

PSALMS: DIARIES OF GODLY OLD TESTAMENT SAINTS

Psalm Forty-Four: When Tragedy Strikes And It Doesn't Make Any Spiritual Sense (Psalm 44:1-26)

I. Introduction

- A. Sometimes, bad things happen to good people, and there is no explicable rhyme or reason for it. It just occurs, and the victim is left full of hurt and confusion about **God!**
- B. What do we do to handle such times? How can we help another who is facing this problem?
- C. Psalm forty-four is a maskil, a psalm intended to **instruct** those in this plight (as follows):

II. When Tragedy Strikes And It Doesn't Make Any Spiritual Sense, Ps. 44:1-26.

- A. Dr. Mowinckel's The Psalms in Israel's Worship, p. 94 notes that psalms like Psalm 44, called a "maskil," imply a "supra-normal insight" and the word shows that a very important lesson is contained in the psalm.
- B. We examine the psalm to see what is that lesson (as follows):
 1. The psalmist subjectively reports that he is very hurt and very confused as to **WHY** God has allowed the nation Israel to suffer a humiliating national defeat, Ps. 44:9-22.
 2. He wonders **why** this failure has happened because, according to the Mosaic Covenant, he is not aware of any sin deserving such punishment in accord with that covenant's stipulations:
 - a. What confuses the hurt psalmist is that he does not understand **WHY** God has allowed the nation to fall to its enemies as the nation, as far as he knows, is **innocent** of forsaking God, Ps. 44:1-8: (a) Israel has believed the report of the fathers that God had helped the nation get settled in the land of Palestine, Ps. 44:1-3. (b) Accordingly, he has adopted that God as his own Lord, Ps. 44:4a. (c) In fact, he has testimonies of God helping him in his own experience to date, Ps. 44:4b-8.
 - b. The Mosaic Covenant agrees with this experience, stating that God would bless the nation if its people obeyed and revered Him as their god instead of revering false gods, Deut. 28:1-14, 15-68.
 - c. However, God has apparently allowed His blessing to be removed so that apparently innocent people are suffering defeats from enemy nations, Ps. 44:9-22. (a) He notes that God's blessing is removed and that they have suffered humiliating, painful military defeats, Ps. 44:9-16. (b) Yet, there is no evidence to the psalmist that there is sin in the camp, Ps. 44:17-22.
 3. **In view of the theological discrepancy between Israel's APPARENT innocence and God's APPARENT failure to keep covenant in view of that innocence, THE PSALMIST STILL TRUSTS GOD to COME TO ISRAEL'S AID**, Psalm 44:23-26!
 - a. In view of this confusing theological discrepancy of God's not helping innocent people in accord with Mosaic Covenant, the psalmist **STILL** asks God to awaken to his plight and **help**, Ps. 44:23. Thus, he asks God for an **explanation**, expecting that he **does not know** everything, Ps. 44:24.
 - b. He trusts God's **loyal love** for help during this confusing, painful loss, Ps. 44:25-26.

Lesson: When we face setbacks where we don't understand God's purposes, GOD wants us to DEAL with our resulting confusion and hurt (1) by TRUSTING that the problem is not in God's failure but in our not UNDERSTANDING something so as to EXPRESS our QUESTIONS to Him, (2) and by our TRUSTING God's loyal love to come through regardless of our confusion.

Application: It is unwise to assume that what is confusing to us about God automatically means that GOD is FAULTY, for it makes sense that the CREATOR of necessity is not always necessarily understood by the CREATURE, man! (cf. Ps. 44:23 where God's name is "Adonai," meaning "Master"!) If an apparent discrepancy appears in God's actions, we must assume that WE, the CREATURE, have an imperfect VIEW of all the facts, and we need our VIEW corrected!

Illustration: A father once boiled some Vicks in a kettle of water, took a funnel of newspaper and put his young son up to the funnel and commanded him to breath its vapors! The boy fussed and cried, and the more he did, the deeper he inhaled the "awful" fumes. However, he later learned that this was Dad's way of rescuing him from pneumonia! What the boy once misunderstood in childhood about his Dad, he now appreciates as a man! God may deal with us in the same way!