

PSALMS OF THE SONS OF KORAH

ARISE AND REDEEM US!:  
PSALM 44

*Be Still*

**And Know That I Am God**

I will be exalted among the nations  
I will be exalted in the earth!

Psalm 46:10

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T. M. and Susie Moore

*A Scriptorium Study*

**The Fellowship of Ailbe**

Psalms of the Sons of Korah: Arise and Redeem Us!

Psalm 44

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## Introduction to Psalm 44

Psalms 42 and 43 of the sons of Korah spoke to personal distress and the urgent need for God. Psalm 44 takes that up to the next level, calling on God to see the troubles threatening His people and to bring revival to the nation.

Here we learn the value of looking back on the works of God in history, as well as of continuing to look forward to the fulfillment of His promises. God will not fail, but we must be honest about where we are and our need for repentance. Then we can call on Him to revive and redeem us in the sure expectation that He will.

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May the Lord bless your work in this study, that you may grow to know Him better, love Him more, and serve Him more joyfully.

T. M. and Susie Moore

## 1      Something to Think About

*Opening Prayer: Psalm 44.1, 2, 23-26*

We have heard with our ears, O God,  
Our fathers have told us,  
The deeds You did in their days,  
In days of old:  
You drove out the nations with Your hand,  
But them You planted;  
You afflicted the peoples, and cast them out...  
Awake! Why do You sleep, O Lord?  
Arise! Do not cast *us* off forever.  
Why do You hide Your face,  
*And* forget our affliction and our oppression?  
For our soul is bowed down to the dust;  
Our body clings to the ground.  
Arise for our help,  
And redeem us for Your mercies' sake.

*Sing Psalm 44.1, 2, 23-36*

(Faithfulness: [\*Great is Thy Faithfulness\*](#))

O God our ears have heard, ancients have taught us, all that You did for them long years ago,  
how by Your hand You defeated the nations, and to the promised land let Israel go.

*Refrain vv. 23-26*

Rise up, awake, O Lord! Hide not Your face from us,  
see our affliction, our suffering and pain!  
See how our soul is sunk down with oppression;  
Rise up and help and redeem us we pray!

*Read Psalm 44 (don't forget the superscription!)*

*Preparation*

1. For whom was this psalm composed?
2. What kind of psalm is it?

*Meditation*

The mind is one component of the soul, and for that reason, it must be brought into subjection to the Lord and His calling (2 Cor. 10.3-5). If we don't work at training our mind to serve the Lord, other influences will rule it, and it will serve whatever shiny or flashy thing that gets its attention next. Then you become distracted, annoyed, perhaps even confused – all because your environment is ruling your mind rather than your mind being in submission to the Lord.

The key discipline for training the mind to serve Jesus is contemplation. Psalm 44, like Psalm 42 and other of the psalms by the sons of Korah, is written as a “contemplation”. It's a gift to God's people to aid them in shaping their minds for serving Him. The sons of Korah wrote it for the Chief Musician – probably Asaph – so that he would incorporate it into the worship of God's people, and they would all be instructed in the discipline of contemplation.

The word “contemplation” (Hebrew: מַשְׁכִּיל, *maschil*) comes from a root that means to be prudent, attentive, understanding, and wise. It also carries the meaning of “cause to consider” or “give insight” and appears in the superscription of several psalms. These ideas help us understand the discipline of contemplation,

suggesting focused thought, careful consideration, patient waiting, and more. The superscriptions of the psalms should be read as part of the inspired text; they are treated that way in the Hebrew Bible. 2 Samuel 22.1 is the superscription for Psalm 18, and this suggests that all superscriptions should be treated with equal regard.

Psalm 44 is especially included to help in training our mind to think God's thoughts after Him. We who believe in Jesus have the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2.16), and Psalm 44 will teach us how to exercise the discipline of contemplation, so that we can put that mind to God-honoring use.

*Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162*

In conveying the idea of contemplation, the psalmists used terms of remembering: "But we have not forgotten You", and "If we had forgotten the name of our God" (vv. 17, 20).

Several other verses come to mind regarding contemplation and its uses and outcomes:

Daniel was *considering* things when visions of the future came to him. (Dan. 7.8; 8.5)

Joseph was *in thought* about Mary when an angel appeared to him in a dream. (Matt. 1.20)

Jesus *perceived in His spirit* the unguided thinking of the scribes. (Mk. 2.8)

Paul was *considering* the objects of worship of the unbelievers of Athens to ready himself to speak a most memorable sermon. (Acts 17.23)

We too, can consider and think about and perceive as we meditate in God's word and contemplate the Word.

