

Satisfied

Psalm 63:1-5

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Introduction:

Attention:

Subject: Here its reality shows itself in the love it has awakened in *soul* and *flesh*, i.e. in David's whole being (cf. 35:9f.), which is deeply restless and unsatisfied without God.

Scripture: Psalm 63:1-5; Psalm 145:14-16

Body:

I. Seek v.1

a. Seak Earnestly

- i. Seek - to **be on the look out for**, search or attentively anticipate
 1. Its most frequent usage is in the wisdom literature (**Prov 1:28; 7:15; 8:17; 13:24; Job 7:21; 8:5; 24:5; also note Ps 78:34; Hos 5:15; Isa 26:9**).
- ii. Earnestly - "dawn," and is often translated "to seek early," "or to attentively anticipate."
 1. *early will I seek thee*, which is based on the derivation of *seek* from the word for 'dawn', suggesting an eagerness which chimes in with the thought of 130:6 and the language of 57:8

b. Soul Thirst

- i. Soul - basic meaning: windpipe opened for breathing, throat, neck desire, breath, (breath of the) soul, life, self
- ii. Thirst
 1. The suppliant expresses a powerful, longing desire for the near presence of God with the strong metaphorical language of thirst in a land of dryness (of Ps 42:2-3) and the fatigue brought about by a lack of water.
 2. David's experience in the **dry**, waterless wilderness prompted him to think of the thirst of his **soul** for **God**
 3. **In Psalm 143:6 the *weary land* is itself the picture of David's thirsty soul, but here there is no direct comparison**

- c. Flesh Yearns
 - i. Flesh- body
 - ii. Yearns – faints
 - 1. Perhaps the effects of dehydration are indicated as may be suggested by the verb כָּמָה, (“longs/yearns”), but which may connote the idea of its Arabic cognate “to be pale”
- d. Land
 - i. Dry
 - 1. This was the **praise** of one who, when in a dry desert (v. 1), thought more of God than of life-sustaining water.
 - ii. Weary -exhausted
 - 1. The geographical features of this verse are primarily metaphorical, and the physical location of the worshiper is secondary to the overpowering longing for the divine presence

II. Saw v.2

- a. Seen
 - i. Sanctuary
 - 1. The longing of v 2 becomes a testimony of assurance in the verses which follow. The speaker recalls past experiences of the strength and glory of God in the sanctuary in v 3.
 - 2. The experience may have involved some sort of rite using fire, smoke, and the blowing of a horn (cf. Exod 19), or it may have been more verbal and mental, combined with the rich symbolism of the temple, producing an internalized apprehension of the divine presence
 - 3. David had the joy of seeing the evidence of God’s presence **in the sanctuary**, the tabernacle in Jerusalem
 - 4. David had worshipped God in happier days at Zion, and God had revealed himself. It would be the same now, desert or no desert, for God is not the prisoner of his sanctuary
- b. See
 - i. Power- God’s might
 - ii. Glory - as manifestation of Yahweh, in the sanctuary
 - 1. The “strength [*or*, power] and glory” may suggest the presence of the Ark of the Covenant (cf. 1 Sam 4:21; Pss 24:7; 70:6; 132:8)
 - 2. The ark was the symbol of the Lord’s glory and strength (cf. 1 Sam. 4:21).

