

PSALMS

Chapter 43

Vindicate me, O God, and defend my cause against an ungodly people, from the deceitful and unjust man deliver me! ² For you are the God in whom I take refuge; why have you rejected me? Why do I go about mourning because of the oppression of the enemy? ³ Send out your light and your truth; let them lead me; let them bring me to your holy hill and to your dwelling! ⁴ Then I will go to the altar of God, to God my exceeding joy, and I will praise you with the lyre, O God, my God. ⁵ Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God.

43:1–4 Stanza 3 – A Plea for Vindication (PBC)

In this stanza the light of hope shines more brightly. Clouds of sorrow still remain because God's deliverance has not yet arrived, but confidence in God's light and truth, which will lead the psalmist back to the temple, shines through more clearly. The psalmist hopes that he will soon express his joy and thanksgiving at God's altar. But even if as literal return to God's altar is slow in coming, the psalmist is being restored to faith and peace. (PBC)

The psalmist continues the direction of Psalm 42 in this Psalm with three requests. First (43:1), he asks God to be his Redeemer and to judge between the wicked and himself. Second (43:2), he asks God to be his strength and stronghold in danger. Third (43:3), he asks God to be his guide back to God's holy mountain (Jerusalem and the temple were built on a hill, Mt. Zion).

Prayer for deliverance from the enemy and for restoration to God's presence. (CSB)

43:1 *vindicate me* – This means to “decide a controversy. (A Commentary of the Psalms - Ross)

A plea in the language of the court. (CSB)

Courtroom language. Psalmist appeals to God as a just judge. (TLSB)

The vindication asked for has to do with clearing the name of the writer, which has been sullied by criminal attacks. Slanders upon our good name always affect us painfully, all the more so when we are innocent. (Leupold)

ungodly – All who set themselves against God and His people, whether ancient or modern. (TLSB)

43:2 *go about* – This stresses it was a continual moving about, going back and forth. Delitzsch says in this psalm it describes “the slow deliberate gait of one who is lost in his own thoughts and feelings. (A Commentary of the Psalms - Ross)

mourning – Meaning “be dark,” perhaps, reflecting the darkened countenance of a mourner. (A Commentary of the Psalms - Ross)

Echoes 42:9. (CSB)

The oppressed psalmist makes his complaint against God, yet takes refuge in Him by prayer. (TLSB)

43:3 *your light and your truth* – Personified as God’s messengers who work out (1) his salvation (light) and (2) his faithful care in behalf of his own. May these guide me back to your temple. (CSB)

God is source of all light and truth, which come from Him as gifts. E.g., Jesus is incarnate light (Jn 8:12; Ps 27:1) and truth (Jn 14:6). (TLSB)

Light is best thought of as a figure of God’s mercy or his steadfast love. Light seems to shine into our life when we know ourselves to be in God’s favor. (Leupold)

holy hill – The site of the Jerusalem temple. (CSB)

Mount Zion, the place of the temple in Jerusalem. There God, who is present everywhere, mercifully located Himself for His people. (TLSB)

43:4 A vow to praise. Many prayers in the Psalter include such vows in anticipation of the expected answer to prayer. They reflect Israel’s religious consciousness that praise must follow deliverance as surely as prayer springs from need—if God is to be truly honored. Such praise was usually offered with thank offerings and involved celebrating God’s saving act in the presence of those assembled at the temple. (CSB)

The all-important thing for him is not the visible sanctuary as such but the assurance of being received and accepted by God. (Leupold)

to the altar – To vocally celebrate God’s saving acts beside his altar was a public act of devotion in which one also invited all the assembled worshipers to praise. (CSB)

Either the altar of incense in the Holy Place or the burnt offering altar. Though any Israelite might bring a sacrifice, it was presented by the priests alone. The author may have performed liturgical duties in the temple. (TLSB)

lyre – Levites who were sons of Korah played stringed instruments for temple worship. (TLSB)

43:5 Refrain (PBC)

The psalmist desires vindication for the cause of his sufferings. He asks God for the light and truth that come from His dwelling so that he might return to His sanctuary in joyful worship. In an ungodly world, you, too, are assailed by sin, death, and the devil. Yet God will comfort you by His life-sustaining Word. • Lead me to Your dwelling, O God, my God, and open my mouth with Your praise and song. Amen. (TLSB)