

Tehillim / Psalms 43 | ספר תהילים מג

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The One who pleads on our behalf

This week's study is from *Tehillim / Psalms 43:1-5*, the Psalm opens with David asking the Lord to vindicate him saying *43:1 Vindicate me, O God, and plead my case against an ungodly nation; O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man!* (NASB) When David asks the Lord deliver him from an ungodly nation, what nation is he referring to? He goes on to state the Lord is his strength (*ב- כִּי-אַתָּה | אֱלֹהֵי מְעוּזֵי לְמָה זָנַחְתָּנִי לְמָה-קָדַר אֶתְהַלֵּךְ בְּלַחַץ אוֹיֵב: 43:2 For You are the God of my strength; why have You rejected me? Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy? NASB*) He appears to parallel the oppression of his enemy to the Lord rejecting him. He continues saying *43:3 O send out Your light and Your truth, let them lead me; Let them bring me to Your holy hill And to Your dwelling places.* (NASB) David asks that the “light” of God goes forth and he states “let them lead me” (הַמָּה יִנְחֹנֵנִי). Who is it he is referring to, the light? What is the meaning of God sending forth His light? He is asking to be led to the holy mountain and God's dwelling place. Why are mountains and high places considered dwelling places of the Lord God Almighty or of the gods of the nations? He continues saying *ד וְאַבּוֹאָה | 43:4 Then I will go to the altar of God, To God my exceeding joy; And upon the lyre I shall praise You, O God, my God.* (NASB) How important is it to go before the Lord and to the Altar with joy according to the Torah? David concludes his Psalm saying *ה מַה- 43:5 Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why are you disturbed within me? Hope in God, for I shall again praise Him, The help of my countenance and my God.* (NASB) Notice how David seems to speak to his soul in the third person. Is there a difference between the soul and the spirit? Our help is in the Lord and in His presence in our lives.

עברית Hebrew

ארמי Aramaic

ελληνικός Greek

עברית Hebrew	ארמי Aramaic	ελληνικός Greek
<p>ספר תהילים פרק מג</p> <p>א שְׁפֹטֵנִי אֱלֹהִים וְרִיבָה רִיבֵי מְגוּי לֹא-חֲסִיד מְאִישׁ-מְרָמָה וְעוֹלָה תִפְלֹטֵנִי: ב כִּי-אַתָּה אֱלֹהֵי מְעוּזֵי זֵי לְמָה זָנַחְתָּנִי לְמָה-קָדַר אֶתְהַלֵּךְ בְּלַחַץ אוֹיֵב: ג שְׁלַח-אוֹרְךָ וְאַמְתָּךְ הַמָּה יִנְחֹנֵנִי יְבִיאוּנִי אֶל-הַר-קֹדֶשׁךָ וְאַל-מִשְׁכַּנּוֹתֶיךָ: ד וְאַבּוֹאָה אֶל-מִזְבֵּחַ אֱלֹהִים אֶל-שְׁמַחַת גִּילֵי וְאוֹדְךָ בְּכִנּוֹר אֱלֹהִים אֱלֹהֵי: ה מַה-תִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה נַפְשִׁי וּמַה-תִּהְיֶה עָלַי הוֹחֵלִי לְאֱלֹהִים כִּי-עוֹד אוֹדְנּוּ יְשׁוּ-עַת פָּנָי וְאֱלֹהֵי:</p>	<p>ספר טוביה פרק מג</p> <p>א דון יתי יהוה אלהא בדין קשוט ועלך למנצי מצותי מן עמא דלא זכאי חסיד מן גבר נכיל וטלומא תשובינני: ב ארום ארי אנת הוא אלהא עושני למה שבקתני אנשיתני למה חכיר בקיב לא אזיל בדחוק בעיל דבבא: ג שדר נהורך והמנותך הינון אינון ידברונני יעלון יתי לטור בית מוקדשא ומדרשי בית שכינתך: ד ואעול לקרבא קורבניה למדבח אלהי יהוה לות אלהי די מיניה חדות בעותי ואודי קדמך בכינורא יהוה אלהי: ה מה תתמכין נפשי ומה תרגישי עלי אוריכי לאלהא ארום תוב אשבחינני אודי קדמוהי בפורקניה דמן קדמוי די ארום הוא אלהי:</p>	<p>ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 43</p> <p>43:1 ψαλμὸς τῷ Δαυὶδ κρῖνόν με ὁ θεὸς καὶ δίκασον τὴν δίκην μου ἐξ ἔθνους οὐχ ὀσίου ἀπὸ ἀνθρώπου ἀδίκου καὶ δολίου ῥύσαι με 43:2 ὅτι σὺ εἶ ὁ θεὸς κραταιώμα μου ἵνα τί ἀπώσω με καὶ ἵνα τί σκυθρωπάζων πορεύομαι ἐν τῷ ἐκθλίβειν τὸν ἐχθρόν μου 43:3 ἐξαπόστειλον τὸ φῶς σου καὶ τὴν ἀλήθειάν σου αὐτά με ὠδήγησαν καὶ ἤγαγόν με εἰς ὄρος ἁγίον σου καὶ εἰς τὰ σκηνώματά σου 43:4 καὶ εἰσελεύσομαι πρὸς τὸ θυσιαστήριον τοῦ θεοῦ πρὸς τὸν θεὸν τὸν εὐφραίνοντα τὴν νεότητά μου ἐξομολογήσομαί σοι ἐν κιθάρα ὁ θεὸς ὁ θεὸς μου 43:5 ἵνα τί περιλῦπος εἶ ψυχὴ καὶ ἵνα τί συνταράσσεις με ἔλπισον ἐπὶ τὸν θεόν ὅτι ἐξομολογήσομαι αὐτῷ σωτήριον τοῦ προσώπου μου ὁ θεὸς μου</p>

