

Psalm 143

A Psalm of David (paired with the Torah reading of **Deuteronomy 29**)

This psalm was composed by David when he fled from Absalom his son, according to the Septuagint and other sources, though some say it was written when (as with many of these psalms) he was being pursued by Saul.

Psalm 143:1 - "Hear my prayer, O LORD, give ear to my supplications: in thy faithfulness answer me, and in thy righteousness."

David here appeals to God's faithfulness and righteousness, not his own.

Psalm 143:2 - "And enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified."

Targum: Enter not into the house of judgment, or the court of justice

...Because it would no doubt lead to his condemnation. David knew his own sins, and is throwing himself on the mercy of God.

"in thy sight shall no man living be justified" - This is perhaps the basis for any understanding of the scriptures.

- **Psalm 14:1** - "There is no one who does good."

- **1 Kings 8:46** - "...for there is no one who does not sin"

- **Ezra 9:15** - "Here we are before You in our guilt, though because of it no one can stand before You"

As in the Psalm of Ascent, **Psalm 130:3** - "If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?"

Paul quotes **Psalm 143:2**, replacing "no man living" with "no flesh":

- **Romans 3:20** - "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference"

As David is a type of Christ, the passages that reveal his consciousness of sin stand as examples of how Jesus felt when the weight of the sin of the world was placed on His shoulders at the cross. Like the twin goats at Yom Kippur, His blood atoned for the blame of our sin, and as the scapegoat He took on and then "bore away" the terrible

burden of guilt as well.

Psalm 143:3-4 - "For the enemy hath persecuted my soul; he hath smitten my life down to the ground; he hath made me to dwell in darkness, as those that have been long dead. Therefore is my spirit overwhelmed within me; my heart within me is desolate."

"persecute" = *radaph* - hunt, chase, pursue

"smitten" = *daka'* - to crush, shatter, to break in pieces

"darkness" = *machshak* - dark places, used for the grave

"long dead" = *olam muwth* - eternally dead

"overwhelmed" = *`ataph* - shrouded or clothed in darkness, overwhelmed, drained of strength

"desolate" = *shamem* - astonished, struck with horror, laid waste, stupefied (used by the prophets to describe the destruction of Jerusalem)

This is the description of the utter hopelessness and depression that comes from the burden of sin on a person. It is applied by the enemy, Satan, the adversary, issuing accusations through the venue of our minds. The feelings of guilt are there to turn us back toward God. But Satan wants to keep us dangling in hopeless terror or help us find a way to "carry on"- to novocaine our souls - without resorting to repentance. The result of that path is delusion and eventually our doom.

- **Mark 14:32-33** - "And they came to a place which was named Gethsemane: and he saith to his disciples, Sit ye here, while I shall pray. And he taketh with him Peter and James and John, and began to be sore amazed (*ekthambeó* - stunned), and to be very heavy (*adémoneó* - to feel fear, be distressed, lack courage)"

Jesus experienced all this for us. Still, He said, "Not my will, but thine be done" and took it to the cross. But He is risen! His new life is our inheritance. The old man Adam is dead and gone.

- **Romans 6:4** - "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

Psalm 143:5 - "I remember the days of old; I meditate on all thy works; I muse on the work of thy hands."

Rashi - "I remember the days of yore": when You performed for us many wondrous miracles.

"muse" = *siyach* - muse, meditate, study, ponder, consider (can also mean to talk or sing)

This is the prescription for times of trouble and affliction. Remember what God has done for us and for His people! And not only that, but His works of creation, etc. in the "days of old."

Psalm 143:6 - "I stretch forth my hands to you: my soul thirsts after you, as a thirsty land. Selah."

In prayer, as the Targum adds; for this is a prayer gesture, **1 Kings 8:38**; both hands were stretched forth, earnestly imploring help, and ready to receive and embrace every blessing bestowed with thankfulness - *Gill's Exposition*

The word "thirsty" is left out - which gives David's cry its urgency. "I stretch forth my hands to you, my soul! ... as a thirsty land"

Recalling God's mighty works just makes his current situation seem worse. His desperation is rising. Where's God?!

After the "*selah*" or pause, David seems to start over again more calmly, but still desperate.

