

A Study on the Psalms of the Sons of Korah

Whenever we think about the Book of Psalms, we often only think of David. Since David wrote most of the Psalms, sometimes we overlook the other writers, like the Sons of Korah. Although their relatives had taken part in a rebellion against God during Moses's time, they were faithful to follow God (Numbers 26:8-11). Due to their obedience and love for God, they were spared.

The Sons of Korah were part of the Kohathites, and they were responsible for the care, devotion, and well-being of the sanctuary. Their main responsibilities were to take care of everything within the sanctuary, including the Ark of the Covenant. This confirms that they had an important role in the ministry of the sanctuary and in the overall ministry of God.

Over time, the Sons of Korah began to be known for their great musical skills. They could play various instruments and were known to sing beautifully. This is what inspired them to write their Psalms. We must remember that the Psalms are meant to be sung as songs; therefore, this is why they are often set up in a prose manner and have specific instruments associated with particular psalms.

The Sons of Korah wrote Psalm 42, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 84, 85, 87, and 88. We will cover the first five psalms; however, I encourage you to read all 11 psalms by the Sons of Korah, as they are inspiring, helpful, and genuine. It can be a blessing to read true feelings from biblical writers and to know they went through similar things. It helps us know we are not alone in our struggles, doubts, and worries.

Psalm 42

“My soul is downcast within me; therefore I will remember you from the land of the Jordan, the heights of Hermon—from Mount Mizar. Deep calls to deep in the roar of your waterfalls; all your waves and breakers have swept over me” (Psalm 42:6-7).

Psalm 42 is the first psalm we read from the Sons of Korah. It is a maskil, which is a psalm that is encouraging, enlightening, and wise. When we read the psalms from the Sons of Korah, we see that they can be crestfallen, but also quite powerful, even today. The Sons of Korah were in exile at this time but longed for God to restore His people. Nothing was positive around them, yet they hoped in God.

The Sons of Korah remembered God when their souls were downcast. We must do the same. Our hearts may be crushed, and we feel every wave and breaker has washed over us, yet God is still good, and He is still for us. God loves us beyond measure, just as He loved the Sons of Korah.

Challenge Questions:

- Do you relate to the Sons of Korah's words in Psalm 42?
- When everything around you is in shambles, how might you find hope in God?
- Our souls can become downcast at times. How might you allow God to give you a rejuvenated heart?

Psalm 44

"We are brought down to the dust; our bodies cling to the ground. Rise up and help us; rescue us because of your unfailing love" (Psalm 44:25-26).

Yet again, Psalm 44 was written during Israel's exile in Babylon. The Sons of Korah and all of Israel were now living in an area that was not their home. Babylon was filled with paganism and false gods. Israel would have been deeply uncomfortable here and in much agony under the oppression of the Babylonians. Despite all this, the Sons of Korah did not doubt God's unfailing love.

They are raw and genuine in this psalm and express their emotions; however, they are not charging God with evil. Instead, they are praying for deliverance. They knew God could save them from the oppression of the Babylonians, bring them back to their home, and restore their blessings. Day after day, they called to Him in prayer and song. Most likely, Psalm 44 was sung by the entire nation of Israel while in exile.

Challenge Questions:

- Are you in your own sort of exile? How can you relate to the Sons of Korah?
- The Sons of Korah are raw and genuine in their emotions. What does this teach you about your own prayers?
- Do you doubt God's unfailing love when times are hard? Why or why not?

Psalm 45

"You are the most excellent of men and your lips have been anointed with grace, since God has blessed you forever" (Psalm 45:2).

Psalm 45 is a wedding song, a *maskil*, and is written to the tune of the "Lilies." Although we don't know what the tune of the "Lilies" sounds like, it is utilized many times throughout the Psalms. Psalm 45 was possibly sung in preparation for weddings. This psalm is in agreement with Proverbs 18:22, "He who finds a wife finds what is good and receives favor from the Lord." Marriage is a gift from the Lord, as a man who finds a devoted, caring, and steadfast wife is blessed.

Though today's Christians don't often use Psalm 45 as a wedding song, it is a beautiful reminder of God's blessings. The Sons of Korah's musical skills are likely why they created this well-known wedding song for Israel. It was a sign of blessings, praise, and thankfulness to God.

Challenge Questions:

- Read all of Psalm 45. If you are married, can you relate to these words? Reflect on your wedding day.
- How can you give God praise for your spouse?
- If you are not married, how might you still learn from Psalm 45?

Psalm 46

"God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging" (Psalm 46:1-3).

Psalm 46 is a psalm that will forever have a special place in my heart. It helps us remember that God is our refuge, strength, and ever-present help in trouble. Even though everything in our life might be falling apart, God is still present, and He is still fighting for us (Romans 8:31). The Sons of Korah knew nothing but hardships throughout their lives, yet they knew God was still on their side.

This shows us the immense faith of the Sons of Korah, which seems to be a major theme throughout all of their psalms. This challenges us to be faithful to God and to have hope even when all hope seems lost. Even if there is only a spark of light at the end of the tunnel, the Sons of Korah urge us to keep trusting in God. Through death and beyond, God will forever be with us, surrounding us with His grace and helping us grow.

Challenge Questions:

- God is our refuge and strength. How have you seen His help in your own life?
- The Sons of Korah urge us to continue to trust God even when all hope seems lost. How can you apply this to your own life?
- Hardships will come and go in our lives. How can you see them as opportunities for growth?

Psalm 47

"God has ascended amid shouts of joy, the Lord amid the sounding of trumpets. Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises to our King, sing praises. For God is the King of all the earth; sing to him a psalm of praise" (Psalm 47:5-7).

Psalm 47 is a true blessing to us as it is a psalm of praise. It lifts God up in praise and brings our hearts to a true place of worship. This psalm was most likely written when the Sons of Korah were seeing relief brought to Israel. They saw His goodness, blessings, and realized promises. Their trust in God was not built upon false hope, but rather in a sincere and steadfast truth.

What God has promised will come to pass. We need to echo the same faith and worship that the Sons of Korah displayed in this psalm. God is the King over all the earth, and everything submits to Him. Whenever we are worried about a situation, scared of a person, or stressed by a circumstance, we must believe God is bigger. He is our loving God, who has already redeemed us and will bring us to His Heavenly Kingdom. Praise be to God!

Challenge Questions:

- How can you sing praises to God today?
- God is greater than any trouble, problem, or hardship. How might this encourage you today?
- Regardless of what you are going through today, how can you take time to truly notice the goodness of God?

By: Vivian Bricker