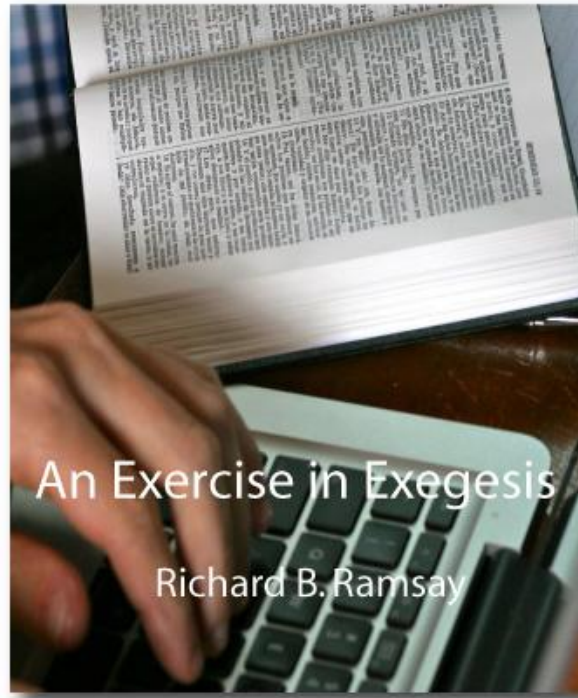


# AN EXERCISE IN EXEGESIS

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**Richard B. Ramsay**



**An Analysis of Psalm 42  
With the Use of e-Sword**

This is a basic explanation of how to do an exegesis of a Bible passage, studying Psalm 42 with the use of e-Sword software. If you prefer to use some other software, such as *Logos* or *BibleWorks*, or if you have your own library of books, you can still do the same exercise, because the same principles apply. There are three major aspects of biblical hermeneutics: preparation, investigation of the original meaning, and application for today.

### **Step 1: PREPARATION**

*Prepare by asking God to give you wisdom and that He illuminate your heart and mind as you study His Word.*

### **Step 2: INVESTIGATION OF THE ORIGINAL MEANING**

#### **2.1 First, read Psalm 42 in several different translations.**

We recommend that you download and install the free software program called *e-Sword*.

See the following for PCs: <http://www.e-sword.net/downloads.html>

There are also versions for MAC.

There is a minimal cost for this program if you purchase it through iTunes.

For iPads, find "e-Sword HD "in the Apps store or go to: <http://www.e-sword.net/ipad/>

Once installed, you can download different versions of the Bible. To do this, find the "download" menu at the top. Then select the kind of resource ("Bibles" in this case) and browse through the list. Click on "download" for any version you want, and it will be put on the list in the box below. When you are finished selecting the resources, click "download" / "Start" in the same open window, then close the e-Sword program and restart it. The resources should appear.

In addition to the King James version and the KJV+ with Strong's Numbers, which should come with the initial installation, we recommend the following versions, for example:

- American Standard
- English Standard
- Revised Version
- Young's Literal Translation

To find Psalm 42, click on Psalms in the list of Bible books in the left margin, then click on "42" in the list of chapters in the column just to the right of the list of the Bible books.

*Read the different versions and write down any important differences you observe.*

## 2.2 Investigate the author and the original audience

Find information about the author (or authors) and the original audience of Psalm 42. Use a commentary, a study Bible, a Bible dictionary, or an Introduction to the Old Testament.

In the case of Psalm 42, there are different opinions about who is the author. You should read different resources before making up your mind.

If you would like to continue using *e-Sword*, for example, we recommend that you download the following free Bible dictionaries:

- Easton's Bible Dictionary
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia
- Nave's Topical Bible

For example, to find an article on the "Sons of Korah," or the "Korahites," look in the window with the dictionaries, click on ISBE, and find the name "Korahites" in the column on the right.

