

Psalm 43:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

O send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles.

Analysis

O send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles. This verse shifts from complaint and plea to specific petition for divine guidance. Following protests about oppression and deceit (43:1-2), the psalmist asks God to intervene through His light and truth—personified attributes that will guide him back to worship. The verse anticipates God's response to the soul's distress expressed throughout Psalms 42-43.

"O send out thy light" (shelach-orkha, שְׁלַח־אַרְכָּה) is urgent imperative. Shalach means to send forth, dispatch, release. Or means light—symbol of guidance, revelation, deliverance, divine presence. Throughout Scripture, light represents God's nature (1 John 1:5: "God is light"), His word (Psalm 119:105: "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path"), His salvation (Isaiah 9:2: "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light"), and His presence (Psalm 27:1: "The LORD is my light and my salvation"). The psalmist asks God to dispatch His light as guide through present darkness.

"And thy truth" (va'amitekha, וְאַמְתָּחָה) pairs with light. Emet means truth, faithfulness, reliability, fidelity. This is not abstract philosophical truth but relational faithfulness—God's trustworthy character and reliable promises. Exodus 34:6 reveals God as "abundant in goodness and truth [emet]." Psalm 25:5 prays: "Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation." Truth here encompasses both revelation (what is true) and faithfulness (who is trustworthy). The psalmist needs both illumination to see the path and assurance

that the path is reliable.

"Let them lead me" (hemah yanchuni, הַמָּה יַנְחַנִּי) personifies light and truth as guides. Nachah means to lead, guide, conduct—often used of shepherds leading flocks or God guiding His people. Exodus 15:13 celebrates: "Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed." Psalm 23:2-3 describes the Lord as shepherd who "leadeth me beside the still waters" and "leadeth me in the paths of righteousness." The dual "them" (light and truth) suggests two guides or two aspects of single divine guidance—illumination and reliability working together.

"Let them bring me unto thy holy hill" (viviuni el-har qodshekha, וְבִיאוּ אֵל-הַר-קֹדֶשׁ) specifies the destination. Bo means to bring, lead to, cause to arrive. "Thy holy hill" refers to Mount Zion, Jerusalem's temple mount where God's presence dwelt. Psalm 2:6 declares: "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion." Psalm 15:1 asks: "LORD, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill?" The psalmist, separated from Jerusalem, longs for restoration to worship's center.

"And to thy tabernacles" (ve'el-mishkenotekha, וְאֵל-מִשְׁקָנוֹתֶךָ) extends the destination. Mishkan means dwelling place, tabernacle. The plural form may indicate:

1. various sacred precincts within temple complex
2. plural of majesty emphasizing grandeur
3. multiple dwelling places of God (heavenly and earthly).

The word connects to shakan (to dwell, abide), emphasizing God's presence dwelling among His people. The tabernacles represent not merely physical structures but the place where God meets His people in worship.

Historical Context

The imagery of light and truth as guides has deep biblical roots. During wilderness wandering, God led Israel by pillar of cloud by day and pillar of fire by night (Exodus 13:21-22)—visible manifestations of divine guidance. The Urim and Thummim, priestly instruments for discerning God's will, were associated with

"light and truth" (some scholars connect Urim with "lights" and Thummim with "truths," though etymology is debated). Moses pleaded: "If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence" (Exodus 33:15)—preferring desert with God's presence over Promised Land without it.

Mount Zion became Israel's spiritual center after David captured Jerusalem and brought the ark there (2 Samuel 6). Solomon built the temple on this holy hill (1 Kings 6-8). Three annual pilgrimage festivals brought Israelites to Jerusalem to worship. For exiles or those separated from Jerusalem, inability to worship at the temple created profound spiritual crisis. Psalm 137:1 laments: "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion."

The sons of Korah, this psalm's authors, were Levitical musicians whose identity centered on temple worship. Separation from their calling—leading worship in God's house—meant separation from life's purpose. Their cry for restoration to God's holy hill wasn't merely nostalgia but vocational and spiritual necessity. Compare Levites in exile (Ezekiel 1:1): Ezekiel's vision of God's glory came "by the river of Chebar"—God meeting him far from temple, demonstrating His presence transcended geography while the longing for restoration remained.

Christian interpretation sees Christ fulfilling light and truth imagery. Jesus declared: "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12). He claimed: "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). Christ embodies the light and truth the psalmist requested, personally guiding believers to the Father. The holy hill finds fulfillment in "mount Sion" of Hebrews 12:22-24—heavenly Jerusalem where believers already participate through Christ. The tabernacles become believers themselves—individually (1 Corinthians 6:19) and corporately (Ephesians 2:21-22) as God's dwelling place.

For contemporary believers, this verse models prayer for divine guidance. The specific petition—send light and truth, guide me, bring me to your presence—provides framework for seeking God's direction. The destination remains worship ("thy holy hill," "thy tabernacles"), reminding that guidance's ultimate purpose is restored relationship and worship, not merely resolution of problems.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. What does it mean for God's light and truth to 'lead' you? How do illumination and faithfulness work together in divine guidance?
2. How does Jesus fulfill the roles of light and truth that the psalmist requests?
3. What is the relationship between seeking guidance and desiring worship? How does the psalmist's destination (God's holy hill) shape the nature of his petition?
4. In what ways might believers today be 'separated from the holy hill'— distanced from worship, community, or God's felt presence?
5. How can you cultivate sensitivity to divine guidance through both illumination (insight, understanding) and truth (God's reliable character and promises)?

Interlinear Text

אֶל יְבִיא וְנִי שְׁלַח אָוֶרֶב אֶת אֶמְתָּבָב הַמָּה יְנַח וְנִי H1992 let them lead me let them bring H413
O send out thy light and thy truth H216 H571 H5148 H935

מִשְׁכָנֹתֶיךָ וְאֶל קְרָב קְדַשְׁךָ הַלְּכָה
hill me unto thy holy and to thy tabernacles H413 H6944 H4908

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 36:9 (Light): For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light.

John 1:4 (Light): In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

Psalms 143:10 (Parallel theme): Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God: thy spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness.

Psalms 119:105 (Light): Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

Psalms 84:1 (Temple): How amiable are thy tabernacles, O LORD of hosts!

Psalms 40:11 (Truth): Withhold not thou thy tender mercies from me, O LORD: let thy lovingkindness and thy truth continually preserve me.

Psalms 97:11 (Light): Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart.

John 1:17 (Truth): For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

Micah 7:20 (Truth): Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old.

Psalms 3:4 (Holy): I cried unto the LORD with my voice, and he heard me out of his holy hill. Selah.