God's Word is pure. (Ps. 119.140)

God's Word is proven. (Ps. 18.30)

God's Word is like a burning fire in our hearts. (Jer. 20.9)

God's Word is from the very beginning. (Jn. 1.1)

God's Word became flesh and dwelt among us. (Jn. 1.14)

God's Word dwells richly in our hearts in wisdom. (Col. 3.16)

God's Word is living and powerful and discerns our thoughts and intents of our hearts. (Heb. 4.12)

God's Son is called The Word of God. (Rev. 19.13)

We will get a vision of Christ in glory, and dream about good actions, perceive wise thoughts, and use creation to share God's goodness, when we stop forgetting, and start remembering to contemplate this wonderful, active Word.

#### *Reflection*

1. How do you understand what it means to contemplate the Word of God? How often do you do this?
2. Why is the Bible such a rich source for contemplation? As we contemplate Scripture, what should we be looking to discern?
3. How can you make contemplating Scripture more a part of your walk with the Lord?

*As to the meaning of the word מַשְׁכִּיל, maskil, it...is sometimes found in the inscription of psalms whose subject is cheerful; but it is more commonly used when the subject treated of is distressing; for it is a singular means of leading us to profit by the instruction of the Lord, when, by subduing the obduracy of our hearts, he brings us under his yoke. John Calvin (1509-1564), Commentary on the Psalm 44*

*Closing Prayer: Psalm 44.17, 18, 23-26*

Spend some time allowing the Lord to search your soul. Meditate on Psalm 139.23, 24. Ask Him to show you any sins, any negligence, or any stubbornness which is keeping you from growing in and serving Him. Call on the Lord to revive you and send you forth in His Name.

*Psalms of the Sons of Korah: Psalm 44*

*Psalm 44.17, 18, 23-26*

(Faithfulness: [\*Great is Thy Faithfulness\*](#))

All this has come on us, but we remember: You are our covenant God and our King!

Turn back our hearts to adore and extol You; Lord, keep our steps as Your praises we sing.

*Refrain vv. 23-26*

Rise up, awake, O Lord! Hide not Your face from us,

See our affliction, our suffering and pain!

See how our soul is sunk down with oppression;

Rise up and help and redeem us we pray!

## 2 Cast Off and Ashamed

*Opening Prayer: Psalm 44.9-11*

But You have cast us off and put us to shame,  
And You do not go out with our armies.  
You make us turn back from the enemy,  
And those who hate us have taken spoil for themselves.  
You have given us up like sheep intended for food,  
And have scattered us among the nations.

*Sing Psalm 44.9-11, 23-26*

(Faithfulness: [\*Great is Thy Faithfulness\*](#))

Ah, but for now in dishonor we languish. Our armies quail while our enemies boast.  
We are as spoil to our foes who despise us; God has forsaken those He loves the most.

*Refrain vv. 23-26*

Rise up, awake, O Lord! Hide not Your face from us,  
See our affliction, our suffering and pain!  
See how our soul is sunk down with oppression;  
Rise up and help and redeem us we pray!

*Read Psalm 44.9-16*

*Preparation*

1. How would you describe the mood of this psalm? Which words in these verses lead you to think that?
2. What seems to be the occasion that prompted the writing of Psalm 44?

*Meditation*

We begin our contemplation of Psalm 44 in the middle, because here is where we find the occasion for the writing of this psalm. In Psalms 42 and 43 the sons of Korah were feeling downcast and disquieted because they considered that God had forgotten them. Here they are speaking on behalf of the whole nation. As God had cast out the pagan peoples of Canaan (v. 2), so now He had cast off His own people (v. 9). Why?

Several terms in these verses call us to slow down and think: put to shame (v. 9); turned back (v. 10); given up, scattered (v. 11); sold for nothing (v. 12); reproach, scorn, derision (v. 13); byword, a shaking of the head among the peoples (v. 14); dishonor, shame (v. 15); reproach and reviling (v. 16). Take a few moments and meditate on each of these. What feelings do you experience as you do? Would you want to continue feeling that way?

This is *not* what God intended for His people (cf. Deut. 4.5-8).

Something had gone wrong in Israel – or was about to. Keeping in mind that this psalm was probably composed when Solomon was king, it's difficult to see how it fits those outwardly glorious times (cf. 1 Kgs. 10). Were the sons of Korah speaking prophetically here? Offering a psalm to use for a later time in Israel's history?

