

Psalm 63

A Psalm of David, when he was in the wilderness of Judah.

Psalm 63:

The location of the writing of the psalm is described generally as “in the wilderness of Judah”.

Unlike many of the psalms written in these dire situations, however, this psalm is overflowing with thanksgiving rather than lament and petition.

David declares his longing for spiritual renewal (verses 1-2), he expresses his thankful mood (verses 3-6), he gives voice to his trust in God (verses 7-8), and he announces his hope for the future (verses 9-11).

Enemies are mentioned only in passing (verses 9-10).

Verses: 1-11:

In deepest words of devotion, this psalm expresses David’s intense love for his ORD.

The psalm was written while David was in the Judean wilderness, either during his flight from Saul (1 Sam. chapter 23), or more likely his flight from Absalom (2 Sam. chapter 15; compare 63:11 “the king”).

David writes from the perspective of these tenses:

- I. Present – Seeking God’s Presence (63:1-5).
- II. Past – Remembering God’s Power (63:6-8).
- III. Future – Anticipating God’s Judgment (63:9-11).

Verses 1-2:

"Early will I seek thee".

The true Christian devotes to God the morning hour.

He opens the eyes of his understanding with those of his body, and then awakens each morning to righteousness.

He arises with a thirst after those comforts which the world cannot give, and has immediate recourse by prayer to the Fountain of the water of life.

The true believer is convinced, that nothing in this sinful world can satisfy the wants and desires of his immortal soul.

He expects his happiness from God, as his portion.

When faith and hope are most in exercise, the world appears a weary desert, and the believer then longs for the joys of heaven, which is as foretastes in the ordinances of God upon earth.

Psalm 63:1 "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;"

"I will seek thee":

Eagerness to be with the LORD in every situation is more in view than the time of day.

"My soul thirsteth for thee":

David longs for God's presence like a wanderer in a desert longs for water.

"In a dry and thirsty land":

David writes this psalm while hiding in the wilderness of Judea, but longing to be back worshipping in Jerusalem.

The water that David is speaking of, is the Spirit of God.

I have discovered, as did David, that the best time to seek God is the first thing in the morning.

The reason we know for sure that the water David is thirsting for is the Spirit, is the fact that Jesus told the woman at the well she would never thirst again, if she drank the water that He had given her.

John 4:14 "But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

This is really speaking of righteousness through the Spirit of God.

Look at one more Scripture that Jesus spoke on this subject.

John 6:35 "And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst."

All of this leaves no doubt that the dry and thirsty land in verse 1 above, is a land without the Spirit of God.

Psalm 63:2 "To see thy power and thy glory, so [as] I have seen thee in the sanctuary."

Either the ark, as the Jewish writers generally interpret it; the symbol of God's presence and glory, and which is called his strength and his glory (see Psalm 78:61).

Or rather the Lord Christ, who is the power of God, as well as the wisdom of God.

By whom he made the world, and upholds it.

By whom he has redeemed his people, and keeps and preserves them; and whose power is seen in the effectiveness of the word and ordinances.

And who is also the glory of God; he is the brightness of his Father's glory.

His glory is the glory as of the only begotten of the Father.

He has the same glorious nature, perfections, names, homage, and worship.

And the glory of all the divine attributes is displayed in the work of salvation and redemption he has wrought out.

And this glory is to be seen, through the glass of the word and ordinances, in the house of God.

Hence it follows;

"So as I have seen thee in the sanctuary":

Where he comes and blesses his people, and manifests himself unto them, as he does not unto the whole world.

Where his goings are seen, and his footsteps traced (Psalm 68:24).

The psalmist calls to mind former experiences in the sanctuary.

And these stimulate him to an eager desire of fresh tastes of the grace of God, and clearer views of his power and glory.

As much as I desired the water in the desert, even more do I desire to see thee in the sanctuary.

David wants very much to be able to worship again, in the sanctuary where he had witnessed the presence of God.

We know that in David's youth, he had been in close relationship with the LORD.

This is really what he is desiring again here.

I refuse to attend church where the presence of God is not evident.

There is no more of a hollow feeling, than to seek God and not be able to sense His presence.

Verses 3-6:

Even in affliction we need not want matter for praise.

When this is the regular frame of a believer's mind, he values the loving-kindness of God more than life.

