

WHY ARE YOU CAST DOWN, O MY SOUL? – PSALM 42-43

INTRODUCTION

1. Psalm 42 marks the beginning of Book Two in the Psalter (**Ps. 42-72**).
2. It is very highly probable that Psalm 42 and 43 were at one time a single psalm.
 - a. They share not only an identical refrain but similar themes.
 - b. Psalm 43 is also the only psalm in Book Two without a title.
3. This psalm was not written by David, but the sons of Korah, most likely the same Korah who rebelled against Moses and Aaron (**Num. 26:11; 16:1-50**).

DISCUSSION

I. WHY IS OUR SOUL CAST DOWN?

- A. It has been noted that these two psalms both deal with depression.
- B. Life is not always easy nor fair and sometimes we all get weighed down.
- C. What causes depression?
- D. The psalmist gives us several things that can lead the child of God to be depressed.
- E. Being unable to assemble and worship God is a cause of depression (**Ps. 42:1-2**).
 - i. His desperation to worship, to be in God's presence, is pictured as a deer who is panting for water to quench its thirst.
 - ii. He longs to come and to worship the "living" God (**Heb. 11:6**).
 - iii. Based on what he says here and in verse 6, the psalmist is far away from Jerusalem and the temple, probably on the northeast side of the Jordan.
 - iv. When we find ourselves down and depressed, drawing near to God with our brethren is where we need to be (**Heb. 4:16; 10:24**).
- F. Being ridiculed for our faith in God is another cause of depression (**Ps. 42:3, 10**).
 - i. The psalmist is taunted by unbelievers, "Where is your God?"
 - ii. In the ancient world, atheism wasn't the norm and the sense is probably more about the idea that God wasn't helping the psalmist in his struggles.
 - iii. When we are suffering there are those who would ridicule us and cause us to doubt that God is really there, and He really cares (**2 Pet. 3:3-4**).
- G. Dwelling on the past, longing for better days, is another cause (**Ps. 42:4**).
 - i. The psalmist recalls when he was able to go with the throng and worship.
 - ii. There is a proper use of memories, of good times, of God's provision and care, to encourage us and give us hope for the future (**Heb. 13:5-6**).
 - iii. Instead of living in the past we have to press on with God (**Phil. 3:13-14**).
- H. The challenges and trials of life can sometimes be overwhelming (**Ps. 42:7**).
 - i. The psalmist envisions the trials of life and the testing of God as great waves breaking over him, as though he is drowning (**Jonah 2:3**).
 - ii. We don't know what he was suffering but many of us have felt the same way, that we can endure our suffering no longer (**Ps. 32:6**).
- I. Another cause of depression is thinking that God hasn't heard or answered our prayers (**Ps. 42:9**).

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- i. His heartfelt cry of anguish reminds us of David and the Lord (**Ps. 22:1; Matt. 27:46**).
 - ii. It is easy for us to fall into the trap of thinking that God has forgotten us.
- J. Being mistreated by the ungodly also causes us to be depressed (**Ps. 43:1**).
 - i. The psalmist calls on God to vindicate him from false accusations.
 - ii. Jesus warns us that we will suffer such treatment when we live for Him (**John 15:19-20**).
- K. These are just a few of the many things that can cause us to feel hopeless and want to give up.
- L. But how can we overcome depression?

II. WHAT IS THE CURE FOR THE DOWNCAST SOUL?

- A. The world offers us all manner of false “cures.”
 - i. Alcohol and drug abuse are the preferred choice of many.
 - ii. Others turn to adultery, fornication, divorce, entertainment, or even shopping.
- B. What does the psalmist do and what does he teach us to do?
- C. He gets himself under control and confronts his depression (**Ps. 42:5, 6, 11; 43:5**).
 - i. As you read through these psalms he doesn’t wallow in self-pity, but actively confronts his depression and considers why he feels the way he feels.
 - ii. We need to do the same thing, even talking it through with the Lord (**2 Cor. 13:5; 1 Kings 19:9, 13**).
- D. He then challenges himself to recognize what is true and to act on it (**Ps. 42:8**).
 - i. He admits that God hasn’t abandoned him, but is faithful and constant in His love and care (**Rom. 8:35-39**).
 - ii. He determines to seek God’s presence, justice, strength, guidance, and joy (**Ps. 43:1-4; Phil. 4:6-7**).
- E. Above all, the psalmist seeks God and puts his hope in God (**Ps. 42:5, 6, 11; 43:5**).
- F. God is the only thing constant in this universe (**Jas. 1:17**).
- G. God cares for us and we must always look to Him to help us bear up under life’s pressures (**1 Pet. 5:6-7**).

CONCLUSION

1. When you read this psalm, you can see that seeking God works for the psalmist who moves from lament to strong confident prayer and hope in God himself.
2. Depression is real and it can happen to anyone, even mature believers (**1 Kings 19:1-4; Matt. 11:2-3; 26:69-75**).
3. But the solution to depression is not to allow it to take over our lives and consume us.
4. We must confront it and deal with it and look to the Lord who has promised us that even in the darkest times, we can have joy (**John 15:11; Phil. 4:4; Gal. 5:22; 2 Cor. 4:8-10**).