Or did they, like Asaph, see something in the soul of the nation that caused them alarm?

*Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162*

Cast off and ashamed. Sometimes this is caused by others. Sometimes it is self-inflicted.

A situation recorded in the book of Joshua illustrates the second cause. Before the victory at Jericho the

people were told, “by all means abstain from the accursed things, lest you become accursed when you take of the accursed things, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it. But all the silver and gold, and vessels of bronze and iron, *are* consecrated to the LORD; they shall come into the treasury of the LORD” (Josh. 6.18, 19).

So, of course, someone decided that God wasn’t serious about this, or perhaps didn’t really mean what He said – in the same slithery way the serpent said to Eve, “Has God indeed said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?’” (Gen. 3.1). Unbeknownst to the rest of the crowd, Achan “took of the accursed things; so the anger of the LORD burned against the children of Israel” (Josh. 7.2).

And given their stunning victory at Jericho, the people got cocky and decided their next skirmish would be a simple one; so they sent just a few soldiers and were completely routed with the loss of 36 men. Not actually because they were cocky, but because there was sin in the camp.

God addressed this sin plainly: “Israel has sinned, and they have also transgressed My covenant which I commanded them. For they have even taken some of the accursed things, and have both stolen and deceived; and they have also put *it* among their own stuff.” (Yes, God said “stuff”.) “Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, *but* turned *their* backs before their enemies, because they have become doomed to destruction. Neither will I be with you anymore, unless you destroy the accursed from among you” (Josh. 7.11, 12).

These people were experiencing being cast off and ashamed, and it was self-inflicted. Could we be guilty of allowing our own disobedient souls to go there sometimes?

God didn’t like sin in the Old Testament, or the New Testament. And He still doesn’t like it: “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap” (Gal. 6.7). And the good news? “For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life” (Gal. 6.8). Obedience can also be self-inflicted.

Let’s contemplate that!

#### *Reflection*

1. Have you ever heard yourself saying in your soul, “Has God indeed said...?” What should you do at that moment?
2. Did you contemplate each of the terms we listed? What did you learn from that contemplation?
3. How can contemplation like this help to make us more inclined to obey God, and less inclined to sin against Him?

*There is here described such a change as showed not only that God had ceased to exercise towards them his accustomed favor, but also, that he was openly adverse and hostile to his people.* John Calvin (1509-1564), *Commentary on the Psalm 44.9*

#### *Closing Prayer: Psalm 44.12-16*

As you pray these words, contemplate the state of the Church in our world today. Have we become a scorn, a derision, and a byword? Have we dishonored ourselves? Wait on the Lord in silence over these verses, praying slowly and contemplatively. Repent as the Lord leads.

#### *Sing Psalm 44.12-16, 23-26*

(Faithfulness: [\*Great is Thy Faithfulness\*](#))

Sold into sin and reproached by our neighbors, You do not profit from our woeful state. Shame and dishonor o’erwhelm and consume us; mocking and scorn for our sin is our fate.



*Psalms of the Sons of Korah: Psalm 44*

*Refrain vv. 23-26*

Rise up, awake, O Lord! Hide not Your face from us,  
See our affliction, our suffering and pain!  
See how our soul is sunk down with oppression;  
Rise up and help and redeem us we pray!

### 3 Remember the Works of God

*Opening Prayer: Psalm 44.1, 2*

We have heard with our ears, O God,  
Our fathers have told us,  
The deeds You did in their days,  
In days of old:  
You drove out the nations with Your hand,  
But them You planted;  
You afflicted the peoples, and cast them out.

*Sing Psalm 44.1, 2, 23-36*

(Faithfulness: [Great is Thy Faithfulness](#))

O God our ears have heard, ancients have taught us, all that You did for them long years ago,  
how by Your hand You defeated the nations, and to the promised land let Israel go.

*Refrain vv. 23-26*

Rise up, awake, O Lord! Hide not Your face from us,  
see our affliction, our suffering and pain!  
See how our soul is sunk down with oppression;  
Rise up and help and redeem us we pray!

*Read Psalm 44.1-3*

*Preparation*

1. What events in Israel's history were the psalmists recalling in these verses?
2. How did they know about these events?

*Meditation*

Paul explained that we may find comfort by recalling the works of God in the past (Rom. 15.4). In Psalm 44, the people of Israel were – or were about to be – experiencing separation from God and persecution from enemies. At such times, we must turn to the Lord. By remembering His works in the past, we remind ourselves of His faithfulness, greatness, power, and love. Thus we are emboldened and encouraged to seek His comfort and help for our own times of need.

