms that God is his only strength, he struggles with the painful reality that

God seems absent during his suffering. His faith acknowledges who God is, yet his circumstances tempt him to question why a God of strength would allow him to mourn under enemy oppression. This tension is not unbelief, but a mark of genuine faith wrestling with hardship – and ultimately driving him back to God in deeper dependence.

3. To illustrate the point of verse two, consider a small child, lost in a crowd, crying out for his father. He knows his father loves him – but for a moment, the child feels afraid, abandoned, and vulnerable.

When the father rushes in and picks him up, the child's fear gives way to security – but in that moment of separation, the fear was real.

Faith knows God is near, but real pain can still make us feel forsaken for a time – and we, like the psalmist, cry out for our Father to come to us.

The psalmist teaches us to run toward God with our pain, not away from Him.

II. PETITION FOR DIVINE LEADING – VS. 3-4

In Hebrew poetry, this is a sequential consequence, similar to but not quite as rigid as an “if...then” formal logic proposition. So, **“if you send...then I will go and praise.”**

Keep in mind the previous verse as well as verse five and the struggle the psalmist was having. These verses are his petition to God to help him find his way back to His presence.

There is a unique flow to these verses.

Plea for Divine Guidance (v.3)



God sends "light and truth"



They lead the psalmist back to God's dwelling



Result: Joyful Return to Worship (v.4)



Praise and rejoicing at the altar of God

A. A cry for God's intervention - vs. 3

1. "Send out thy light and thy truth"

- a) These are imperative verbs with an intense emotional plea - "O send..." The psalmist needed "light" (**illumination, direction**) and "truth" (**stability, reliability of God's promises**) from God in the midst of the "ungodly nation."
So do we today.
- b) The psalmist recognizes he cannot find his way back without God's **guidance** and **faithfulness**.

Psalm 27:1

¹ The LORD *is* my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD *is* the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

Psalm 119:105

¹⁰⁵ NUN. Thy word *is* a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

John 8:12

¹² Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, *I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.*

2. "Let them **lead** me"

This and the next one are future/causative form: "they (light and truth) will guide me."

3. "Let them **bring** me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles" – back to the presence of God.

In times of despair, what we need most is God's **light** and **truth** to guide us home.

B. A confidence in God's restoration – vs. 4

1. "Then **will I go...**" – when God's light and truth lead us back, **worship naturally follows**. Worship is **not self-produced**; it flows from God's restoring work.

Psalm 23:3-4

³ He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

⁴ Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou *art* with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Hebrews 10:19-22

¹⁹ Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰ By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; ²¹ And *having* an high priest over the house of God; ²² Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

2. "Upon the harp **will I praise** thee..." – praise springs from being restored to intimate fellowship with God.

True joy is not found in circumstances, but in

the God who meets us at the altar of grace.

Notice the psalmist doesn't say he will find his own way back to the altar. He pleads for God's light and truth to lead him – and *then* he anticipates praising God. True worship always begins with God's gracious initiative, not human effort.

III. PERSONAL EXHORTATION FOR DISCOURAGEMENT - VS. 5

The first four verses of this psalm describe the external battle the psalmist faced. This verse turns inward to the internal battle.

Verses 1-4 = The External Situation:

- Oppressed by a godless nation and deceitful men (v.1)
- Feeling abandoned and mourning (v.2)
- Crying out for divine guidance – light and truth (v.3)
- Anticipating a joyful return to worship (v.4)

Verse 5 = The Internal Response:

- *Now that he has prayed and anticipated restoration, he **counsels his own soul** to trust fully in God.*

A. "Why art thou cast down, O my soul?"

1. **Image:** Soul is **bent low, collapsed inwardly** under the weight of sorrow.
2. **Tense:** Imperfect – suggests a **continuing condition**: "Why do you keep being cast down?"

He's not just feeling a momentary sadness; his soul is **persistently overwhelmed**.

B. "And why art thou disquieted within me?"

1. "Disquieted" (תַּהֲרִי) – Comes from a root that can describe **the raging of the sea** (compare Isaiah 17:12 – "the noise of the seas").

Isaiah 17:12

¹² Woe to the multitude of many people, *which* make a noise like the noise of the seas; and to the rushing of nations, *that* make a rushing like the rushing of mighty waters!

2. **Image:** The soul is **agitated, churning, unsettled**, not at peace.

Not only is he bowed down (depressed), he is **internally roaring and restless** – a powerful image of emotional turmoil.

C. "Hope in God"

1. "Hope" (הוֹחִיל) – wait expectantly, hope earnestly.
2. **Imperative form** – he is **commanding** himself to hope.
3. **Not passive:** Biblical hope is **active trust** – not wishful thinking, but confident expectation based on God's character.

He **preaches to himself**: *"Stop sinking. Anchor your soul in who God is."*

D. "For I shall yet praise him"

1. "Yet" (עוֹד) – again, still – **certainty of future praise**
2. "I shall praise Him" (אֶדְבֹּר) – this is an emphatic future tense.

He expresses **certainty**: no matter how dark it feels now, *praise will come*.

E. "Who is the health of my countenance, and my God"

1. "The health" (יְשׁוּעָה) – a word most often translated as "salvation" or "deliverance" in their varied forms (of the 78 times it is used: "salvation" – 68 times; "deliverance" – 3 times).

This is the plural form of the word **emphasizing abundant, ongoing help**.

2. "My countenance" (פָּנַי) – although the word means "face" in a general way, as used here it means his entire emotional and physical expression. His face told the story.

He confesses **God is the one who will lift his face** from sorrow into joy – **personal, relational, transformative**.

Conclusion: "After laying out his deep external struggles – the injustice he faces, the feeling that God has abandoned him, and the desperate prayer to be led back by God's light and truth – the psalmist arrives at the real battleground: *his own soul*."

In verse 5, he turns inward and speaks directly to himself: *'Why are you cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me?'* The Hebrew gives us vivid imagery – a soul bent low under grief, swirling and storming like crashing waves inside.

But here's where faith shines: he doesn't let his soul stay there. He commands it: *'Hope in God.'* The word for hope isn't passive – it means to wait with steady, expectant trust. It's as if he's saying, 'You may feel overwhelmed now, but

I know who my God is. He will lead me back. I will praise Him again.'

This verse isn't a detour – it's the summit. After all the crying, pleading, and longing, the psalmist preaches truth to his own heart. And that's where real worship begins – not when everything is fixed, but when we choose to hope in the God who still holds us."