

Psalm 13  
The Cry of the Confused

**Introduction:** This is from the 1<sup>st</sup> book of Psalm, which focuses on the suffering of the historical David. It shows how Yahweh's anointed is preserved. Martin Luther said, "Hope despairs and yet despair hopes." Dale Ralph Davis said, "This implies bleak despair may be part of the believing experience. Do you think we ought to let that get out?"

Ronald Allen recounts the following from an experience in his first church as pastor: There was a family that was given an inordinate amount of suffering. The young mother of four children was a lovely woman whose heart was full of love for God. Then she was stricken with a terrible viral infection that settled in her brain. She was hospitalized for months and had numerous tests and operations. Her husband, troubled with her ailment—and the families mounting medical bills—was himself hospitalized for a time because of nerve-induced hives. While I was visiting this young woman one night, she looked at me with a face distorted from medication, her hair shaved off for the next morning's surgery, her body wasting, and her heart troubled for her children and her home. She held my hand, looked into my eyes, and asked a question I will never forget: "Pastor, has God forgotten me?"

**Superscription:** *For the choir director. A Psalm (melody) of David.*

**1) Weary, but still explosive, individual lament—13:1-2**

- FOUR legitimate questions rooted in despair ("How long?" or perhaps better, "how much longer?") This is the longest series of consecutive questions in the Psalms.

a) **His trouble with GOD'S remoteness—13:1**

- i) **Perceived disinterest by God:** *<sup>1</sup> How long [ad-ana], O Yahweh? Will You forget me forever?*

(1) There is no evidence of sin or awareness of guilt. It appears that God is displeased, but why?

(2) We are often more in danger with the drawn-out trials than with the intense short-lived trials. (Andrew Fuller, 1754-1815)

(3) Addressed in 13:5-6.

(4) This seems to be related to God's promise in Ps. 12:5.

- ii) **Perceived avoidance by God to withhold favor:** *How long [ad-ana] will You hide Your face from me?*

(1) withholding practical help

b) **His trouble with HIS OWN indecision—13:2a**

- i) **Real internal turmoil:** <sup>2</sup> *How long [ad-ana] shall I take counsel (seek advice) in my soul, Having sorrow in my heart all the day?*  
(1) Do a short history of the concept of emotions.

(a)

(2) His own solutions to his problems have proven inadequate.

- c) **His trouble with OTHERS' hostility—13:2b**

- i) **Perceived external humiliation:** *How long [ad-ana] will my (anonymous) enemy be exalted over me?*

## 2) **Demonstration of the instinct of faith—13:3-4**

- At the throne of grace, tears fall from your eyes and arguments from your lips. (D. R. Davis)
- a) **Three requests of God** (who appears to not be listening)—13:3a
  - i) **Take careful interest in my situation:** <sup>3</sup> *Look ...*
    - (1) God already possesses perfect knowledge of the situation.
    - ii) **Respond graciously to me:** *and answer me, O Yahweh my God;*
      - (1) Prayed to the God who appears to have hidden Himself.
    - iii) **Restore my perspective:** *Give light to my eyes,*
  - b) **Three reasons for prayer—13:3b-4**
    - i) **Potential loss of life:** *lest I sleep the sleep of death,*
    - ii) **Potential loss of security:**
      - (1) <sup>4</sup> *Lest my enemy says, "I have overcome him,"*
      - (2) *And my adversaries rejoice that I am shaken.*

## 3) **Deliberate trust—13:5-6**

- He does not remain in despair.
- a) **What genuine faith looks like—13:5-6a**
  - i) **Confidence in who God is:** <sup>5</sup> *But I* (emphatic, despite the accusations of the enemy) *have trusted [batach] in Your lovingkindness [chesed];*
    - (1) Despite the apparent lack of immediate deliverance.
    - (2) Despite the pressure, the choice is still ours to make, not the enemy's; and God's loyal love remains. (Derek Kidner)
  - ii) **Joy in what God will do:** *My heart shall rejoice [gil] in Your salvation [yeshuah].*
    - (1) He deliberately depends on God for the restoration of his well-being.
  - iii) **Singing** (praising God) **for what God has already done:** <sup>6</sup> *I will sing [shir] to Yahweh,*
    - (1)
- b) **The basis of faith—13:6b** (cf. 13:1-2)

i) *Because He has dealt bountifully* (adequately) [*gama*] *with me.*

**4) Things we need to remember:**

- a) We have troubles with God's timing—we appear to go on in our troubles far longer than we think the mercy of God should allow. (paraphrase of D. R. Davis)
- b) Expressing a complaint is not the same as a lack of trust.
- c) David's circumstances haven't changed, but the Lord has changed him, and that occurred when David stopped looking at his feelings and his foes and by faith started looking to the Lord. (Warren Wiersbe)
- d) Listen carefully to the words of Presbyterian pastor, James Montgomery Boice (1938-2000): If you are suffering from a sense of feeling abandoned by God, which is what this psalm is about, I cannot tell you when the emotional oppression will lift. But it will lift. The curtain of your despair will rise, and behind the veil you will see the blessed Lord Jesus Christ, who has been with you and has loved you all the time.