

Psalm 74

1 Maschil of Asaph. O God, why hast thou cast us off for ever? why doth thine anger smoke against the sheep of thy pasture? 2 Remember thy congregation, which thou hast purchased of old; the rod of thine inheritance, which thou hast redeemed; this mount Zion, wherein thou hast dwelt. 3 Lift up thy feet unto the perpetual desolations; even all that the enemy hath done wickedly in the sanctuary.

4 Thine enemies roar in the midst of thy congregations; they set up their ensigns for signs. 5 A man was famous according as he had lifted up axes upon the thick trees. 6 But now they break down the carved work thereof at once with axes and hammers. 7 They have cast fire into thy sanctuary, they have defiled by casting down the dwelling place of thy name to the ground. 8 They said in their hearts, Let us destroy them together: they have burned up all the synagogues of God in the land.

9 We see not our signs: there is no more any prophet: neither is there among us any that knoweth how long. 10 O God, how long shall the adversary reproach? shall the enemy blaspheme thy name for ever? 11 Why withdrawest thou thy hand, even thy right hand? pluck it out of thy bosom.

12 For God is my King of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth. 13 Thou didst divide the sea by thy strength: thou brakest the heads of the dragons in the waters. 14 Thou brakest the heads of leviathan in pieces, and gavest him to be meat to the people inhabiting the wilderness. 15 Thou didst cleave the fountain and the flood: thou driedst up mighty rivers. 16 The day is thine, the night also is thine: thou hast prepared the light and the sun. 17 Thou hast set all the borders of the earth: thou hast made summer and winter.

18 Remember this, that the enemy hath reproached, O LORD, and that the foolish people have blasphemed thy name. 19 O deliver not the soul of thy turtledove unto the multitude of the wicked: forget not the congregation of thy poor for ever. 20 Have respect unto the covenant: for the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty. 21 O let not the oppressed return ashamed: let the poor and needy praise thy name.

22 Arise, O God, plead thine own cause: remember how the foolish man reproacheth thee daily. 23 Forget not the voice of thine enemies: the tumult of those that rise up against thee increaseth continually.

Introduction:

1. “Maschil” – meaning understanding or teaching. A skillful psalm used for public instruction. (13 Psalms are a “Maschil” Psalm: 32, 42, 44, 45, 52, 53, 54, 55, 74, 78, 88, 89, 142).
2. “of Asaph” – This is Asaphic Psalm is a prophetic Psalm indicating the destruction of the Temple of Solomon.

Outline: (two parallel halves)

- A. Prayer for Remembrance (vv.1-3)
- B. Destruction of the Temple (vv.4-8)
- C. Feeling of Abandonment (vv.9-11)
- C.’ God’s Past Involvements (vv.12-17)
- A.’ Prayer for Remembrance (vv.18-21)
- B.’ Destruction of God’s Enemies (vv.22-23)

Observations:

1. This is Asaph’s prophecy concerning the destruction of the Temple of Solomon. (586 BC – The Babylonian Invasion). This was in accordance with Deut. 28:45-50 (see also: Jer. 40:2-3; 2 Chr. 36:15-16).
2. This makes Nebuchadnezzar the “Foolish Man” in v.22.
3. (v.4) Congregation is the same Hebrew word for “synagogues” (v.8) = assembly.
4. The destruction is recorded in 2 Kings 25:8-21.
5. (vv.1-11) – The sorrows of the nation.
6. See these extra Bible verses that describe the desolation of the Temple and City – Jer. 52:13, Lam. 4:4; Jer. 8:20; 39:41; Psalm 137:1-4.
7. (vv.12-23) – The former display of power assures Asaph of a future hope.
8. Asaph’s prayer: Remember, O LORD your: people (vv.18-19); your promise (v.20); your praise (v.21); your power (vv.22-23).

Lesson: The Enemy in the midst of the sanctuary.