

## Introduction

There are Psalms which express what it's like to be disciplined because of sin or doing things one's own way, and there are Psalms which express what it's like to experience evil or injustice undeservedly. In this Psalm is expressed the situation of what it's like in times of spiritual testing which may come about even though we have continued to walk faithfully in the Lord. The Psalmist here notes what we may feel during those times when physical circumstances are contrary to our spiritual walk.

## Read verses 1-3

<sup>1</sup>O God, we have heard with our ears,  
Our fathers have told us  
The work that You did in their days,  
In the days of old.  
<sup>2</sup>You with Your own hand drove out the nations;  
Then You planted them;  
You afflicted the peoples,  
Then You spread them abroad.  
<sup>3</sup>For by their own sword they did not possess the land,  
And their own arm did not save them,  
But Your right hand and Your arm and the light of Your presence,  
For You favored them.

**Q: What is specifically being referred to here?**

A: The conquest of Canaan and the possession of the Promised Land by Israel.

**Q: What is the main theme being addressed?**

A: What God accomplished in the past:

1. "...Your hand drove out..." (v.2)
2. "...You planted..." (v.2)
3. "...You affected..." (v.2)
4. "...Your right hand...Your arm..." (v.3)
5. "...Your presence..." (v.3)
6. "...You favored..." (v.3)

**Q: What is the important point being made concerning man's role in these events?**

A: According to v.3 it's that none of this came about by their own strength or will, but only in concert with God's grace.

**Application:** Past success came about not by the **works** of man but the **working** of God.

- When we look back at times when we think there was great spiritual growth or revival, how well do we separate what were the works of men vs. the reality of the working of God?
- Do we mistakenly believe we can change circumstances on our own for better or worse?
- How is true spiritual success achieved?

<sup>4</sup>You are my King, O God;  
Command victories for Jacob.  
<sup>5</sup>Through You we will push back  
our adversaries;  
Through Your name we will  
trample down those who rise  
up against us.  
<sup>6</sup>For I will not trust in my bow,  
Nor will my sword save me.  
<sup>7</sup>But You have saved us from our  
adversaries,  
And You have put to shame  
those who hate us.  
<sup>8</sup>In God we have boasted all day  
long,  
And we will give thanks to Your  
name forever. Selah.

<sup>9</sup>Yet You have rejected us and  
brought us to dishonor,  
And do not go out with our  
armies.  
<sup>10</sup>You cause us to turn back from  
the adversary;  
And those who hate us have  
taken spoil for themselves.  
<sup>11</sup>You give us as sheep to be  
eaten  
And have scattered us among  
the nations.  
<sup>12</sup>You sell Your people cheaply,  
And have not profited by their  
sale.  
<sup>13</sup>You make us a reproach to our  
neighbors,  
A scoffing and a derision to  
those around us.  
<sup>14</sup>You make us a byword among  
the nations,  
A laughingstock among the  
peoples.

## Read verses 4-8

**Q: How do these verses build upon the framework of the previous verses?**

A: These verses take the past tense of the previous verses and apply them in the present tense.

**Point:** *Just as the Lord was sovereign and in control in the past, so is He now; just as He provided victory in the past, so He is able to provide it now; just as the outcome was in God's hands then, so it is the present.*

**Application:** *Just as the Lord was **sovereign** and in **control** in the past, so is He now; just as He provided **victory** in the past, so is able to provide it now; just as the **outcome** was in God's hands then, so is the present.*

- *Just as past spiritual endeavors could not have been successful without God, neither can the present ones. How do we ensure that the things we desire and undertake are actually subject to His will and ways and not simply our own desires being played out?*

## Read verses 9-16

**Q: So although the first section contrasted God's ability to bring victory in the past to present in the second section, what do we find is the actual situation in the present?**

A: They are not being led to victory, but instead experiencing defeat and failure.

