

THE USE OF PSALM 44 IN ROMANS 8: PAULINE RESPONSE TO GOD’S HIDDENNESS

ZANDRITIANA LOVANOMENA

Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies, PHILIPPINES

Abstract

Paul’s citation of the communal lament Psalm in Ps 43 LXX/Ps 44 MT presents challenges that have not been adequately addressed. Psalm 44 underscores the suffering of the righteous and their anguish when faced with the apparent hiddenness of God. It contains a litany of accusations against God, who seems to inexplicably break the covenant. On the contrary, Rom 8 rhetorically affirms the faithfulness of God amid the despair of suffering. Paul asserts that nothing can separate God’s people from His love in Christ. This perceived dissonance between the two contexts raises the question: How does Paul relate to Ps 44 in using the communal lament Psalm in Rom 8? The present study is an attempt to answer this question by analyzing and comparing the contexts of Ps 44 and Rom 8, and then discerning the hermeneutical explanation of the use and function of the quotation in its new context in Rom 8. I will argue that Paul uses Ps 44 typologically to depict Christ as the fulfilment of the psalmist’s plea, establishing the ground for God’s faithfulness, the inseparability between God and His people, and the ultimate victory even through temporal sufferings. Beyond biblical scholarship, this study ventures into a reflection on the implications of this finding for the philosophical discourse surrounding the hiddenness of God, His past and future actions, and the ethical dimensions.

Keywords: Use of Scripture, God’s hiddenness, righteous suffering, Romans 8:36, Psalm 44:22, typology, God-human relationship

1. Introduction

Romans 8:31–39 is one of the most quoted passages in Christian traditions for its eloquent statement affirming God’s faithfulness and the inseparability between His love and His people.¹ Paul’s use of the Scriptures, namely the citation from a communal lament psalm (Ps 43 LXX/Ps 44 MT) in the pericope presents complexities (v. 36). He abruptly interrupts the flow of His argument (in v. 36) to insert a quotation from Ps 44, which seems to be out of order. On the one hand, Ps 44 underscores the suffering of the righteous and their anguish in the apparent hiddenness of God. The psalmist insists on the faithfulness of Israel, denying they have been false to the covenant to deserve suffering.² On the other hand, Paul’s citation of Ps 44 comes in the context of a confident assertion about the assurance of God’s unbreakable love for His people (Rom 8:17–39) as already demonstrated in and through Christ (Rom 5–8). While Ps 44 contains a litany of accusations against God for inexplicably breaking the covenant, Rom 8 rhetorically affirms God’s faithfulness amid the despair of suffering.³

The perceived dissonance between the two contexts raises several interpretative questions: What is the purpose of Paul in citing the OT text? How does the quotation fit into the development of thought in his overall argumentation? What functions does the quotation perform in Rom 8? How does the quotation contribute to Paul’s portrayal of his messages? Does it bear any exegetical or theological significance to the understanding of Rom 8? There have been several attempts to account for the citation of Ps 44 in Rom 8.⁴ In this study, I will focus on how Paul relates to Ps 44 in using the communal lament psalm in Rom 8. I do not pretend to provide the only possible

¹ I am grateful to Dr. Kenneth Bergland, the Biblical Theology Seminar at the Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies, and the blind reviewers for their helpful comments and suggestions on earlier drafts of this article.

² This type of lament, a protestation of innocence, is only found in Pss 44 and 59 (Paul Wayne Ferris, *The Genre of Communal Lament in the Bible and the Ancient Near East*, SBL 127 [Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1992], 99).

³ Wright argues that “the whole of Romans 1–11 is, in one sense, an exposition of how the one God has been faithful, in Jesus Christ, to the promises he made to Abraham” (Nicholas T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993], 234).

⁴ The mainstream can be classified into three interpretations. First, the traditional interpretation posits that Paul cites Ps 44 to show that suffering and tribulation have been the experience of God’s people, hence, to be expected also in the Christian’s experience (e.g., John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans: The English Text with Introduction, Expositi-*

answer. Rather, I wish to contribute to the discussion from a different perspective by focusing on the use and function of the quotation in Rom 8:36 and then examine the theological and ethical implications it raises.⁵ To this

tion, and Notes, NICNT [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968], 331; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 33 [New York: Doubleday, 1993], 534; Ben Witherington, *Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004], 232–34). “The suffering experienced by Christians should occasion no surprise” (Douglas J. Moo, *The Letter to the Romans*, 2nd ed., NICNT [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018], 565). Cranfield states that “the main effect of the quotation of Ps 44:22 is to show that the tribulations which face Christians are nothing new or unexpected, but have all been characteristic of the life of God’s people” (C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, ICC [London: T&T Clark International, 2001], 1:440). Second, the citation functions as a prophecy regarding the believers’ participation in the suffering of Christ (e.g., Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989], 59; Michael J. Gorman, *Cruciformity: Paul’s Narrative Spirituality of the Cross* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001], 328–29; Siu Fung Wu, *Suffering in Romans* [Cambridge: James Clarke, 2015], 193–94; Kingsley I. Uwaegbute and Damian O. Odo, “An Existential-Psychological Reading of Romans 8:35–39 in the Context of Igbo Christianity,” *NTSSA* 52.2 [2018]: 345). “Paul reads Ps 44:22 as an anguished prophetic announcement of participation in the crucified Messiah” (Tyler A. Stewart, “The Cry of Victory: A Cruciform Reading of Psalm 44:22 in Romans 8:36,” *JSPHL* 3.1 [2013]: 25–45). Mark Seifrid argues that, “in taking up this lament, Paul suggests that the believers share in Christ, the Suffering Servant, who likewise was led as a ‘sheep to slaughter’ (Isa 53:7; cf. Rom 8:17, 32–34). The verse alludes to sacrifice, not only that of the Servant but also perhaps the sacrifice of Isaac (Gen 22:7–8). The ‘sufferings of the present time’ are thus an ‘exile’ without answer or evident basis for believers in Christ” (Mark A. Seifrid, “Romans,” in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009], 637). Frank Matera sought to prove the use of citation to “explain the significance of sufferings that the believers are presently enduring” (Frank J. Matera, *Romans*, Paideia [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010], 207). For Robert Jewett, the quotation provides Scriptural evidence to refute the criticism against the disciples, suggesting that they lack authenticity because they face suffering (Robert Jewett, *Romans: A Commentary*, Hermeneia [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007], 548). Third, the citation is a lament that finds its answer at the cross (Channing L. Crisler, *Reading Romans as Lament: Paul’s Use of Old Testament Lament in His Most Famous Letter* [Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2016], 143–44; David Starling, “For Your Sake We Are Being Killed All Day Long: Romans 8:36 at the Hermeneutics of Unexplained Suffering,” *Themelios* 42.1 [2017]: 120–21). Aside from the mainstream, some perceive that the quotation lacks significance. To Andreas J. Köstenberger, two OT quotations—Exod 20:17 or Deut 5:21 in Rom 7:7; and Psalm 44:22 in Rom 8:36—have no significant role in Paul’s argumentation (Andreas J. Köstenberger and Greg Goswell, *Biblical Theology: A Canonical, Thematic, and Ethical Approach* [Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2023]).

⁵ I use the term “function” to refer to “the discourse purpose for which the NT writer is

end, I will analyze and compare the contexts of Ps 44 and Rom 8. I will then examine the function of the quotation in its new setting in Rom 8.⁶ A brief discussion on the interpretative tradition of Ps 44 in the Second Temple Jewish writings will follow. I will then conclude with a theological reflection on the use of Ps 44 in Rom 8 and its potential for advancing the understanding into the discussion of the hiddenness of God and ethics.

