

Psalm 74

- **Psalm 73** deals with a personal crisis of faith, now **Psalm 74** deals with a national crisis, when a nation has lost it's faith.

Psalm 33:12 "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord; and the people whom He hath chosen for His own inheritance."

- This Psalm is thought have been written at or just after the destruction of both Jerusalem and the Temple in 586 BC by the Babylonians under king Nebuchadnezzar.
 - The city is lying in ruins, the Temple has been destroyed right down to the foundation. The walls of the city are all cast down, the Babylonians have carried the vast majority of the people away and only a small remnant remains in the rubble of what was once the glorious city of Jerusalem, and the Temple of God.
 - It's a very sad picture.
 - This Asaph is not the same Asaph that was a contemporary with David, because it's been roughly 600 years from David until the destruction of Jerusalem.
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V: 1 Lord is this desolation going to go on forever? Will we come back, will it ever be like it was?

- Will your anger last forever? It's one thing to be angry with those who are your enemies, but we're the sheep of your pasture.
- I suppose that part of the problem is when the sheep of His pasture act like His enemies...

Hebrews 12:6-7 "6For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. 7If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not?"

V: 2-4 The Psalmist is pointing back to when God redeemed Israel out of it's bondage in Egypt - remember.

- Your presence dwelt here, in Jerusalem, in the Holy Temple, this is where your people worshipped you - but look at it, it lies in ruins.
- The enemies flags are flying over this city, they brag about their victory, they have defiled your sanctuary.

- In my lifetime I've experienced disappointments, as everyone has, but I've never, we've never experienced this kind of defeat in our lives. Imagine a Chinese or Russian flag flying over the white house or the capital buildings... that is what they are experiencing.

V: 5-7 He's talking about lumberjack days, men that could prove their strength cutting down the large trees used as timber for the construction of the Temple, and the city itself.

- Now men are having contests to break down the Temple and it's ornate carvings and decorations, they've broken it down and destroyed it with fire, right down to the foundations.
- Later when Nehemiah finally came to Jerusalem, he had to re-build even the foundations of the Temple.

V: 8-9 The reference to synagogues has caused some to think that this Psalm was written at an even later date because they didn't really build synagogues until a later date, although the Jews did gather in different places prior to that and worship.

- This may be a reference to their attempt to completely wipe out the worship of Jehovah throughout the entire land, which has been true at various times in history.
- Our signs / ensigns no longer fly over our nation, there aren't any prophets speaking the Word of God to the people, no one knows how long this will go on.
- The prophet Jeremiah is in Egypt, Daniel and Ezekiel were in captivity in Babylon, there weren't any prophets to guide them.

Psalm 119:105 "Thy Word is a lamp unto thy feet, and a light unto thy path."

- The absence of God's Word = darkness & confusion.
- God had warned them of this coming judgment, the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, and many others had warned them, but they refused to listen. Because of that God didn't raise up any new prophets during this time.
- The Psalmist is certainly expressing his perspective, but we know that at this time the Prophet Jeremiah had written, as Daniel would later figure out, that it would be 70 years of desolation, then the re-building would begin. His writings might not have been widely circulated at that time, although Daniel was aware of them.

V: 10-11 How long will you allow these wicked people to blaspheme?

- Asaph is obviously ready to get things back on track; what he doesn't know is that God is also working on the other side of this equation.
- *Daniel records*: Nebuchadnezzar, dreams interpreted, humbled, Daniel Ch. 4

Daniel 3:28-29 “²⁸Then Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said, blessed be the God of Sha-drach, Me-shach, and Abednego, who hath sent His angel, and delivered His servant that trusted in Him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God. ²⁹Therefore I make a decree, that every people, nation, and language, which speak any thing amiss against the God of Sha-drach, Me-shach, and Abednego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill: Because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort.”

Daniel 4:34 “And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto Heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured Him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation.”

V: 12 Key verse in this Psalm, and it's the turning point as well. Like in Psalm 73, Asaph was pretty bummed out until he got to verse 17.

Psalm 73:17 “... until I went into the Sanctuary of God; then I understood.”

- In the same way here, this other Asaph moves from looking at the destruction of everything around him to looking up to the throne of God.

V: 12-17 God, you created all things, you control all things, you are all powerful, you are able to do this. Reminding God of their history together.

- Dividing the Red Sea, conquering the Egyptian army, at times referred to as dragons / crocodiles in some translations.
- The miraculous crossing of the Jordan as God stopped up the waters.
- Joshua 10 describes God holding the Sun & Moon still, making the day longer for Joshua and Israel's army to fight Amorites, actually the Lord fought for Israel.
- The issue isn't God's ability, the issue is that of God's will.

V: 18 Asaph and many others have said the same thing: don't let man be victorious over you, don't let them get away with this. (*Sure sign of foolishness / blasphemy*)

- Eventually God does set things aright, the Babylonians will be judged as well.

V: 19 "... Thy turtledove" (Your beloved), "... Thy poor..." (and helpless) - His appeal is based on relationship and need, not on merit or worthiness.

V: 20 Now he's pulling out the big guns.... Remember your promise!

Psalm 138:2 "I will worship toward Thy holy temple, and praise Thy name for Thy lovingkindness and for Thy truth: for Thou hast magnified Thy Word above all Thy name."