III. Satisfied v.3-5

- a. Lovingkindness - faithfulness loyalty, lasting relational loyalty from God to us
 - i. Better than Life
 - 1. Worship has made the speaker aware of the surpassing value of Yahweh's loyal-love (v 4), which is better than life itself.
- b. Lips
 - i. Praise – to honor with song, God over all
 - ii. Bless You - to declare God to be the source of the special power
- c. Hands
 - i. Lifted – in prayer
 - 1. The lifted up hands refer to a posture of prayer, probably denoting that the empty hands wait in trust to be filled with the blessings of God (lit. “palms”—the open hand; the open hand may also show the nature of the one who is praying; cf. Pss 7:3; 24:4; 26:6; 73:13; Isa 1:15; 59:3, 6).
 - 2. To *lift up ... hands* or eyes (John 17:1) to heaven was to give the body its share in expressing worship (cf. 134:2) or supplication (28:2; cf. 1 Kgs 8:54). The New Testament speaks the same language (1 Tim. 2:8).
- d. Soul
 - i. Satisfied – rejoicing. Reference sacrificial feast, to eat one's fill
 - 1. Marrow
 - 2. Fatness
 - a. In spite of his separation from the sanctuary, David found satisfaction in praising God, for it brought joy and comfort to his heart.
 - b. with *My soul is feasted*—as if the mere slaking of thirst would be too weak a metaphor. The praise is now exuberant: the Hebrew word for *joyful* (5), like ‘sing for joy’ in verse
- e. Mouth
 - i. Praise –
 - 1. praising God would satisfy his **soul** as much as **the richest of foods** would satisfy his body. **Praise** to Him gave vitality to his spiritual life
 - ii. Joyful Lips – exaltation

Word Studies

Seek Earnestly - to **be on the look out for**, search¹

¹ Ludwig Koehler et al., [*The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*](#) (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994–2000), 1465.

Soul - basic meaning: windpipe opened for breathing, throat, neck desire, breath, (breath of the) soul, life, self²

Thirsts-

Flesh – body

Yearns – faints,

Dry

Weary – exhausted

Sanctuary

Power – God's might

Glory- as manifestation of Yahweh³ in the sanctuary

Lovingkindness – faithfulness loyalty, lasting relational loyalty from God to us

Praise – to honor with song, God over all

Bless- to declare God to be the source of the special power⁴

Lifted – in prayer

Satisfied- to eat one's fill

Joyful- exaltation

Commentary Studies

² Ludwig Koehler et al., [*The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*](#) (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994–2000), 712.

³ Ludwig Koehler et al., [*The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*](#) (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994–2000), 458.

⁴ Ludwig Koehler et al., [*The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*](#) (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994–2000), 160.

Longing for the presence of God (63:2–5). The אלהים (“God”) of v 2 was originally “Yahweh,” which was changed to “Elohim” for some reason, as in numerous cases in Pss 42–83 (see Craigie, 29–30). The verb for “seek” is not the familiar cultic בקש but שחר, which may be a denominative of שחר, “dawn,” and is often translated “to seek early,” “early will I seek thee” (כ⁵v). The verb’s contextual meaning at least is clearly to seek eagerly, or to attentively anticipate. Its most frequent usage is in the wisdom literature (Prov 1:28; 7:15; 8:17; 13:24; Job 7:21; 8:5; 24:5; also note Ps 78:34; Hos 5:15; Isa 26:9). The suppliant expresses a powerful, longing desire for the near presence of God with the strong metaphorical language of thirst in a land of dryness (of Ps 42:2–3) and the fatigue brought about by a lack of water. Perhaps the effects of dehydration are indicated as may be suggested by the verb כמה, (“longs/yearns”), but which may connote the idea of its Arabic cognate “to be pale” or the Syriac verb “to be blind” (see K⁶B, 441). In any case, “the poet is as thirsty for God as an exhausted wanderer is for water in a parched desert” (A. A. Anderson, I, 456). The geographical features of this verse are primarily metaphorical, and the physical location of the worshiper is secondary to the overpowering longing for the divine presence (see Leslie, 270, with reference to Mowinckel, who thinks of a sick person burning with fever, who comes to the temple to seek purification and healing—though prayers for healing should not be tied exclusively to the temple; they would have been more appropriate in family and community contexts).

