

Lament Psalms

Asking God the Hard Questions

Psalms 26 & 44:

*“Why am I suffering,
when I haven't done anything wrong?”*

Session 8 – 7 November 2021

1st Baptist Church – Regina, SK

L4L Fall 2021

Instructor: Kelvin Friebe

Circumstances of being "Disoriented":

► *Not of the Psalmist's Doing:*
Assertions of Innocence

Pss 7:3-5, 8-10
17:1-5
26:1-8, 11-12
35:7, 11-14
69:4, 7, 9-12
44:17-21
(see also 18:20-24)
+ Book of Job



*"Life is the
Pits!
Why, O Lord?"*

*Spiritual
Questioning*

DISORIENTED

Lament Psalms

Psalm 26

Genre: Individual Lament

v. 1a - PETITION

[1) For Yahweh to Judge / Assay]

MOTIVATION: v. 1b
Assertion of Innocence

(1) Psalmist's Relationship with Yahweh

v. 2 - PETITION

[1) For Yahweh to Judge / Assay]

MOTIVATION:
Assertion of Innocence
v. 3
vv. 4-5
vv. 6-8

(1) Psalmist's Relationship with Yahweh

(2) Psalmist's Lack of Relationship with Wicked

(3) Psalmist's Worship in Temple

vv. 9-10 - PETITION

[2) For Yahweh to Deliver]

MOTIVATION: v. 11a
Assertion of Innocence

(1) Psalmist's Relationship with Yahweh

v. 11b - PETITION

[2) For Yahweh to Deliver]

MOTIVATION: v. 12
Assertion of Innocence

(3) Psalmist's Worship in Temple

| Psalm 26 <small>(KGF)</small> | | 1) For Yahweh to Judge / Assay | 2) For Yahweh to Deliver |
|---|--------------------------------------|--|---|
| PETITION | | 1a Vindictively-judge me, Yahweh, | 2 Assay me, Yahweh, and try me; test my kidneys and my heart. |
| | | 9 Do not gather my soul with sinners, and with men of blood, (do not gather) my life-- 10 in whose hands are (evil-)purpose(s), and their right hand is full of bribe(s). | 11b Redeem me, and show-favour to me. |
| | | 1b for I, in blamelessness, I have walked, and in Yahweh, I have trusted—I will not waver. | 3 For your loving-loyalty is before my eyes; and I have walked-about in your truthful-faithfulness. |
| MOTIVATION: Assertion of Innocence | | 4 I have not sat with men of worthlessness, nor with dissemblers, I will not come-in. 5 I have hated (the) assembly of evil-doers, and with (the) wicked, I will not sit. | 11a And/but as for me, in my blamelessness, I will walk. |
| | 1) Psalmist's Relationship with God | 6 I will wash in innocence, my hands, and I will surround your altar, Yahweh, 7 to make heard (the) voice of thanksgiving, and to recount all of your wondrous-deeds. 8 Yahweh, I have loved the habitation of your house, and the place (that) is the dwelling of your glory. | |
| | 2) Psalmist's Avoidance of Wicked | | 12 My foot stands in an upright-place; in the places-of-the-assembly, I will bless Yahweh. |
| | 3) Psalmist's Involvement in Worship | | |

Psalm 44

Genre: Communal Lament Psalm

A. Recollection of Yahweh’s Past Faithfulness (vv. 1-8)

- 1. Distant Past (vv. 1-3)
- 2. Recent Past (vv. 4-8)

Declaration of CONFIDENCE

B. Current Defeat (vv. 9-26)

COMPLAINT (vv. 9-16)

Assertion of Innocence (vv. 17-18)

COMPLAINT (v. 19)

Assertion of Innocence (vv. 20-21)

COMPLAINT (v. 22)

PETITION (v. 23a)

COMPLAINT (v. 23b)

PETITION (v. 23c)

