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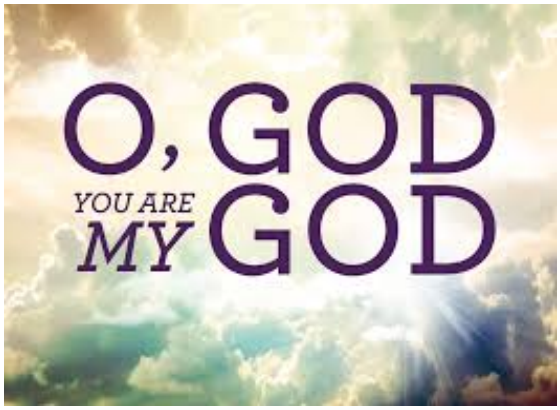
When David Was in the Desert of Y'hudah
Psalm 63: 1-11

A **psalm** of **David** when **he** was in **the Desert of Judah**.

DIG: Why is David in the desert? What dangers await him there? What memories keep David going? What is better than life? How can David devote himself to the love of God at a time and place like this? What does it mean to swear by God?

REFLECT: How desperate is your longing for a relationship with ADONAI? What do you long for the most? Which verse of this Psalm best fits your relationship with God? Are you a "clinger" in relationships? How tight is your grasp on YHVH? Explain.

This **Psalm** is associated with **David's** stay in the Judean wilderness during **his** escape from **Sha'ul**. Once more, the worst had brought out **David's** best, in words as it did in deeds. In this poem **he** tells of the longing for **the Sanctuary** that consumed **him**, and the consolation **he** found in reflecting upon **YHVH** during **his** banishment from home. There may be other **psalms** that equal this outpouring of devotion; but few, if any, that surpass it.[120]



A. Longing for ADONAI: O God, You are my God; I will seek You earnestly. The phrase **I will seek You earnestly** comes from the Hebrew root (*shr*), to which

the noun *dawn* is related. This gave rise to the tradition of **Psalm 63** as a morning **psalm** with the translation **early will I seek You**.[121] The longing in these verses is not the groping of a stranger, feeling his way toward **the LORD**, but the eagerness of a friend, almost of a lover, to be in touch with the one held dear.[122] **My heart thirsts for You, my body longs for You in a land parched and exhausted, where no water can be found (Psalm 63:1 CJB). As the traveler there pines for water, so David yearns for the spiritual refreshment that only God can provide. David's** whole soul is deeply restless and unsatisfied without **the LORD**.

B. Vision of God's Grace: David gives another reason for his thirsting after God. **Having so often known the reality of His chesed** (see my commentary on **Genesis Af – The Concept of Chesed**)**, the desire to offer praises to ADONAI had become the real purpose of his life, more precious than existence itself. I used to contemplate You in the Sanctuary, seeing Your power and glory; for your chesed is better than life. My lips worship You (Psalm 63:2-3 CJB). David** changes metaphors from that of the desert to that of a prophetic vision. **He** has a vision of **God's** holiness, **power** and **glory**. Even as **Isaiah** had a vision of **God's** holiness and glory (see the commentary on **Isaiah, to see link click Bo – In the Year King Uzziah Died**), so **David** confesses that **he** has had a glimpse of the beatific vision. The great **God he** worships is **the Great King**, who promised to be present among **His** people in **the Sanctuary**. The symbol of **His** presence was **the ark of the Covenant** (see the commentary on **Exodus Fr – The Ark of the Covenant in the Most Holy Place: Christ at the Throne of Grace**).[123]

C. In Praise of ADONAI: Yes, I will bless you as long as I live; in Your name I will lift up my hands (First Kings 8:54; Psalm 28:2; Lamentations 3:41; Ezra 9:5). The result of this worship is that **David's** soul is **satisfied. I am as satisfied as with rich food,** literally *as with marrow and fatness***.** The Torah demanded that no **fat** be eaten because **all the fat belongs to ADONAI (Leviticus 3:16)**. Here, as a result of worship, **YHVH** gives **His** own **food** to **David** and **he** is filled. Again **David** responds in **praise**. **My mouth praises you with joy on my lips (Psalm 63:4-5 CJB).**

A. Longing for ADONAI: David not only worships **the LORD** in public, but **he** also seeks **Him** in private. It is a good thing to **meditate** on what **God** has done for us. It shows how faithful **Ha'Shem** has been in our lives. **When I remember You on**

my bed in the stillness of the night **and meditate on You in the night watches.** The verb **meditate** is also used in **Psalm 1:1-2: How blessed are those who reject the advice of the wicked, don't stand in the way of sinners or sit where the mockers sit! Their delight is in ADONAI's Torah; on His Torah they meditate day and night. David** found security even in the perilous hours when an enemy could strike under the cover of darkness. **For you have been my help; in the shadow of Your wings I rejoice; my heart clings to You; Your right hand supports me (Psalm 63:6-8 CJB).**[124] Thus **God** kept **him** safe even though **Sha'ul** wanted to kill **him**.

B. Vision of God's Judgment: David is in a battle. **His enemies** sought **to destroy his life.** Because of **God's power and glory**, however, **they** would be destroyed. **They** will **go** down **to the lowest parts of the earth,** namely Sh'ol (see the commentary on **Jude Ak – The Angels Did Not Keep Their Positions of Authority**). **May they be given over to the power of the sword; may they become prey for jackals** to come and eat their corpses, without a proper burial **(Psalm 63:9-10 CJB).** The weapons that they intended to use against the innocent will be turned against them, and they will be destroyed.

Like **David**, we too have our enemies. Rabbi Sha'ul reminds us, however, that our real foes are not human and thus our weapons must be spiritual: **For although we do live in the world, we do not wage war in a worldly way; because the weapons we use to wage war are not worldly. On the contrary, we have God's power for demolishing strongholds. We demolish arguments and every arrogance that raises itself up against the knowledge of God (Second Corinthians 10:3-5a CJB).** While **the devil comes to steal and kill and destroy (John 10:10)**, it is **he** who will finally go **to the lowest parts of the earth,** even **the lake of burning sulfur** where **he will be tormented day and night for ever and ever (Revelation 20:10).** So it is vital that, like **David**, we remember **ADONAI** at night and know **Him** as our help, our **Protector**, and our **power**. Under **His wings** we can join **David** and rejoice and shout for joy.

C. In Praise of ADONAI: David concludes that **the king will rejoice in God.** The third person singular is "court language," so that means that this **psalm** applies to the line of **Isra'el's** kings climaxing in **Messiah**. Notice **David's** joy is not merely in winning the battle; it is in the **God** who wins the battles for **him**. The danger in worshiping **ADONAI** for **His** benefits when we

receive the overflowing of **His** gifts, is that we end up worshiping the benefits and not the **God** who gives them to us. Furthermore, **all who swear by God will glory in Him.** To **swear by God** is to take an oath of loyalty. **While the mouths of the liars will be** reduced to **silence** in Sh'ol by **God's** judgment. Our **King** is **Yeshua.** As **He** rejoices in **YHVH**, so do we **(Ps 63:11 CJB).**[125]