**Q: Who is causing this to happen?**

A: God, the same one credited with bringing victory in the past:

1. "...You have rejected us..." (v.9)
2. "You cause us to turn back..." (v.10)
3. "You give us as sheep..." (v.11)
4. "You sell Your people..." (v.12)
5. "You make us a reproach..." (v.13)
6. "You make us a byword..." (v.14)

**Q: What is the greater spiritual lesson being taught here?**

A: God is in control of the circumstances whether they're "positive" and leading to victory or "negative" and inducing testing and trials.

**Application:** *We cannot make a judgment about what is happening based solely on the **circumstances**. It is the same God in charge regardless of external **appearances** one way or the other.*

### Psalm 44 • In the Midst of It, Page 2 of 4

<sup>15</sup>All day long my dishonor is  
before me  
And my humiliation has  
overwhelmed me,  
<sup>16</sup>Because of the voice of him  
who reproaches and reviles,  
Because of the presence of the  
enemy and the avenger.

<sup>17</sup>All this has come upon us, but  
we have not forgotten You,  
And we have not dealt falsely  
with Your covenant.  
<sup>18</sup>Our heart has not turned back,  
And our steps have not deviated  
from Your way,  
<sup>19</sup>Yet You have crushed us in a  
place of jackals  
And covered us with the shadow  
of death.

### Read verses 17-19

**Q: How are God's people holding on during this crisis?**

A: By holding firmly to His Word ("Your covenant") from the heart.

**Point:** Regardless of external conditions – good or bad – the overwhelming consideration is to remain spiritually faithful to God's Word and ways.

**Q: What is the author trying to express in v.19?**

A: This is a dramatic way of expressing the fact that in spite of experiencing the worst circumstances imaginable, they are still remaining faithful to God.

**Application:** Regardless of external **conditions** – good or bad – the overwhelming consideration is to remain spiritually **faithful** to God's **Word** and **ways**.

- Do we believe that is we're "good" that we won't experience bad things in life or that we won't have to be tested?
- Do we recognize that in every circumstance – good or bad – God is effecting something greater in our life spiritually?

<sup>20</sup>If we had forgotten the name  
of our God  
Or extended our hands to a  
strange god,  
<sup>21</sup>Would not God find this out?  
For He knows the secrets of the  
heart.  
<sup>22</sup>But for Your sake we are killed  
all day long;  
We are considered as sheep to  
be slaughtered.  
<sup>23</sup>Arouse Yourself, why do You  
sleep, O LORD?  
Awake, do not reject us forever.  
<sup>24</sup>Why do You hide Your face  
And forget our affliction and our  
oppression?  
<sup>25</sup>For our soul has sunk down  
into the dust;  
Our body cleaves to the earth.  
<sup>26</sup>Rise up, be our help,  
And redeem us for the sake of  
Your lovingkindness.

## Read verses 20-26

**Q: How might this last section compliment what was expressed in the opening sections?**

A: Whereas the opening sections acknowledge nothing can come about except by God's hand, so it is again confirmed here. God is acknowledged as having been in control in the past, and regardless of how things look now He is still in control.

**Q: So what is the true test that is taking place here?**

A: They know God can bring victory but they have yet to glimpse it. They are still in the midst of the test from which they desire to yet be rescued.

**Q: What are the questions in verses 23 & 24 actually asking?**

A: It's a dramatic way of asking how long these trials will continue.

**Point:** *It's OK to speak frankly to God in times of trial, especially in the course of seeking His grace and strength to get through it.*

**Q: What is the quality of God's character to which they ultimately appeal?**

A: "Your lovingkindness", which is the Old Testament term for God's grace.

**Application:** *It is not a test of **knowledge** but **faith**; it is not an issue of personal **strength** or **circumstances** but God's **grace**.*

## Overall Application

- That which God has accomplished for us in the past is supposed to serve as the basis for the quality of our trust in Him where the present is concerned.
- It does not matter whether the present situation is "good" or "bad", God is in control regardless.
- It all ultimately comes down to the issue of God's grace, which should actually be of extreme comfort to Believers.