The sons of Korah knew about the mighty works of God in the past because their “fathers” had told them (v. 1). It falls to the fathers and mothers of God's people to make sure that the generation that succeeds them are full taught concerning God, His works, and His salvation. The home is the front lines for mission for the people of God. Our duty is to teach our children all the great works of God and His Word, both as households and communities (Ps. 78.1-18). This is no guarantee that all our children will receive such teaching. Yet their unwillingness to learn the things of the Lord does not excuse us from our duty to teach.

When we find ourselves or our churches entangled in the world, ensnared in spiritual lethargy, and enfeebled in our mission and calling, we must look to the record of God's work in the past. He has led His people to victory over and over; and remembering His great works will give us comfort and hope in our times of separation from Him.

*Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162*

“We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us, the deeds You did in their days, in days of old...” (Ps. 44.1)

“The home is the front lines for mission...our duty is to teach our children all the great works of God and

His Word...”

How sweet it is to be able to say with the psalmist: “Concerning Your testimonies, I have known of old that You have founded them forever” (Ps. 119.152), because the generations preceding me took the command to tell the next generation seriously.

And how sweet to hear Paul say to Timothy: “when I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also... and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim. 1.5; 3.15).

How lovely it is for us to remember the goodness of God and His wonderful works and Word; then to share with those we love, our dear children, that they too will hear and know that God loves and favors them. (Ps. 44.3).

Let us never forget to remember and tell.

*Reflection*

1. What are some of the best ways you have used for teaching children?
2. Why is it so important that we understand and remember the works of God in the past?
3. Why is the home “the front line for mission”?

*Former experiences of God's power and goodness are strong supports to faith, and powerful pleas in prayer under present calamities. The many victories Israel obtained, were not by their own strength or merit, but by God's favor and free grace. The less praise this allows us, the more comfort it affords, that we may see all as coming from the favor of God. He fought for Israel, else they had fought in vain. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), Commentary on Psalm 44.1-8*

*Closing Prayer: Psalm 44.17, 18, 23-26*

Thank God for His covenant and promises. Thank and praise Him for your trials and tribulations. Rejoice in His salvation, and pray that God will arise to help you throughout this day.

*Psalm 44.17, 18, 23-26*

(Faithfulness: *Great is Thy Faithfulness*)

All this has come on us, but we remember: You are our covenant God and our King!

Turn back our hearts to adore and extol You; Lord, keep our steps as Your praises we sing.

*Refrain vv. 23-26*

Rise up, awake, O Lord! Hide not Your face from us,

See our affliction, our suffering and pain!

See how our soul is sunk down with oppression;

Rise up and help and redeem us we pray!

## 4 The Lord Our Victory

*Opening Prayer: Psalm 44.3, 4*

For they did not gain possession of the land by their own sword,  
Nor did their own arm save them;  
But it was Your right hand, Your arm, and the light of Your countenance,  
Because You favored them.  
You are my King, O God;  
Command victories for Jacob.

*Sing Psalm 44.3, 4, 23-36*

(Faithfulness: [Great is Thy Faithfulness](#))

Not by their sword did they drive out the nations; not by their arm did they settle the land.  
Your saving mercy and light triumphed for them: victories for us, our King, please now command.

*Refrain vv. 23-26*

Rise up, awake, O Lord! Hide not Your face from us,  
see our affliction, our suffering and pain!  
See how our soul is sunk down with oppression;  
Rise up and help and redeem us we pray!

*Read Psalm 44.3-8*

*Preparation*

1. What specifically did the psalmists remember about God's work in the past?
2. How did they use that to encourage them in their present struggle?

*Meditation*

What makes it so important that we recall the mighty works of God in the past is that God does not change. His love for us does not change. His power over all our enemies does not change. His willingness to rush to our aid does not change. And because He does not change, no one and nothing can thwart His will.

The more we remember that God is the God of past victories (v. 3), the more we will call upon Him to bring us victories in the present (vv. 4-8). Remembering God's mighty works, our supplications become more ambitious (v. 4). We become bolder and more strategic in facing our trials and struggles (v. 5). And we are reinforced in our faith in the Lord and His means of giving us victories day by day (vv. 6, 7). Thus ready to take on the challenges of our walk with and work for the Lord, we go in praise and boasting *in Him and His great faithfulness* (v. 8).

