

Psalm 79

- Simply titled “A Psalm of Asaph.”
 - This Psalm was written at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, we get a glimpse of the picture presented, it’s desolation.
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V: 1 KJV refers to the “heathens”, NKJV has “nations” both referring to the Gentiles, the non-Jews, referring specifically to the Babylonians.

- The Babylonian army invaded once again in 596 BC. They had already been conquered once by the Babylonians who left Zedekiah in power, under subjugation and tribute - but when he rebelled they came back with a vengeance and totally destroyed the city leaving the city and all the homes in just heaps of rubble. The glorious Temple of Solomon also being completely destroyed.
- There were strict rules as to who could enter the temple precincts, who could enter into the Holy Place, and to the Holy of Holies - now these non-Jews, the heathen nations, were roaming about taking it apart, defiling the Temple in the process.

V: 2-3 This gives some insight as to the slaughter. So many killed that there weren’t enough left to bury the dead.

- **Romans 6:23** “For the wages of sin is death...” Not always just spiritually.
- In that culture it was a tremendous reproach and a disgrace, or desecration to die and not be given a proper burial. Here we see that the bodies of those killed were left out in the open for the vultures, the dogs, and hyena’s to eat.

V: 4 Their neighbors refers to those nations around them, their enemies. The Edomites, Ammonites, Moabites, Amalekites, the Philistines - all of whom hated Israel and were glad to see this come upon them, they gloated over their destruction and troubles - to them Israel had become a reproach and the subject of scorn.

- While they were certainly down at that time, there would come another day.

Micah 7:8 “Do not rejoice over me, my enemy; when I fall, I will arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord will be a light for me.”

Proverbs 24:17 “Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, and do not let your heart be glad when he stumbles;”

V: 5 The Psalmist seeing all of this and Israel’s enemies gloating and he cried out “how long, Lord?” “Will it be like this forever?”

- We can all related to those times when the Lord was chastening us, correcting us and we cried out in that same desperate way.
- They didn't know that while it wouldn't last forever, it would literally be a lifetime to some as it would last for 70 years.
- The Bible describes God as a "Jealous" God - jealousy is a special kind of anger, it is an extreme emotion.

Exodus 34:14 "for you shall worship no other god, for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God."

- God looks upon the relationship He has with the nation of Israel, and with us as a marriage relationship. When we go whoring after other gods He views our infidelity as that of adultery - spiritual adultery; which rightly makes Him angry - He is jealous for us, just as He was for them.

V: 6-7 Lord, wipe them out. Pour your wrath out on the heathen, those that don't know you.

- Part of their problem, one of the things they couldn't reconcile was how could God use the heathen nations, a people that were way worse than they had been, how could he use the Babylonians to judge them for their wickedness.
- The reality is that those who know the will of God but walk in disobedience to that are held to a higher standard than those who don't know it.

Luke 12:47-48 "⁴⁷And that servant who knew his master's will, and did not prepare himself or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. ⁴⁸But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with few. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more."

- A person, or in this case a nation who stands before God will be judged according to the light of God that they have received.

As Peter said:

2 Peter 2:21 "For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them."

- The prayer of the psalmist is that God would pour out His wrath upon the heathen that have not known Him, but that isn't really the way of God. He has great mercy towards those who don't know, but he's upset and want to take vengeance against the Babylonians.

- God will eventually do a great work in Babylon, but not the way Asaph was hoping: The king of Babylon would eventually become a believer, and there would in the first century be a strong Christian presence and church in Babylon.

V: 8-9 Pour out your wrath upon them, but don't remember our iniquities - typical!

- We never pray for justice unless it is for someone else! Mercy for us Lord!
- **Provide atonement / purge away our sins:** His prayer is answered in Jesus:

1 John 4:10 "In this is love, not that we love God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

- Be merciful to us, help us - "... For the glory of your name... for your name's sake!"
- Not on the basis of what we've done, but on the basis of who you are - good tactic!

V: 10-11 In that day and culture the defeat of a nation was tantamount to a defeat of their God who was not able to protect them. Victory or defeat demonstrated the superiority or inferiority of their gods.

As the Assyrians, the predecessors of the Babylonians laid siege to Jerusalem:

2 Kings 18:33, 35 "33Has any of the gods of the nations at all delivered its land from the hand of the king of Assyria?" - "35Who among all the gods of these lands have delivered their countries from my hand, that the Lord should deliver Jerusalem from my hand?"

