



## EXPLORE THE BIBLE®

Session 14: God's Presence

Suggested Week of Use: August 31, 2025

Core Passage: Psalm 42:1-11

### News Story Summary

The Ninth of Av (also known as Tisha B'Av) is the Jewish day of mourning to commemorate the destruction of Solomon's Temple by the Babylonians in 586 BC, as well as the destruction of the Second Temple by the Romans in AD 70. This saddest day on the Jewish calendar was marked on August 2-3 when Jewish communities all over the world reflected on suffering in the past and grieved afflictions still occurring. Some Jewish communities began a season of sorrow three weeks earlier, but it ended with this sundown-to-sundown day of fasting. Traditionally, mourning is expressed through chanting or reading from Lamentations, Exodus, and Deuteronomy. It is seen in the fasting and in the dimmed lights and the black veil placed over the box where the Torah is kept. And it is felt while sitting on low stools or on the ground by the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem, which is the last remaining portion of the outer retaining walls that support the Temple Mount, the site of the ancient temples.

For more information on this story, search "2025 Jewish Day of Mourning."

### Engage

To supplement the Engage activities, ask: *Where have you turned for comfort in times of adversity? What verses help when you are struggling with discouragement?* Allow a few volunteers to respond and make a note of the verses they mention. Point out that God's Word has been a source of comfort and encouragement for centuries. Summarize the information about the Ninth of Av, the Jewish day of mourning. Note that we can follow the Jewish example of digging into God's Word when we are feeling overwhelmed. Point out that in Psalm 42 David also struggled to hear God's voice and to feel His presence. Share that his fears and his hope in God were strangely mixed in this psalm. Encourage adults to reflect on their struggles as they study these verses and to ask God to reveal Himself in their pain.

### Challenge

To supplement the Challenge activities, ask: *How did David battle his inner turmoil? What steps can we take to recall God's love and presence in our painful seasons?* Recall that Jewish communities all over the world remember their most difficult times on one specific day a year. Note that many come to the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem because it helps them feel closer to God. Ask: *What helps you feel closer to God in difficult circumstances? How can you follow David's example by seeking God's presence in those storms?* Close in prayer, thanking God for sending His Son and His Spirit so we can worship Him anywhere. Ask God to help each adult feel closer to Him during the week ahead.