The sons of Korah understood how to lead their nation back from the brink of disaster: Remind them of God's great works, then provide them a way to – Psalm 44 – return to Him in prayer and worship, so that the old victories of their faithful God would be new every morning, whatever they had to face.

*Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162*

Just knowing about all the victorious accomplishments of God in the past gives us courage to believe that He still is God, He still is King, and He still commands victories for His people.

And aren't these verses a lot like the victorious salvation that God provides us through Jesus? For we did not gain possession of heaven by our own sword (v. 3), nor did our own strength or goodness save us (v. 3), but it was God's Right Hand Jesus, and His underserved favor toward us that commanded this victory over sin! (vv. 3, 4) *Our sin.*

Indeed, “because He does not change, no one and nothing can thwart His will.” And His will was, and is, to save: “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son...Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him...But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Jn. 3.16; Heb. 7.25; Rom. 5.8). Our *salvation*.

“For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?” (1 Jn. 5.4, 5).

The Lord is our victory!

*Reflection*

1. In what sense or senses has Jesus given us victory over sin?
2. How should the victory of Jesus prepare us for dealing with temptation? With any sin in our lives?
3. How can believers encourage one another to focus on and hope in the victory of Jesus?

*You are the same even now, Lord, he is saying, ruling in similar fashion, overpowering in a similar fashion, exercising the same force, your nature undergoing no change. For you simply a word suffices for salvation: give the nod, and the people will enjoy it.*  
Theodoret of Cyr (393-466), *Commentary on the Psalms 44.3*

*Closing Prayer: Psalm 43.5-8*

What struggles with the enemy of your soul do you anticipate in the day ahead? Commit your way to the Lord, and call on Him to give you the victory over whatever comes your way.

*Psalm 44.5-8, 23-26*

(Faithfulness: [\*Great is Thy Faithfulness\*](#))

Through You shall we all our enemies vanquish; them will we trample in Your mighty Name.

We will not trust in our strength or our wisdom; Jesus will save us; we'll boast of His fame!

*Refrain vv. 23-26*

Rise up, awake, O Lord! Hide not Your face from us,

See our affliction, our suffering and pain!

See how our soul is sunk down with oppression;

Rise up and help and redeem us we pray!

## 5 Hold On

*Opening Prayer: Psalm 44.19-22*

But You have severely broken us in the place of jackals,  
And covered us with the shadow of death.  
If we had forgotten the name of our God,  
Or stretched out our hands to a foreign god,  
Would not God search this out?  
For He knows the secrets of the heart.  
Yet for Your sake we are killed all day long;  
We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

*Sing Psalm 44.19-22, 23-26*

(Faithfulness: [\*Great is Thy Faithfulness\*](#))

Crushed and consumed in the shadows of darkness, we would remember You, Jesus, our King!  
Though we are trampled, like sheep for the slaughter, yet of Your faithfulness, Lord, we will sing!

*Refrain vv. 23-26*

Rise up, awake, O Lord! Hide not Your face from us,  
see our affliction, our suffering and pain!  
See how our soul is sunk down with oppression;  
Rise up and help and redeem us we pray!

*Read Psalm 44.17-22*

*Preparation*

1. Why were the psalmists puzzled about the suffering they were enduring?
2. How can you see this psalm pointing to Jesus?

*Meditation*

As they waited on the Lord, the psalmists were puzzled: They could not find any reason why God should have inflicted this chastening upon His people (vv. 17, 18, 20). God does nothing without a reason. It's just that the reason is not always made known to us. No surprise there (Is. 55.8, 9; Ps. 139.17, 18). God promised us that in this life we would know tribulation (Jn. 16.33). He didn't promise we would always know why.

So what lesson should we draw from this? Three, I think.

First, whenever we come into trials, and especially when we can't understand why, our duty is to rejoice and give thanks to God, not to stubbornly persist in complaining (ask Job, and see Jms. 1.2-4).

Second, keep in mind that the heart is deceitful and desperately wicked, and no one can know it perfectly (Jer. 17.9). The sons of Korah may well have been speaking as the nation of Israel when they insisted that their hearts "had not turned back" from the Lord (v. 17). In fact, Solomon and the people were already turning away from God, even amid His rich blessings, and they were apparently oblivious to this (1 Kings. 11.1ff).

Finally, sometimes God brings us to suffering so that we can better identify with Jesus (cf. v. 22; Rom. 8.36-39). The gatekeepers who composed this psalm could not see the suffering of Jesus, but the Spirit used them to point us to it anyway, and to remind us that, as it is a gift to know and believe in Jesus, so also it is a gift to suffer with Him (Phil. 1.29, 30).