- It was the next day that an angel of the Lord came down and slew 185K Assyrian soldiers - the Lord answered their questions.
- At the same time we can hinder what God wants to do, and or push Him away.

2 Chronicles 15:1-2 "1Now the Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Obed. 2And he went out to meet Asa, and said to him: "Hear me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin. The Lord is with you while you are with Him. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will forsake you."

- Sadly we are reading and studying this Psalm because it has been fulfilled in the history of Israel. They forsook their God and now God is using the Babylonians to chasten them.

- Asaph is looking to the Lord to avenge His people; he's pleading the cause of the many captives, the prisoners who were transported back to Babylon simply to be executed there before king Nebuchadnezzar.

V: 12 Lord give it to them 7 times worse than you gave it to us! There's a curse!

V: 13 We are your people, we are the sheep of your pasture - and we will give you thanks and praise.

- These sad, tragic events are really the background for the book of "Lamentations" or "sorrows."

Psalm 80

- This Psalm was also written after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians, this Psalm picks up where the previous left off

Psalm 79:13 "... We are your people, the sheep of your pasture:"

V: 1 *"Give ear oh Shepherd of Israel..." Relationship & connection.*

Jesus said:

John 10:11 "I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd gives His life for the sheep."

- Probably describing the presence of God as He dwells between the Cherubim on the Mercy Seat of the Ark of Testimony. Longing for the presence of God once again amongst His people.
- The cherubim are described as the highest order of the angelic host - **Ezekiel 1 & 10**, Revelation 4 describing the throne of God and the cherubim that are about the throne of God:

Revelation 4:8 "The four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying: Holy, holy, holy," Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!"

V: 2 Numbers Ch. 2 - these three tribes are listed together and would follow the presence of the Lord, the Tabernacle / Ark.

- Perhaps as to say that as we follow you, come and save us!



V: 3 The phrase will be repeated in V: 7, then again in 19. (God / God of hosts)

- Restore us, or turn to us again. Cause your face to shine, presumably upon us.

Numbers 6:24-26 “²⁴The Lord bless you and keep you; ²⁵The Lord make His face shine upon you, and be gracious to you; ²⁶The Lord lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace.”

- “Shine” (H-215) ovr, make luminous, show, reveal, set on fire, shine.

2 Corinthians 4:6 “For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”

- Cause your face to shine upon us, reveal yourself to us, and we shall be saved!

V: 4-6 How long? According to the prophets Isaiah & Jeremiah it would be 70 years.

V: 7 Again the repeated plea: Restore us, turn again to your children, cause your face to shine upon us, reveal yourself to us - save us!

- Now he begins to use a parable of sorts, likening the nation to a grape vine.

V: 8-11 The prophets Isaiah & Jeremiah liken the nation of Israel unto a vine,

Isaiah 5:7 “For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel...”

- Jesus used the vine as an analogy as well:

John 15:1-2 “¹I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. ²Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.”

- He brought the vine out of Egypt, he cast out the nations from before Him, preparing, making room for His vine and planted it in the land of Canaan.
- Cause it to take deep root, filling the land - taking over - to the sea - meaning the Mediterranean, and to the river meaning the Euphrates.

V: 12-13 Why have you broken her down hedges? Taken away her protection? That should be obvious.

- She is plundered, up-rooted, devoured by wild beasts - Babylonians.

Galatians 6:7-8 “⁷Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. ⁸For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.”

V: 14-15 Again the plea for God to remember His vine, His work.

V: 16 It is burned with fire, completely destroyed - like Jerusalem and the Temple.

V: 17-18 A prophetic utterance: “*The man of your right hand...*” - “*Upon the Son of man...*” Who is it in heaven that is seated at the right hand of the Father? Jesus!

V: 19 As once again we see this same plea for help, which in light of the previous verses is a plea for Messiah to come, that He is their only hope - which is true, and He is our only hope as well!

The hidden face of God:

Ezekiel 39:29 “And I will not hide My face from them anymore; for I shall have poured out My Spirit on the house of Israel, says the Lord God.”

Isaiah 59:1-2 “¹Behold, the Lord’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. ²But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear.”

- What is the remedy? Repentance & confession leads to restoration.

1 John 1:9 “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”