God's loving-kindness is our spiritual life, and that is better than temporal life.

We must praise God with joyful lips; we must address ourselves to the duties of religion with cheerfulness, and speak forth the praises of God from a principle of holy joy.

Praising lips must be joyful lips.

David was in continual danger; care and fear held his eyes waking, and gave him wearisome nights; but he comforted himself with thoughts of God.

The mercies of God, when called to mind in the night watches, support the soul, making darkness cheerful.

How happy will be that last morning, when the believer, awaking up after the Divine likeness, shall be satisfied with all the fullness of God, and praise him with joyful lips, where there is no night, and where sorrow and sighing flee away!

Taken collectively, this presents an image of praising God with one's entire being, even through memories ("I remember thee").

Praise does not come only from one's "mouth".

Psalm 63:3 "Because thy lovingkindness [is] better than life, my lips shall praise thee."

"Better than life":

God's covenant love is more valuable to David than life itself (compare Phil. 1:21; Acts 20:24).

David's life hung in the balance, yet he realized that true life is found in God alone.

God's "lovingkindness is better than life" because it extends beyond life.

David consistently revealed himself to be a man after God's own heart (Acts 13:22).

To live this life without God is not worth living.

The only life worth living, is the life we live in Him.

The following Scripture is the only way to live a victorious life in the world today.

Galatians 2:20 "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

We Christians, even more than David, have much to praise the LORD for.

He paid the price for our sins that we might live in His righteousness.

Our lips should not stop day and night praising His wonderful name.

God inhabits the praises of Israel.

Christians are spiritual Israel.

Psalm 63:4 "Thus will I bless thee while I live: I will lift up my hands in thy name."

"Lift up my hands":

As an Old Testament posture of prayer, the upheld hands pictured both the ascent of prayer and the readiness to receive every good gift which comes from God (compare James 1:17).

It was thus a posture of trust in God alone.

Had you ever really thought of it being possible that we might bless the LORD?

Notice, how long David says he will praise Him.

He says as long as there is breath in his body, he will praise God.

Can we who have received so much more than David, do less?

Notice how David blesses Him.

He lifts his hands toward heaven, and praises Him.

This reminds me of the offering that is waved before the LORD in the tabernacle.

Do you suppose, by raising our hands toward heaven to bless the LORD, that we are dedicating our work with our hands to Him?

Even the lifting of the hands must be done in the name of the LORD.

Psalm 63:5 "My soul shall be satisfied as [with] marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise [thee] with joyful lips:"

"Marrow and fatness":

A metaphor comparing the spiritual and emotional satisfaction of the divine presence with the satisfaction of rich banquet food.

The fat of the offering was burned as a sweet smelling savor to God.

The fat then, could be a spiritual blessing that we receive in our soul when we bless God.

This beautiful experience can make us alive with joy, and nothing but praise could come from our lips.

The dry bones in Ezekiel needed but a breath of the Spirit of God to make the fat and marrow come on them and make them alive again.

I won't tell you where it is, it is good to search the Word for morsels of truth.

Psalm 63:6 "When I remember thee upon my bed, [and] meditate on thee in the [night] watches."

David had doubtless done this during the long and anxious night which followed his first day in the wilderness of Judea (2 Sam. 16:14).

"And meditate on thee in the night watches":

Which the Jewish writers on the text say were three, as they were with the Jews, but with the Romans four (see notes on Matt. 14:25).

And the night, in the times of Homer, was divided into three parts.

The night season is a very proper one for meditation on the perfections, providences, promises, word and works of God.

And which is very delightful and profitable, when attended with the presence, Spirit, and grace of God.

The Targum is, "in the watches I will meditate on thy word."

David, perhaps was like many of us.

He was so busy during the day, that his best time to be quiet and think of God was when he was on his bed at night.

Sometimes just thinking of God and His plans early in the night get me so excited that, I forget what time it is and visit most of the night with him.

Psalm 63:7 "Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice."

Because thou hast interposed to defend me in danger.

The idea is, that he had experienced the divine interposition in times of danger, and that this was a reason why he should still confide in God.

The argument is, that God's mercy and favor in the past is a reason why we should confide in him in time to come.

"Therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice":

Under the shadow or protection of thy wings will I feel safe (see the notes at Psalm 17:8; compare Psalms 36:7; 57:1; 61:4).

How beautiful to feel the protection underneath the protecting wings of God.

We talked about how a mother hen will get her little chickens under her wings before the storm comes for their protection.

This just means that God is that protective, and even more, of us.

Just knowing that God is protecting us should make us rejoice.

David says, you have been my help in the past, and I know you will protect me now.

Psalm 63:8 "My soul followeth hard after thee: thy right hand upholdeth me."

"My soul followeth hard after thee":

In response to God's repeated invitation to "hold fast" to Him (Deut. 4:4; 10:20; 13:4), the psalmist clings to God.

This signifies David's unfailing commitment to his LORD.

With the statement "thy right hand upholdeth me", David reminds himself that God will deal with David's problems.

God often subtly assures His people that all will be made well when they go through difficulties.

David is saying, that even though he made some mistakes, he sought the LORD with everything within him.

He would not be denied.

He just came to the LORD over and over.

This Right Hand, and its mention all through the Bible, is speaking of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Psalm 63:9 "But those [that] seek my soul, to destroy [it], shall go into the lower parts of the earth."

“Into the lower parts of the earth”:

A reference to the realm of the dead (see note on Eph. 4:9).

David's enemies were actually out to destroy him.

They were not out just for David's life, but to destroy his reputation as well.

They were God's enemies as well as David's, and their destination was hell.

It really is no different now.

There are people who do nothing except try to cause you to sin.

The devil has sent them on a mission to steal your soul.

They are out to destroy you.

The flesh and the spirit of man are constantly in battle.

The will of man has to do with the soul.

The spirit or the flesh of man will control the will of man.

If the spirit rules, the man is saved and will spend eternity in heaven.

If the flesh rules, the man is headed for an eternity in hell.

Psalm 63:10 "They shall fall by the sword: they shall be a portion for foxes."

“Foxes”:

Scavengers, feasting on unburied bodies (see note on Psalm 53:5).

Those that live by the sword, shall die by the sword.

Those who are opposed to God's family will die in the field of battle.

A very good example of this is (Ezekiel chapter 39), where 5 out of 6 of those opposed to Israel are killed.

The scripture says, that the animals and birds shall eat their flesh.

Psalm 63:11 "But the king shall rejoice in God; every one that sweareth by him shall glory: but the mouth of them that speak lies shall be stopped."

“One that sweareth by him”:

The Mosaic Covenant instructed this practice expressing loyalty to the true God alone (compare Deut. 6:13; 10:20; 1 Kings 8:31; Jer. 12:16).

The king here is David.

David will greatly rejoice, because his enemies have been defeated by God.

Christians where is our rejoicing?

Our enemy the devil, has been defeated by the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is prophetically speaking of Jesus as King of kings and Lord of lords as well.

The swearing by Him, just means that we have professed our belief in Him with our mouth.

The liars spoken of, are children of their father, the devil, who is the author of all lies.

Christians will not have to hang their head in shame, because they will rule and reign for the 1000 year Millennium reign when Jesus is King on this earth.

Psalm 63 Questions

1. When did David seek God?
2. My _____ thirsteth for thee.
3. What was the water that David was seeking?
4. What did Jesus call himself, in John 6:35?
5. What is the dry and thirsty land, in verse 1?
6. Where was David longing to worship again?
7. Where does the author refuse to attend church?
8. Thy _____ is better than life.
9. God inhabits the praises of _____.

10. Who is spiritual Israel?
11. Why do we lift our hands to God?
12. What was done with the fat of the offering?
13. What did the dry bones in Ezekiel need to make them live?
14. Why did the author not give you the location in Ezekiel for the dry bones?
15. Where was David, in verse 6, when he remembered God?
16. Why do you suppose this was a good place to worship and meditate on God?
17. How does the mother hen protecting her chicks relate to verse 7?
18. What is meant by David when he says, his soul followeth hard after thee?
19. Where will those who sought to destroy David wind up?
20. The spirit is constantly in battle with the _____.
21. What does Ezekiel chapter 39 say will happen to the enemies of God's people?
22. Who is verse 11 speaking of prophetically?
23. Why will the Christians not be ashamed at last?