

Redemption Remembered in Present Dishonor

Psalm 44:title-26

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Psalm 44 seems to be a national lament that was written following some great but historically unidentifiable defeat in an unknown battle. Through this Psalm there are subtle but sure shifts between speakers of the first-person plural (i.e. “We” and “us” cf. vv. 1-3, 5, 7-14, 17-22) and the first-person singular (i.e. “I” or “my”; c.f. vv. 4, 6, 15-16). This may indicate that the Psalm was originally given antiphonally (with a giving and a response) with alterations coming from both the beaten king/general and his defeated nation. The prayers of vv. 23-26 may have been offered in unison as a climax. By employing the three historic centers in Psalm 44, the psalmist tries to understand and deal with a national tragedy.

We can divide the Psalm into basically three sections:

1. A Focus on Past History: The Shock of National Tragedy (44:1-8)
2. A Focus on Current History: The Inscrutability of the National Tragedy (44:9-22)
3. A Focus on Future History: A Prayer for an End to This National Tragedy (44:23-26).

We should also note that the words of the Title are the same as the words in Psalm 42; however, in the Hebrew text the order is slightly different.

1. Psalm 44:1

¹ *We have heard with our ears, O God, Our fathers have told us,
The deeds You did in their days,
In days of old:*

As we noted, there are a number of verbs in the Psalm that use the first plural sense indicating that the speaker is speaking of the group of which he is a part. The language of the first part of the verse would seem to suggest that this is a continuing of what, in Psalms, was a rich tradition of God’s great acts that the nation’s fathers had passed along and that David had taken up to declare the glory of God. This tradition involves the rehearsal of the nations’ history and its’ demonstration of a Holy Gods’ interaction with His people. (cp. Ex. 10:1-2, 12:26ff, 13:14ff; Deut. 6:20ff; Josh. 4:6ff; Psa. 78:6).

As we said, the Psalmist here is crying out to God, pleading with Him to deliver His people from this great period of national peril which has caused him (the Psalmist) to take up this great lament (9-21). It is interesting that there are quite a number of writers who have suggested that this period of turmoil could possibly prefigure the coming Tribulation Period.

By way of application we can think of this passage as speaking to us...

1. We can think of it terms of God’s past care for Israel as stimulating the praise (vv. 1–3) and as an example of what needs to be our memory and

rehearsal and lifting up of all that God has done for us and for our loved ones and friends.

2. We can also see it as an example that leads us to praise and worship Him even in the difficult times in our lives, be they defeats or just various degrees of difficulties.
3. We can also see it as that which can stimulate us to the sure confidence that we can have (vv. 4–8) as we ponder that which the Psalmist speak of what the people can have as they bring before the Lord their present defeat and trouble (vv. 9–16)
4. As is obvious to most believers, our prime course of action is similar to what is portrayed as what they were commended to do - petition the Lord God for assistance and deliverance (vv. 17–26).

There is nothing better for us than what David says here to his people and, by means of the avenue that God gave him as Prophet and writer of His Word. We can think of them in ideas that, because they are ours in short basic ways:

1. Remember and Rehearse
2. Render Praise and Worship
3. Respond with Confidence
4. Render Prayer to the God Who Responds