



Pointers and questions on the book of

Psalms:
Selection A

PSALMS

Session **3**

Psalm 44

Trying to understand the mysterious ways of the Lord

Summary

The people of Israel have suffered a crushing defeat in battle. They are puzzled as to why this has happened, because they have not been unfaithful to the Lord or broken his covenant. He had given them great victories in the days of Joshua; why has he failed to do so now? They call on him, as their only hope, to redeem them from their bad situation.

- v1-3** God gave their ancestors great victories at the time of the conquest of Canaan under Joshua.
- 4-8** They look to him to do the same for them today.
- 9-16** But now they have suffered a humiliating defeat at the hands of their enemies, causing those enemies to taunt and despise them.
- 17-22** They protest their innocence. If they had gone after foreign gods and been unfaithful to the Lord they could have understood this defeat—but they haven't. And God himself, who knows and sees all, has not accused them of unfaithfulness.
- 23-26** Puzzled, they call on the Lord to rise up and help them in their sad plight.

Questions to get you thinking

1. Does God *have* to ensure our comfort and success all the time? Has he undertaken always to do so?
2. Talk about our proneness to reduce God to a series of formulas, by which we believe we can guarantee that he will act in certain ways. How realistic is this?
3. How do you feel when God has apparently let you down? And how does this affect your Christian testimony?
4. How likely is it that they were as innocent as they claimed to be?
5. It was true that God himself had not accused them of slackness or unfaithfulness, but does that necessarily mean that he was totally pleased with them and their progress?
6. What other reasons might God have had for letting them be defeated by their enemies?
7. Notice the 'Why?' questions in the closing section. It's natural to ask them in such circumstances. Does God *have* to answer them?
8. When understanding runs out, trust takes over and they end up calling on God to deliver them. Would that be your own response in similar circumstances? Is it the right response?
9. Compare this response with that of Job in Job 13:15.

