

# Lesson 3

## From Forsaken to Fortress (Psalms 44-47)

1. How does Psalm 44 differ in tone and content from the others you've studied so far? In what ways would this psalm be a good reminder for the Israelites during difficult times? During good times? Why is it important to remember times of defeat as well as times of triumph?
2. Choose one verse or phrase from Psalms 44—47 that stands out to you. This could be something you're intrigued by, something that makes you uncomfortable, something that puzzles you, something that resonates with you, or just something you want to examine further. Write that here.
3. What does the uncertainty and confusion in this psalm tell us about the way God chose to work in the lives of the Israelites during this chapter in their story? How does the psalmist's pleading shift in verses 23–26? What does this teach us about trusting God?
4. What stands out to you about the descriptions in this psalm? Go through Psalm 45 and underline words or phrases that make it likely that this is a messianic psalm.
5. How does the description of the Bridegroom compare to our understanding of Jesus as the Bridegroom for His bride, the church? What is the "preparation of the bride" as described in Psalm 45:10–14? In what ways is the church today being prepared for the Bridegroom?

6. What is it about this hymn that would have drawn supporters to the reformers' cause? What makes it relevant to today's church? Why might some in popular culture reference this particular hymn in an ironic context? What does this say about the meaning and importance of the message?
7. Why would the image of "refuge" have been important to the Israelites during the time of David? Why is that image important to the church today? What sorts of trouble do Christians experience today? What is the message in this psalm to those who are in trouble?
8. What does it mean to "Be still" today? Why is it difficult to trust God to manage our lives? What does allowing "God to be God" look like in practical terms? Why does God allow us to get into "tight places" in life? What do these experiences teach us about God?
9. In what ways is God exalted in Psalm 47? How is this a fulfillment of Psalm 46:10? What is the theme of Psalm 47? How is this theme appropriate to the culture of the Israelites? How does it apply today?
10. What does Psalm 47 teach us about God's character? Why did the Israelites praise God with such enthusiasm? What are ways churches today praise God? Why is it important to offer praises to God?
11. When have you felt like the psalmist in Psalm 44? What are the specific events that led you to wonder if God had forsaken you? Where was God during that season? How did God use that time to grow your faith? If you're still in one of those seasons, how can you trust that God is near?
12. How does the Bridegroom/bride analogy in Psalm 45 affect the way you view your relationship with Jesus? In what ways are you being prepared

as part of the church for the wedding? Where do you see room for spiritual growth and improvement in your specific role in the church?

13. What does it mean to you that God is “a mighty fortress”? When has God been your refuge in a time of trouble? Psalm 46:2 says, “We will not fear,” but is this a realistic claim? When have you experienced fear in difficult times? How has God come through in those times?
  
14. Think of one or two things that you have learned that you’d like to work on in the coming week. Remember that this is all about quality, not quantity. It’s better to work on one specific area of life and do it well than to work on many and do poorly (or to be so overwhelmed that you simply don’t try). **Do you need to learn to trust God when He seems to have forsaken you? Be specific.**
  
15. Write a prayer below (or simply pray one in silence), inviting God to work on your mind and heart in those areas you’ve previously noted. Be honest about your desires and fears.