2. Preliminary: Textual Background

Table 1. Psalm 43:23 LXX Parallel with Romans 8:36

Psalm 43:23 LXX	Romans 8:36 NA28
ὅτι ἕνεκά σου θανατούμεθα ὅλην τὴν ἡμέραν, ἐλογίσθημεν ὡς πρόβατα σφαγῆς.	ὅτι ἕνεκεν σοῦ θανατούμεθα ὅλην τὴν ἡμέραν, ἐλογίσθημεν ὡς πρόβατα σφαγῆς.
“because for your sake we are being put to death all day long, we were accounted as sheep for slaughter” (NETS).	“For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter” (NKJV).

The chart above shows a verbatim similarity, which leaves no doubt about Paul’s intentional direct citation from LXX. The minor difference is the prepositions ἕνεκά and ἕνεκεν. However, this distinction is not significant as they can be used interchangeably. Their function, when attached to genitive, is “to indicate the cause of or reason for something, because of, on account of, for the sake of.”⁷ They function in the same way both in Ps 44 and Rom 8. This argument of intentionality prompts a question of whether Paul’s use of Ps 43 LXX aligns with its broader contextual meanings.

using the OT text” (Douglas S. Huffman, *Understanding the New Testament Use of the Old Testament: Forms, Features, Framings, and Functions* [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2024], 102).

⁶ The approach in this study is informed by G. K. Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament: Exegesis and Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 41–54; and Huffman, *Understanding the New Testament Use*, 14–20. However, I do not strictly follow them. The discussion on the development of interpretation in the Second Temple Jewish writings is rather minimal in this study.

⁷ Frederick W. Danker, Walter Bauer, and William Arndt, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 4th ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2021), 296.

3. Psalm 44:22 in Its Original Context

Psalm 44 portrays the intricate relationship between God and the people of Israel. Its thematic feature depicts a communal lament over the hiddenness of God. The Israelites conclude that God has rejected them (*ἀποστρέφω* ["turn away"]), causing them to encounter afflictions (v. 25). The psalmist articulates the perceived difference between the divine deliverance in the past (vv. 1–8) and present experience of the community (vv. 9–22). The Israelites' distress resulted in the psalmist addressing God directly for not defending them against the afflictions by their enemies (e.g., Ps 80, 89) and pleading for deliverance (vv. 23–26).

Psalm 44 consists of three units, namely: praise (vv. 1–8), complaint (vv. 9–22), and petition (vv. 23–26). The first unit of praise opens with an account of God's past actions in favor of Israel (vv. 2–3) and a portrayal of Israel's piety (v. 4). It is followed by the collective expression of praise, emphasizing their continual exaltation of God's name (all day long) (v. 8). The second unit consists of complaints (vv. 9–22). The first half of this unit reproves God for putting the Israelites to shame. Not only did God disgrace and refrain from accompanying their armies (v. 9), but also contributed to the triumph of their enemies (v. 11). The psalmist pointed out that God sold His people for no price (v. 12). Consequently, they became objects of mockery among the nations (vv. 13–14). The narrative voice shifts to the first person singular in vv. 15–16, wherein the psalmist expresses a continuous sense of self-contempt.

The latter half of the complaint unit highlights the claim of innocence (vv. 18–23). The sentence structure changes significantly. The people assume the role of subject/agent of the verbal phrases, while God becomes the object of the actions (except for v. 19). The psalmist draws a contrast between the humans' faithfulness and God's actions using parallelism.⁸

A – All this has come upon us,
though we have not forgotten you,
and we have not been false to your
covenant. Our heart has not turned
back, nor have our steps departed
from your way (vv. 17–18).

A' – If we had forgotten the
name of our God or spread out
our hands to a foreign god,
would not God discover this?
For he knows the secrets of the
heart (vv. 20–21).

⁸ Similarly Loren D. Crow, "The Rhetoric of Psalm 44," *ZAW* 104.3 [1992]: 398, <https://doi.org/10.1515/zatw.1992.104.3.394>.

B – Yet you have broken us in the
place of jackals and covered us
with the shadow of death (v. 19).

B' – Yet for your sake we are
killed all the day long; we are
regarded as sheep to be slaugh-
tered (v. 22).⁹

The first parallel (A, A') asserts people's innocence and loyalty to the covenant. The nature of people's assertion of faithfulness to God exceeds the purview of this study. However, a few points are worth noting. By claiming that they have not forgotten the name of God, the psalmist reinforces their adherence and commitment to the covenant (cf. Deut 12:5; 1 Sam 12:9; Jer 23:27).¹⁰ Their claim of innocence includes both internal aspects of loyalty to God (heart) and external manifestations by their upright behavior (steps, hand). The explicit assertion of loyalty in the text indicates that their allegiance is directed exclusively to God and not foreign gods (vv. 21–22). The context does not warrant consideration of whether or not the individuals may have committed any sins.¹¹ Rather, the primary concern pertains to the disparity between the present reality and expectations of the people who serve God, shaped by His past actions and promises. The second parallel (B, B') explicitly expresses that people are continually being killed (כָּל־הַיּוֹם ["all day long"]). This is the climax of the complaint unit, standing in stark contrast to the continuous (כָּל־הַיּוֹם) pride in God in the past (v. 8). The parallel also points to God as the agent responsible for the people's deaths. Hence, their misery found its cause in God.¹²

⁹ Translations are taken from ESV.

¹⁰ Forgetting God may also refer to idolatry (e.g., Deut 8:19; Hos 2:15), or in general sense, to deviation from the will of God (e.g., Deut 8:11; Jer 2:32–34; Ezek 22:12).

¹¹ Gert Kwakkel contends that Ps 44 applies to the nation "as a whole" without any distinctions between the righteous and the wicked Israelites. "It would be an exaggeration to take the congregation's assertions about its faithfulness to God as a claim to a way of life without sin. Be this as it may, the psalm does not explicitly refer to any shortcoming on the part of the people, either" (Gert Kwakkel, *According to My Righteousness: Upright Behaviour as Grounds for Deliverance in Psalms 7, 17, 18, 26, and 44*, OtSt 46 [Leiden: Brill, 2002], 234). He cautions, however, against the danger of a two-sided perspective, as it is also reasonable to consider that vv. 18–19 and 21–22 may relate to the specific circumstances people encountered. "For them the pressing question was one of 'to be or not to be' (v. 23a)" (Kwakkel, *According to My Righteousness*, 234).

¹² The phrase עָלֶיךָ ("on account of you") could suggest that the people suffer misery because of their relationship with and loyalty to God. It also could imply a religious persecution. However, to make such an overly particular interpretation may lead to anachronistic readings. What remains evident is that "the cause or origin of people's distress can ultimately be found in God, and not in their own behavior" (Kwakkel, *According to My Righteousness*, 211).

The last unit comprises a petition (vv. 24–27), calling for God’s intervention on behalf of the people. The psalmist uses two imperative verbs. The first imperative calls for God to be awake (עֹרֶה), followed by a question, “Why do you sleep, O Lord?” (v. 23). The second imperative calls for God’s specific action to arise (הִקְיָה), followed by a question, “Why do you hide your face and forget our affliction and our oppression?” (v. 24). The psalmist acknowledges the power of God and His presence. His concern is not the absence of God but rather His inactivity. One more time, the psalmist reiterates the depth of their anguish (v. 25). Nonetheless, he still perceives God as the Savior and ultimate deliverer of the people (v. 26). He then pleads with God to act (קוּמָה [lit. “raise up”]) for their help (עֲזֹרָתָה לָנוּ [“help us”]) and for redemption (וּפְדָנוּ [“Redeem us”]). The psalm ends with this appeal to God’s favor for His people.

The analysis of Ps 44 reveals that, first, it has a unique voice emphasizing God as the source of distress, primarily for being silent in human afflictions. It lays the responsibility of the affliction upon God rather than upon human enemies or God’s people themselves.¹³ The afflictions intensify from disgrace to death, wherein God plays a pivotal role as the agent of the actions (vv. 10–17, 20, and 23). Second, the literary feature of Ps 44 shows the opposition between God and the people who claim to be loyal. The thematic contrast and the grammatical shift in v. 17 reinforce this opposition. God’s seeming ignorance towards the faithful people elicits questions about His loyalty to the covenant. Third, Ps 44 differs from the common pattern of laments. It ends with a plea to God rather than praise. The element of praise occurs only in the introduction, recalling God’s past actions. Fourth, the purpose of the complaint is to awaken God to help and redeem His people. However, the lament was left unanswered (cf. Psalm 88).