We must receive all the good gifts of our Lord with gratitude, patience, rejoicing, and hope (Job 2.10). And in so doing, let us hold on.

*Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162*

The sons of Korah knew that faithfulness to God was important. They were, no doubt, trying to show what faithfulness looked like, and trying to set a good example for the people to follow.

They declared that, even in light of their suffering “we have not forgotten You, nor have we dealt falsely with Your covenant. Our heart has not turned back, nor have our steps departed from Your way...” (vv. 17, 18).

They were saying to the people, “Here is God’s truth. Walk in it!”

Jesus takes up right where the sons of Korah left off. He tells potential followers, who have a zillion excuses as to why they can’t follow Him right that moment, “No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God” (Luke 9.62).

Jesus also said, “For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels” (Mk. 8.38).

When we are suffering and sad, we are called to not forget God, or deal falsely with His covenant, or let our hearts turn back away from Him, or follow another path. Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life (John 14. 6). To Him we must be faithful. To Him we must “Hold On”!

#### *Reflection*

1. Why should we regard our times of suffering as a gift from the Lord?
2. How can we respond to suffering so that we grow through it into greater levels of sanctification?
3. How can believers help one another during times of suffering, so that we can all hold on together?

*...the faithful, although in their adversities they do not perceive any obvious reason for being so dealt with, yet they rest assured of this, and regard it as a fixed principle, that God has some good reasons for treating them so severely. At the same time, it is proper to observe, that the godly do not speak in this place of the time past, but rather allege their patient endurance, which was no small token of their piety, since, in the most humble manner, they thus bowed their neck to the yoke of God. John Calvin (1509-1564), NKJV Commentary on Psalm 44.17*

*Closing Prayer: Psalm 44.17, 18, 23-26*

Meditate on Genesis 12.1-3. Pray these promises back to God. Call on Him to revive and renew His Church, and to awaken the world to the Good News of Jesus and His Kingdom.

*Sing Psalm 44.17, 18, 23-26*

(Faithfulness: [\*Great is Thy Faithfulness\*](#))

All this has come on us, but we remember: You are our covenant God and our King!

Turn back our hearts to adore and extol You; Lord, keep our steps as Your praises we sing.

*Refrain vv. 23-26*

Rise up, awake, O Lord! Hide not Your face from us,

see our affliction, our suffering and pain!

See how our soul is sunk down with oppression;

Rise up and help and redeem us we pray!

## 6 Revive Us!

*Opening Prayer: Psalm 44.5-8*

Through You we will push down our enemies;  
Through Your name we will trample those who rise up against us.  
For I will not trust in my bow,  
Nor shall my sword save me.  
But You have saved us from our enemies,  
And have put to shame those who hated us.  
In God we boast all day long,  
And praise Your name forever.

*Sing Psalm 44.5-8, 23-26*

(Faithfulness: [\*Great is Thy Faithfulness\*](#))

Through You shall we all our enemies vanquish; them will we trample in Your mighty Name.  
We will not trust in our strength or our wisdom; Jesus will save us; we'll boast of His fame!

*Refrain vv. 23-26*

Rise up, awake, O Lord! Hide not Your face from us,  
see our affliction, our suffering and pain!  
See how our soul is sunk down with oppression;  
Rise up and help and redeem us we pray!

*Read Psalm 44.23-26*

*Preparation*

1. What are the psalmists seeking in these verses?
2. How would you describe the tone of these verses? Is this how you pray?

*Meditation*

It's hard to miss the feeling of urgency in these verses: "Awake!", "Arise!", "redeem us". When God's people begin to stray, as evidently they were doing under the later years of King Solomon's reign, no amount of mere persuasion will convince them to stop living "under the sun" and return to life "under the heavens". God must work, and He begins that work by coming powerfully among His people to stir them for revival.

The "face of God" is a phrase that conveys a wide range of ideas, including the favor of the Lord, the Presence and power of His Spirit (Ezek. 29.29), and the powerful working of His Word (Ps. 119.135). His face being turned away indicates that these benefits were in decline in Israel, as was indeed the case, beginning with the drifting of Solomon's heart (cf. 1 Kgs. 11.1ff).

God, of course, does not sleep (Ps. 121.3, 4). It can seem that He does at times, but it's not that God has nodded off; rather, we have departed from Him. And if we are to be revived, we need to acknowledge the miserable state of our soul (v. 25) and call on the Lord to help, heal, redeem, and revive us in His mercy (v. 26).