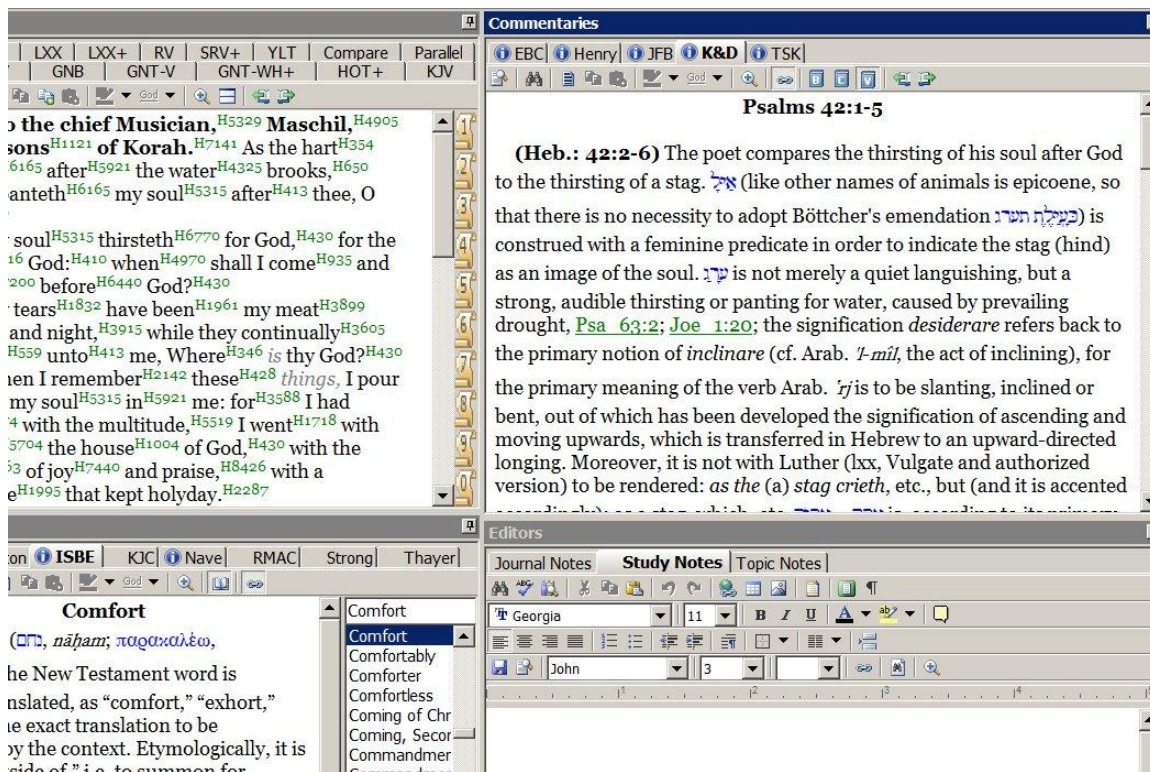
The screenshot shows the e-Sword Bible software interface. At the top, a Bible passage is displayed with various words highlighted in green and blue, indicating they are linked to a dictionary. Below the passage is a window titled "Dictionaries" with several tabs: BDB, Easton, ISBE (selected), KJC, Nave, RMAC, Strong, and Thayer. The ISBE tab is active, showing the entry for "Korahites; Sons of Korah". The entry includes the Hebrew name *kō'ra-its* (קָרָהִי, *korhī*), the Hebrew name *בְּנֵי קָרַח*, and the Latin name *b<sup>e</sup>nē kōrah*. The text explains that this phrase is used to denote Assir and Elkanah and Abiasaph, Korah's 3 individual sons (Exo 6:24; compare Num 26:11). It also discusses the genealogical details concerning Korahites, mentioning 7 successive generations closing with the prophet Samuel and his son Joel (1Ch 6:31-38, 1Ch 6:22-30; 1Sa 1:1, 1Sa 1:20; 1Sa 8:2), and the two in Ch mention most of the generations between Korahites and Joel. The fragmentary lists in 1Ch 9:25; 26 connect the list with the 4 generations following Joel (1Ch 6:33; 1Ch 9:19-31; 1Ch 26:1 ff), and with 2 generations in the very latest Bible times (1Ch 9:31). The adjective "Korhite" appears also in the King James Version as "Korathite," "Kore," and "Korahite," the last being the form preferred in the English Revised Version. It is used 4 times in the singular. Once it designates an individual (1Ch 9:31); 3 times it denotes the successors of Korahites taken collectively (Exo 6:24; Num 26:58; 1Ch 26:19); 4 times it is used in the plural, denoting the members of this succession of men (1Ch 9:19; 1Ch 12:6; 1Ch 26:1; 2Ch 20:19). As variants of this use, "the sons of the Korahites" appears once, and "the children of the Korahites" once (1Ch 26:19; 2Ch 20:19).