<p>Tehillim / Psalms 43 43:1 Vindicate me, O God, and plead my case against an ungodly nation; O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man! 43:2 For You are the God of my strength; why have You rejected me? Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy? 43:3 O send out Your light and Your truth, let them lead me; Let them bring me to Your holy hill And to Your dwelling places. 43:4 Then I will go to the altar of God, To God my exceeding joy; And upon the lyre I shall praise You, O God, my God. 43:5 Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why are you disturbed within me? Hope in God, for I shall again praise Him, The help of my countenance and my God. (NASB)</p>	<p>Toviyah / Psalms Chapter 43 43:1 Judge me, O Lord with true judgment; it is for you to argue my case with a people that is not righteous; from the deceitful and oppressive man you will save me. 43:2 For you are God, my strength; why have you abandoned me? why do I go about in gloom at the oppression of the enemy? 43:3 Send your light and your faithfulness; they will guide me, they will bring me to the mount of the sanctuary and the academies, the place of your presence. 43:4 And I will come to make his sacrifice at the altar of my God the Lord; to my God from whom is the joy of my gladness; and I will give thanks in your presence with the lyre, O Lord my God. 43:5 Why will you be lowly, O my soul, and [why] will you rage against me? Wait for God, for again I will praise him[13] for the redemption that comes from his presence, for he is my God. (EMC)</p>	<p>Psalmoi / Psalms 43 A Psalm of David. 43:1 Judge me, o God, and plead my cause, against an ungodly nation: deliver me from the unjust and crafty man. 43:2 For thou, O God, art my strength: wherefore hast thou cast me off? and why do I go sad of countenance, while the enemy oppresses me? 43:3 Send forth thy light and thy truth: they have led me, and brought me to thy holy mountain, and to thy tabernacles. 43:4 And I will go in to the altar of God, to God who gladdens my youth: I will give thanks to thee on the harp, O God, my God. 43:5 Wherefore art thou very sad, O my soul? and wherefore dost thou trouble me? Hope in God; for I will give thanks to him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God. (LXX)</p>
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This week’s study is from *Tehillim / Psalms 43:1-5*, the Psalm opens with David asking the Lord to vindicate him saying *אֲשַׁפְּטֵנִי אֱלֹהִים | וְרִבְּהָ רִיבִי מִגּוֹי לֹא-חֶסֶד יִמְאִישׁ-מִרְמָה וְעִוְלָה תִּפְלֹטֵנִי*: *43:1 Vindicate me, O God, and plead my case against an ungodly nation; O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man!* (NASB) The Aramaic Targum states *דון יתי יהוה אלהא בדין קשוט ועלך למנצי מצותי מן עמא דלא זכאי*: *43:1 Judge me, O Lord with true judgment; it is for you to argue my case with a people that is not righteous; from the deceitful and oppressive man you will save me.* (EMC) The Septuagint states *43:1 ψαλμὸς τῷ Δαυιδ κρῖνόν με ὁ θεὸς καὶ δίκασον τὴν δίκην μου ἐξ ἔθνους οὐχ ὀσίου ἀπὸ ἀνθρώπου ἀδίκου καὶ δολίου ῥῥῶσαί με* *A Psalm of David. 43:1 Judge me, o God, and plead my cause, against an ungodly nation: deliver me from the unjust and crafty man.* (LXX) The Hebrew text is written using the word “*Shaftani*” (שַׁפְּטֵנִי) in which the NASB translates as “*vindicate.*” “*Shaftani*” means “*judge me.*” The Septuagint translates using the word “*krinon*” (κρῖνόν) meaning to judge. The Aramaic targum uses the word “*don*” (דון) meaning “*to discuss, consider, to be sentenced or accused.*” Each of these translations are in agreement on the interpretation of the first verse of the Psalm having David asking the Lord to judge him. Why do you think David is asking the Lord to judge him? He makes an appeal to the Lord to judge him because he knows that the Lord is merciful. The Hebrew text states *וְרִבְּהָ רִיבִי מִגּוֹי* asking the Lord to “*plead his case from an ungodly nation.*” The first occurrence of the word *ריב* in the Torah is found in Parashat Lech Lecha (*Bereshit / Genesis 13:7-8*).

Bereshit / Genesis 13:5-9

13:5 Now Lot, who went with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents. 13:6 And the land could not sustain them while dwelling together, for their possessions were so great that they were not able to remain together. 13:7 And there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram’s livestock and the herdsmen of Lot’s livestock. Now the Canaanite and the Perizzite were dwelling then in the land. 13:8 So Abram said to Lot, ‘Please let there be no strife between

you and me, nor between my herdsmen and your herdsmen, for we are brothers. 13:9 'Is not the whole land before you? Please separate from me; if to the left, then I will go to the right; or if to the right, then I will go to the left.' (NASB)

ה וגם-ללוט ההלך את-אברם הנה צאן-ובקר ואהלים: ו ולא-נשא אתם הארץ לשבת יחדו פי-הנה רכושם רב ולא יכלו לשבת יחדו: ז ויהי-ריב בין רעי מקנה-אברם ובין רעי מקנה-לוט והפנעני והפרזי אז ישב בארץ: ח ויאמר אברם אל-לוט אל-נא תהי מריבה ביני ובינה ובין רעי רעי פי-אנשים אחים אנחנו: ט הלא כל-הארץ לפניך הפרד נא מעלי אם-השמאל ואימנה ואם-הימין ואשמאילה:

Based upon the Torah, the men of Abraham and Lot were quarreling over land for their cattle. The men are striving or arguing with one another. In this sense David is asking the Lord to strive for his case, to argue on his behalf in the presence of the nations. Note that this is an ungodly nation, the Hebrew simply provides a negative term saying “*lo khasid*” (לא-חסיד) meaning “*not righteous*” or “*not pious.*” It is important to note that the root word for “*khasid*” (חסיד) is “*khesed*” (חסד) meaning “*grace,*” or “*lovingkindness.*” David’s understanding on the deliverance of the Lord is rooted in the covenant context. The nation he is asking the Lord to argue on his behalf against is an ungodly and wicked nation, one that is not in a covenant relationship with the Lord. When David asks the Lord to deliver him from an ungodly nation, what nation is he referring to? We might consider the following references from Parshiot Beshalach (*Shemot / Exodus 13:17-17:16*), Shoftim (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 16:18-21:9*), and Ki Tetze (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 21:10-25:19*):

