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## Psalm 44

(2019)

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Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

## Psalm 44.

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### Topics.

- Our fathers have told us, the great deeds you performed in days of old.
- I trust not in my bow or my sword to save me, but in the LORD.
- You have rejected us and not gone out with our armies.
- We have not forgotten you or broken your law yet you have broken us.
- Why are you sleeping, O LORD? Do not reject us forever.

**FOR INFORMATION:** concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: "Map Locations and People of the Bible," and the title: "Bible Dictionary" on Website Menu.

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### INTRODUCTION

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Psalms are songs and prayers offered to God by the nation Israel, they cover the range of human emotion, expressing praise, faith, victory, sorrow, despair, depression, frustration and the troubled heart of a mourner. They contrast the righteous with the wicked, and include the wisdom and the treasure of God's word. Psalms were written at the beginning of the 15th century BC and probably collected in their final form in the 3rd century.

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### BOOK TWO (PSALM 42-72)

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### PSALM 44:1-3

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To the Choirmaster. A Maskil of the Sons of Korah.

#### **Our Fathers have Told us, the Great Deeds you Performed.**

- **Psalm 44:1-3:** O God, we have heard with our ears, our fathers have told us, what deeds you performed in their days, in the days of old: <sup>2</sup>you with your own hand drove out the nations, but them you planted; you afflicted the peoples, but them you set free; <sup>3</sup>for not by their own sword did they win the land, nor did their own arm save them, but your right hand and your arm, and the light of your face, for you delighted in them.

These verses refer to the great deeds God did when He gave the armies of Israel great victories over their enemies and established them in the Promised Land, and the seasons of times the kings, priests, prophets and people of Israel did what was right in the eyes of God and He delighted in them.

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### PSALM 44:4-8

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#### **I trust Not in My Bow or My Sword to Save Me, but in the LORD.**

- **Psalm 44:4-8:** You are my King, O God; ordain salvation for Jacob! <sup>5</sup>Through you we push down our foes; through your name we tread down those who rise up against us. <sup>6</sup>For not in my bow do I trust, nor can my sword save me. <sup>7</sup>But you have saved us from our foes and have put to shame those who hate us. <sup>8</sup>In God we have boasted continually, and we will give thanks to your name forever. *Selah*

The writer appears to be a leader of Israel praying for the nation of Israel. His faith is solely set upon God as his King and he credits God for all their victories over their enemies.

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## PSALM 44:9-16

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### **You Have Rejected Us and Not Gone Out with Our Armies.**

- **Psalm 44:9-16:** 16: But you have rejected us and disgraced us and have not gone out with our armies. <sup>10</sup>You have made us turn back from the foe, and those who hate us have gotten spoil. <sup>11</sup>You have made us like sheep for slaughter and have scattered us among the nations. <sup>12</sup>You have sold your people for a trifle, demanding no high price for them. <sup>13</sup>You have made us the taunt of our neighbors, the derision and scorn of those around us. <sup>14</sup>You have made us a byword among the nations, a laughingstock among the peoples. <sup>15</sup>All day long my disgrace is before me, and shame has covered my face <sup>16</sup>at the sound of the taunter and reviler, at the sight of the enemy and the avenger.

It is safe to suppose that verses refer to the following three periods of time:

1. When the fierce armies of Assyria invaded the land of Israel (the ten tribes in Samaria) and destroyed their homes and farms and laid their land waste and took the people into captivity.
2. When the mighty armies of Babylon invaded the land of Judah and attacked and burnt the city of Jerusalem and pillaged the Temple of God of all its scared items and it gold, silver and precious jewels and took the people captive to Babylon.
3. When the armies of Babylon conquered Assyria and the Empire of Babylon ruled over the ten tribes taken captive by Assyria and the two tribes taken by Babylon for seventy years

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The reason the LORD allowed Assyria and Babylon to have such a great victory over his people was because they had set their hearts diamond hard against the faithful prophets and the word of God. Following is a list of sins that permeated the land of Judah, Israel and Jerusalem: throughout their generations. Unrestrained these sins eventually became like a contagious virus running rampant throughout the land of Judah, Israel and Jerusalem. They defiled God's Holy name and their own land by their lifestyle, deeds and actions. They committed gross idolatry and Baal altars were set up throughout their land. They worshipped the goddess of love and fertility (her worship was sexually indecent). Worse than this they worshipped Moloch and sacrificed their sons to him in the Hinnom valley.