4. Context of Romans 8

The overarching theme in Rom 8 revolves around suffering and the assurance of salvation. Verses 1–17 elucidate God’s actions, including the heavenly enthronement and glorification of Christ (vv. 2–4). As a result, the believers receive the ultimate eschatological state as heirs of all God’s promi-

¹³ The subject of all the finite verbs in vv. 10–17 is God Himself, with the exception of the verb שָׁסִי (“spoil” [v. 10]) and (כִּסְתִּנִּי) (“covered” [v. 15]). This shows the emphasis on God as the one responsible for all the afflictions mentioned in the text, unlike most communal laments commonly attributed to human enemies (cf. Ps 74, 49, 137, etc.).

ses in Christ, who now is the ruler of the cosmos.¹⁴ They have a new status as reconciled with God, not according to the flesh but through the power of God's Spirit. The focus transitions in v. 18 towards the future eschatological hope of a new creation.¹⁵ It opens with a summative statement that the present suffering is not worth comparing with the glory that shall be revealed.¹⁶ Paul then contrasts the present deplorable circumstances to the future revelation and glory (vv. 19–27).¹⁷ The scope expands to the whole creation, which is subjected to enslavement and decay. The personified creation looks forward to restoration (v. 20b) and deliverance from the bondage of corruption (v. 21).

Verses 18–30 goes on to a discussion about hope for complete bodily redemption. However, it seems elusive as the believers do not see it materializing or yet to be fulfilled (vv. 24–25). He then introduces the Spirit, who helps them in their weaknesses (v. 26), searching the hearts (v. 27a) and interceding for the saints (v. 27b).¹⁸ Paul affirms the certainty of humans' final destiny, which is not dependent on their faithfulness but on God's, whose grace ultimately prevails (v. 28a). The section ends with an affirmation of God's control over the cosmos and that He works all things together for His beloved (vv. 28–30).

Rom 8:18–30 sets the context of the present suffering and assurance of salvation. A new section starts in vv. 31 to 39, where Paul advances a series of rhetorical questions to assert Christian faith amid present sufferings and to reinforce the assurance of salvation. The particle τί οὖν ("what then") connects the two pericopes (Rom 8:18–30 and 8:31–39) grammatically. After affirming that the future redemption and re-creation rest upon God, Paul poses a series of questions (vv. 31–35) and statements (vv. 36–39).¹⁹ The issue

¹⁴ For more discussion on 'inheritance,' see Mark Forman, *The Politics of Inheritance in Romans*, SNTSMS 148 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 102–35, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511975141>.

¹⁵ N. T. Wright considers vv. 19–25 as "the greatest Pauline picture of the future of the world" (N. T. Wright, *Evil and the Justice of God* [Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2006], 116).

¹⁶ The concept of glory in Rom 8 carries eschatological connotations, involving the redemption of the body and resurrection (cf. Rom 8:23). Interestingly, life and glory are inextricably connected in Romans (e.g., Rom 1:23; 2:7–10; 5:1–2; cf. 2 Cor 4:14; 5:1–5).

¹⁷ Jonathan Moo suggests a parallel between Isa 24–27 and Rom 8:19–22. See Jonathan Moo, "Romans 8.19–22 and Isaiah's Cosmic Covenant," *NTS* 54.1 (2008), <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0028688508000052>.

¹⁸ For more discussion on the Spirit, see George MacRae, "A Note on Romans 8:26–27," *HTR* 73.1–2 (1980): 227–30, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S001781600000211X>.

¹⁹ For other propositions on the subdivision, see Douglas J. Moo, *The Letter to the Romans*,

of punctuation has generated scholarly debates on the number of questions and statements in the pericope.²⁰ The following outline is predicated on the proposition that each clause in the sequence constitutes a rhetorical question, thereby making a total of seven questions:

What then shall we say to these things? (31a)

If God is for us

Who is against us? (vv. 31b)

Because He did not spare his Son but delivered him up for us all

How shall He not freely give us all things with Him? (v. 32)²¹

Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? (v. 33)

God is the One justifying.

Who is the one condemning? (v. 34)

Christ [Jesus] is the One having died.

And more having been raised up

who also is the one at the right hand of God

who also intercedes for us

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? (v. 35a)

Shall tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, and sword?
(v. 35b)

The first rhetorical question, formulated as a possible conclusion, functions as a summative query: "What shall we say to these things?" The connective particle οὖν ("therefore") prompts a reconsideration of the earlier Christological formulation and an examination of the argumentation put forth by Paul. The expression πρὸς ταῦτα ("to these things") should not be confined to vv. 18–30. It covers the entirety of Paul's theological discussion from chapters 5 to 8.²² Hence, Rom 8:31–39 serves as the recapitulation and climax of Paul's discussions from chapter 5.²³

2nd ed., NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018), 560. See also, C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, ICC 1 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2001), 437–38.

²⁰ For a discussion on five punctuation options, see Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, NICNT [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996], 541.

²¹ The relative pronoun ὅς carries a causal sense. Because God has given His Son, He will freely give all things.

²² Cranfield, *Epistle to the Romans*, 435.

²³ Moo, *The Letter to the Romans*, 559–60. Verses 31–39 are "the climax of the entire first

The protasis εἰ ὁ θεὸς ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν (“if God is on our side”) is not a condition but rather an assertion of the ground of the rhetorical question in the apodosis τίς καθ’ ἡμῶν; (“who is against us?”). By employing this construction in response to claims that ascribe adversities of life to God’s rejection, Paul affirms with confidence that God stands in unity with His people; hence, they need not fear human and non-human enemies (cf. Ps 23:4; 56:9; 118:6–7). Paul underscores God’s past actions as evidence of His love (v. 32), addressing the people’s doubts about His faithfulness. The sacrificial language is made prominent here with the phrase οὐκ ἐφείσατο (“did not withhold”). This phrase is used in LXX to describe Abraham’s act of sacrifice (Gen 22:12, 16).²⁴ The act of faithfulness by Abraham and his readiness to offer his only son Isaac serves as a paradigmatic example of the boundless love of God and His faithfulness towards humanity as demonstrated through the ultimate sacrificial offering of His Son, which Paul has described earlier (e.g., Rom 3:25–26; 5:8; 6:9–10; cf. John 1:29).

The changes in verbal tense within vv. 31–37 are significant. While the questions are expressed in the future tense, the answers are either in the past or present tense. Paul refers to God’s actions in the past and present as rhetorical devices for the emphatic certainty of God’s action in the future (χαρίσεται [“will give”], v. 32). Snyman contends that the future tense in this context carries a modal rather than temporal quality. It conveys the sense of possibility or ability.²⁵ He states that,

Rom 8:31–39 is clearly not judicial; the audience is not asked to judge any event of the past. It is also not deliberative, because the future tenses are not primarily timebound, but express a certain modality; neither is the audience asked to make any decision about a future action. Our passage is epideictic, because it celebrates Christian beliefs. It is an attempt to strengthen the adherence of the audience to these beliefs.²⁶

In contrast to the preceding pericope in which Paul alternates the use of

part of the letter, the *probatio*” (Witherington, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*, 229). It is the peroration of Paul’s argument from Rom 5–8. He then no longer intends to convince his audience in the final section, rather, he makes an appeal (Andries H. Snyman, “Style and the Rhetorical Situation of Romans 8.31–39,” *NTS* 34.2 [1988]: 227, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0028688500020014>).

²⁴ “Whether or not Paul is intending to compare Christ with Isaac in terms of atoning sacrifice, it does seem likely that Paul is consciously alluding to the Abraham and Isaac story” (Mark Forman, *The Politics of Inheritance*, 107). On the intertextual play between Rom 8:32 and 11:2, see Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, 61–62.