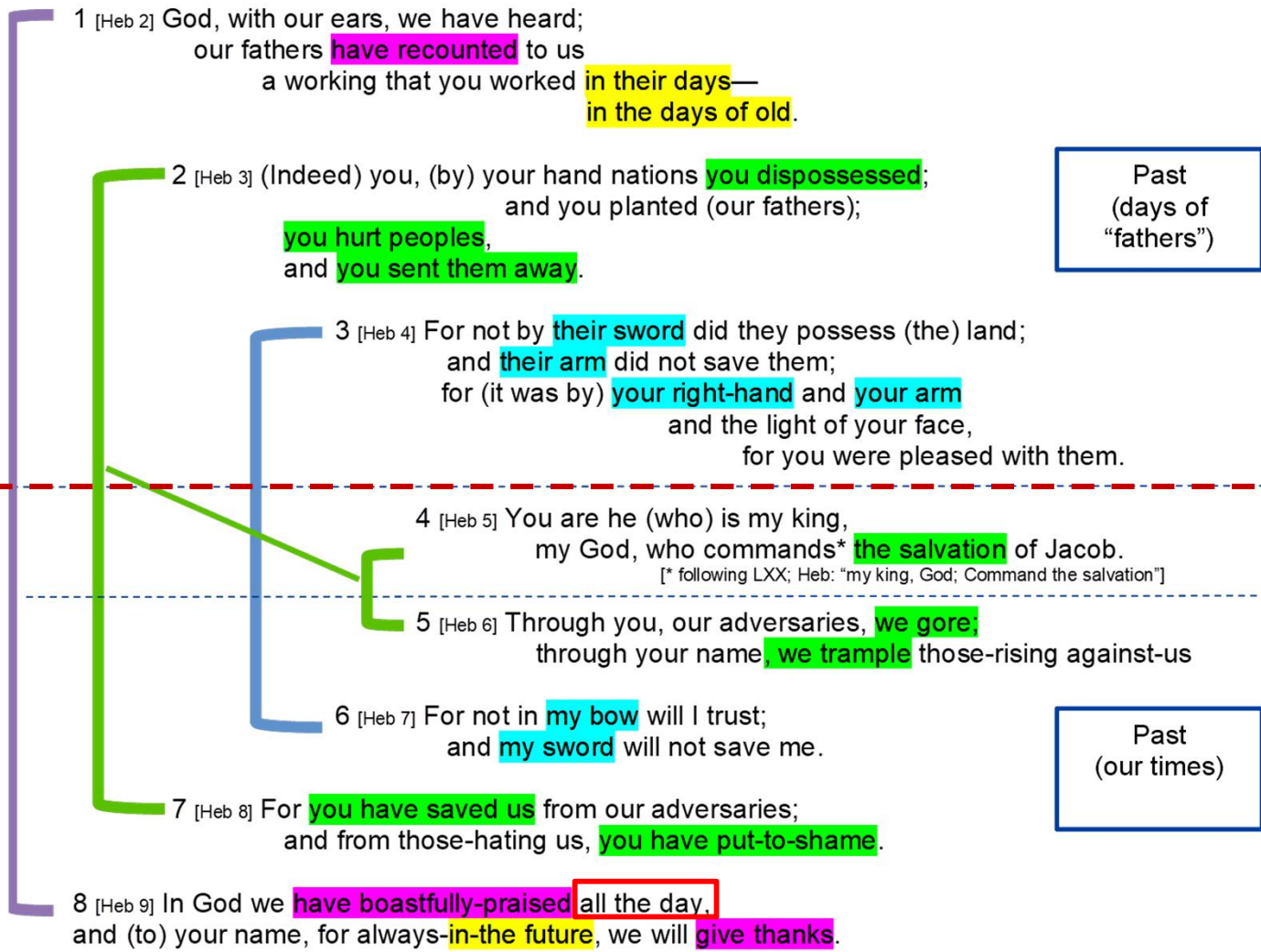
COMPLAINT (vv. 24-25)