On the right side of the dictionary window, there is a list of search results. The entry "Korahites; Sons of Korah" is highlighted in blue. Other entries in the list include Koa, Kohath; Kohat, Koheleth, Kolaiah, Konae, Koph, Kor, Korah, Korathites, Kore, Korhites, Koz, Kushaiah, Laadah, Laadan, Laban, Labana, Labor, Laccunus, Lace, Lacedaemonia, Lachish, Lack, Lacunus, and Lad.

We also recommend that you download the following free commentaries:

- Expositor's Bible Commentary
- Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible
- Jamieson, Fausset and Brown Commentary
- Keil and Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament

To download new resources, find "download" in the menu at the top. Then select the kind of resource and browse through the list. Click on "download" for any resource you want, and it will be put on the list in the box below. When you are finished selecting the resources, click "download" in the smaller open window, then close the e-Sword program and restart it. The resources should appear. Commentaries will appear in another window on the upper right.



After investigating information about the author and the original audience, write down the important information.

## 2.3 Study the text

We have already investigated the author and the original audience of Psalm 42. Now we will continue the investigation of the original meaning, looking at the third aspect to be investigated: the text. This includes four areas: the semantics, the morphology, the syntax, and the literary context. First, we will look at semantics.

### 2.3.1. Semantics

This is the study of the meaning of the words. Here you should study words that you may not understand, or words that have important theological significance. It is especially important to see how the same author uses the word in similar passages.

To study key words, you can use the following resources:

Dictionaries. You should learn to use especially a Hebrew dictionary (for Old Testament) and a Greek dictionary (for New Testament).

Concordances. A concordance lists all the uses of a particular word throughout the Bible.

**e-Sword** [<http://www.e-sword.net/>] also provides these resources.

Let's look at an example. You might use e-Sword to look up the word "hope" used in Psalm 42:5. Use the *King James Version w/ Strong's Numbers* (KJV+) of the Bible (which comes with the initial installation), look up the verse (see the book and chapter lists in the left margin), click on the green number beside the word, and see the definition and pronunciation of the Hebrew word "yachal."

The screenshot shows the e-Sword Bible software interface. The top menu bar includes options like ASV, ESV, GNB, GNT-V, GNT-WH+, HOT+, KJV, KJV+, LBLA, LXX, LXX+, RV, SRV+, YLT, Compare, and Parallel. Below the menu is a toolbar with icons for search, zoom, and other functions. The main text area displays Psalm 42:1-8. Verse 5 is highlighted, and a pop-up dictionary window is open over the word "hope" (H3176). The dictionary entry for H3176 shows the Hebrew word "yachal" and its definition: "A primitive root; to wait; by implication to be patient, hope: - (cause to, have, make to) hope, be pained, stay, tarry, trust, wait." The dictionary is identified as "Strong's Hebrew and Greek Dictionaries".

For more precise definitions, you can also install the Hebrew dictionary, *Brown Driver Brigg's Hebrew Definitions* (BDB). Then when you click on the number after the word, a more complete list of meanings appears in the box below.

**Bibles**

ASV | ESV | GNB | GNT-V | GNT-WH+ | HOT+ | KJV | **KJV+** | LBLA | LXX | LXX+ | RV | SRV+ | YLT | Compare | Parallel

God

Psa 42:1 To the chief Musician,<sup>H5329</sup> Maschil,<sup>H4905</sup> for the sons<sup>H1121</sup> of Korah.<sup>H7141</sup>  
 As the hart<sup>H354</sup> panteth<sup>H6165</sup> after<sup>H5921</sup> the water<sup>H4325</sup> brooks,<sup>H650</sup> so<sup>H3651</sup> panteth<sup>H6165</sup> my soul<sup>H5315</sup> after<sup>H413</sup> thee, O God.<sup>H430</sup>

Psa 42:2 My soul<sup>H5315</sup> thirsteth<sup>H6770</sup> for God,<sup>H430</sup> for the living<sup>H2416</sup> God:<sup>H410</sup> when<sup>H4970</sup> shall I come<sup>H935</sup> and appear<sup>H7200</sup> before<sup>H6440</sup> God?<sup>H430</sup>