²⁵ Snyman, “Style and the Rhetorical Situation,” 226.

²⁶ Snyman, “Style and the Rhetorical Situation,” 228.

the first and second persons, he associates himself with the readers in a more personal and direct way by using the first-person plural throughout Rom 8:31–39. The argumentation shifts from the rhetorical questions to the cumulative answers (vv. 35–39). Paul evokes the potential threats that believers may encounter in the present time. The list of various forms of trouble creates a contrasting rhetorical effect. The central point lies in the affirmation that believers cannot be disconnected from God’s love by any form of adversity.²⁷ God’s people are more than conquerors in all these things (v. 37). The subject of the compound verb ὑπερνικῶμεν (“we are supervictor”) is inclusive, and the present tense conveys the progressive nature of the victory. The concept of the “supervictor” diverges from the ancient and contemporary notions of superheroes. It represents a “decisive victory” won through the agency of love rather than through competition (v. 32).²⁸ Those who are in Christ partake in God’s victory, irrespective of any assertions that propose otherwise. According to James Dunn, Rom 8 “sums up in most emphatic tone Paul’s confidence in the faithfulness of God to those whom His love has thus embraced and sustains.”²⁹ In essence, Paul contends the certainty of salvation.

5. Comparison of Psalm 44 and Romans 8

5.1 Similarities

Both Ps 44 and Rom 8 are concerned about the divine-human relationship. Further prominent similarities link the two passages. First, they reflect on the past actions of God, highlighting His goodness. The psalmist recounts the past actions of God in favor of His people. God expelled nations and liberated their ancestors (v. 2), ultimately leading to victory in the conquest of the land. This victory is credited to God, as He delighted in them (v. 3). The word רצה (“delight”) appears 49 times in the OT, signifying God’s

²⁷ The aorist participle ἀγαπήσαντος (“loved”) does not refer to an ongoing love, but to the single action of God’s love that was manifested on the cross (Brent Kruger, “If God Is For Us: A Study of Pauline Theodicy in Rom 8:18–39” [PhD diss., The Catholic University of America, 2013], 183). However, it has everlasting effect as indicated by the phrases in present tense ὁ θεὸς ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν (“God for us”), θεὸς ὁ δικαίων (“God who justifies”), and ἐντυγχάνει ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν (“He intercedes for us”).

²⁸ Robert Jewett, *Romans: A Commentary*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 548–49.

²⁹ James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, WBC 38A (Dallas: Word, 1998), 508.

pleasure, favor, or acceptance towards His people.³⁰ This illustrates a sense of friendship and a close relationship between God and His people.³¹ The outcome of the saving action of God is continuous praises (vv. 4–8). Similarly, Rom 8 underscores the action of God in Christ. He did not spare His Son but gave Him up for us all, died on the cross, and was raised (vv. 32, 34).

Second, both passages reflect the seeming unfaithfulness of God in light of the afflictions His people face, as though they were in opposition to Him.³² The psalmist lists ninefold verbs depicting the idea of separation and God's rejection of His people (vv. 9–16). For instance, he portrays God as standing at a distance, sleeping, and hiding His face (v. 24; cf. Ps 10:1).³³ In the immediate context, the act of hiding the face is juxtaposed with the light of God's face (v. 3). The Israelites formerly secured the land and experienced deliverance by virtue of the light of God's face (פָּנֵי אֱלֹהִים), a manifestation of His favor. Hence, the notion of God's face being hidden denotes a retraction of His favor (cf. Isa 54:8). The nature of the divine action is questioned as it contradicts the prevalent expectation that adversity is intended for the unfaithful. For according to the Deuteronomic warnings, the turning of God's face (τὸ πρόσωπόν σου ἀποστρέφεις) is the consequence of Israelites breaking the covenant,³⁴ and divine retribution for idolaters (Deut 29:28). However, given that the psalmist insists on the innocence of the Israelites for not violating the covenant (v. 18), the root cause of their oppression is ascribed to God Himself.³⁵

³⁰ "רצה," HALOT, 3:1281.

³¹ "רצה," HALOT, 3:1281.

³² For discussion of the element of lament in Rom 8, see Crisler, *Reading Romans as Lament*, 143–44. Some parallels are found in Sylvia C. Keesmaat, "The Psalms in Romans and Galatians," in *The Psalms in the New Testament*, ed. Steve Moyise and M. J. J. Menken, NTSI (London: T&T Clark International, 2004), 149–53.

³³ According to Duvall and Hays, the Hebrew word פָּנִים ("face") is associated with the presence of God in the OT. While lament psalms are attributed to the absence of God, praise psalms follow a restoration of the presence of God (Jeffrey S. Duvall and J. Daniel Hays, *God's Relational Presence: The Cohesive Center of Biblical Theology* [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2019], 93–94). A significant point of consideration is that Ps 44 is not concerned primarily with the absence of God; rather, it conveys the perceived divine disfavor towards His people and indifference to their misery.

³⁴ E.g., Deut 31:17–18; 32:20; Isa 59:2; Ezek 39:23–24; Job 13:23–24.

³⁵ The implied agent of the passive verb ἐλογίσθημεν ("counted") is God Himself, not others. God is the subject of the verb ἔδωκας ("you gave"). Moreover, the prepositional phrase ἐνεκα σοῦ ("on the account of you") explicitly attributes the responsibility of the affliction of the people to God's hiddenness and forgetfulness rather than the enemies.

Similarly, the scenario in Rom 8 encapsulates the notion of God's hiddenness and conveys a sense of alienation between God and the believers. Paul highlights the turmoil within creation. The believers are afflicted both inwardly and outwardly (vv. 22–23). The hope of the believers regarding the promised redemption of the body appears to be obscure, particularly in light of realities that suggest the contrary (vv. 24–25). Moreover, the potential threats Paul enumerates in his series of rhetorical questions are frequently depicted in the Scriptures as a manifestation of divine condemnation (e.g., Lev 26:14–29; cf. Rom 13:4). For instance, the pairing of the terms *θλίψις* ("tribulation") and *στενοχωρία* ("distress") appear in Deut 29:53 LXX and Isa 8:22 LXX as results of disobedience (cf. Deut 28:15). Paul himself recognizes tribulation and distress as retributions for evildoers (Rom 2:9).³⁶ In the OT, passages where the pairing of words *λιμός* ("famine") and *μάχαιρα* ("sword") appears refer to divine condemnation.³⁷ The same holds true with the terms *λιμός* and *γυμνότης* ("nakedness").³⁸ Furthermore, famine and sword are languages of exile.³⁹ Although, the words *κίνδυνος* ("danger") and *διωγμός* ("persecution") do not have reference or allusion to the OT, suffice it to say that the listed afflictions indicate what is known as divine condemnation for His lawless people.⁴⁰ The initial sevenfold list of troubles reflects typical experiences of daily life (physical), whereas the expansion in vv. 38–39 takes on a more cosmic dimension (non-human),⁴¹ encompassing all facets of existence and the threatening forces that transcend human control.

³⁶ Though elsewhere, tribulations (*θλίψις*) are associated with Paul's dedication to God and ministry (e.g., 2 Cor 1:4, 8; 2:4; 4:17; 6:4; Phil 4:14; 1 Thess 3:7). The same is true for his co-workers (e.g., 2 Cor 8:1–2; Phil 1:29; 1 Thess 1:6; 3:3).

³⁷ Lam 2:21; 4:9; 5:10; Jer 5:12; 11:22; 14:12, 16; 16:4; 18:21; 24:10; cf. 1 Chr 21:12; 2 Chr 20:9 (*ρόμφαία*: "sword").

³⁸ Deut 28:48; Isa 8:21.

³⁹ Amos 4:2; 2 Kgs 25:3–12; Lev 26:33; Jer 9:15.