- God remembers His Word, He keeps His promises. (Good tactic)
- Dark places, habitations of cruelty - ISIS, the persecuted church.

V: 21-23 Help us not to remain in this shameful place.

- Arise Lord and make it right for your own reputation's sake; don't forget the horrible things that the wicked have said against you.
- God doesn't forget, He will make all things right in His time:

Romans 12:19 "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord."

- Asaph acknowledged that while they had seemingly lost everything else, the city, the Temple, their homes; they had not lost their God, He was still there, and still on the throne.

Psalm 75

- **Psalm 75**, also written by Asaph starts off with Praise.

V: 1 Unto God we give thanks... we should be an ever thankful people.

James 1:17 "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

- God is manifest or real to man through His works:

Psalm 19:1 "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth His handiwork."

Romans 1:20 “For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.”

V: 2-3 Asaph seems to go into Messianic mode here as he begins to utter a prophecy:

- When I - speaking of or for Jesus, when He receives the congregation He will judge uprightly - because Jesus is the righteous judge.
- When the earth is dissolved - that is definitely speaking of future events - He will bear it up.

Colossians 1:16-17 “¹⁶For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him: ¹⁷And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist.”

- He upholds, bears up the pillars of all things - that is Jesus!

V: 4-5 To the proud: don't be foolish, don't be lifted up in stubbornness and pride.

Proverbs 16:18 “Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.”

V: 6-7 Speaking to those who would seek to promote themselves - understand that promotion truly comes from God, He elevates one and demotes another according to His will.

Isaiah 2:11 “The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day.”

- Nebuchadnezzar is certainly a good example of someone who at one time said look at this magnificent Babylon that I have made... he found himself being humbled for 7 years until he came to his senses and confessed that God alone was worthy of all praise, and honor, and glory!

1 Peter 5:6 “Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time:”

V: 8 Jesus spoke of the wrath of God in the garden of Gethsemane as being a cup that He wished could be avoided.

Speaking of the wicked:

Revelation 14:10 “The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb:”

V: 9-10 In all this I will declare, I will sing praises to praise the Lord. He is making a personal commitment to walk in God's ways and to praise Him no matter what.

Job 13:15 "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him..."

Joshua 24:15 "... but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

- The wicked will be cut off, but the righteous shall be exalted, raised up to the highest place to be with Him.

Psalm 76

- During the reign of Hezekiah his chief counselor was Isaiah the prophet. Sennacherib was the king of Assyria, they were to become a world dominating power. They were extremely cruel in their treatment of their prisoners. They had conquered the Northern kingdom of Israel, now they turned their attention upon the Southern kingdom of Judah.
- They had sent emissaries to persuade Hezekiah to capitulate and surrender without any resistance, they mocked and blasphemed the God of Israel. Isaiah's counsel was for Hezekiah to wait upon the Lord and trust in Him which he did.
- Rabshakkeh had boasted that none of the gods of the other nations had been able to withstand them. He would learn that their dead gods were no match for the True and Living God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
- Sennacherib amassed an army of 185,000 soldiers surrounding Jerusalem, laying siege to it, blockading it, trying to weaken them through starvation.
- Hezekiah took these things to the Lord in the Temple. Soon thereafter the inhabitants woke up to a new day and looked over the wall of the city to see a field of dead corpses, an angel had come and wiped out the Assyrian army, 185,000 struck dead.
- This Psalm was written in celebration of this occasion. Written by a descendant of Asaph, himself also named Asaph.

V: 1-3 In Judah in praise, God is known. His name is great in Israel, in Salem, Jerusalem is his dwelling place in Zion.

- Even though the kingdom was divided at the time, Asaph invokes the unity of the Lord in speaking of both Judah, the Southern kingdom, and Israel the Northern kingdom, as one in God's eyes.

- This is where He fought for His children.

Psalm 24:8 “Who is this king of glory? The Lord of hosts, He is the king of glory. Selah.”

V: 4-9 Proclaiming God’s awesome victory. He says You are glorious in your victory. Strong men are spoiled, their strength was lost, they never found it.

- At his rebuke chariots and horses fell dead.
- Who can stand in thy sight?
- God arose to judgment to save the meek, the inhabitants of Jerusalem.
- This victory all came about because King Hezekiah, the prophet Isaiah, and the elders of Judah in Jerusalem all listened to God’s Word and put their faith in the Lord, they trusted in His Word.

Isaiah 37:35-36 “³⁵For I will defend this city to save it for mine own sake, and for My servant David’s sake. ³⁶Then the angel of the Lord went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and fourscore and five thousand:..”

- Notice that throughout he is giving glory to God for the great things He has done.

V: 10-12 Knowing the back ground to this Psalm really helps to understand the flow of it. These last few verses remind me of the arrogance of the Assyrians as they taunted the inhabitants of Jerusalem, as they mocked the God of Israel - all that is gone now.

- Their princes, their commanders, all dead, cut off.
- He is terrible to the kings of the earth - who refuse to submit to Him.
- Bring presents unto Him that ought to be feared...

Romans 12:1 “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.”

“*Feared*” 4 x’s, (V: 7,8,11,12) (H3372) Nora, terrible, to be feared, reverential fear.

- It has been said that you can’t really know the grace of God until you’ve known the fear of God.

To know as the Assyrians learned:

Hebrews 12:29 “For our God is a consuming fire.”

- Give Him the gift that He desires. He desires you!

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