

Commentary on Psalm 63:1-11

By L.G. Parkhurst, Jr.

The **International Bible Lesson** (*Uniform Series*) for **October 31, 2010**, is from **Psalm 63:1-11**. Five **Questions for Discussion** follow the *Bible Lesson Commentary*. The **International Bible Lessons** can be read at: <http://internationalbiblelessons.com/>; new *International Bible Lessons* are also published each Saturday in [The Oklahoman](#) newspaper.

Psalm 63: 1 O God, you are my God, I seek you, my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.

It is one thing to believe that there is a God or that God exists, and quite another to call God, “my God,” because you want to bow down and acknowledge that God indeed created you, is Lord over you, and is worthy to be obeyed by you in all things. Furthermore, after we bow in this way, we should thirst after God – to know God better and experience a deeper and more profound and more loving relationship with him.

2 So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and glory.

When David wrote this Psalm, the Temple of Solomon had not yet been built; therefore, we know that David beheld the Lord in his holy, heavenly, sanctuary – where David saw the Lord and heard the Lord speak, for David said, “the Lord said to my Lord” (see Psalm 110:1; Matthew 22:44). David could not see God completely, as the finite cannot see the infinite, but he did see a measure of the power and the glory of God.

3 Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you.

Power and glory have much to do with the supernatural being of God. Steadfast love has to do with the choices God makes. The Bible says, “God is love.” True, steadfast love motivates all of God’s choices. To know that you live within the circle of God’s love and that nothing can ever separate you from God’s love is better than life itself and a reason for praising God.

4 So I will bless you as long as I live; I will lift up my hands and call on your name.

The word “bless” can also mean “make happy.” The psalmist has resolved to make God happy as long as he lives – that involves not only obeying Jesus because you love Jesus as your Lord and Savior – that also involves looking for things that you can do in this life that you know will make God happy; such as, telling others about Jesus, helping the needy beyond what the specific, detailed,

laws of God require, and lifting up holy hands in praise, prayer, and thanksgiving to God.

5 My soul is satisfied as with a rich feast, and my mouth praises you with joyful lips

Just as we can feel physically satisfied after a delicious and equally nourishing and healthy meal, so we can feel spiritually satisfied as we feed on the word of God, meditate on and worship God with the Psalms as our own thoughts (or in our own words). Knowing God intimately brings us joy, and a joy we cannot refrain from expressing with our minds and mouths.

6 when I think of you on my bed, and meditate on you in the watches of the night;

When we cannot sleep at night, we may want to take that as a sign that we should think about God. Our prayers might be only “making our requests known to God,” so we may end up not thinking about God as we should or praising God for Who he is and what he has done and is doing. So, in the quiet of the evening as we prepare to sleep, we can think about God as we think about our loved ones.

7 for you have been my help, and in the shadow of your wings I sing for joy.

As we think about God, we can think about some of the ways he has helped us – for example – every good thing that has come our way he has helped to bring our way. The food we have eaten, our family, our friends, our jobs, our homes, our volunteer opportunities, our church, the books we read, our clothing, all these are reasons to rejoice over God’s provision and protection.

8 My soul clings to you; your right hand upholds me.

We cannot cling to God with our human hands, but with the spiritual nature God has given us we can cling to him by keeping him foremost in our hearts and thoughts. When at rest, we can send out our hearts, our feelings, our thoughts, toward God with love. At all times, our interest in and attention to doing all of these good things God has inspired within us by his Holy Spirit. His power inspires and upholds our special loving relationship with him.

9 But those who seek to destroy my life shall go down into the depths of the earth;

There will inevitably be those who want to destroy us personally because they recognize that we know and love God. They will try to destroy our relationship with God – if they could – by trying to sow seeds of doubt in our minds or accusing God or us of not being faithful to one another, but if they do not repent God will punish them. We also have spiritual enemies that will try to use others

against us to hurt us and our relationship with God.

10 they shall be given over to the power of the sword, they shall be prey for jackals.

Those who seek to battle against, harm, or destroy God's children will face the judgment of God, who will protect his own. Sometimes we will see that judgment happen in this life, when the godless reap what they have sown or when God brings swift and certain judgment through the hands of others who exercise his justice, knowingly or not.

11 But the king shall rejoice in God; all who swear by him shall exult, for the mouths of liars will be stopped.

David was a good king who did rejoice in God, as he hoped those kings who followed him would also do. All who swear by God shall exalt God; whereas, Jesus later said that swearing was not necessary. Many told lies about David. Later, even his own son, Absalom, lied about his father, but David knew that the Lord would eventually stop the mouths of those who lied about him – which actually happened. God is our sure defense both in this life and in the next.

Five Questions for Discussion

1. What are some of the ways a person can overcome a period of spiritual dryness or the feeling that God is not close to them?
2. What do you call the place where you worship the Lord? What does the word "sanctuary" mean to you? What does it mean to you to worship God in his sanctuary?
3. In what situations might a person or group of people be physically well-fed, but spiritually unfed? In what situations might a person or group of people be physically starving, but spiritually well-fed? What are some of the ways people can be certain of being spiritually well-fed?
4. What will happen to those who try to destroy the faith of believers or who try to destroy the lives of believers?
5. How do the Psalms help you (or have helped you) face persecution or the mistreatments you receive from some, even some who claim to believe in God?

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