
Day 115 – April 25

Israel as a Monarchy (1100 – 930 BCE)

Psalms of the Troubled Soul

Readings: *Psalm 120, 121, 140, 143, 144*

Reflections:

- Psalm 120: Again we see a value on peace, “Too long have I lived among those who hate peace. I am a man of peace; but when I speak, they are for war.”
- Psalm 121: This psalm emphasizes total dependence on God and the sense of security and safety his child has.
- Psalm 140: Value on the poor - “the Lord secures justice for the poor and upholds the cause of the needy.”
- Psalm 143: A beautiful prayer of dependence on God. Here we see the key elements of how to rightly depend on God when facing a difficult time:
 - Affirm his perfect character (faithful and righteous) and your humble state (“no one living is righteous”).
 - Honestly share exactly what is happening and how you feel (“The enemy pursues me, he crushes me to the ground....my spirit grows faint within me...”).
 - Remind yourself of God's faithfulness in the past and meditate/focus on how he has answered prayers or acted to save in the past. (“I remember...I meditate on all your works...”) This will show God that you do value his faithfulness in the past and do not take him for granted. Also, it helps you remain centered in faith and confidence that God will work in the future as he has in the past.
 - It is okay to ask for a quick response (“answer me quickly”).
 - Ask for guidance by his Spirit to make good choices and express your desire to be teachable (“Show me the way to go...Rescue me...Teach me to do your will...May your Spirit lead me on level ground.”).
 - It is ok to remind God of his reputation (“for your name sake”) and his character (“righteousness”) and his heart (“your unfailing love”).
 - Conclude by reminding him of your relationship to him (“I am your servant”).
 - What an excellent example, model and guide for our prayers when we struggle!

- Psalm 144: First verses...so much for being a man of peace -- “The Lord my Rock, who trains my hands for war, my fingers for battle.” Again, although peace is viewed as the ideal, the actual teaching of Jesus has not yet come and in this period of the kingdom of God being defined in physical terms, physical war is the norm. In Christ he will make clear that the true battle is a spiritual battle and that in the process of saving all people, even our enemies, God wants us to experience peace by being people who are trained to love our enemies.
- Again, in Psalms, David expresses his dependence on God and the hope of God's protection and blessing.