Remember God's works and promises (vv. 1-7). Face up to your sin and need (vv. 8-12). Lament the sad condition into which sin has plunged you (vv. 13-16). Search your heart and remember the Lord (vv. 17-22). Cry out to Him for revival (vv. 23-26).

I think we can agree that Psalm 44 is a timely guide to prayer for our own day.



*Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162*

It can seem as if God sleeps, “but it’s not that God has nodded off; rather we have departed from Him.”

And when we depart it can seem like we are being afflicted and oppressed. Sometimes this is for our own good, as Asaph contemplated in Psalm 78: “When He slew them, then they sought Him; and they returned and sought earnestly for God” (vs. 34).

And when we “acknowledge the miserable state of our soul” He does revive, heal, and help us. Again, Asaph says, “But He, *being* full of compassion, forgave *their* iniquity, and did not destroy *them*. Yes, many a time He turned His anger away, and did not stir up all His wrath; for He remembered that they *were but* flesh, a breath that passes away and does not come again” (Ps. 78.38, 39). David also pleads this pervasive human condition: “For He knows our frame; He remembers that we *are* dust” (Ps. 103.14).

Jesus, the face of God that was seen by humanity, expressed this compassion first-hand. As He was teaching, and preaching, and healing, and amongst the people the Bible says that “when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd” (Matt. 9.36).

If we ask, He will revive us. He will have mercy on us. He will show us compassion. “Arise for our help, and redeem us for your mercies’ sake” (Ps. 44.26).

And thank You, O God, for remembering us when we are self-afflicted and oppressed.

#### *Reflection*

1. How can we tell if God has turned His face away from us?
2. Revival, as our psalm indicates, begins in prayer. How can you add praying for revival to your daily prayers?
3. Is it possible for us to drift from the favor of the Lord, and not even know it? Explain.

*The cry to awake is an appeal for God to act on behalf of His people. The cry is based on the people’s faith that the Lord will forgive. **redeem us:** In v. 12, the people suggested that God had sold them; here they ask Him to redeem them—to buy them back for Himself. Earl Radmacher (1931-2014), NKJV Study Bible Notes on Psalm 44.23-26*

*Closing Prayer: Psalm 44.17, 18, 23-26*

Call upon the Lord to lead His people to repentance, revival, and renewal; and to awaken the world to Jesus and His salvation.

*Sing Psalm 44.17, 18, 23-26*

(Faithfulness: [\*Great is Thy Faithfulness\*](#))

All this has come on us, but we remember: You are our covenant God and our King!

Turn back our hearts to adore and extol You; Lord, keep our steps as Your praises we sing.

*Refrain vv. 23-26*

Rise up, awake, O Lord! Hide not Your face from us,

see our affliction, our suffering and pain!

See how our soul is sunk down with oppression;

Rise up and help and redeem us we pray!

## 7 A Call to Pray for Revival

*Opening Prayer: Psalm 44.3, 4*

For they did not gain possession of the land by their own sword,  
Nor did their own arm save them;  
But it was Your right hand, Your arm, and the light of Your countenance,  
Because You favored them.  
You are my King, O God;  
Command victories for Jacob.

*Sing Psalm 44.3, 4, 23-26*

(Faithfulness: [Great is Thy Faithfulness](#))

Not by their sword did they drive out the nations; not by their arm did they settle the land.  
Your saving mercy and light triumphed for them: Victories for us, our King, please now command.

*Refrain vv. 23-26*

Rise up, awake, O Lord! Hide not Your face from us,  
see our affliction, our suffering and pain!  
See how our soul is sunk down with oppression;  
Rise up and help and redeem us we pray!

*Read Psalms 44; meditate on Psalm 44.3-8.*

*Preparation*

1. In what things would the psalmists *not* put their trust? Why?
2. How would they show that they trusted in God?

*Meditation*

In a time of increasing faithlessness and danger to the nation (vv. 9-16), the sons of Korah composed this psalm to refocus the people on God and His salvation. Outwardly, the people must have considered that they were right with God (vv. 17, 18). He was blessing them abundantly, after all (cf. 1 Kgs. 10), and they enjoyed their majestic temple and the glorious worship they experienced there. Israel was the envy of the nations, which sent emissaries and tribute year after year.