⁴⁰ Similar lists, although not the exact same in number and order, is found in early Jewish and Second Temple Literature (*Sirach* 39:12–31; *Psalm of Solomon* 13:1–12; 15:7; 2 *Enoch* 66:6). The space limitation prevents a detailed discussion of these texts here; however, a couple of observations can still be made. The lists are related to vengeance and punishment to the ungodly (cf. *Pss. Sol* 13:1–12). They are also associated to persecution and temptations (cf. *T.jos* 2:14).

⁴¹ The new list of threats encompasses several dimensions: (1) existence (life and death [cf. 1 Cor 15:26, 54f]), (2) supernatural agents (angels and principalities [1 En 6–9; 66:2ff]), (3) time (things present and things to come [cf. Rom 8:18; Mark 13:13]), (4) power (authorities [1 En 40:7; 53:3; 62:11]), (5) space (height-depth), and (6) any other created thing. See Peter Stuhlmacher, *Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Commentary*, trans. Scott J. Hafemann [Louisville: Westminster, 1994], 140–41. Snymann suggests that "the

The list of potent existential threats could be seen as indicators of a separation from God.

Third, a central issue of both Ps 44 and Rom 8 is the notion of destiny. Both passages are forward-looking to future deliverance. The psalmist looked forward to the fulfillment of God's covenant and the restoration of Israel. In the same way, the believers in Rom 8 wait for the realization of the promised future creation (v. 19) and deliverance from the bondage of corruption (v. 21). The psalmist and Paul contemplate the contemporary circumstances in view of God's covenantal promises. They associate themselves with the audience using the first-person plural, seeing suffering as a universal experience, and that they are not exempt from it.

5.2 Differences

The most notable difference between Ps 44 and Rom 8 is the emphasis. On the one hand, Ps 44 is primarily concerned with the hiddenness and inactivity of God towards His people facing suffering. It posits that God is on the side of their enemies, prompting the psalmist to appeal to God to vindicate His name. It calls for God's deliverance as He had done in former days. However, the lament left no answer from God. On the other hand, Rom 8 ascertains the presence of a loving God who stands on the side of His people (v. 31). Paul outlines the actions of God in Christ both in the past and present as a guarantee for the future bodily redemption, the ultimate result of the new covenant in Christ.

Moreover, Ps 44 portrays a theme of loss, lamenting the defeat at the hands of enemies. This loss is ascribed to a perceived neglect of God towards His people. In contrast, Rom 8 emphasizes Christ's victory as the basis of the continuous victory of the elect of God, despite threats that can cause suffering. He affirms that the elect of God are more than conquerors and that nothing can separate them from His love. Paul posits that suffering does not signify abandonment of God, as God stands in solidarity with His people and is present by His divine love. The concern about what appears to be divine abandonment is a fundamental issue that Paul addresses in Rom 8:31–35, especially as the afflictions appear to be characteristic of those who oppose God and are reflective of God's disfavor. The reality of affliction might have raised doubts among the believers, that prompts Paul to rhetorically reassure them of their salvation.

progressive lengthening of the units is a good example of amplification" (Snyman, "Style and the Rhetorical Situation," 223).

6. Paul's Hermeneutical Use of Psalm 44

The context of the citation in Rom 8 and its original use in Ps 44 evoke further questions: How does Paul interpret the OT text, and what is his scriptural hermeneutic? Does Paul use the citation to refer to a similar idea, or is it a mere deduction? What might account for the differences between the two contexts? In the following section, I will argue that Paul uses Ps 44 typologically.

Typology is defined as “the study of analogical correspondences among revealed truths about persons, events, institutions, and other things within the historical framework of God’s special revelation, which, from a retrospective view, are of a prophetic nature and are escalated in their meaning.”⁴² In typological exegesis, the NT writers view events from the OT as foreshadowing the truths of the new covenant. This approach is interpretative in nature rather than dialectical or rhetorical.⁴³ I acknowledge the substantial debates over typology as to what it means and other related issues such as allegory and continuity versus noncontinuity, among others. In this study, I use the term typology to simply mean that it involves (1) analogical correspondence, (2) historicity, (3) foreshadowing (prophetic sense), (4) escalation, and (5) retrospection.⁴⁴ These five elements characterizes a type, thereby a typological frame of reference is involved rather than a mere illustration or application of principles.⁴⁵ The following are indications that Paul uses Ps 44 typologically in consonance with the themes of divine hiddenness and the experience of suffering.

First, there are points of analogy between Ps 44 and Rom 8. The analogical correspondence between the two historical events is evident from the points of similarity demonstrated in the interlocking comparisons above (see similarities). Particularly, the patterns of action involve (1) God’s action in the past in favor of His people, (2) present experience of suffering, and (3) anticipation of God’s intervention.

⁴² Beale, *Handbook*, 14. See also Gary Edward Schnittjer and Matthew S. Harmon, *How to Study the Bible’s Use of the Bible: Seven Hermeneutical Choices for the Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2024), 132–33.

⁴³ Earle E. Ellis, *Paul’s Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957), 126. Hays points out that typology is hardly conceived as a method of interpretation. Rather, it provides a framework rooted in literary and historical understandings. This framework establishes the hermeneutical conditions to connecting scriptural texts with contemporary issues. See Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, 161.

⁴⁴ Beale, *Handbook*, 13–27.

⁴⁵ Beale, *Handbook*, 14, 19.

Second, both passages are grounded in history. This is a key component of a typology which is “not the product of the interpretation producing connections on a merely literary level.”⁴⁶ The real historical events in which the psalmist and Paul wrote are subject to debate since they are unspecified in the texts. In any case, Ps 44 indicates that the psalmist’s protest reflects a situation of suffering in contrast to the past history.⁴⁷ Similarly, Rom 8 indicates unpleasant circumstances that the people of God might have endured.⁴⁸ Although the historical references are implicit, it does not nullify the historicity of the events.

Third, the context substantiates the forshadowing nature of Ps 44. The psalmist implores God to intervene on behalf of His people and take action for their deliverance (Ps 44:24–27). The people anticipated deliverance from their enemies and looked forward to the future intervention of God on their behalf. The basis for their plea was threefold, namely: (1) God’s past actions (vv. 2–4), (2) the present deplorable situation facing the people (vv. 10–17, 25b, 26), and (3) the enduring nature of God’s favor (v. 27). In light of the past deliverance of their fathers, they expected deliverance to occur again in the future, particularly in an eschatological context. The psalmist acknowledges God’s power to save the afflicted people and insistently pleads to God to act on their behalf. However, their plea left no answer from the vantage point of the psalmist.

The contexts suggest that this indirect prophetic prefiguration of Israel’s historical experience finds its fulfillment in Christ. There are two major classifications of fulfillment: (1) the direct fulfillment of prophecy, wherein the prophet provides an explicit prediction, and (2) typological fulfillment,

⁴⁶ Schnittjer and Harmon, *How to Study the Bible’s Use of the Bible*, 133.

⁴⁷ On discussions about historical background, see Kwakkel, *According to My Righteousness*, 221–31.