Psa 42:3 My tears<sup>H1832</sup> have been<sup>H1961</sup> my meat<sup>H3899</sup> day<sup>H3119</sup> and night,<sup>H3915</sup> while they continually<sup>H3605 H3117</sup> say<sup>H559</sup> unto<sup>H413</sup> me, Where<sup>H346</sup> is thy God?<sup>H430</sup>

Psa 42:4 When I remember<sup>H2142</sup> these<sup>H428</sup> things, I pour out<sup>H8210</sup> my soul<sup>H5315</sup> in<sup>H5921</sup> me: for<sup>H3588</sup> I had gone<sup>H5674</sup> with the multitude,<sup>H5519</sup> I went<sup>H1718</sup> with them to<sup>H5704</sup> the house<sup>H1004</sup> of God,<sup>H430</sup> with the voice<sup>H6963</sup> of joy<sup>H7440</sup> and praise,<sup>H8426</sup> with a multitude<sup>H1995</sup> that kept holyday.<sup>H2287</sup>

**Psa 42:5** Why<sup>H4100</sup> art thou cast down,<sup>H7817</sup> O my soul?<sup>H5315</sup> and why art thou disquieted<sup>H1993</sup> in<sup>H5921</sup> me? hope<sup>H3176</sup> thou in God:<sup>H430</sup> for<sup>H3588</sup> I shall yet<sup>H5750</sup> praise<sup>H3034</sup> him for the help<sup>H3444</sup> of his countenance.<sup>H6440</sup>

Psa 42:6 O my God,<sup>H430</sup> my soul<sup>H5315</sup> is cast down<sup>H7817</sup> within<sup>H5921</sup> me: therefore<sup>H5921 H3651</sup> will I remember<sup>H2142</sup> thee from the land<sup>H4480 H776</sup> of Jordan,<sup>H3383</sup> and of the Hermonites,<sup>H2769</sup> from the hill<sup>H4480 H2022</sup> Mizar.<sup>H4706</sup>

Psa 42:7 Deep<sup>H8415</sup> calleth<sup>H7121</sup> unto<sup>H413</sup> deep<sup>H8415</sup> at the noise<sup>H6963</sup> of thy

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**Dictionaries**

**BDB** | Easton | ISBE | **KJC** | Nave | RMAC | **Strong** | Thayer

God

**H3176**

יָחַל

yâchal

**BDB Definition:**

1) to wait, hope, expect

1a) (Niphal) to wait

1b) (Piel)

1b1) to wait, await, tarry

1b2) to wait for, hope for

1c) (Hiphil) to wait, tarry, wait for, hope for

**Part of Speech:** verb

**A Related Word by BDB/Strong's Number:** a primitive root

**Same Word by TWOT Number:** 859

H3176

H3157

H3158

H3159

H3160

H3161

H3162

H3163

H3164

H3165

H3166

H3167

H3168

H3169

H3170

H3171

H3172

H3173

H3174

H3175

H3176

What are some of the definitions of the Hebrew word "yachal"?

For words like "Hermon," or "Mizpar," you may want to use the Bible dictionaries that you hopefully installed previously, such as the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia or Easton's Bible Dictionary.

Finally, if you wish to do your own word study of a word like "deep," finding other places where the same word is used in the Bible, you can download the King James Concordance (KJC) and look at all the passages.

praise<sup>H3034</sup> him *for* the help<sup>H3444</sup> of his countenance.<sup>H6440</sup>  
**Psa 42:6** O my God,<sup>H430</sup> my soul<sup>H5315</sup> is cast down<sup>H7817</sup> within<sup>H5921</sup> me:  
 therefore<sup>H5921</sup> <sup>H3651</sup> will I remember<sup>H2142</sup> thee from the land<sup>H4480</sup> <sup>H776</sup> of  
 Jordan,<sup>H3383</sup> and of the Hermonites,<sup>H2769</sup> from the hill<sup>H4480</sup> <sup>H2022</sup> Mizar.<sup>H4706</sup>  
**Psa 42:7** Deep<sup>H8415</sup> calleth<sup>H7121</sup> unto<sup>H413</sup> deep<sup>H8415</sup> at the noise<sup>H6963</sup> of thy  
 waterspouts.<sup>H6794</sup> all<sup>H3605</sup> thy waves<sup>H4867</sup> and thy billows<sup>H1530</sup> are gone<sup>H5674</sup>