Shemot / Exodus 17:5-7

17:5 Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Pass before the people and take with you some of the elders of Israel; and take in your hand your staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. 17:6 'Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink.' And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. 17:7 He named the place Massah and Meribah because of the quarrel of the sons of Israel, and because they tested the Lord, saying, 'Is the Lord among us, or not?' (NASB)

ה ויאמר יהוה אל-משה עבר לפני העם וקח אתה מזקני ישראל ומטה אשר הכית בו את-היאר קח בידך והלכת: ו הנני עמד לפניך שם | על-הצור בחרב והכית בצור ויצאו ממנו מים ושתה העם ויעש כן משה לעיני זקני ישראל: ז ויקרא שם המקום מסה ומריבה על-ריב | בני ישראל ועל נפתם את-יהוה לאמר היש יהוה בקרבנו אם-אין:

Devarim / Deuteronomy 21:1-7

21:1 'If a slain person is found lying in the open country in the land which the Lord your God gives you to possess, and it is not known who has struck him, 21:2 then your elders and your judges shall go out and measure the distance to the cities which are around the slain one. 21:3 'It shall be that the city which is nearest to the slain man, that is, the elders of that city, shall take a heifer of the herd, which has not been worked and which has not pulled in a yoke; 21:4 and the elders of that city shall bring the heifer down to a valley with running water, which has not been plowed or sown, and shall break the heifer's neck there in the valley. 21:5 'Then the priests, the sons of Levi, shall come near, for the Lord your God has chosen them to serve Him and to bless in the name of the Lord; and every dispute and every assault shall be settled by them. 21:6 'All the elders of that city which is nearest to the slain man shall wash their hands over the heifer whose neck was broken in the valley; 21:7 and they shall answer

and say, 'Our hands did not shed this blood, nor did our eyes see it. (NASB)

א פי-ימצא חלל באדם אשר יהיה אלהיך נתן לך לרשתה נפל בשדה לא נודע מי הפהו: ב ויצאו זקניה ושפטיה ומדדו אל-הערים אשר סביבת החלל: ג והיה העיר הקרבה אל-החלל ולקחו זקני העיר והוא עגלת בקר אשר לא-עבד בה אשר לא-משכה בעל: ד והורדו זקני העיר והוא את-העגלה אל-נחל איתן אשר לא-יעבד בו ולא יזרע וערפו-שם את-העגלה בנחל: ה ונגשו הכהנים בני לוי כי הם בחר יהיה אלהיך לשרתו ולברך בשם יהיה ועל-פיהם יהיה כל-ריב וכל-נגע: ו וכל זקני העיר והוא הקרבים אל-החלל ירחצו את-ידיהם על-העגלה הערופה בנחל: [מפטיר] ז וענו ואמרו ידינו לא שפכה [שפכו] את-הדם הזה ועינינו לא ראו:

Devarim / Deuteronomy 25:1-3

25:1 'If there is a dispute between men and they go to court, and the judges decide their case, and they justify the righteous and condemn the wicked, 25:2 then it shall be if the wicked man deserves to be beaten, the judge shall then make him lie down and be beaten in his presence with the number of stripes according to his guilt. 25:3 'He may beat him forty times but no more, so that he does not beat him with many more stripes than these and your brother is not degraded in your eyes. (NASB)

א פי-יהיה ריב בין אנשים ונגשו אל-המשפט ושפטום והצדיקו את-הצדיק והרשיעו את-הרשע: ב והיה אם-בן הכות הרשע והפילו השפט והפיהו לפניו כדי רשעתו במספר: ג ארבעים יכנו לא יסוף פן-יסוף להפתו על-אלה מכה רבה ונקלה אחיד לעיניך:

According to Parashat Beshalach (*Shemot / Exodus 13:17-17:16*) the Scriptures state that the Children of Israel quarreled with God and tested the Lord asking whether the Lord was among them because there was not water. As a result, Moshe named the place “*Massah and Meribah*.” In Parashat Shoftim (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 16:18-21:9*) we read about the command regarding the slain man (murder). According to the command, the heifer is brought to a valley with running water, its neck is broken, and the men who belong to the nearest city wash their hands over the heifer stating they did not kill this man. The Scriptures state that the levites who are to judge over these things are to decide every dispute (כל-ריב). In Parashat Ki Tetze (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 21:10-25:19*) we read that a dispute (ריב) between two men to be taken to the court and the judges will decide the case and justify the righteous and condemn the wicked. Within each of these cases, from a Torah perspective, the pleading or arguing over a dispute is performed in an orderly manner and within the covenant context. Righteous and holy men sit as judges before God and hear the case. Therefore, when David asks for the Lord to plead his case against an ungodly nation, was he referring to men of Israel? This very well may be the case since he is asking for justice and vindication rather than deliverance.

David contrasts asking the Lord to plead for him on behalf of an unrighteous nation, to the Lord delivering him from the deceitful and unjust man. Yeshua the Messiah said on the sermon on the mount, those who are gentle will inherit the earth. The Greek word used for “gentle” (πραεῖς) has the meaning to be “humble, meek, gentle, and submissive.” These qualities of gentleness show to be a response to faith and maturity, faith that God controls the events of life. A peacemaker provides us with further meaning on what it means to be gentle. A peacemaker does not have within his heart pride to overpower someone but trusts in the Lord and seeks to make peace with all men. Yeshua goes on to say those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, they will be satisfied, and the parallel is to those who are pure in heart will see God. In these Scriptures, one’s soul is that which is thirsting and hungering for righteousness. Within the Torah context, the covenant relationship with the Lord and the Holy Spirit working in our lives we should have a desire for righteousness, this desire should fill up our entire life. Just as we seek to find food and drink for our bodies in this world, we also should have a desire to seek after righteousness to give food and drink for our souls. Our food and drink is found in the Lord and for our the Spirit, in the Word of God.