PETITION (v. 26)

Psalm 44

Genre: Communal Lament Psalm

A. Recollection of Yahweh’s Past Faithfulness (vv. 1-8)



| | vv. 9-18 | vv. 19-21 |
|-------------------------------|--|--|
| COMPLAINT | <p>9 [H 10] Yet-indeed, you have rejected and humiliated us; and do not go-out with our armies.</p> <p>10 [H 11] You make us turn back from our adversary; and those-hating us plunder for themselves.</p> <p>11 [H 12] You give us, like a flock (for) food; and among the nations, you have scattered us.</p> <p>12 [H 13] You sell your people for no price; and you have not increased their sale-prices.</p> <p>13 [H 14] You make us a reproach to our neighbours; a scorn and a derision to those around us..</p> <p>14 [H 15] You make us a byword among the nations; a shaking of the head among the peoples.</p> <p>15 [H 16] All the day is my insult before me, and the shame of my face has covered me--</p> <p>16 [H 17] from [i.e., because-of] the voice of (the) one-reproaching and (the) one-reviling; because of (the) enemy and (the) avenger.</p> | <p>19 [H 20] Though you have crushed us into a place of jackals, and you have covered us with (the) shadow-of-death.</p> |
| Assertion of Innocence | <p>17 [H 18] All this is has come upon us; and/but we have not forgotten you; and we have not been false to your covenant.</p> <p>18 [H 19] Our heart has not turned backward; and our steps have (not) turned-aside from your path.</p> | <p>20 [H 21] If we had forgotten the name of our God, and (if) we had stretched-out our palms to a strange god,</p> <p>21 [H 22] would not God search this out? For he knows (the) secrets of the heart.</p> |

| | vv. 22-23a | v. 23b & c | vv. 24-26 |
|------------------|--|--|--|
| COMPLAINT | <p>22 [H 23] For on your account, we are killed all the day; we are reckoned as a flock for slaughter.</p> | <p>23b Why do you sleep, Lord?</p> | <p>24 [H 25] Why do you hide your face? (Why do) you forget our affliction and our oppression?</p> <p>25 [H 26] For bowed-down to the dust, is our soul; clinging to the earth is our belly.</p> |
| PETITION | <p>23a [H 24] Arouse (yourself)!</p> | <p>23c Wake-up! Do not reject forever.</p> | <p>26 [H 27] Arise! (Be) our help! and redeem us!</p> <p>For –the-sake-of your loving-loyalty.</p> |

► 3 issues that prompt the **COMPLAINT**:
 (1) physical defeat by the enemies
 & the accompanying physical suffering

9b and do not go-out with our armies.
 10 You make us turn back from our adversary;
 and those-hating us plunder for themselves.
 11 You give us, like a flock (for) food;
 and among the nations, you have scattered us.
 12 You sell your people for no price;
 and you have not increased their sale-prices.

19 [H 20] Though you have crushed us into a place of jackals,
 and you have covered us with (the) shadow-of-death

22 [H 23] For on your account, we are killed all the day;
 we are reckoned as a flock for slaughter.

(2) shame of being defeated

9a Yet-indeed, you have rejected and humiliated us;
 13 You make us a reproach to our neighbours;
 a scorn and a derision to those around us..
 14 You make us a byword among the nations;
 a shaking of the head among the peoples.
 15 All the day is my insult before me,
 and the shame of my face has covered me--
 16 from (i.e., because-of) the voice of
 (the) one-reproaching
 and (the) one-reviling;
 because of (the) enemy
 and (the) avenger.

(3) theological issue of Yahweh not being faithful to the Covenant

- He has not given victory
when the people have been faithful to the Covenant

Deuteronomy 28 (World English Bible)

¹ It shall happen, if you shall listen diligently to Yahweh your God's voice,
to observe to do all his commandments which I command you today,
that Yahweh your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth.