**Dictionaries**

BDB | Easton | ISBE | **KJC** | Nave | RMAC | Strong | Thayer

← | ↻ | 🔍 | 📖 | 📄 | 📑 | 🔄 | 🏠

God

**H8415**

תהום / תהום

tehôm

**Total KJV Occurrences: 36**

**deep, 20**  
[Gen 1:2](#), [Gen 7:11](#), [Gen 8:2](#), [Gen 49:25](#), [Deu 33:13](#), [Job 38:30](#),  
[Job 41:32](#), [Psa 42:6-7 \(3\)](#), [Psa 135:6 \(2\)](#), [Pro 8:28](#), [Isa 51:10](#), [Isa 63:13](#),  
[Eze 26:19](#), [Eze 31:4](#), [Eze 31:15](#), [Amo 7:4](#), [Hab 3:10](#)

**depths, 10**  
[Exo 15:5](#), [Exo 15:8](#), [Deu 8:7](#), [Psa 71:20](#), [Psa 77:16](#), [Psa 78:15](#),  
[Psa 106:9](#), [Psa 107:26](#), [Pro 3:20](#), [Pro 8:24](#)

**depth, 5**  
[Job 28:14](#), [Job 38:16](#), [Psa 33:7](#), [Pro 8:27](#), [Jon 2:5](#)

**deeps, 1**  
[Psa 148:7](#)

H8415  
 H8395  
 H8396  
 H8397  
 H8398  
 H8399  
 H8400  
 H8401  
 H8402  
 H8403  
 H8404  
 H8405  
 H8406  
 H8407  
 H8408  
 H8409  
 H8410  
 H8411  
 H8412  
 H8413  
 H8414  
**H8415**  
 H8416  
 H8417

What other words do you think it would be good to study in Psalm 42? Write the definitions.

### 2.3.2 Morphology (the form of the words)

Sometimes it may be important to verify the form of a word, especially verbs. Without knowing Hebrew, it is a bit difficult to study the morphology. Furthermore, there are fewer tools for this in programs like e-Sword. (In Greek, there are more resources.) Nevertheless, let's look at one example in Psalm 42, verse 5. Look at the phrase, "Hope in God, for I shall again praise Him."

What is the morphology of the word "hope"? First, is this a noun or a verb in this sentence?

We can return to the "Brown-Drivers Brigg's Hebrew Definitions" to get some help.

The screenshot shows the e-Sword interface. The top window displays Psalm 42:5: "Psa 42:5 Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance." The word "hope" is highlighted. Below this, the "Dictionaries" window is open to the BDB (Brown-Driver-Briggs) definition for the Hebrew word H3176. The definition lists the following:

- Part of Speech:** verb
- A Related Word by BDB/Strong's Number:** a primitive root
- Same Word by TWOT Number:** 859

The BDB definition also includes a list of verb forms: 1) to wait, hope, expect; 1a) (Niphal) to wait; 1b) (Piel) 1b1) to wait, await, tarry; 1b2) to wait for, hope for; 1c) (Hiphil) to wait, tarry, wait for, hope for.

Find where it gives the "Part of Speech" of the word.

*Is it a verb or a noun?*

Now that we know "hope" is a verb in Psalm 42:5, let's continue with the morphological study. What is the mood of the verb? Software such as e-Sword at the present do not offer resources that analyze such aspects of Hebrew morphology (only resources to analyze Greek morphology).



Nevertheless, let's assume that the majority of the versions have translated it properly, "Hope in God,..." What is the mood?

The indicative mood makes a statement.

The infinitive mood is the basic form of a verb, expressing no time, often used with "to...".

The subjunctive expresses doubt or something contrary to fact.

The imperative mood expresses a command.

*Which mood do you think it is when it says "Hope in God,..."?*

Other resources, such as *Logos* software, indicate that "hope" in Psalm 42:5 is a verb in the imperative mood. So it seems the psalmist is talking to himself here, encouraging himself to hope in God, to wait on God.

Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me?

Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation.