ב כִּי-אַתָּה | אֱלֹהֵי מַעֲוֵי לָמָּה זָנַחְתָּנִי לָמָּה-קָדַרְתָּ David indicates this saying the Lord is his strength (אֱלֹהֵי מַעֲוֵי לָמָּה זָנַחְתָּנִי לָמָּה-קָדַרְתָּ) 43:2 *For You are the God of my strength; why have You rejected me? Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?* NASB) He appears to parallel the oppression of his enemy to the Lord rejecting him. According to a previous Psalm (*Tehillim / Psalms 9*), David states that the Lord abides forever and He has established His throne forever. Note that David says “*Le’olam*” (לְעוֹלָם) meaning as an adverb “*for ever, unfailingly, eternally,*” the Lord is eternal and therefore His judgment or His ruling will hold forever.

Tehillim / Psalms 9:7-10

9:7 *But the Lord abides forever; He has established His throne for judgment, 9:8 And He will judge the world in righteousness; He will execute judgment for the peoples with equity. 9:9 The Lord also will be a stronghold for the oppressed, A stronghold in times of trouble; 9:10 And those who know Your name will put their trust in You, For You, O Lord, have not forsaken those who seek You. (NASB)*

ח וַיְהִי לְעוֹלָם יֵשֶׁב כּוֹנֵן לְמִשְׁפַּט כְּסָאוֹ: ט וְהוּא יִשְׁפֹּט-תִּבְלַל בְּצַדִּיק יִדְוִן לְאַמִּים בְּמִישְׁרִים: י וַיְהִי יְהִי מִשְׁגָּב לְדָד מִשְׁגָּב לְעַתּוֹת בְּצַרְתָּ: יא וַיִּבְטְחוּ בָּךְ יוֹדְעֵי שְׁמֶךָ כִּי לֹא-עֲזַבְתָּ דְרָשֵׁיךָ יְהִי:

These scriptures are telling us that we can find refuge in the Word of God and in the Lord God Almighty Himself. He is our strength and a place of hope during the desperate times of life. Those who seek the Lord know His name (וַיִּבְטְחוּ בָּךְ יוֹדְעֵי שְׁמֶךָ), those who know the name of God, trust in Him because they know He will never fail them. The result of God’s righteous judgment, His everlasting justice that has been established, He will be praised forever, 9:11 *Sing praises to the Lord, who dwells in Zion; Declare among the peoples His deeds. (NASB)* How often today do people believe the Lord has forsaken them and in turn they themselves forsake the Lord? To know the name of God, is this a proof text for the Sacred Name movement? To know the Name of God is to know him according to his historical interaction with mankind. This calls to remembrance all that He has done and so we can focus upon His actions, who He is, a Holy and Righteous Judge. Thus, each day, we can call to memory how the Lord has worked in each of our lives, including that which is written of our fathers in the Scriptures. All who know the Lord in this sense will put their trust in Him because He is actively working in the life of the believer. A person may have a sense of being forsaken like David is saying here in *Tehillim / Psalms 43:2* or *Tehillim / Psalms 22:1*, but he was never forsaken. This is implied in *Tehillim / Psalms 37:28*, the Lord “*forsaketh not His saints; they are preserved forever.*”

ב אַרוֹם אַרִי אַנְתָּ הוּא אֱלֹהֵי עוֹשֵׁנִי לָמָּה שִׁבַּקְתָּנִי אֲנִשְׁתִּי לָמָּה חָכִיר בְּקִי׃ The Aramaic Targum states בִּלְא אַזִּיל בְּדַחֻק בְּעִיל דְּבַבְא: 43:2 *For you are God, my strength; why have you abandoned me? Why do I go about in gloom at the oppression of the enemy?* (EMC) The Septuagint states 43:2 ὅτι σὺ εἶ ὁ θεός κραταίωμα μου ἵνα τί ἀπόσω με καὶ ἵνα τί σκυθρωπάζων πορεύομαι ἐν τῷ ἐκθλίβειν τὸν ἐχθρόν μου 43:2 *For thou, O God, art my strength: wherefore hast thou cast me off? And why do I go sad of countenance, while the enemy oppresses me?* (LXX) The obvious fact is that if we are oppressed by our enemies we are going to be depressed. When we realize that we cannot save ourselves, we seek the Lord and this may be the entire purpose of having trouble in this life. So we are continually reminded to turn to the Lord and to seek His face. With this perspective, we can honestly state that all things work together for good (*Romans 8:28*); this very well may be the perspective that the Apostle Paul had when writing the letter to the Romans.

ג שְׁלַח-אוֹרְךָ וְאַמְתָּךְ הַמָּה יִנְחֹנֵנִי בִּיאֹנֵי אֶל-הַר-קְדִישְׁךָ וְאֶל-: David continues in his Psalm saying 43:3 *O send out Your light and Your truth, let them lead me; Let them bring me to Your holy hill And to Your dwelling places. (NASB)* David asks that the “*light*” of God goes forth and he states “*let them lead me*” (הַמָּה יִנְחֹנֵנִי). Who is it he is referring to, the light? What is the meaning of God sending forth His light? We might be able to gain some insight into this based upon what the prophet Isaiah said in *Isaiah 58*.

