

Israel's Songs of Hope
The Book of Psalms

Lord, Be My Refuge
Psalm 142

Prayer for Help in Trouble.

Maskil of David, when he was in the cave. A Prayer.

- ¹ I cry aloud with my voice to the LORD;
I make supplication with my voice to the LORD.
² I pour out my complaint before Him;
I declare my trouble before Him.
³ When my spirit was overwhelmed within me,
You knew my path.
In the way where I walk
They have hidden a trap for me.
⁴ Look to the right and see;
For there is no one who regards me;
There is no escape for me;
No one cares for my soul.
⁵ I cried out to You, O LORD;
I said, 'You are my refuge,
My portion in the land of the living.
⁶ Give heed to my cry,
For I am brought very low;
Deliver me from my persecutors,
For they are too strong for me.
⁷ Bring my soul out of prison,
So that I may give thanks to Your name;
The righteous will surround me,
For You will deal bountifully with me.'

¹ Sam.22:1 So David departed from there and escaped to the cave of Adullam; and when his brothers and all his father's household heard of it, they went down there to him. ² Everyone who was in distress, and everyone who was in debt, and everyone who was discontented gathered to him; and he became captain over them. Now there were about four hundred men with him. ³ And David went from there to Mizpah of Moab; and he said to the king of Moab, 'Please let my father and my mother come and stay with you until I know what God will do for me.' ⁴ Then he left them with the king of Moab; and they stayed with him all the time that David was in the stronghold. ⁵ The prophet Gad said to David, 'Do not stay in the stronghold; depart, and go into the land of Judah.' So David departed and went into the forest of Hereth.

Questions

1. How is David feeling here?
 - a. Depressed/panicked: In v.1 – 2, he has a cry, complaint, trouble.
 - b. Hopeless: In v.3, he says ‘my spirit grows faint’
 - c. Desperate in v.6
 - d. Weak in v.6: ‘those who pursue me’... ‘are too strong for me’
 - e. Imprisoned: ‘my prison’ in v.7
2. Notice that in v.7, what David asks for does happen in 1 Sam.22:1 – 5. The righteous do gather around him later. This is what leads me to think that Psalm 142 came chronologically before Psalm 59.
3. Notice the contrast ‘I have no refuge’ in v.4 and ‘You are my refuge’ in v.5. David had first went to Jonathan and Michal (the children of Saul), then to the prophet Samuel, to protect him. He now has no one – either they cannot humanly do anything more, and/or David does not want to endanger their lives. What does it mean to have a refuge?
4. During this time of reflection, we’re not going to end with a lot of closure. Instead, following the Psalm, we’ll just end with a cry for help. EXAMPLE: Write a poem expressing to the Lord that you need him to be your refuge. Even if you’re not necessarily going through something right now, you can write this with some past event in mind. Or, just for the sake of being spiritually prepared for a time when you will cling to these words with more force.