⁴⁸ Yoonjohn Kim contends that sufferings in Rom 8 pertains to tangible and real-world situations, rather than a mere mental or abstract phenomenon. See Yoonjong Kim, *The Divine-Human Relationship in Romans 1–8 in the Light of Interdependence Theory*, LNTS 635 (New York: T&T Clark, 2022), 135–36. Certain studies advocate that the list of threats was drawn from the experiences of Paul (cf. 2 Cor 11:23–28; 12:10) and that of the Roman congregations (Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 543; Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 505; Jewett, *Romans*, 543). Keesmaat argues from the anti-imperial perspective, stating that “the suffering that Paul is referring to had something to do with the rulers who have the power to wield the sword in Rome, and who have already introduced oppression, distress, percussion, peril and sword in the Jewish community there” (Keesmaat, “The Psalms in Romans and Galatians,” 150). Without denying the realities of these afflictions, it appears that Paul’s list is deliberately selected to represent those aspects perceived as manifestations of divine condemnation.

which is indirect and points forward to forthcoming events in the new covenant period.⁴⁹ Psalm 44 is not typically classified as a verbal prophecy but a communal lament in a historical situation, which involves an expectation that points forward to God's intervention. Moreover, the presuppositions that "history is unified" and that "God has designed the earlier parts to correspond and point to the latter parts, especially to the events that have happened in the age of *eschatological fulfilment* in Christ"⁵⁰ do not restrict fulfillment solely to direct verbal prophecies from the OT.⁵¹ The foreshadowing in typology entails that "the pattern was not anticipated by the OT language and is largely recognizable only after the decisive pattern occurs."⁵² Further evidence supports the aspect of fulfillment in the context of Rom 8. The fulfillment introductory formula *καθὼς γέγραπται ὅτι* ("even as it is written") hints that the present context is foreshadowed in the Scriptures.⁵³

Fourth, from a retrospective view,⁵⁴ Paul interprets Ps 44 in light of the Christ event. The psalmist's call to God to redeem His people has been answered through the work of Christ. The summative statement *ὁ θεὸς ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν* ("God is for us") (v. 31) reiterates Paul's earlier affirmation of the presence of Jesus through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in believers (vv. 12–30). He uses the language of Ps 118:6 to emphasize that no human power can prevail against those who are on God's side. The statement "God is for us" is itself, as James R. Edwards rightly observes, "not a conceptual statement of God's gracious disposition; it is a historical statement testifying to

⁴⁹ It is also called "event prophecy" (Beale, *Handbook*, 58). Huffman delineates three nuances pertaining to fulfillment: "prophecy fulfillment," "promise pattern," and "typological correlation" (Huffman, *Understanding the New Testament Use*, 110–20). The typological correlation aligns with my application of the term "typology" in this study.

⁵⁰ Beale, *Handbook*, 98. Emphasis in original.

⁵¹ Fulfillment may include "redemptive-historical relationship of the new, climatic revelation of God in Christ to the preparatory, incomplete revelation to and through Israel" (Douglas J. Moo, "Problem of Sensus Plenior," in *Hermeneutics, Authority, and Canon*, ed. D. A. Carson and J. D. Woodbridge [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986], 191).

⁵² Huffman, *Understanding the New Testament Use*, 119.

⁵³ Paul typically uses this formula to introduce OT quotations (Rom 1:17; 2:24; 3:4, 10; 4:17; 8:36; 9:13, 33; 10:15; 11:8; 26; 15:3, 9, 21). The literal rendering of this phrase would be "as it has been written." Its function is "to connect the citation with its antecedent, the statement that precedes it in its new context; it asserts that the citation corresponds both to the exemplar and its antecedent" (Francis Watson, *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith* [London: T&T Clark International, 2004], 43).

⁵⁴ A retrospective view suggests that, following Christ's resurrection and under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the NT writers interpret OT historical accounts as indirect prophecies about Christ or the church. See Beale, *Handbook*, 57.

God's *action* on our behalf."⁵⁵ Paul in Romans consistently upholds that God's action *for* His people is the love through the sacrifice of Christ (Rom 3:21–4:25; 5:1–21; 8:1–3, 11, 17, 23, 29). Paul then elaborates this portrayal of God's actions in and through Christ: (1) *God did not spare His Son but delivered Him up for us all* (Rom 8:32; cf. 3:21–26; 4:25; 5:6–11; 8:3). The sacrifice of Christ is the evidence that God withheld nothing from His people. As a result of that sacrifice, (2) *God justifies* (v. 33).⁵⁶ This justification includes forgiveness of sin which creates the possibility of a new relationship with God, a theme Paul elaborated on in the earlier verses (vv. 12–17). The attention shifts from God to Jesus who (3) *died, rose, and intercedes for His people* (v. 35). These portrayals of Christ are worth noting here, particularly as opposed to the thought of divine condemnation amidst sufferings.

Given that Christ took on human form and willingly offered Himself to death for the sake of humanity and their sin (cf. Rom 4:25; 8:3), it is inconceivable that He could be the source of condemnation. Furthermore, Christ was raised and exalted at the right hand of God, a position of sovereignty;⁵⁷ yet, He advocates on behalf of the believers. Joseph Fitzmyer notes that "such an exalted intercessor cannot assume the role of an accuser or one who will condemn us."⁵⁸ Paul depicts God as the vindicator in Rom 8 and through Jesus's death and resurrection, Christ's love is made known.⁵⁹ It is, therefore, plausible to affirm that God's action in Jesus is the direct answer to the lament in Ps 44. The assurance that God is for His people is a paradox of grace, affirming that God sides with redeemed humanity.

Fifth, Paul establishes a typological connection between the referenced citation and new ideas that are absent in Ps 44. This escalation is a defining characteristic of typology, which involves correspondences between the OT

⁵⁵ James R. Edwards, *New International Biblical Commentary: Romans*, NTS 6 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1992), 222. Emphasis in original.

⁵⁶ "The theme of God's justice has for so long been subsumed in popular readings of Paul under the theme of human salvation that we need to remind ourselves, as a matter of strict exegesis, that the theme stated in Romans 1:16–17 comes to its full expression not simply in Romans 3:21–4:25, not simply in Romans 5:1–11 or Romans 8:1–11, but in Romans 8:19–27" (Wright, *Evil and the Justice of God*, 117).

⁵⁷ See Ps 110:1; Isa 63:10; cf. *Ps. Sol.* 13:1. It refers to the enthronement of Christ (Phil 2:9; cf. Acts 2:33; 5:31; Col 3:1).

⁵⁸ Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 33 (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 533.

⁵⁹ On Christ's love, see 2 Cor 4:15; Gal 2:20. These passages refer to Christ's action of surrender for the sake of humanity.

type and the NT antitype, where the antitype also transcends the type.⁶⁰ In Rom 8, Paul aligns with Psalm, portraying the idea of suffering for being just. The correspondence between the two contexts demonstrates that the experience retains the association and continuity between the OT and NT. Moreover, beyond merely drawing attention to the apparent indifference of God to the distress of His people, Paul further provides an avenue of response. He presents new elements in Rom 8 to complement the understanding of the God-human relationship, by focusing on Christ's continuous advocacy for believers, the assurance of victory in Christ and the divine love despite sufferings (v. 37), and the assertion that no adversities could sever their relationship with God (v. 39). Although the complete contours of prophecy have not yet been fully realized, the triumph of the cross is the assurance and a foreshadowing of the final victory over evil.

7. The Interpretative Tradition of Ps 44:23

Commentators perceive that Ps 44:22 had been applied to martyrs in Israel during the Maccabean persecutions (2nd cent. BC, 2 Macc 7; 4 Macc 13). In particular, 2 Maccabees accounts for a period in Jewish history when the Jewish people endured oppression under king Antiochus.⁶¹ As a result of apostasy (2 Macc 4–6), the people assumed a collective punishment (2:4–6; 4 Macc 4:21–26). The righteous then observed the law with the expectation that their piety would propitiate God's wrath and bring about reconciliation (7:38). However, in their devotion, they faced tortures for defying the king's command, which they saw as violating God's law (cf. 4 Macc 4:25–26; 5:7–13).

The martyrological stories (2 Macc 6:18–7:42), highlights that their deaths were “for the sake of God's laws” (2 Macc 7:9, 11; cf. 4 Ezra 7:89).⁶² This situation is inconsistent with the promises of blessings for those who adhere

⁶⁰ “The fulfilment of the type in the antitype does not simply repeat the elements of the type but goes beyond it in significance and intensity” (Schnittjer and Harmon, *How to Study the Bible's Use of the Bible*, 133). Hays notes that, “the antitype is much greater than the type; it ‘fulfills and annuls’ the work of the ‘precursor’” (Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, 99).