*What does the mood of the verb "hope" suggest to you about dealing with discouragement when something is going wrong?*

### **2.3.3 Syntax (the structure)**

Look at verse 1 of Psalm 42: "As the deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God."

This sentence has two main parts, two clauses.

*How would you describe the relationship between the two?*

The key to Hebrew poetry is not rhyme, but parallelism. Note in Psalm 42 how many phrases repeat similar thoughts with different words. Notice also how verses 5 and 11 are exactly the same.

*What does the fact that verses 5 and 11 repeat the same thought suggest to you?*

*What other observations do you have about the structure of this psalm?*

### **2.3.4 Literary Context**

Some scholars believe that Psalms 42 and 43 were originally one single psalm. But not everyone agrees. You can study the issue and draw your own conclusion.

As you study Psalm 42, it is important to consider the context of the whole book of Psalms.

*What is their purpose?*

*How were they used?*

*In what historical context were they written?*

*What kinds of Psalms are there?*

Now look at verse 4:

These things I remember, as I pour out my soul: how I would go with the throng and lead them in procession to the house of God with glad shouts and songs of praise, a multitude keeping festival.

*What do you think the psalmist is remembering here?*

*What did the temple represent for the people of God during the time of the Old Testament?*

### **2.3.5 Summary of the original meaning**

We will now finalize the second main step of biblical interpretation, the step of investigation. We have studied the author, the original audience, and the text. Now we will draw some conclusions about the "original meaning" of Psalm 42.

*To conclude this step, first write down what you consider the main theme or main point of Psalm 42. What makes it special?*

*Now write down what you think God meant to say to the original audience when He inspired the author to write it. What changes did He want to produce in the original audience?*

*Think of three areas of change:*

*concepts*

*behavior*

*emotions*

*Write a summary of the original message.*

### Step 3: APPLICATION FOR TODAY

Now we move on to the third and final main step of biblical interpretation, contemporary application.

*Read Psalm 42 again.*

*Consider the following things: connections (similarities) between the world of the psalmist and ours, developments that have occurred since the time of the original message, and contemporary applications.*

#### 3.1. Connections

First, consider what "connections" (similarities) you see between the experience of the author or original audience of the psalm and what you sometimes experience.

You may never have been in a situation exactly like the author of Psalm 42, but maybe you have been unable to attend worship as often as you would like, or unable to attend a church where the worship was meaningful to you. Furthermore, think about Christians in some other countries where public worship is not legal. How about the fact that people were making fun of the author? How about the fact that he was probably being persecuted in some way.

*What "connections" can you make with the author of Psalm 42 and his audience?*

#### 3.2. Developments

Secondly, what "developments" have occurred between the time period of the original audience and your contemporary context that are important to remember as you study this psalm?

For this process, we need to consider the following: a) any biblical elaborations made on the text throughout the Scriptures, any other passages that comment on it, b) any broader epochal changes, such as changes from one period of the Bible to another, especially differences between the Old Testament and the New Testament, and c) cultural changes, things that make our world different from the world at that time.

We will give some suggestions for Psalm 42:

Notice verse 4:

These things I remember, as I pour out my soul: how I would go with the throng and lead them in procession to the house of God with glad shouts and songs of praise, a multitude keeping festival.

Where did they need to go to experience the special presence of God at the time this psalm was written? To the temple, right?

Now consider this:

What has changed since then in the way we can experience the special presence of God? Think of what happened in the temple when Jesus died.

And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit. And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom.... (Matthew 27:50-51).

Hebrews 20:19-22 explains the privilege we have now:

Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

*What has changed?*

Notice also verse 9 of Psalm 42:

I say to God, my rock: "Why have you forgotten me?"

When he says, "Why have you forgotten me?", does this remind you of something Jesus said on the cross?

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Matthew 27:46

*What did Christ do to make it possible for us to be in God's presence?*

*Are there any other important developments that come to your mind?*

### **3.3. Contemporary Application**

Now to finalize the study of Psalm 42, consider ways in which the psalm applies to our contemporary context.

Think of the needs around you, of society, of your church, of your family, and of yourself. What does this Psalm teach us today?

*Write down your thoughts.*

Remember the three areas:

concepts

behavior

emotions

*Summarize the one most important contemporary application that you find*