

Psalm 42 and 43

1. Read **Psalm 42 and 43**
2. Review
 - a. Which psalms so far, and what were they about?
3. General observations
 - a. Some manuscripts treat these two psalms as one psalm. (Apparently, there are manuscripts that only have 147 psalms, rather than 150, because they group Psalms 42 and 43 together, as they do 9 and 10, and 32 and 33.)
 - i. Three stanzas and a chorus (42:5-6a, 11, 43:5)
 - ii. 42:9 and 43:2 are very similar
 - b. The placement of verse 6 (the number 6, not the text in verse 6)
 - c. The sons of Korah?
 - i. “The sons of Korah were descendants of Kohath, son of Levi, who served in the temple as musicians (1 Chron 6:22). From them we have the collection of the so-called Korahite Psalms: 42-43; 44-49; 85-85; 87-88.” VanGemeren, 34
 - d. The “soul” (*nephesh*) in Hebrew thought and the Old Testament
 - i. Referring to the word “soul” in 42:1-2, VanGemeren says this: “As usual ‘soul’ does not denote the spiritual aspect of man exclusively.” VanGemeren, 331
 - ii. “The Hebrew (*nephesh*, ‘soul’) denotes the whole being. See *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*: ‘in some contexts *nephesh* is best rendered by “person,” “self,” or more simply by the personal pronoun....” VanGemeren, 98
 - iii. The entry for *nephesh* in the *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis* (3:133):
 1. **ANE** Other ANE meanings include ‘life, person, self, desire,’ of which Hebrew also avails itself.
 2. **OT 1.** Comparable roots in Ugar. and Akk. confirm the basic biblical meaning for *nephesh* to be ‘breath’....Care should be taken not to import a Greek paradigm of psychology to *nephesh*; though at times in its over 700 appearances it refers to the inner person, it seldom denotes a ‘soul’ in any full sense....This identity of *nephesh* with the entire person gives the word its frequent function as a reference to the self.
 3. **OT 2.** In some cases *nephesh* stands for the inner person rather than the entire individual. *nephesh* represents the desires and

inclinations of animals and humans....One's *nephesh* can be....encouraged....(Ps 86:4).

iv. The entry for *Humanity* in the *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology* adds this:

1. *nephesh*, the most common Hebrew term for the whole person, essentially means 'living being'. It sometimes indicates inner desires, from physical appetite to a longing to serve God (Prov. 23:2; Deut. 6:5). The traditional translation 'soul' is misleading, since this has connotations of a (later) dualism....The OT clearly presents the human person as a psychosomatic unity, and does not distinguish between material body and immaterial 'soul'. This is due partly to the authors' holistic approach to life, and partly to their dominant interest in the present life and the relationship of the living with God. Nonetheless, the OT also indicates in several ways that humans continue to exist in some ill-defined form after physical death. (564-565)

e. Context

- i. We're not sure, but commentators suggest the psalmist may have been in exile in a foreign land, away from Jerusalem and the temple.

f. Spiritual depression

- i. Read the first 3 ½ paragraphs of *Spiritual Depression*, page 9
- ii. Dark night of the soul
- iii. Discuss...

4. Observe, interpret, and apply (what does it say? what does it mean? so what?)

Resources

1. *ESV Study Bible*
2. *Psalms, The Expositor's Bible Commentary (Volume 5)*, Willem A. VanGemeren
3. *Psalms: An Expository Commentary, Volume 1*, James Montgomery Boice
4. *Spiritual Depression: Its Causes and Cure*, D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones