

Rabbi's Reflections - Tuesday, January 13, 2026
Shalom {{firstName}},

Psalms
Psalm 44:10-13(9-12) – Part 3

Psalm 44:10 Yet You have spurned and humiliated us, and no longer go out with our armies. 11 You make us retreat before the enemy. Those who hate us have plundered us. 12 You gave us to be devoured like sheep and have scattered us among the nations. 13 You are selling Your people cheaply—not even getting a great price for them.

Oh my... this is bad! Did you read the text above? It's bad in itself, and it will continue (the same theme - "God has left us to be hated by our enemies") until we (finally) reach the last verse of this Psalm. "You, You, You, You." We have four verses today, and they all start with the accusative "You," describing either what God has done to (or not done to preserve) His people, or what God has allowed our enemies (presumably His enemies as well) to do to His people.

We will actually encounter a very similar diatribe in the first twelve verses of Psalm 60. Both of these sections of Scripture remind me of the high holiday prayer book called a "Machzor." (The word "Machzor" means "remembrance." It contains all the liturgy for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.) But even the "Machzor" puts the emphasis on our sin. "We have sinned before You, Lord, in the area of (fill in the blank)." This text makes no such accommodation. Here, the emphasis is on God. Specifically, it is simply telling God what He has done to punish (or allow others to punish) His people.

Rabbi Trail: I struggled to use the word "punish." Actually, "discipline" would be a better word. The first word I tried to use there was "abuse," but that didn't work either because "abuse" is done when the victim is not at fault. But, we have sinned. Punish doesn't work either because punishment is done to inflict pain, and that is not God's objective. His objective is to lead us into righteousness. End RT.

We won't find reconciliation for this until the very last verse of the Psalm, when we will call upon God to arise, help us, and ultimately redeem us. Meanwhile (according to our text), we are spurned and humiliated. Rather

than being victorious, we are in retreat. We have been hated and plundered, devoured and scattered. The final insult is being sold into slavery cheap.

What's the lesson to be learned here. Because the text is silent regarding the solution, we must infer the highest redemptive value.

Rabbi Trail: Seeking "the highest redemptive value" of any situation is admirable among the people of God. This was first taught to me by my rabbi, Dan Juster. When we seek solutions to problems, our chief concern should be to find the solution that gives the most glory to God. Usually, that will be found in the area of forgiveness along with the fruits of the Spirit, love, joy, peace, et al. **Matthew 6:33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.**
End RT.

Let's follow this logically... if our disobedience causes calamities such as those described in our subject verses, then it only makes sense that our obedience will be the antidote. What, you were expecting me to declare faith in Yeshua as the solution to our troubles? It is! The disconnect is to believe we can be followers of Yeshua without obeying His commands.

John 14:15 "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments."

John 14:23a Yeshua answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word.

1John 2:4 The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

1John 3:24a The one who keeps His commandments abides in God, and God in him.

1John 5:3a For this is the love of God—that we keep His commandments.

Please notice that each of these proof texts is from the New Testament. Isn't there another word for "faithful?" Yes, it is "obedience." We sing the "Shema" (Deuteronomy 6:4) with regular determination. It begins "Hear O Israel." Yet a better translation would be "Take heed or obey, O Israel."

What follows is the command to love God. The above verses lead us to conclude that if we love God, we must obey His commands. Only then will God fight for us and defeat every enemy. Shalom shalom.

Daily Bread, reading plan by Lars Enarson (<https://www.thewatchman.org/>)

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Ex 6:29-7:7 1 Ki 3-4 Ps 104 Lk 19:1-27 (Eph 3)