Isaiah 58:3-59:2

58:3 'Why have we fasted and You do not see? Why have we humbled ourselves and You do not notice?' Behold, on the day of your fast you find your desire, And drive hard all your workers. 58:4 'Behold, you fast for contention and strife and to strike with a wicked fist. You do not fast like you do today to make your voice heard on high. 58:5 'Is it a fast like this which I choose, a day for a man to humble himself? Is it for bowing one's head like a reed And for spreading out sackcloth and ashes as a bed? Will you call this a fast, even an acceptable day to the Lord? 58:6 'Is this not the fast which I choose, To loosen the bonds of wickedness, To undo the bands of the yoke, And to let the oppressed go free And break every yoke? 58:7 'Is it not to divide your bread with the hungry And bring the homeless poor into the house; When you see the naked, to cover him; And not to hide yourself from your own flesh? 8:8 'Then your light will break out like the dawn, And your recovery will speedily spring forth; And your righteousness will go before you; The glory of the Lord will be your rear guard. 58:9 'Then you will call, and the Lord will answer; You will cry, and He will say, 'Here I am.' If you remove the yoke from your midst, The pointing of the finger and speaking wickedness, 58:10 And if you give yourself to the hungry And satisfy the desire of the afflicted, Then your light will rise in darkness And your gloom will become like midday. 58:11 'And the Lord will continually guide you, And satisfy your desire in scorched places, And give strength to your bones; And you will be like a watered garden, And like a spring of water whose waters do not fail. 58:12 'Those from among you will rebuild the ancient ruins; You will raise up the age-old foundations; And you will be called the repairer of the breach, The restorer of the streets in which to dwell. 58:13 'If because of the sabbath, you turn your foot From doing your own pleasure on My holy day, And call the sabbath a delight, the holy day of the Lord honorable, And honor it, desisting from your own ways, From seeking your own pleasure And speaking your own word, 58:14 Then you will take delight in the Lord, And I will make you ride on the heights of the earth; And I will feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father; For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.' 59:1 Behold, the Lord's hand is not so short That it cannot save; Nor is His ear so dull That it cannot hear. 59:2 But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, And your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear. (NASB)

Isaiah begins speaking of fasting for the purpose of getting a response from the Lord, so the Lord will hear and save the nation. He says that the fasting of the people are for "contention, strife, and to strike with a wicked fist." Who would fast for these things or with that in mind? Their fasting is for the purpose of making their voice be heard on high and the people go about swaying, bowing the head, and laying upon sackcloth and ashes. According to Isaiah, these things are not the purpose of fasting and in fact fasting for the purpose of "loosening the bonds of wickedness, to undo the bands of the yoke of slavery, to let the oppressed go free, to divide your bread with the hungry, to give the poor a place to live, and to cloth the naked." Isaiah says only 8:8 'Then your light will break out like the dawn, And your recovery will speedily spring forth; And your righteousness will go before you; The glory of the Lord will be your rear guard. (NASB) In addition to this, Isaiah says 58:10 And if you give yourself to the hungry And satisfy the desire of the afflicted, Then your light will rise in darkness And your gloom will become like midday. (NASB) The light that goes forth are the righteous deeds that we do for others and for the Lord. Living righteously, doing good to the poor and being innocent before the Lord our God, these are the things Yeshua the Messiah taught us when he said what he did in *Matthew 19:13-15*.

Matthew 19:13-15

19:13 Then some children were brought to Him so that He might lay His hands on them and pray; and the disciples rebuked them. 19:14 But Jesus said, 'Let the children alone, and do

not hinder them from coming to Me; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.’
19:15 *After laying His hands on them, He departed from there. (NASB)*

Yeshua said that the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these (children). If we consider the child, he is innocent and he is completely dependent upon his parents for support and life, food, clothes, being taught to read, understanding the Lord, prayers, having relationships with others, family, and for making him clean from dirty diapers, etc, and for all intents and purposes the baby is considered “poor;” because he came into this world with nothing. We are to be in like manner, to be innocent, to take care of the poor, and to provide for those in need. The text in Isaiah concludes saying 59:1 *Behold, the Lord’s hand is not so short That it cannot save; Nor is His ear so dull That it cannot hear. 59:2 But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, And your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear. (NASB)* The light that David is speaking of in the Psalm, his asking the Lord to send forth His light and truth, this is the very thing that Isaiah is speaking of. David says “*Let them bring me to Your holy hill And to Your dwelling places*” indicates that he is expecting the Lord to work in the hearts of his enemies to be kind to the poor and innocent, which he considers himself to be, and to bring him to the holy Hill of the Lord. The “*holy Hill*” was chosen by David, according to 2 *Chronicles 3:1-2*, because the Lord had appeared to him there.

2 Chronicles 3:1-2

3:1 Then Solomon began to build the house of the Lord in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where the LORD had appeared to his father David, at the place that David had prepared on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. 3:2 He began to build on the second day in the second month of the fourth year of his reign. (NASB)

David asks the Lord to speak to the hearts of his enemies so they would bring him to the holy mountain of God’s dwelling place. Why are mountains and high places considered dwelling places of the Lord God Almighty or of the gods of the nations? According to the Scriptures, high places were utilized as places of worship. These were either elevated pieces of ground, raised altars in the valley, or a place located on the top of a mountain. According to the Torah, in Parashat Massei (*Bamidbar / Numbers 33:52*) and Parashat Bechukotai (*Vayikra / Leviticus 26:30*), high places were dedicated to idol worship by the nations and especially among the Moabites (*Isaiah 16:12*). These places often included an altar along with a sacred object such as a stone pillar or wooden pole to identify the deity of worship. In the Torah, the “*High Place*” is translated from the Hebrew word בַּמָּה (bamah, plural בַּמֹּת bamot). In the synagogue, the “*High Place*” from which the Torah is read is called the “*bemah*.”