But the sons of Korah heard the resentment and scorn of the nations as they came to visit Solomon and gawk at his riches and wisdom. The psalmists winced to see Solomon taking foreign wives and setting up altars for them to worship their gods. They heard the mutterings of people coming and going from the temple, and doubtless were aware of the growing hostility without and discontent within the nation (1 Kgs. 11.1-40). They knew that Israel needed God to arise among them once again and to restore them to righteousness before Him (vv. 23-26).

By recalling what their fathers had told them about how He had driven out the nations of Canaan and settled Israel in the land of promise (vv. 1-3), the psalmists encouraged the people to invoke God's help once again, for victory over their enemies, even if those enemies were their own hearts (vv. 4-8, 18, 21).

Revival begins in prayer. Thus, by providing this prayer for contemplation and worship, the sons of Korah sought to unite the hearts of God's people in confessing the "bowed down" condition of their souls (v. 25) and seeking the blessing of the Lord once again. This is what faithful gatekeepers do. As the Lord's gatekeepers today, we should follow the example of the sons of Korah in calling our generation of the people of God to seek Him for revival, renewal, and awakening.

*Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162*

We must pray for revival. Revival first for our own hearts, then for the Church, and then the world.

Our hope is not in politics, presidents, good judges, dynamic fun churches, or anything else that comes to mind. Our hope for revival is in God alone. We mustn't put our hope in bows or swords, or anything our strength can muster. We are to pray that God our King will command victories! "Give us help from trouble, for the help of man *is* useless. Through God we will do valiantly, for *it is* He *who* shall tread down our enemies" (Ps. 60.11, 12). And again, David writes, "Some *trust* in chariots, and some in horses; but we will remember the name of the LORD our God" (Ps. 20.7).

God specializes in uncanny victories. Think of Moses and the escape from Egypt, or Joshua and the defeat of Jericho, or Gideon with his whittled down army. God never wants us to go in our own strength lest we think we have achieved it. He wants us to say with the sons of Korah, "But You have saved us from our enemies, and have put to shame those who hated us. In God we boast all day long, and praise Your name forever" (Ps. 44.7, 8).

And how do we approach our own salvation and revival? Was there something we did to earn this victory over sin and death? God is still in the business of commanding uncanny victories all by Himself! And we, too, look only to Him for salvation. "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast" (Eph. 2.8, 9).

As we pray for revival, let's look only to God. Only He can save us. Only He can revive us.

And what does a revived believer look like? "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2.10).

Revived to boast in God and praise His name forever!

#### *Reflection*

1. Why is praying for revival a necessary condition for revival? What are we saying to God as we pray for revival?
2. What would be some indicators suggesting that we need revival today?
3. How will you use this psalm to seek the Lord for revival?

*[God] fought for Israel, else they had fought in vain. This is applicable to the planting of the Christian church in the world, which was not by any human policy or power. Christ, by his Spirit, went forth conquering and to conquer; and he that planted a church for himself in the world, will support it by the same power and goodness. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), Commentary on Psalm 44.1-8*

#### *Closing Prayer: Psalm 44.5-8, 23-26*

Call on the Lord to bring a new measure of His great salvation to light in your walk with and work for Him today. Devote yourself to Him, and offer yourself as a living sacrifice for His pleasure and glory.

#### *Sing Psalm 44.5-8, 23-26*

(Faithfulness: [\*Great is Thy Faithfulness\*](#))

Through You shall we all our enemies vanquish; them will we trample in Your mighty Name.  
We will not trust in our strength or our wisdom; Jesus will save us; we'll boast of His fame!

#### *Refrain vv. 23-26*

Rise up, awake, O Lord! Hide not Your face from us,  
see our affliction, our suffering and pain!

*Psalms of the Sons of Korah: Psalm 44*

See how our soul is sunk down with oppression;  
Rise up and help and redeem us we pray!

*Questions for Reflection or Discussion*

1. What seems to have been the situation prompting the writing of this psalm? Does it bear any similarities to our own day?
2. What is contemplation? Why is contemplation an important discipline for the life of faith?
3. The sons of Korah called on the people to look up to God, back to His works, ahead to His salvation, and around at their situation. Why are each of these important aspects of a Christian vantage point on life?
4. Why must revival begin with prayer? What do we learn from Psalm 44 about praying for revival?
5. What's the most important lesson you have learned from our study of Psalm 44? How are you putting that lesson to work in your walk with and work for the Lord?

*For prayer:*

## The Fellowship of Ailbe

The Fellowship of Ailbe is a spiritual fellowship in the Celtic Christian tradition. Our goal is to promote revival, renewal, and awakening, following the teaching of Scripture and the example and heritage of our forebears in the faith.

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Thank you.