The longing of v 2 becomes a testimony of assurance in the verses which follow. The speaker recalls past experiences of the strength and glory of God in the sanctuary in v 3. The visionary experience of the verb חזה (“to see/have a vision”) is not described in detail, and doubtless differed in form and degree among worshipers. The experience may have involved some sort of rite using fire, smoke, and the blowing of a horn (cf. Exod 19), or it may have been more verbal and mental, combined with the rich symbolism of the temple, producing an internalized apprehension of the divine presence. The “strength [or, power] and glory” may suggest the presence of the Ark of the Covenant (cf. 1 Sam 4:21; Pss 24:7; 70:6; 132:8; see G. H. Davies, “The Ark in the Psalms,” in *Promise and Fulfillment*, FS S. H. Hook, ed. F. F. Bruce [Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1963], 51–61), which is also indicated by the “shadow of your wings” in v 8. Perhaps we should think of a worship experience which seems to lie behind the vision of Isaiah (Isa 6; see also 27:4; Hab 2:1).

Worship has made the speaker aware of the surpassing value of Yahweh’s loyal-love (v 4), which is better than life itself. A vow of life-long praise follows in v 5. The lifted up hands refer to a posture of prayer, probably denoting that the empty hands wait in trust to be filled with the blessings of God (lit⁷. “palms”—the open hand; the open hand may also show the nature of the

⁵KJV King James Version (1611) = AV

⁶KB L. Koehler and W. Baumgartner, *Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti libros* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1951–53)

⁷lit. literally

one who is praying; cf. Pss 7:3; 24:4; 26:6; 73:13; Isa 1:15; 59:3, 6). For prayer in the name of Yahweh, see *Comment* on Ps 54:3.⁸

Thirsting for God (63:1–2)

63:1. David's experience in the **dry, waterless wilderness** prompted him to think of the thirst of his **soul** for **God**. Because his soul thirsted for and longed for his **God**, he wrote, **Earnestly I seek You**. This may also be translated, "Early will I seek You." This has prompted many believers to read this psalm in the mornings. To seek someone early suggests doing so earnestly.

63:2. David's longing for God came because of his vision of God's **power** (strength) and ... **glory**. This awareness of God came before his enemies had driven him into the wilderness. The ark was the symbol of the Lord's glory and strength (cf. 1 Sam. 4:21). David had the joy of seeing the evidence of God's presence **in the sanctuary**, the tabernacle in Jerusalem.

B. Satisfying the soul with praise (63:3–8)

63:3–4. In spite of his separation from the sanctuary, David found satisfaction in praising God, for it brought joy and comfort to his heart. He praised God for his loyal **love**, which is **better than life**. This was the **praise** of one who, when in a dry desert (v. 1), thought more of God than of life-sustaining water.

63:5–6. Moreover, praising God would satisfy his **soul** as much as **the richest of foods** would satisfy his body. **Praise** to Him gave vitality to his spiritual life. Praising God is the natural expression of a heart that meditates on God, a heart that thinks of Him **through ... the night**⁹

⁸ Marvin E. Tate, *Psalms 51–100*, vol. 20, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 127.

⁹ Allen P. Ross, "*Psalms*," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 840.

There is no compelling reason to abandon the familiar translation, *early will I seek thee*, which is based on the derivation of *seek* from the word for 'dawn', suggesting an eagerness which chimes in with the thought of 130:6 and the language of 57:8.⁵¹⁰⁵ In Psalm 143:6 the *weary land* is itself the picture of David's thirsty soul, but here there is no direct comparison. The comparison may of course be implied, but it is not stated. The word *as* is not in the text of verse 1 (Heb. 2), which simply says that David is praying in parched and cheerless surroundings (which the title defines as the Wilderness of Judah). The implication is that the longing which this desolate spot arouses is only the surface of a much deeper desire. But his explicit comparison, introduced by the *So* of the next verse, gives a fresh turn to the matter.

2. The NE¹¹B clarifies the *So* by expanding it to 'So longing'.⁵¹²⁶ With the same intense desire (in other words) David had worshipped God in happier days at Zion, and God had revealed himself. It would be the same now, desert or no desert, for God is not the prisoner of his sanctuary. David speaks the same language here that his actions had spoken when he sent away the ark (see the opening comments to the psalm); and the thought would come to perfect expression in Psalm 139. On the vision of God, see on 11:7.