⁶¹ Daniel R. Schwartz, “On Something Biblical About 2 Maccabees,” in *Biblical Perspectives: Early Use and Interpretation of the Bible in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. Michael Edward Stone and Esther G. Chazon, STDJ 28 (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 227.

⁶² E.g., Eleazar states that it is honorable to die over violating the law (2 Macc 6:18–31). Judas, the last martyr in the narrative, encourages his men “to struggle nobly until death for laws, temple, city, fatherland, constitution” (2 Macc 13:13–14; 15:17).

to the covenant (Deut 30:1, 19–20). Jan Sigvartsen notes that “2 Maccabees struggles with harmonizing the deutoronomistic principle of just-reward based on observance of the Torah and the martyrdom of the righteous Jews.”⁶³ Their resolution for this theodicy issue is the belief about bodily resurrection.⁶⁴ In the face of torture, the martyrs consistently espouse their hope for resurrection and re-creation (2 Macc 7:9, 11, 14, 22–23, 29, 36). They believed that although they did not receive their deserved reward of virtue in this life, a vindication in the future resurrection would address the issue (cf. 4 Macc 9:8; 18:22–23). Moreover, the Torah-observant believed that their death brings about reconciliation between God and His servants (2 Macc 6, 16, 33, 37–38).⁶⁵

The narrative highlights four themes in relation to the purpose of the righteous’ suffering: edification (6:16), brevity of God’s anger (7:36, 38), reconciliation (5:20; 6:12–17; 7:6, 32–33, 37–38), and servanthood (2 Macc 7:6, 33).⁶⁶ The quotation of Deut 32:36 in 2 Macc 7:6 underlines the promise of God to vindicate His servants (cf. 7:33). The Jews sought complete reconciliation with God (8:29), a process that begins when God’s anger turns to mercy (8:5). Dunn states that “given the parallel with the Maccabean martyrs, it is not insignificant that whereas the Maccabean martyrs died ‘for the sake of God’s laws’ (2 Macc 7:9, 11; similarly 4 Ezra 7:89), in Paul’s thought Christ has become the decisive expression of the special relation between

⁶³ Jan Åge Sigvartsen, *Afterlife and Resurrection Beliefs in the Apocrypha and Apocalyptic Literature*, JCT 29 (London: Bloomsbury, 2019), 40.

⁶⁴ Sigvartsen, *Afterlife and Resurrection*, 40. The theme of resurrection is prominent in 2 Maccabees (e.g., 2 Macc 6:26; 12:43–45; 14:37–46). “This is one of the earlier, and certainly the most intensive, sources for these beliefs in ancient Jewish texts” (Daniel R. Schwartz, *2 Maccabees*, CEJL [Berlin: de Gruyter, 2008], 299). The emphasis in 4 Maccabees is rather different, including the anticipation of “future vindication,” “persecutor’s judgement,” and “present realization of this hope” (9:8–9; 17:21–22). See Brian J. Tabb, *Suffering in Ancient Worldview: Luke, Seneca and 4 Maccabees in Dialogue*, LNTS 569 (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), 119.

⁶⁵ David A. DeSilva notes, “They suffered as part of the nation: but at the same time, their voluntary surrender to their bodies for the sake of God and God’s law becomes an efficacious death on behalf of the nation ... just as the sin of the individuals brought collective punishment, so the covenant loyalty of individuals can effect reversal” (David A. DeSilva, *Introducing the Apocrypha: Message, Context, Significance* [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002], 275).

⁶⁶ Schwartz, *2 Maccabees*, 299.

God and His people (vv. 35, 39).⁶⁷ Paul recounts the assurance that even physical death can't separate the believers from God.

8. Theological Significance and Relevance

Romans 8 provides an exposition of Pauline theodicy—defending God's righteousness in response to the apparent hiddenness of God to innocent subjects.⁶⁸ As Wright asserts, "Romans 8 is the deepest New Testament answer to the 'problem of evil,' to the question of God's justice."⁶⁹ The central tenet of Pauline theodicy in Rom 8:31–37 is the providential care of God through Christ's loving act of death and resurrection. This is the Gospel that Paul advocates as a revelation of the righteousness of God (1:16–17). The perspective throughout the New Testament consistently reveals that the sacrifice of Jesus is the means to confront evil.⁷⁰ Hays also notes that the death and resurrection of Jesus serve as "theological answers to doubts about God's righteousness."⁷¹

The non-intervention of God in the present suffering might be perceived as incompatible with His love. Paul's use of Ps 44 in Rom 8 seems to suggest that such doubts took place among the Roman believers, especially when their current experiences seemed to reflect God's condemnations. The reference to "sheep for slaughter" comes right after Paul's first listing of tribulations. In the OT, this expression indicates a life that is threatened by death (cf. Jer 11:19; 12:3; Isa 53:7).⁷² The synonym of the word "slaughter" (שָׁחָה) is used in a complaint concerning the prosperity of the wicked, while the

⁶⁷ Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 506. One of Paul's concerns in Romans is the legitimacy of the law (Rom 3:31) and its culmination in Christ (8:1–11).

⁶⁸ Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, 57; Katherine Grieb, *The Story of Romans: A Narrative Defense of God's Righteousness* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002), xvii; Gordon D. Fee, *Pauline Christology: An Exegetical-Theological Study* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007), 239; J. R. Daniel Kirk, *Unlocking Romans: Resurrection and the Justification of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 10.

⁶⁹ Wright, *Evil and the Justice of God*, 118. Hays argues that Rom 8 is the Christian community and Paul's "theological answers to doubts about God's righteousness" (Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, 57).

⁷⁰ N. T. Wright, *Evil and the Justice of God*, 136. It is commonly referred as the "Christological approach to theodicy."

⁷¹ Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, 57.

⁷² Daniel Wallace takes the word σφαγῆς ("slaughter") as a "genitive of destination," rendering that they were "regarded as sheep destined for slaughter" (Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament*, 9th ed. [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001], 100–101).

righteous unjustly suffer demise (Jer 12:3; cf. 1 Sam 25:11). Zechariah 11 provides a further description of the phrase “sheep for slaughter,” noting that “the buyers kill them and do not consider themselves guilty” (v. 5). The depiction seems to make a distinction between regular sheep sold in the market for meat and those set aside for temple use. The lament in Ps 44 also mentions that they were sold for no price. If such distinction is true, the torture of the chosen people by enemies is a serious shame, as the holy sheep cannot be slaughtered simply by anyone (see also John 18:31). Dunn notes that the phrase *ὅλην τὴν ἡμέραν* (“all day long”) is a semitic expression which means “no escape.”⁷³ The accusative of duration, *ἡμέραν* (“day”), points to a real-life experience and the reality of suffering. Within this backdrop, the quotation assumes significant meaning as it emphasizes the profound sense of shame that the people of God possibly experience.

It is then reasonable to assert that the theological purpose of Paul in using Ps 44 is to emphasize the theodicy of love. He appropriates the OT passage to address the perceived notion of God’s detachment and offers a response, highlighting the work of Jesus, His death, and resurrection. The action of God in Christ provides the ground for the possibility of entering into a relationship with God.⁷⁴ Within this framework, Paul argues that nothing and no one can separate believers from the love of God. He also asserts the presence of Christ through the mediation of the Spirit (Rom 8:9–11), who dwells in the believers.⁷⁵ Hence, Rom 8 sets forth a new paradigm for suffering. As Keesmaat argues, Paul replaces the imperial notion of victory embraced by Israel and Rome with the victory of suffering love. She states that

the whole dynamics of this passage rejects the traditional categories about who is victor and who is conquered. The messiah who died and was raised is the one in the position of authority at the right hand of God,

⁷³ Dunn, *Romans* 1–8, 506.

⁷⁴ The pattern in Deut 32 is worth noting here. Israelites are counted as God’s own personal portion (v. 9). However, due to their sins, God hides His face (v. 20), which allows persecution by the foreign power (v. 21–26) for a “brief time” (cf. Isa 54:7). The enemies were arrogant for a while without expecting their own final fall (vv. 27–31). Atonement was the means of reconciliation between God and His servants (v. 32). After the atonement, God will turn around, have mercy upon His people (v. 36), and avenge His servants’ blood upon the nations (vv. 35, 41–43).

