

Psalm 63:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips:

Analysis

My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips. This verse employs rich culinary imagery to describe spiritual satisfaction. The Hebrew deshen vachelev (דְּשֵׁן וְחַלְבָּן, "marrow and fatness") refers to the choicest, most luxurious foods—the richest portions of meat, including bone marrow and fat considered delicacies in ancient Near Eastern cuisine. These were celebration foods, feast foods, foods reserved for special occasions.

David uses this metaphor to describe the soul's satisfaction in God. The verb tisba (תִּשְׁבָּה, "shall be satisfied") means to be filled, to have appetite completely met, to want for nothing more. Despite physical deprivation in the wilderness—likely living on meager rations, surviving day-to-day—David testifies to spiritual abundance. His soul experiences feast-level satisfaction through relationship with God, even when his body experiences famine-level scarcity. This demonstrates that spiritual realities can sustain us when physical circumstances fail.

The comparison is deliberate: **as with** marrow and fatness, not literally but analogously. God Himself becomes the soul's feast. Earlier (v.1) David described thirst and longing; here he describes that thirst quenched, that longing fulfilled. The progression models prayer's movement from need to satisfaction, from hunger to fullness. God doesn't merely provide what we need; He satisfies completely, filling us with joy that surpasses physical pleasures.

"My mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips" (siftey rananot yehalel-kha pi, שְׁפָתִי רָנָנוֹת יְהָלֵל-פִּי) indicates that satisfied souls produce joyful worship. Rananot means ringing cries of joy, jubilant shouts. Halal (the root of "hallelujah") means to praise, celebrate, boast in. The structure suggests causation: satisfaction produces praise. When souls feast on God, mouths overflow with worship. This isn't manufactured enthusiasm but organic response to experiencing God's goodness.

Historical Context

In ancient Israel's sacrificial system, certain portions of animals were reserved for priests (Leviticus 7:31-34)—the breast and right thigh were priestly portions. The fat portions were burned as offerings to God, considered the choicest parts (Leviticus 3:16—"all the fat is the LORD's"). Israelites ate meat primarily during festivals and sacrifices, making it a celebratory food rather than daily fare. For most of Israel's history, the common diet consisted of bread, lentils, vegetables, and occasional meat—making David's metaphor of marrow and fatness particularly vivid as a symbol of luxury and abundance.

The imagery recalls the messianic banquet prophesied in Isaiah 25:6—"And in this mountain shall the LORD of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined." This eschatological feast represents God's ultimate provision for His people—abundance, celebration, satisfaction beyond all earthly comparison. David's psalm participates in this prophetic hope, tasting in present experience what will be fully realized in God's kingdom.

For Israel in exile or under foreign oppression, this psalm offered hope that spiritual satisfaction could transcend political and economic hardship. When Babylon destroyed the temple and carried Israel away, physical feasting ceased. But the exilic community learned to feast spiritually on God's Word and presence, maintaining joy in adverse circumstances. Psalm 63 modeled this resilience—finding fullness in God when earthly securities vanish.

Jesus's teaching echoes this theme: "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled" (Matthew 5:6). He identified Himself

as the bread of life (John 6:35) and invited the hungry to come eat without money or price (Isaiah 55:1-2). The Lord's Supper institutionalizes this spiritual feast—bread and wine representing Christ's body and blood, the soul's true nourishment. What David experienced anticipatorily, Christians experience in Christ—souls satisfied not with earthly abundance but with divine presence.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How can the soul experience 'marrow and fatness' satisfaction in God even when physical circumstances are difficult or deprived?
2. What does it mean for God Himself to be the feast that satisfies your soul, rather than God providing the things you want?
3. How does the progression from thirst (v.1) to satisfaction (v.5) model the pattern of authentic prayer and worship?
4. What obstacles prevent modern believers from experiencing soul-level satisfaction in God rather than constantly craving more earthly pleasures?
5. How does satisfied worship differ from dutiful or manufactured praise, and what cultivates this joyful satisfaction in God?

Interlinear Text

וְשָׁפֵת יְנַפֵּשׁ כִּי לְבָבִי כִּי כִּמְלֵא
H3644 as with marrow H2459 and fatness H1880 shall be satisfied H7646 My soul H5315 lips H8193

פִּי יְפָלֵל כִּי בְּנֵת וְתָ
thee with joyful H7445 shall praise H1984 and my mouth H6310

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 25:6 (Parallel theme): And in this mountain shall the LORD of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined.

Psalms 135:3 (Resurrection): Praise the LORD; for the LORD is good: sing praises unto his name; for it is pleasant.

Psalms 17:15 (Parallel theme): As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.

Psalms 43:4 (Resurrection): Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy: yea, upon the harp will I praise thee, O God my God.

Psalms 71:23 (Parallel theme): My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing unto thee; and my soul, which thou hast redeemed.

Psalms 65:4 (Parallel theme): Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple.

Jeremiah 31:4 (Parallel theme): Again I will build thee, and thou shalt be built, O virgin of Israel: thou shalt again be adorned with thy tabrets, and shalt go forth in the dances of them that make merry.