3. Now he goes a step further. How much further, any reader of his words may judge by considering whether his own unprompted estimate would have taken such a form as this. But it is a true estimate, vouched for by the whole army of martyrs, and put into similar words by Paul in Acts 20:24 (A¹³V): 'Neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy.'

4. The inwardness of David's devotion was completed by what was outward and corporate, as verse 2 has shown, the one reinforcing the other. To lift up ... hands or eyes (John 17:1) to heaven was to give the body its share in expressing worship (cf. 134:2) or supplication (28:2; cf. 1 Kgs 8:54). The New Testament speaks the same language (1 Tim. 2:8).

63:5–8. God my delight

The new stanza sees the faith and persistence of verses 1–4 abundantly rewarded.

¹⁰⁵⁵ RSV and JB omit 'early', presumably on the grounds that the etymology of a word tends to recede into the background, or that a cognate Akkadian root means 'turn towards' (cf. K-B). But NEB retains 'early', and Prov. 13:24 (cf. RV) supports the view that this element in the verb was prominent in Heb.

¹¹NEB The New English Bible, 1970.

¹²⁵⁶ But NEB departs from the Heb. text by continuing, 'I come before thee'.

¹³AV English Authorized Version (King James), 1611.

5, 6. The contrast to 'my soul thirsts for thee' (1) is unexpectedly strong with *My soul is feasted*—as if the mere slaking of thirst would be too weak a metaphor. The praise is now exuberant: the Hebrew word for *joyful* (5), like 'sing for joy' in verse¹⁴

¹⁴ Derek Kidner, [*Psalms 1–72: An Introduction and Commentary*](#), vol. 15, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1973), 243–244.

Ps. 63 was in , then in and ¹⁵. It had the reference to David's life יהודה במדבר יהודה in ¹⁶. It was not in ¹⁷ (v¹⁸. Intr. §§ 27, 31, 32). The original was composed of three trimeter tetrastichs, v¹⁹. 2 v²⁰. 3, 5 v²¹. 7, 9, all in assonance, in ח-ח. The author seems to be in exile, away from the sanctuary, where he used to behold the glory of Yahweh. Now he can only remember his former privileges and persist in prayer and longing for a return. The situation is similar to that of Ps. 42–43. The Ps. probably comes from the early exile. The statement in the title is probably due to the use of בארץ ציה by txt. err²². for כארץ ציה, a simile, and not indicating the locality of the author. To this Ps. was attached in ²³ a fragment of a royal Ps. v²⁴. 10–12b, a trimeter hexastich which, on account of המלך, was preëxilic, and, on account of תחתיות הארץ,

¹⁵☪ The Elohist Psalter.

☞ The Psalter of the Mizmorim.

☛ The Psalter of David.

¹⁶☛ The Psalter of David.

¹⁷☞ The Korahite Psalter.

¹⁸v. *vide*, see.

¹⁹v. verse.

²⁰v. verse.

²¹v. verse.

²²txt. err. textual error.

²³☪ The Elohist Psalter.

²⁴v. verse.

was not earlier than the reign of Josiah. Possibly both Pss. were from a common author, a companion of Jehoiachin. To these Pss. several glosses were added: v²⁵. 4, 6, 8, all later than ²⁶ and all emphasizing temple worship, and therefore making the Ps. more suitable to public use. V²⁷. 12c is a vindictive conclusion suited to the Maccabean period.

