



Rise Up and Help Us O Lord!

Psalm 44 For the Leader. Of the sons of Korah, a Maskil

Introduction:

This is a community petition; it begins with a hymn about God's past deliverance (verses 2-9), followed by a complaint about the current situation (verse 10-17). An emphatic declaration of innocence (verses 18-23) and the petition itself (verses 24-27) conclude the psalm.

Outline

1. Our Ancestors trusted You, God, for victory and You granted it (44:1-3)

The Psalm opens with a tradition coming down from the time of Moses and of Joshua which they have heard with their own ears, to demonstrate the vast distance between the character of the former times and the present (KeilDelitzsch).

Much of the early history of Israel was doubtless preserved by oral tradition for a long period before it was committed to writing (see Deut. 4:9-10; 6:4-7, 20; Psa. 78:3-4; 1 Cor. 15:1-3; 2 Tim. 1:5; 2:2) . Not their own valour but God's help and favor gave Israel possession of the land (Vv. 2-3)

2. We also trusted You, God, for victory and You granted it (44:4-8)

It is the duty of the king to defend his people (1 Sam. 10:19).

The king (44:4) and then the people (44:5) acknowledge that God is the source of any victories (salvation) over their foes.

Both people and king affirm in their praise that God is the one deserving credit for any victory they experience (44:8)

3. But now You have rejected us (44:9-16)

The words "But now" introduces a radical shift in the tone and content of the Psalm.

In verses 1-8 all had been confidence and assurance. As Israel's ancestors had experienced God's powerful support in battle with their enemies, so the present community of faith could anticipate his engagement in their behalf. But Israel's experience did not live up to her expectation.

4. But we have not rejected You (44:17-22)

The real reason for the community's dismay not their unfaithfulness to God (44:17-21)

It is for God's sake (44:22; see Rom. 8:36)

5. Rise up! Help us! (44:23-26)

An urgent plea for God's immediate help.

Confident of their own innocence in covenant obligations, the psalmist and his community call on God to respond with the sort of unflinching love (hesed) that characterizes his covenant relationship with his people.

Lesson: There is an immense mystery in God and His ways, but we must continue to trust and to pray.