Not all high places were dedicated to idol worship. They played a major role in Israel’s worship, for example the earliest mention of the site of worship is found in *Bereshit / Genesis 12:6-8* where Abram built an altar to the Lord at Shechem and Hebron. Abraham also built an altar in the region of Moriah and was willing to sacrifice his son there (see *Bereshit / Genesis 22:1-2*). This is the location that is traditionally believed to be the same place where the Lord spoke to David and King Solomon later built the Temple in Jerusalem. Note also that Jacob set up a stone pillar to the Lord at Bethel (*Bereshit / Genesis 28:18-19*), and Moshe met God on the mountain of Sinai (*Shemot / Exodus 19:1-3*) which also would be considered a high place. Reading on in the books of the prophets, Joshua set up stone pillars after crossing the Jordan (*Joshua 4:20*) and considered this a high place of worship because the Israelites “*came up from*” the Jordan onto higher ground. The high places were visited regularly by the prophet Samuel (see *1 Samuel 7:16*). High places are again mentioned as sites of Canaanite idol worship (*Judges 3:19*) which extended into the period of Elijah (see *1 Kings 18:16-40*). According to the Torah, the Lord chose only one high place where the sacrifice was authorized, and that was the temple in Jerusalem (2 *Chronicles 3:1*). The Lord God commanded that all other high places to be destroyed and it was King Josiah who finally destroyed them according to 2 *Kings 22-23*.

In the Tanach, the בַּמָּה (bamah) is mentioned 117 times as the high places which are essentially the centers for Canaanite idol worship that Israel was commanded to tear down. However, these places became

idols that subtly seduced God's people year after year and we read in the biblical history that they seemed to be unable to stay away. What about today? Are the followers of Christ still tempted by the high places? Let's ask the question this way, what kind of idols exist today that tempt believers? How about materialism, sex, and selfishness? What we can learn from the ancient idol worship at these high places is that these were a reoccurring (repetitive) problem and it was very seductive for the people of Israel. The fact that the high places are mentioned 117 times should lead us to study this more in-depth. According to *1 Kings 14:23*, the Canaanites "*built for themselves high places and sacred pillars and Asherim on every high hill and beneath every luxuriant tree.*" It would have been interesting to see how polluted the land of Israel was at that time with idol worship. Before Israel crossed the Jordan into the promised land, Moshe exhorted the people to "*demolish all their high places ... or they will become as pricks in your eyes and as thorns in your sides*" (see *Bamidbar / Numbers 33:52, 55*). What particularly was so dangerous about these Canaanite deities? Let's look at a deities that were worshiped.

Summary of Canaanite Deities

- **EI** - supreme head of the Canaanite pantheon of gods, supposedly the father of creation.
- **Baal** - lord of earth and rain (Baal was prayed to for successful harvest in a dry land).
- **Ashtoreth** - goddess of fertility. Canaanite farmers visited her shrines to mate with cult prostitutes to guarantee crop fertility.
- **Dagon** - principal deity of the Philistines. Dagon means grain in Hebrew and Ugaritic and is associated with the wheat harvest. In *1 Chronicles 10: 8-10*, when the Philistines found King Saul's dead body on Mount Gilboa, they "*fastened his head in the house of Dagon.*"
- **Molech** - Ammonite deity to whom children were sacrificed. At Gezer, archaeologists have found clay jars containing the charred bones of babies.
- **Chemosh** - a Moabite deity, "*honored with horribly cruel rites like those of Molech, to whom children were sacrificed in the fire*" (Unger's Bible Dictionary).

These are only six of the 26 major Canaanite gods and goddesses. The High places were not harmless shrines, God's people were also seduced to sin and murder at these altars. Isaiah rebuked them: "*Are you not children of rebellion ... who inflame yourselves among the oaks, under every luxuriant tree, who slaughter the children in the ravines?*" (*Isaiah 57:4-5*). In addition to this, King Solomon succumbed to the high places by his Canaanite wives and built high places for Chemosh and Molech on the mountain east of Jerusalem. These Canaanite gods are involved with human sacrifice. How could Solomon have been so deceived to commit human sacrifice and the murder of the innocent?

Today we don't construct idolatrous clay figurines of Baal or attend worship services for Asherah, but our temptations are just as seductive and perhaps even more subtle than these high places in these ancient days. People today may avoid the obvious "*high places*" such as theft, child abuse or explosive anger. However, we tend to be casual about other sins such as covetousness, envy, worry, pride, sexual sin, gossip, strife, and dishonoring your mother and father to name a few. (*Galatians 5:19-21*). Would you consider these modern versions of the "*high places*?" Some things to think about and consider in our own lives, is to ask "*Have I given myself permission to adopt a casual attitude towards sin?*" The Lord commanded to

drive out the inhabitants of the land of Canaan because of their wickedness, not because of the righteousness of Israel (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 9:5*). The Lord told Israel to take drastic measures, to utterly destroy these places. Yeshua said to gouge out the eye and cut off the hand that sins (*Matthew 5:30*). Israel on the other hand took a casual attitude with the idolatrous high places for 800 years because they were intermingling with the local nations. Solomon is a great example of this as he grew older and acquired more and more wives, his wives turned his heart away from the Lord and towards the gods of the nations (*1 Kings 11:4*). If we take a casual attitude towards sin, we will begin to consider these high places of worship in our lives over the Lord God Almighty and Yeshua the Messiah. As we entertain the worldly high places in our hearts, our hearts will be drawn further and further from the Lord, our love for Yeshua, our Father in heaven, and our love for others will slip away. We need to guard our hearts very carefully and there are so many things today that can draw us away and entice us.