² All these blessings will come upon you, and overtake you,
if you listen to Yahweh your God's voice.

⁶ You shall be blessed when you come in,
and you shall be blessed when you go out.

⁷ Yahweh will cause your enemies who rise up against you to be struck before you.
They will come out against you one way, and will flee before you seven ways.

⁹ Yahweh will establish you for a holy people to himself, as he has sworn to you,
if you shall keep the commandments of Yahweh your God, and walk in his ways.

¹⁰ All the peoples of the earth shall see that you are called by Yahweh's name,
and they will be afraid of you.

¹³ Yahweh will make you the head, and not the tail.
You will be above only, and you will not be beneath,
if you listen to the commandments of Yahweh your God which I command you today,
to observe and to do, ¹⁴ and shall not turn away from
any of the words which I command you today, to the right hand or to the left,
to go after other gods to serve them.

Psalm 44: Nation is Lamenting a Military Defeat

▶ lament can occur:

- **before the disaster**

& laments what might potentially happen if Yahweh does not help
& seeks Yahweh’s help against the impending danger

- **in the midst of the disaster**

& laments the situation
& pleads for deliverance from the disaster

- **after the disastrous event has occurred**

(sometimes the past “disaster” cannot be undone)

& laments why Yahweh did not help

- & (a) petitions for a re-affirmation & re-assurance of God’s covenant relationship of loving-loyalty
- (b) petitions that God will act in the future in a way consistent with the covenant, so that similar disaster will not occur again
- (c) seeks some type of redress that will alleviate the consequences of the disaster event

► Primary **MOTIVATION = Assertion of Innocence**

(1) Psalmist’s Relationship with Yahweh

17 [H 18] All this is has come upon us;
and/but we have not forgotten you;
and we have not been false to your covenant.

18 [H 19] Our heart has not turned backward;
and our steps have (not) turned-aside from your path.

20 [H 21] If we had forgotten the name of our God,
and (if) we had stretched-out our palms to a strange god,

- For Validation of this **Assertion of Innocence**,
Appeal is made to God’s knowledge of their spiritual lives

21 [H 22] would not God search this out?
For he knows (the) secrets of the heart.

▶ Disorientation is *Not* of the Psalmist’s Doing:
“Assertions of Innocence”

- Psalmists declare their innocence of
any wrongdoing
that would justify the suffering
that they are enduring
- rather they protest that
they have acted righteously
toward God
& toward the enemies
- ◆ thus, God should deliver
& protect them

▶ Disorientation is *Not* of the Psalmist’s Doing:
“Assertions of Innocence”

How do we view
these Assertions of Innocence?

- Inaccurate Self-Appraisals ?
- Self-Righteous Statements ?
- Accurate Situational Statements
& Valid Motivating Arguments ?

--when we are suffering “innocently”
it is okay:

- to lament when the terms of the covenant relationship says it shouldn't be happening
- to raise the hard questions of God as to why this is happening

44:23b Why do you sleep, Lord?
24 Why do you hide your face?
(Why do) you forget our affliction and our oppression?

- to plead for his involvement & intervention in the ongoing effects & ramifications of the disaster

44:23a Arouse (yourself)!
23c Wake-up! Do not reject forever.
26a Arise! (Be) our help!
and redeem us!

- to petition for & expect God to be faithful to his covenant loving-loyalty (*hesed*)

44:26b For –the-sake-of your loving-loyalty

- to lament/pray in that way on the basis of our being “not guilty”

44:17 All this is has come upon us;
and/but we have not forgotten you;
and we have not been false to your covenant.
18 Our heart has not turned backward;
and our steps have (not) turned-aside from your path

Circumstances of being “Disoriented”:

- ▶ Not of the Psalmist’s Doing: Assertions of Innocence

Pss 7:3-5, 8-10
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*“Life is the Pits!
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Spiritual Questioning

DISORIENTED

Lament Psalms

Revised: “Circle of Life” by Dorcas Kibiki