They worshipped a golden calf at a religious centre at Dan and at a religious centre at Bethel. Altars were set up in the temple court for planetary worship and the worship of the host of heaven (i.e., the sun, moon and stars) and worship of idols and altars had been built under shady trees on their hills throughout their land. Added to this innocent people were killed and cheated out of justice, leaders oppressed others for their own selfish gain and drunkenness, violence, robbery and gross sensuality was rampant. The rich cheated the innocent out of justice, and showed no sense of responsibility towards the poor and instead of relieving their economic distress they devised new means of depriving them of their property. Is it any wonder the LORD compares Israel's ways to the uncleanness of a woman in her menstrual impurity? (Ezek. 36:17) and poured out His wrath upon Judah, Israel and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

**The lesson for today:** by wicked behaviour Israel defiled the name of God which resulted in the surrounding nations mocking and despising God. This shines a light on the following truth: the behaviour of everyone who confesses the name of God and Christ His Son will determine to some

extent whether outsiders are drawn to God or to despise Him. We are not witnesses to the Lord only when we are sharing our faith with another person our entire life is a witness to our faith and of God it can be a good witness or a bad witness.

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## PSALM 44:17-22

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### **We have Not Forgotten You, Though You have Broken Us.**

- **Psalm 44:17-22:** All this has come upon us, though we have not forgotten you, and we have not been false to your covenant. <sup>18</sup>Our heart has not turned back, nor have our steps departed from your way; <sup>19</sup>yet you have broken us in the place of jackals and covered us with the shadow of death. <sup>20</sup>If we had forgotten the name of our God or spread out our hands to a foreign god, <sup>21</sup>would not God discover this? For he knows the secrets of the heart. <sup>22</sup>Yet for your sake we are killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.

At first glance it appears that the LORD has brought all this trouble and despair upon Israel for no justified reason since it seems according to the writer, they have done nothing to deserve it, but this is not the case. God being a God of Holiness and justice would never bring such destruction upon His people without a very justified reason. The key to understanding the writers' words is to realise it was probably written sometime near the end of the seventy-year Babylonian captivity. During this period of time God moulded the two nations like a master potter moulds a beautiful clay jar. Israel (the ten nations) and Judah (the two nations) went into Babylonian captivity as two unfaithful and rebellious nations that had turned away from the LORD to idols and other gods and while in captivity God moulded them into one united nation faithful to the only true God the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

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## PSALM 44:23-26

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### **Why Are You Sleeping, O Lord? Do Not Reject Us Forever.**

- **Psalm 44:23-26:** Awake! Why are you sleeping, O Lord? Rouse yourself! Do not reject us forever! <sup>24</sup>Why do you hide your face? Why do you forget our affliction and oppression? <sup>25</sup>For our soul is bowed down to the dust; our belly clings to the ground. <sup>26</sup>Rise up; come to our help! Redeem us for the sake of your steadfast love!

**Our soul is bowed down to the dust; our belly clings to the ground** (v25) carries the idea of a worm slithering upon the dry dusty ground lacking even strength to lift itself up as it desperately seeks food and water. The writer pleads for the LORD to rise from His sleep and stop hiding His face and forgetting their affliction and oppression. This cry does not mean God has withdrawn his love, mercy, grace and salvation from the faithful, but that He is at this time withholding His blessings and favour toward them in that He is allowing their enemy to oppress them. God used Cyrus (the King of Persia) who He called His anointed shepherd (Isaiah 44:28) and who he took by His right hand (Isaiah 45:1) to answer this prayer and cry of the writer. The armies of Cyrus conquered the Empire of Babylon and gave written permission for Israel to return to Jerusalem. Under Ezra and Nehemiah God brought Israel and Judah back to their beloved city Jerusalem as one united nation faithful to only one God, the LORD their God, the God of Abraham Isaac and Jacob (Israel never turned to idols or pagan gods again) and in this manner the writer's prayer was answered.

**Great encouragement:** there are times when the faithful feel confused and have no idea what God is doing with their life; everything seems to be contrary to how they thought their life would be going as the roaring waves of the ocean roll into the shore never ceasing to crash one upon

another one crisis seems to comes hurtling in upon another. This is how the writer of this Psalm felt, yet he continued to love the LORD, and eventually God's plan for him and the faithful he was praying for was revealed.

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*As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.*

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