David continues saying **ד וְאָבוֹאָה | אֶל-מִזְבֵּחַ אֱלֹהִים אֶל-אֵל שְׂמַחַת גִּילִי וְאוֹדֶה בְּכִנּוּר אֱלֹהִים אֱלֹהֵי:** *43:4 Then I will go to the altar of God, To God my exceeding joy; And upon the lyre I shall praise You, O God, my God. (NASB)* How important is it to go before the Lord and to the Altar with joy according to the Torah? Reading through the Torah, in Parashat Re'eh, *Devarim / Deuteronomy 12* appears to parallel the Psalm study thus far. The following is a summary of *Devarim / Deuteronomy 12*:

Summary of Devarim / Deuteronomy 12

- State explicitly these are the rules you must obey and be careful to follow in the land the Lord is giving you. **א אֵלֶּה הַחֻקִּים וְהַמִּשְׁפָּטִים אֲשֶׁר תִּשְׁמְרוּ** (על-הָאָדָמָה: **לַעֲשׂוֹת בְּאֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נָתַן יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲבֹתֵיךָ לָךְ לְרִשְׁתָּהּ כָּל-הַיָּמִים אֲשֶׁר-אַתָּם חַיִּים**)
- Drive out the nations from the land and destroy all of their high places where they worship their gods. **ב אַבְדוּ תְּאֲבִדוּן אֶת-כָּל-הַמְּקוֹמוֹת אֲשֶׁר עִבְדוּ-** **שָׁם הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר אַתָּם יֹרְשִׁים אֶת-אֱלֹהֵיהֶם עַל-הַהָרִים הַרְּמִים וְעַל-הַגְּבְעוֹת** (וְתַחַת כָּל-עֵץ רַעְנָן)
- Worship the Lord God the way it is described in the Torah and not in the way the nations serve and worship their gods. **ד לֹא-תַעֲשׂוּן כִּן לַיהוָה** **ה כִּי אִם-אֶל-הַמְּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר-יִבְחַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם מִכָּל-שְׁבִטֵיכֶם לְשׂוֹם אֱלֹהֵיכֶם:** (אֶת-שְׂמוֹ שָׁם לְשַׁכְּנוֹ תִדְרָשׁוּ וּבָאתָ שָׁמָּה)
- Bring your sacrifices to the place the Lord chooses, and do so with joy. **ו וְאֲכַלְתֶּם-שָׁם לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם וּשְׂמַחְתֶּם בְּכָל מַשְׁלַח יְדְכֶם אֶתָּם וּבְתִיכֶם אֲשֶׁר** (בְּרַכָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיךָ)
- The Lord will choose a special place (הַמְּקוֹם) to establish His name.
- Do not eat meat with the blood in it, pour it out on the ground. **ז רַק הַדָּם** (לֹא תֹאכְלוּ עַל-הָאָרֶץ תִּשְׁפְּכוּ כַּמַּיִם:
- Be filled with joy in the sight of the Lord your God, be joyful in all you do. These are connected to the Sacrifices. **ח כִּי אִם-לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיךָ תֹאכְלוּ** **ט בְּמְקוֹם אֲשֶׁר יִבְחַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיךָ בּוֹ אֶתָּה וּבְנֶה וּבְתִיךָ וְעִבְדֶּה וְאַמְתֶּה וְהִלּוּי אֲשֶׁר** (בְּשִׁעְרֶיךָ וּשְׂמַחְתָּ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיךָ בְּכָל מַשְׁלַח יְדְךָ:

- It is repeated the Lord will choose the special place (הַמְקוֹם), bring the sacrifices to this place, do not eat meat with blood in it, and do not serve the Lord like the nations serve their gods.
- Do not be trapped by asking questions about their gods saying “*How do these nations serve their gods? We’ll do it the same way.*” The Lord hates this and all the evil the nations have committed in worshiping their gods.
 לְהִשְׁמֹר לְךָ פֶּן-תִּנְקַשׁ אֶת־הֵימָוִתְךָ אֶת־הַשָּׁמַיִם מִפְּנֵיךָ וּפֶן-תִּדְרֹשׁ לְאֱלֹהֵיהֶם
 לֵאמֹר אֵיכָה יַעֲבֹדוּ הַגּוֹיִם הָאֵלֶּה אֶת־אֱלֹהֵיהֶם וְאֶעֱשֶׂה-כֵן גַּם-אֲנִי: לֹא לֹא-תַעֲשֶׂה
 כֵּן לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ כִּי כָל-תּוֹעֵבֹת יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר שָׁנֵא עָשׂוּ לְאֱלֹהֵיהֶם כִּי גַם אֶת-בְּנֵיהֶם
 (וְאֶת-בְּנֹתֵיהֶם יִשְׂרְפוּ בְּאֵשׁ לְאֱלֹהֵיהֶם:)

Note in the first verse of *Devarim / Deuteronomy 12* in the Hebrew Scriptures we read these are to be obeyed so that you may live upon “*ha’adamah*” (הָאֲדָמָה) “*the land.*” What is important to note about this is that Moshe uses the word “*ha’adamah*” (הָאֲדָמָה) rather than “*ha’eretz*” (הָאֶרֶץ). The difference in word usage suggests these Scriptures apply for everyone, not just in the land of Israel. According to Parashat Lech Lecha (*Bereshit / Genesis 12:1-17:27*) the Lord calls Abram to a new land. In these Scriptures we learn that the Lord desires for us to be obedient to His call on our lives. The Lord God’s call on Abrams life was to go out from his land, from his father’s house, and from his people (וּמֵאֶרֶץ אָבִיךָ) to a land that He will show him. The Lord promised to bless Abram and make him into a great nation (וְאֶעֱשֶׂה לְךָ לְגוֹי גָּדוֹל) and that those who bless him the Lord will bless, and those who curse him the Lord will curse (וְאִבְרַכְתָּה מְבַרְכֶיךָ וּמְקַלְלֶיךָ אָאֵר). In God’s call on Abram we read that the Lord promises in Him all the families of the earth will be blessed (וְנִבְרַכְוּ בְךָ כָּל מִשְׁפְּחוֹת הָאֲדָמָה). In the Hebrew text we find the same Hebrew word “*ha’adamah*” (הָאֲדָמָה, Earth) is used to indicate that all of the families of the Earth will be blessed. The reason this word is used is to indicate that all will be blessed and does not restrict the blessing to only those who are in the land of Israel. The word *adamah* means ground based on its use in Parashat Bereshit, and was the reason the first man was named “*Adam*” because he was made from the ground. The Scriptures here state “*all of the families of the ground*” taking from the meaning that God created man from the dust of the earth (וַיִּיצֶר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הָאָדָם עֹפָר מִן-הָאֲדָמָה) in *Bereshit / Genesis 2:7*. The Targum Onkelos states that all the “*seed of the earth*” will be blessed (וַיִּתְבְּרֶכּוּן) or the seed of the ground; it is in this way that all the peoples of the earth are being referenced. The Hebrew Scriptures reveal the Lord’s plan to extend the covenant to all peoples at a future time. It is within these few verses, the Abrahamic Covenant, from *Bereshit / Genesis 12:1-4*, that all other covenants find their basis. The Mosaic covenant in the Torah expands upon the covenant of the Promised Land (Israel) establishing a dwelling place (הַמְקוֹם), the Mishkhan (Tabernacle), where the Lord God makes His name known. In Parashat Re’eh, those who live upon the earth, “*ha’adamah*” (הָאֲדָמָה), are to obeyed these commands. The importance of these commands is to not walk in wickedness in our lives, not to follow the way of the nations, not to serve the Lord God the way the nations do and the Scripture states explicitly:

