

The King and His Scattered Sheep

Intro: We continue our study highlighting the introductory sections to each of the 5 Books into which the collection of Psalms is organized. Today we introduce Book II with Psalms 42-44. Psalms 42-43 go together as one psalm presenting us with an individual feeling cut off, in deep despair, longing for God. Three times we hear the refrain, *Why are you cast down, O my soul?* But also three times: *Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him.* For a fuller treatment of 42-43, go back to the message of October 2, '22 on our website for both audio and outline. Today we will focus our attention on Ps. 44, though not as well-known as many, nonetheless introduces Book II with a national emphasis on *The King and His Scattered Sheep*. [Confession of Faith, Complaint of Devastation, Covenant Hope]

Confession of Faith (1-8)

- Remembering: The story of their founding as a nation and settled in Canaan.
 - It was the work of God to plant and give them possession of the land.
 - Confessing it was not by own sword, but a work of God, His power, His grace, His election
- Confessing *Elohim* as King
 - Note Bk II uses the more general term for God, as apposed to Yaweh, the personal name? Why?
 - Context of Psalm is the kingdom and the dynasty of David. Note both individual of 42f. and national, 44.
 - The King commands victories
 - He gives us courage to trust—not in our bows/efforts—but in Him.
 - Our boast in Him
- Confessing faith in God for past mercies, relying on Him against present adversaries.

Complaint of Devastation (9-16)

- But You have rejected us!
 - Brought reproach on us. Caused us to turn back from our adversaries.
 - You've sold us cheaply, made us a byword among the nations. [We are wasted]
 - We are overwhelmed with humiliation and dishonor, because of the enemy and avenger.
- What does this complaint reveal about their relationship with God?
 - Does it not seem they are blaming God? Are they going too far with their complaint?
 - We do know of times where defeat and devastation were consequences of the sin of the nation.
 - We also know that the Lord allows adversity for a redemptive purpose. (e.g. Job, Jesus)
 - Ultimately, the complaint expresses faith in sovereign goodness and love of God, as we will see below.

Covenant Hope (17-26)

- We have not forgotten You nor dealt falsely with Your covenant.
 - We've trusted and obeyed You.
 - Yet, You have crushed us and covered us with the shadow of death.
 - If we had forgotten or reached out to a foreign god, You would know it.
 - You know the secrets of our hearts!
- But for Your sake we are killed all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.
 - We are Your people, Your kingdom, Your servants, Your representatives.
 - Our being scattered among the nations, our reproach reflects on Your redemptive purpose.
- Arouse Yourself, Awake and do not reject us.
 - Not accusing, but pleading with Him to intervene.
 - Redeem us (buy us out) for the sake of Your lovingkindness
- Next 4 Psalms emphasize the Lord is King over all.

45: Your throne forever O God
 46: God is our refuge & strength
 47: Shields of earth belong to God, King of all
 48: Great is the Lord in Mt of holiness

Conclusion: Compare and Contrast

- Individual despair of the king/National devastation appeal to *Elohim*, King over all nations.
- Common themes across Bk II: Devastation, Nations, *Elohim* is King
- Application: Prayer and Praise when faithful are scattered into an adversarial and threatening world. The Lord God is King over all so that even in our reproach and rejection we are serving His divine purposes for good.