²⁸**Str**²⁹. 1. A syn³⁰. tetrastich.—2. *Yahweh, my God*], emphasizing the personal relation to Yahweh as his own God. The archaic 'El is for the 'Elohim usual in such combinations. It is improbable, however, that it was to emphasize the original meaning, "strong one," as , or that it was predicate as E³¹V^{32s}. after ³³H, ; for the personal pronoun "Thou" was an interpretative insertion, making the line too long.—*earnestly I seek thee*], as one rising with the dawn, cf³⁴. Ps. 78:34; |³⁵| *thirst for Thee*], cf³⁶. 42:2 |³⁷| *long for Thee* |³⁸| *faints for Thee*; with the simile of *a dry land*], greatly in need of rain, cf³⁹. Je. 4:31, Ps. 143:6. This is explained by a gloss, "where no

²⁵v. verse.

²⁶☞ The Elohist Psalter.

²⁷V. verse.

²⁸

²⁹**Str.** strophes.

³⁰syn. synonymous.

³¹EV English Versions.

☞ Latin Version of Jerome.

^{32s} English Versions.

³³H Hebrew consonantal text.

³⁴cf. confer, compare.

☞ Latin Version of Jerome.

³⁵|| parallel, of words or clauses chiefly synonymous.

³⁶cf. confer, compare.

³⁷|| parallel, of words or clauses chiefly synonymous.

³⁸|| parallel, of words or clauses chiefly synonymous.

³⁹cf. confer, compare.

water is," interpreting the previous adj⁴⁰. as an additional attribute of land, so Vrss⁴¹., "dry and weary land without water."—*my soul ... my flesh*], the whole man.

⁴²**Str**⁴³. II. Two antith⁴⁴. syn⁴⁵. couplets.—**3, 5.** *As in the sanctuary*], in the worship of the temple at Jerusalem in my past experience.—*so in my life*], in my future experience.—*I beheld Thee*], explained as *seeing Thy strength and Thy glory*], in the contemplation of public worship, cf⁴⁶. 29:1, 59:17, 68:35, 96:7. In the future life *will I bless Thee*], in perpetual worship: |⁴⁷| *I will lift up my palms in Thy name*], a gesture especially of invocatory prayer, cf⁴⁸. 28:2, 141:2. This Str⁴⁹. has been enlarged by two glosses.—**4.** *For better than life is Thy kindness*]. Not only did they behold the strength and glory of Yahweh in public worship, but also His kindness; and it was not only earnestly sought and thirsted after, it was better than life itself. This beholding of Yahweh in His temple was in oral worship: *my lips laud Thee*. As the former public worship was thus emphasized, so the future worship.—**6.** *As with marrow and fatness my soul will be satisfied*]. Doubtless the poet is thinking of the sacrificial feasts which characterised seasons of rejoicing before God in the worship of the temple, cf⁵⁰. 22:27, 23:5, 36:9. It is true that the fat pieces of animals always went to the altar. The poet is not thinking of them, but of the flesh of the fat young animals which alone were suitable for sacrifice, where the fat meat was eaten by the offerers and their friends, together with bread and wine. But these provisions for the flesh had as their accompaniment provisions for the soul also; so that soul and flesh were alike and together satisfied. The glossator is evidently thinking more of the satisfaction of soul, for he adds: *and with lips of jubilation will my mouth praise*]. This tautology of ⁵¹H is dubious, especially as it is not in , which omits "my mouth," and adds to the verb "Thy name." It is

⁴⁰adj. adjective.

⁴¹Vrss. Versions, usually ancient.

⁴²

⁴³**Str.** strophes.

⁴⁴antith. anthesis, antithetical.

⁴⁵syn. synonymous.

⁴⁶cf. confer, compare.

⁴⁷|| parallel, of words or clauses chiefly synonymous.

⁴⁸cf. confer, compare.

⁴⁹Str. strophes.

⁵⁰cf. confer, compare.

⁵¹H Hebrew consonantal text.

probable that both are explanatory additions, and that the original was, “and my lips will praise with jubilation.”⁵²

⁵² Charles A. Briggs and Emilie Grace Briggs, [*A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Psalms*](#), International Critical Commentary (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1906–1907), 72–74.

Ⲑ Greek Septuagint Version.