Devarim / Deuteronomy 12:8-9

12:8 “You shall not do at all what we are doing here today, every man doing whatever is right in his own eyes; 12:9 for you have not as yet come to the resting place and the inheritance which the Lord your God is giving you. (NASB)

We are told to be careful that we do not live doing whatever we feel is right in our own eyes. This Scripture holds significant weight in light of what the Lord has done in Yeshua the Messiah (we are to remain / abide

in Him). Part of the command in the Torah, according to *Devarim / Deuteronomy 12*, is to go before the Lord with joy and thanksgiving. This is consistent with David's words in *Tehillim / Psalms 43:4* as he wrote: *וְאָבֹאֶה | אֶל-מִזְבֵּחַ אֱלֹהִים אֶל-אֵל שְׂמַחַת גִּילִי וְאוֹדֶה בְּכִנּוֹר אֱלֹהִים אֲלֹהֵי:* *43:4 Then I will go to the altar of God, To God my exceeding joy; And upon the lyre I shall praise You, O God, my God. (NASB)* Going before the Lord with joy and thanksgiving, serving the Lord, seeking Him for our help and salvation, and destroying the ways of the nations, not serving the Lord the way the nations serve their gods. These are the things we do to remain in Mashiach (Messiah) because honestly, can we live in sin and have fellowship with darkness and say we have fellowship with Yeshua and our Father in heaven? (see *1 john 1*)

ה מֵה-תְּשׁוּחָתִי | נִפְשִׁי וּמֵה-תִּהְיֶה עָלַי הוֹחֵלִי לְאֱלֹהִים כִּי-עוֹד אוֹדְנוּ David concludes his Psalm saying *43:5 Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why are you disturbed within me? Hope in God, for I shall again praise Him, The help of my countenance and my God. (NASB)* David seems to be speaking to his soul in the third person or he may be speaking to each of us. The point that he is making is to trust in the Lord no matter whether circumstances seem to suggest that the Lord has forsaken us. There are times when it is easy to trust in God's love, to rejoice in his salvation, and to sing because He has been good to us. There are other times however when that is not so easy. Times when life is hard, when sorrow fills the heart, and we wonder if the Lord is even there for us like David is doing here in the Psalm. In these times of suffering and struggle, can we still trust in God's love? Can we rejoice? Can we sing with gladness to him? *Tehillim / Psalms 13* tells us that we can. Reading through *Tehillim / Psalms 13*, verses 5-6, suggest that David was going through a time of blessing. However, based upon the entire psalm, David is feeling forgotten by God (*13:1*), he is struggling with anguish and sorrow every day (*13:2*), and he is seeing his enemies appear to prevail over him and he's wondering how long this will go on (*13:2-4*). In the midst of his desperation, David pauses to confess his trust and joy in the Lord and he sings to celebrate God's goodness. He accomplishes this by thinking back to times when the Lord has rescued him in the past (*13:5*). He remembers that the Lord has been good to him (*13:6*). Remembering what the Lord has done in our own lives and according to the Scriptures gives us confidence to trust and believe in the Lord to rescue us from our troubles. David remembers what is true about the Lord and what is true regardless of the situation he is currently in. The Lord God is a God of "unfailing love" (*13:5*). This unfailing love is what was revealed to us in Yeshua the Messiah. Yeshua said that if we have seen him we have seen the Father in heaven (*John 14*). If we have Yeshua in our lives, we have the help of the countenance of our Father in heaven. Let's Pray!

Heavenly Father,

We thank You for David's words and for helping us to think about our lives, our faith, and our trusting in You. We glorify You and give You Praise because You have always kept Your promises! Help us Lord to be people of faith and let our lives reflect our faithfulness. We ask that You would empower us by Your Spirit to walk in Your ways and to follow Yeshua the Messiah and to produce good fruit. Help us to walk and abide in Christ as the Scriptures say we are supposed to do (*John 14:15-17*). Thank You Lord for sending Your son Yeshua that we may enter into the salvation You have provided. Thank You for helping us to realize that observing the Torah is not a form of salvation by our own hands but the way in which we express our love for You. Thank you for helping us to grow in our faith and know who we are in the Messiah Yeshua. Help us to apply these truths to our lives. We praise Your Holy Name and give You all of the honor, and the glory, and the praise forever and ever.

In Yeshua's (Jesus') Name we pray! Amen!

Be Blessed in Yeshua, Christ our Messiah!

הללויה לאדוננו מורנו ורבינו ישוע מלך המשיח לעולם ועד:
Hallelujah for our Lord, our Teacher, our Rabbi,
“Yeshua” King Messiah forever and ever

Notes