

## Psalms 42 and 43

May 17, 2023

We are told that Psalm 42 (and almost certainly 43 too) is a “maskil” of the sons of Korah. Many Psalms are identified as maskils but we don’t know exactly what the word means, other than a type of song.

But who are the “sons of Korah”? The most prominent Korah in scripture is the head of the group of priests who try to usurp Aaron’s role in Numbers 16. Korah and his confederates die as a result, but his sons survive (Numbers 26:11).

Their descendants reappear in 1 Chronicles 6:31-38 as the sons of the Kohathites. David has installed them as leaders of musical worship in the temple. One is Heman, author of Psalm 88.

The grandfather of Korah the rebel was Kohath, one of the three sons of Levi. In Numbers 4, his clan was given charge of the furnishings of the tabernacle (except for the most sacred ones). Now centuries later in the time of David, we find Kohath’s descendants restored to service in the temple, But not as mere furniture movers, but those entrusted by the Spirit to write the inspired words of the Psalms and sing them in praise to the Lord.

God disciplines His children, sometimes severely. But His aim is always for them to be reconciled to Him and resume serving Him as He intended, or even better. Like the sons of Korah.

### Questions:

1. These Psalms can be read together as a song to be sung in three verses, each followed by a repeating refrain. In what (Bible) verses do we find the repeating refrain?
2. The mood of the Psalms alternates between despair at separation from the Lord, and hope of being able again to praise him. Which verses are those of despair? Which of hope?
3. How does the Psalmist picture his intense longing for God in 42:1? Have you ever felt this way?
4. What occasion(s) is being remembered in 42:4? (Hint: Read Exodus 23:14-17)?

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5. Where are the lands of Jordan, Hermon, and Mount Mizar mentioned in 42:6? How does this explain the writer's discouragement?
6. What phrases or verses here remind us of the Lord Jesus?
7. Read 43:3. What "light" and "truth" would serve as encouragements?
8. What else does the Psalmist tell himself for encouragement?
9. What helps you during spiritual ups and downs?