

## Psalm 44

**Title:** Past Triumphs and Present Troubles

**Author and Date:** The Sons of Korah

**Key Verses:** Psalm 44:1, 9

**Type:** Communal Lament

### **Outline**

- A. Past triumphs (verses 1-8).
- B. Present troubles (verses 9-22).
- C. Praying trust (verses 23-26).

### **Notes**

Title: “For the Chief Musician. A Psalm of the sons of Korah. Maschil.” See the notes on Psalm 42. The following psalms have this title: Psalm 42, 44-49, 84-85, and 87-88.

Summary: Psalm 44 is a communal lament where the psalmist expresses lament on behalf of the nation of Israel (“Jacob” in verse 4) instead of expressing lament for himself alone (individual lament). Compare Psalm 60 with this psalm. Psalm 44 speaks of Israel’s past triumphs (verses 1-8) and Israel’s present troubles (verses 9-22). God is the source of Israel’s past triumphs (verses 1). He caused Israel’s enemies to be defeated and allowed Israel to possess their land of promise (verses 2-3). God, not the bow or sword, has delivered, and will deliver Israel (verses 4-8). God is also the source of Israel’s present troubles (verse 9). He is causing Israel’s enemies to now triumph over Israel and he is allowing Israel to be reproached by them (verses 10-16). However, during these present troubles, the psalmist (speaking for himself and Israel) will remain faithful to God (verses 17-22) and he will have a confident trust in God that God will save Israel (verses 23-26). It was God that saved Israel in the past (verses 4-8) and it is God who will save Israel in the present (verses 23-26).

Verse 1: Note the “we” here. The psalmist speaks on behalf of Israel using the pronouns “we,” “us”, and “our” throughout the psalm. Only in verses 4, 6, and 15 does the psalmist refer to himself individually (“my”).

Verse 2: This verse contains antithetic parallelism where the first line stands in contrast to the second; the third in contrast to the fourth. The book of Joshua records how God drove out the nations when Israel conquered Canaan.

Verse 3: The “light of thy countenance” is symbolic of God’s blessings (Psa. 4:6; 89:15).

Verse 5: “Thy name” is all that God is and stands for; all that God has revealed about himself.

Verse 8: For the meaning of “Selah,” see the notes on Psalm 3. This particular “Selah” marks a major turning point in the psalm between the past and the present.

Verse 9: We are not given the specifics of the occasion for the present troubles mentioned in verses 9-16. Some commentators see in these verses the Babylonian captivity (see verses 11 and 14); others see some specific military defeat in the days of David (1 K. 11:15-17) or one of the later kings (2 K. 18; 2 Chron. 20:1-19). One cause for these troubles may be that God is punishing the people for their sin (Lev. 26:14-33; Deut. 4:27; 28:64; Josh. 7:8,12). However, verses 17-18 indicate that the people as a whole are innocent. The troubles, therefore, may be coming from God for the purpose of discipline, or suffering for righteousness’ sake (compare Paul’s use of verse 22 in Romans 8:36).

Verse 16: An example of this can be found in the Assyrian invasion of 2 Kings 19:6, 22.

Verse 18: The same protests of innocence found here can be found by Job (Job 23:11).

Verse 20: “Spread forth our hands” is a gesture of prayer.

Verse 22: This verse is quoted by Paul in Romans 8:36 and applied to suffering Christians.

Verse 23-24: When God allows his people to experience trouble, he is described as sleeping (Psa. 78:65), casting off his people (Psa. 77:7), hiding his face (Psa. 88:14), and forgetting Israel (Psa. 42:9).

Verse 25: “Our soul is bowed down to the dust” is a figure of speech indicating humility (Psa. 119:25).

## **Questions**

1. What does the psalmist hear about concerning God from his fore-fathers (verse 1)?
2. What did God do in the past to the nations and to Israel (verse 2)?
3. How did Israel possess their land in the past and why did they possess it (verse 3)?
4. How does the psalmist describe God and what will God do to the adversaries (verses 4-5)?

5. What does the psalmist not trust in and who does the psalmist boast in (verses 6-8)?
6. What is presently happening to Israel during the time of battle (verses 9-10)?
7. What is presently happening to Israel with reference to the nations (verses 11-14)?
8. What is the psalmist presently experiencing (verses 15-16)?
9. How is Israel acting toward God during their present troubles (verses 17-18)?
10. What description does the psalmist give concerning the present troubles they are experiencing from the hand of God (verse 19)?
11. What will God search out and know (verses 20-21)?
12. What further description does the psalmist give concerning the present troubles (verse 22)?
13. What questions does the psalmist ask the Lord regarding the present troubles (verses 23-24)?
14. What final description does the psalmist give concerning the present troubles (verse 25)?
15. What closing request does the psalmist have for God (verse 26)?

## **Applications for Today**

1. It is important to tell the next generation the mighty works of God (verses 1-2). What must be passed on (2 Tim. 2:1-2)?
2. We must put our trust in God, not in self; make God our King (verses 3-8). What are we to glory in and where are we to put our trust (Jer. 9:23-24; 1 Cor. 1:29-31; 3:21)?
3. Sometimes God's people suffer for righteousness' sake (verses 9-16). What promise did Jesus give his followers concerning persecution (Mt. 5:10-12)? How are Christians like Christ (Jn. 15:20)? What do the godly experience (2 Tim. 3:12)? How did Peter say to suffer (1 Pet. 3:17; 4:14-16)?
4. Troubles, trials, and tribulations are no excuse for unfaithfulness to God (verses 17-19). How are Christians to live during times of tribulation (Rom. 5:3-5)?
5. It will do us no good to forget God or turn to false gods in time of trouble (verses 20-21). What did faithful Christians do in times of persecution and trouble (Rev. 12:17; 14:12)?
6. When the righteous suffer they feel like sheep led to the slaughter (verse 22). What did Jeremiah say about himself (Jer. 11:19)? How did Paul use Psalm 44:22 (Rom. 8:36)?
7. We should cry out to God for help in time of need (verses 23-26). What is prayer for (Heb. 4:16)?