

“The God of my life”

1. The living God

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THROUGHOUT the Scriptures we read of men and women whose appreciation of the existence of God and the involvement of God in their lives was deep. They were aware that we are His creation, that He has a love for His creatures, that He is mindful of all and desirous that none should perish.

Enoch “walked with God”, as did Noah (Gen. 5:22; 6:9). Job was “perfect . . . upright, and . . . feared God, and eschewed evil” (Job 1:1). Hannah “poured out [her] soul before the LORD” in the belief that He would hear and bless her (1 Sam. 1:15). David was “a man after [God’s] own heart” (Acts 13:22). Paul gave voice to his feelings on Mars Hill: “God . . . made the world and all things therein . . . He is Lord of heaven and earth . . . in Him we live, and move, and have our being . . . we are also His offspring. Therefore [NIV] . . . we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man’s device” (17:24-29).

These all believed that God is a living God, active still, concerned as ever, involved fully with His creation. They knew their God; they were not ignorant of His mercy and judgement. They could call upon Him. They sought to be influenced by Him. Their desire was to live their lives as a continuing act of worship before Him. They illustrate the objectives that today’s disciples should be striving for—and what a struggle it is.

We are no strangers to worry, anxiety, uncertainty, pressure, and distraction. We face conflicting demands of work and relaxation, of family and discipleship, of physical, mental and spiritual health. The distinct separation we have achieved becomes blurred; the lusts we have suppressed return, the carnal is ever ready to replace the spiritual. Because the demands upon us may be many, because time is often in short supply anyway, quality time with the Word may often be short, and we are therefore in danger of having an “unknown God” Whom we “ignorantly worship” (v. 23).

Whoever wrote Psalm 42 (and 43), and whatever were the circumstances to which its contents relate, there is a picture here of one who knows his God and whose life is centred on his God. Under pressure, exhausted, he turned to his God for strength: “My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God [el]” (42:2). Downcast, disturbed, ill at ease, he turned to his God to raise his spirits: “Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God [elohim]: for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance” (v. 5). In fear of death, distraught, overwhelmed, he was sustained by his appreciation of his Lord’s knowledge of him and his Lord’s love and kindness: “Yet the LORD [Yahweh] will command His lovingkindness in the daytime, and in the night His song shall be with me” (v. 8).

Suffering at the hands of “deceitful and unjust” fellow-men, feeling cast off, alone, oppressed, he appealed to his God: “O send out Thy light and Thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto Thy holy hill, and to Thy tabernacles” (43:3). In full assurance of an abundant response, he already knows what his reaction will be—worship, sacrifice and praise: “Then will I go unto the altar of God [elohim], unto God [el] my exceeding joy” (v. 4). Here is another whose perception of the nearness of the governor of his days and his ways was intense. The focus of his attention and the source of his help was the One he describes as “the God [el] of my life” (42:8).

What of us? What of the God of our life? Is He the God of our whole life or of certain parts only? Do we know Him as we should? Is He as near as we would like? Do we appreciate His involvement in our life as much as we ought? With renewed enthusiasm and desire let us “draw nigh unto God”, and make it clear by our words and works, by our hopes and aspirations, and by our morals and virtues, that He is the only God of our life.