⁷⁵ See Hans Dieter Betz, “The Concept of the ‘Inner Human Being’ (*Οἶσω Ἀνθρώπου*) in the Anthropology of Paul,” *NTS* 46.3 [2000]: 333, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0028688-500000199>.

those who suffer are the ones who are—not conquered—but more than, indeed above, the conquerors.⁷⁶

While the OT psalmists based their theodicy on their victory over their enemies as evidence of God's favor and presence, Paul refutes this notion by claiming that God is for His people through the work of Christ. Christ died, rose, and now continues to intercede on behalf of humanity. The action of God in Christ is a demonstration of His love for mankind and His aspiration for reconciliation rather than condemnation.

More underlying theological questions persist, such as why God turned His face on the elect as if they were lawless enemies. If Jesus has already suffered for the elect (Rom 8:32), why do believers feel as though God has offered them like sheep for slaughter? Why would a loving God allow His people to suffer? Paul does not completely answer these questions in Rom 8. Instead, he emphasizes the assurance of no separation between the believers and the love of Christ. To substantiate this point, Paul highlights the past actions and the continuing work of Christ, which provide no justification for attributing blame to God. Nicholas Wolterstorff states that,

the biblical silence of God is the failure or refusal of God to answer a question put to Him. Though not the failure or refusal to answer any question you please, however. Some of the questions put to God are questions which, given what God has already said, are misguided questions. Questions that one wouldn't ask if one has heard and genuinely listened to what God has already said. The biblical silence of God is the nonanswering silence of God in the face of those questions which take into account what God has already said.⁷⁷

Ultimately, the final answer to the present suffering is eschatological.⁷⁸ Paul portrays this through the contrast between the body, which is subjected to mortality (vv. 10–11), and glory when suffering believers will be glorified with Christ (vv. 17–18). Although the believers have been given the gift of the Holy Spirit, they still groan in anticipation of the redemption

⁷⁶ Keesmaat, "The Psalms in Romans and Galatians," 152.

⁷⁷ Nicholas Wolterstorff, "The Silence of the God Who Speaks," in *Divine Hiddenness: New Essays*, ed. Daniel Howard-Snyder and Paul K. Moser (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 216.

⁷⁸ John Peckham, *Theodicy of Love: Cosmic Conflict and the Problem of Evil* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018), 133. On the eschatological theme in Romans 8, see Peter Orr, *Christ Absent and Present: A Study in Pauline Christology*, WUNT 2/354 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 91–92.

of their bodies (v. 23). This confirms that the presence of God does not entail an absence of suffering. All of creation long for the freedom from enslavement to the glory of the children of God (v. 21). That eschatological glorification of the believers will be the ultimate end of evil (v. 30). In between, the confidence in the divine presence results in an ongoing hope, peace, and assurance of victory.⁷⁹

9. Ethical Consideration

More than just a philosophical and theological puzzle, evil is a reality in the lives of humans. Richard Rice states, “When it comes to suffering, the ‘so what?’ questions are the most important ones of all.”⁸⁰ As much as the pursuit of an intellectually satisfying answer to the issue of suffering is important, the practical implications that help individuals face the challenge of suffering with a view toward the ultimate redemption hold greater importance. Wright states that

it isn’t that the cross has won the victory, so there’s nothing more to be done. Rather, the cross has won the victory as a result of which there are now redeemed human beings getting ready to act as God’s wise agents, his stewards, constantly worshipping their Creator and constantly, as a result, being equipped to reflect his image into his creation, to bring his wise and healing order to the world, putting the world to rights under his just and gentle rule.⁸¹

In the face of present suffering that appears to deny the salvation of humanity, Paul advances two perspectives from which to view suffering. First, the believers are to look backward to the victory that has already been won through Christ (Rom 5:1–5; 8:31–39).⁸² The cross is the foundation of the inseparability of believers from the love of God. Witherington says, “There is

⁷⁹ Duvall and Hays suggest that “God’s sustaining presence shows up in Paul’s writings in three interrelated ways: (1) God’s presence brings initial life to the believers; (2) God’s presence offers ongoing grace, mercy, and peace; and God’s presence strengthens and empower believers in life and ministry” (Duvall and Hays, *God’s Relational Presence*, 246).

⁸⁰ Richard Rice, *Suffering and the Search for Meaning: Contemporary Responses to the Problem of Pain* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014), 138.

⁸¹ Wright, *Evil and the Justice of God*, 139.

⁸² Wright rightly states that, “as Paul insists in Romans 8, all our present life, in anticipation of this future one, is a matter of groaning in the Spirit as we wait for the final gift given as we are also rejoicing because the victory is already won (Romans 5:1–5;

one item that Paul does not include in the list of the things that can separate the believer from God's love, namely *the believer himself*.⁸³ Second, the immediate experience here and now should be seen in light of the bigger picture of the eschatological horizon. Paul presents an ideal view of the future world free from its bondage to decay (Rom 8:19–25; 1 Cor 15; cf. Rev 21). In anticipation of the eschatological deliverance from evil, the believers can learn to lose the bonds of evil and live in confidence that God is for His people and will ultimately fulfill His promises on account of His faithfulness in the past and present.

The implication of this understanding in Christian living is that, more than striving for intellectually attractive explanations to the question of how and why all the suffering is in the world, the believers are to cling to the promise that the victory of the cross will be implemented and live on a personal basis with comfort and hope. Beyond the reality of suffering, Paul exults the reality of faith, highlighting that steadfastness through suffering in the present time leads to increased hope.⁸⁴ Believers are to find solace in faith and live a holy life freed from the slavery of sin (Rom 8:12–17), in accordance with the standard of the ultimate future (cf. Col 3:1–11).

10. Conclusion

In this essay, I have argued that Paul uses Ps 44 in Rom 8 typologically, and not merely analogically. Paul retrospectively perceived that the psalmist's plea for God's vindication had been fulfilled in the event of Christ. The use of the quotation draws a contrast between the experiences of the Israelites and the believers to disclose the righteousness of God. Though they have the same experience of being treated as if they were wicked, Paul presents a greater reality that supersedes the OT prefiguration. The Christ's event brings about changes in the salvation-history storyline, which results in the assurance of God's love, and ultimately, believers become "more than conquerors" in Christ. The fulfillment of indirect typological prophecy in Christ through the cross is the foreshadowing of the consummate eschatological triumph over evil.

8:31–39)" (Wright, *Evil and the Justice of God*, 118).

⁸³ Witherington, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 234. Emphasis added.

⁸⁴ As Moxnes contends, the work of God in Christ is the anchor of the Christians' hope in their sufferings (Rom 5:1–11; 8:18–39) (Halvor Moxnes, *Theology in Conflict: Studies in Paul's Understanding of God in Romans*, SNT 53 [Leiden: Brill, 1980], 277).

Paul relates to Ps 44 typologically both through comparison and contrast. He not only shows the elements of likeness but also creates antithetical typological correlations. The direct citation in Rom 8 serves as a pointer to the OT context, particularly in reference to the apparent hiddenness of God. Paul then establishes that the plea of the psalmist finds its response in the work of Christ. The presence of God is often attached to an expectation of trains of blessings. The challenge of reconciling the earlier promise of salvation through the work of Jesus with the present experience of the apparent rejection of God remains a puzzle for believers. Failure to address this issue renders the significance of God's presence for His people null and void. For Paul, the knowledge that a loving God is alongside and with His people even during times of hardship offers comfort. The prominent assurance in Rom 8 is that despite the suffering that seemingly reflect God's condemnation, nothing can separate the believers from the love of God, even temporarily. The cross establishes a God-human relationship that encourages the believers to live with a sense of victory within the eschatological horizon.