Psalm 143:7 - "Hear me speedily, O LORD: my spirit fails: hide not your face from me, lest I be like to them that go down into the pit."

"hear" = "answer me"

Targum: "my spirit desireth thee, cause not thy Shechinah to remove from me" i.e. my spirit fails because of its great desire for Your Presence seems to be unfulfilled

"pit" = "the house of the grave" according to the Targum

This whole psalm seems to be an expansion on **Psalm 22:1** and Christ's cry from the cross: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (**Matthew 27:46**)

David's concern at this point is not to escape the tribulation, but that he might have to endure it alone, without God's presence.

Turning Point

Psalm 143:8 - "Cause me to hear thy lovingkindness in the morning; for in thee do I trust: cause me to know the way wherein I should walk; for I lift up my soul unto thee."

Rashi - "in the morning": When the redemption sprouts.

Like the women at the tomb, discovering the Resurrection.

A beautiful chorus is sung to these words. This is a declaration of David's credo - "For in Thee do I trust"

Psalm 143:9 - "Deliver me, O LORD, from mine enemies: I flee unto thee to hide me."

Once we acknowledge that we trust God as our refuge, then we can ask for deliverance with confidence. More than likely this means deliverance THROUGH the affliction rather than FROM the affliction.

The Hebrew is, "I hide myself with thee"

- **Proverbs 14:26** - "In the fear of the Lord there is strong confidence, And his children will have refuge."

- **Psalm 27:6** - "For in the day of trouble He will conceal me in His tabernacle; In the secret place of His tent He will hide me; He will lift me up on a rock."

- **Psalm 91:2** - "I will say to the Lord, "My refuge and my fortress, My God, in whom I trust!"

Targum: "I have appointed thy Word to be (my) Redeemer."

Rashi - ""I will say to the Lord" - I have hid my affairs, my straits and troubles, my difficulties and necessities, from men; and have revealed them unto thee, who alone can save." i.e. David went to no other source for deliverance.

Psalm 143:10 - "Teach me to do your will; for you are my God: your spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness."

Or, rather, "let thy good spirit lead me."

"Teach me to do your will" - Only by the guidance of the Holy Spirit can we transform from doing our own will to doing His.

"the land of uprightness." = the level land, or thee level path or the "plain path (**Psalm 27:11**) without chasms or rifts hat could cause me to stumble. Metaphorically it means tranquility and joy.

The Targum interprets this as "a right land," where honesty prevails, and honest and upright men live.

The "land of uprightness" is the same as the Promised Land, whose spiritual characteristic is Rest. Ultimately, that land will be fully realized at the end of time:

- **2 Peter 3:13** - "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

Psalm 143:11 - "Quicken me, O LORD, for thy name's sake: for thy righteousness' sake bring my soul out of trouble."

"quicken" = *chayah* - to live, regain the breath of life, be revived, recover from sickness, often meaning resurrection or to be restored to life

"trouble" = *tsarah* - trouble, affliction, anguish. A feminine form, which can also refer to a female adversary.

With David as a type of Christ, we could assign the role of "female adversary" to the Great Whore of Babylon who opposes God and His saints in **Revelation 17**.

Again, David doesn't appeal to his own merit, but prays for deliverance "for thy name's sake: for thy righteousness' sake."

Psalm 143:12 - "And of thy mercy cut off mine enemies, and destroy all them that afflict my soul: for I am thy servant."

"of thy mercy" = as a demonstration of your mercy toward me...

Although we are to expect tribulation and persecution in this life, there will be a final reckoning for the enemy and his cohorts.

- **Matthew 25:41,46** - "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels...And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."

- **Revelation 18:1-2** - "And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird."

- **Revelation 19:20** - "And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that worked miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone."

- **Revelation 20:10** - "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever."

- **Revelation 20:14-15** - "Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire; and anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire."

One metaphor swallows another. The lake of fire, after consuming, in "chronological" order, the beast, the false prophet, Satan, death and Hades, is itself consumed or more precisely, renamed "the second death" and thus made to disappear in preparation for the renewal of creation, this time without Satan, who has reached his end.

- from *"The End of Satan,"* by Steven Thompson, *Andrews University Seminary Studies*, Autumn 1999