

Psalm 142

This psalm too is paired with Deuteronomy 28.

"Maschil of David; A Prayer when he was in the cave. " Probably composed by David when he fled from Saul to the cave of Adullam (**1 Samuel 22:1**).

"The state of David, in the cave of Adullam, was a state of utter destitution. Persecuted by his own countrymen, dismissed by Achish, and not yet joined by his own relations, or any other attendants, he took refuge in the cave, and was there alone." - *Benson Commentary*

It provides a guide for us when we are in "caves" of our own.

Psalm 142:1 - "I cried unto the LORD with my voice; with my voice unto the LORD did I make my supplication."

Again, "supplication" means praying to the Lord in humility for grace and mercy, and not pleading on the basis of merit and worthiness, or claiming something by right.

Psalm 142:2 - "I poured out my complaint before him; I shewed before him my trouble."

Like Christ at Gethsemane, he prayed rather than give in to despair.

"We do not show our trouble before the Lord in prayer so that He can see it, but so that we can see *Him*." - *The Treasury of David*

Psalm 142:3 - "When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then thou knewest my path. In the way wherein I walked have they privily laid a snare for me."

"overwhelmed" = *ataph* - shrouded, covered over, and thus languishing; to faint or fail

"thou knowest my path" - when we are in dire straits, our innermost motivations are revealed.

"In the way wherein I walked" - His enemies used his daily, habitual patterns to entrap him. Like Haman, who framed Mordechai and the Jews' observance of the Sabbath and keeping of the commandments as a dangerous threat to the kingdom. Also see **Daniel 3**, "certain Chaldeans came near, and accused the Jews."

Psalm 142:4 - "I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul."

"I looked on my right hand" - because according to the Hebrew metaphor it was on the "right hand" that a protector or patron would stand. Ruth had Boaz, but David has no natural kinsman-redeemer to come to his aid or take up his cause. He could only turn to God.

So...

Psalm 142:5 - "I cried unto thee, O LORD: I said, Thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living."

"portion" - *cheleq* - part, portion, used to signify an inheritance in the Promised Land.

God is David's portion; Israel is God's portion.

- **Deuteronomy 32:9** - "For the LORD'S portion (*cheleq*) is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance."

If God is our portion, we will never lack:

- **Psalm 23:1** - "The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want."

Psalm 142:6 - "Attend unto my cry; for I am brought very low: deliver me from my persecutors; for they are stronger than I."

To be humbled and brought low is a blessed position spiritually. But our flesh hates it.

- **2 Corinthians 12:9** - "And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness."

"deliver me from my persecutors" - from Pharaoh, who would retake the Israelites as slaves; from Laban; from Esau; from Nebuchadnezzar; from Antiochus; from Herod, who would have killed the newborn Jesus; from the Roman and Jewish authorities, who sought His life; and from Satan and his minions who persecute Christ within us now - from without by human persecutors and from within through our own thoughts and evil devices.

- **Matthew 5:11** - "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake."

"for they are stronger than I" -

- **John 16:33** - "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

Psalm 142:7 - "Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name: the righteous shall compass me about; for thou shalt deal bountifully with me."

The prison is the cave - the place where we hide until help comes from the Lord. Without prayer, we would stay there indefinitely.

But when our eyes see Him, we can praise him in the midst of our circumstances, and

we are released.

The Targum: "for my sake the righteous will make to thee a crown of praise."

Aben Ezra: "they shall glory as if the royal crown was on their heads"

...As it is when we recognize we are His royal priesthood, a peculiar (treasured) people.

"for thou shalt deal bountifully with me" - bountiful = *gamal* - to wean, to ripen, reward;
i.e. to reach a full and perfect goal, fulfill one's destiny.

God - by carefully cherishing us as a mother does her nursing child or a gardener by watering and fertilizing his vine or fig tree - will bring us to full maturity so we can enjoy Him both in this "land of the living" and in eternity.