

There will be times in our lives when we, who know God and love God, will be totally dominated and devastated by those who do not care about God. They do not care about His Word or His will. They will appear to be winning and we will appear to be losing.

There will be times when you will be mocked and demeaned and the only reason for it is that you have a relationship with God. There is no other explanation. You are right with God and your enemies are not.

When that happens, the right thing to do is to cry out to God. That thought is clearly communicated in Psalm 79.

If ever there has been a group of people who have known hatred and animosity simply because they have a relationship with God, it is Israel. Time and time again in Israel's history, she has been the target of terrible persecution and devastation.

The worst of this will hit during the Great Tribulation. There have been many times in the history of Israel when all she could do was to cry to God for His intervening help. There is a tremendous lesson to be learned from this Psalm:

WHEN GOD'S PEOPLE DISCOVER THAT THEIR WORLD HAS BEEN INVADED BY THOSE WHO MOCK THEM, HATE THEM AND TRY TO HURT THEM, GOD'S PEOPLE SHOULD CRY TO GOD AND ASK FOR HIS FORGIVENESS AND HIS HELP AND HIS JUDGMENT.

There is no question that this book of Psalms is one that is designed to teach us the necessity of communicating with God. Praying to God and talking with God is clearly the main theme of the entire book of Psalms. This is especially true when we find ourselves in times of great hurt and hardship.

Now this Psalm breaks down into five main themes:

THEME #1 – Godless people have done terrible things to godly people. **79:1-3**

The list of things here is anything but positive. All of these things will happen during the Tribulation and a form of these things have happened at various times in history. There are four horrible actions:

Horrible Action #1 - Godless people invaded God's inheritance. **79:1a**

The Hebrew word "invade" is one that does not just mean they have a presence among God's people, but they have entered into an intimate relationship with God's people (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, pp. 106-107). Godless people who will do you hurt and harm are people you know. These are not strangers.

Horrible Action #2 - Godless people defiled God's temple. **79:1b**

Godless people go to places of worship. But their worship is unacceptable to God. This obviously is referring to the Temple in Jerusalem where people went who were involved in abominable activities.

But we may certainly make an application to the church. There are wicked people who go to church and pretend to worship. There are wicked people who lead ministries who are actually an abomination to God.

Horrible Action #3 - Godless people have destroyed God's city. **79:1c**

This is obviously a reference to the destruction of Jerusalem that has been destroyed by godless people many times.

Horrible Action #4 - Godless people have destroyed God's people. **79:2-3**

Prior to the Assyrian and Babylonian captivity, false prophets were telling the children of Israel that God would never allow His inheritance to be destroyed or taken captive. False prophets proclaimed that God would never allow His temple or His city to be demolished. Sculptures have been found in ancient Assyria that actually show the birds eating the dead bodies of Israelites who were slain. God has permitted horrible things to happen to Israel and He will once again during the Tribulation.

Martin Luther claimed that he had not seen a river in Europe that did not have some blood in it of a believer. Godless people have a track record of hurting God's people in any dispensation. They so despise them that they will not even give them a burial.

THEME #2 – Godless people have made the godly people a mockery and reproach. **79:4**

Instead of people standing in reverential awe of the people and property of God, Israel became a reproach to her neighbors and mocked by those around her and still is to this day.

Chrysostom said that he would actually rather suffer physical abuse than this kind of abuse because physical abuse hurts the body, but this kind of abuse hurts the soul.

When you are in a right relationship with God, you will be ridiculed and mocked in your school, on your job and perhaps even in the context of the church. Your neighbors may mock your faith and your grasp of the Scriptures. This is the way it is.

THEME #3 – Godly people pray to God and ask God for His judgment against godless people. **79:5-7**

Verse 5 gives us part of the reason why God permitted Israel to be so demeaned—He was angry with her because she had rejected Him. God is a jealous God and He is jealous for His people. He wants their love and loyalty. He did some wonderful things for Israel and then she went chasing after other “gods” and that made God angry.

But the Psalmist in understanding this did the right thing in that he prayed and he specifically made two requests to God:

Request #1 - He asked God to cease from His anger against His people. **79:5**

Request #2 - He asked God to pour out His wrath on His peoples’ enemies. **79:6-7**

Asaph gives a description of those who should be the targets of God’s wrath:

- 1) Those who do not know God. **79:6a**
- 2) Those who do not call out to God. **79:6b**

What Asaph realized is that the people who were making life miserable for God’s people did not know God and did not pray to God, but rather to false deities.

God’s wrath will never be poured out on those who know Him and call upon Him. He may get angry with His people, but His wrath is always aimed at those who do not know Him and call out to Him.

Any person who refuses to call out to Jesus Christ for salvation is under the wrath of God and will experience that wrath one day.

THEME #4 – Godly people pray to God and ask for specific requests for themselves. **79:8-12**

Godly people are not sinless people and they are not pharisaical people. There are seven specific requests they make:

Request #1 - Godly people ask God not to remember the iniquities of the forefathers. **79:8a**

God’s people can do some perverse things. Sins do pile up. God does have the ability to punish a ministry because of the sins of a previous ministry. It is imperative that God’s people admit sin or the sins can earn interest.

Request #2 - Godly people ask God for His compassion. **79:8b**

Godly people can be brought very low. People who love God can hit bottom. The compassion of God is able to put His people out of their rut.

Request #3 - Godly people ask for His help. **79:9a**

Even the worst kinds of trouble should not cause us to abandon hope; but they should cause us to cry out to God for help.

Request #4 - Godly people ask God for His deliverance and forgiveness. **79:9b**

Godly people realize God not only can destroy but He also can deliver. But notice a critical key to deliverance—forgiveness of sins. A key to God’s deliverance is to face our sin and remind God that His name is on the line in us.

Request #5 - Godly people ask God for His vengeance. **79:10**

We don’t have to take out vengeance; we can leave it to God.

Request #6 - Godly people ask God for His preservation. **79:11**

God has the power and ability to deliver any of His property even under the threat of death. God can preserve His people even when it appears they will not be preserved.

Request #7 - Godly people ask God for a sevenfold payback. **79:12**

The number seven is the number of completeness. So God’s people are asking God for complete justice.

Now I truly believe there is an eschatological application to this. There are seven seal judgments, seven trumpet judgments and seven bowl judgments in the Tribulation. God is going to pay back a full complete judgment on this God-mocking, Christ-rejecting, Israel-hating world.

THEME #5 – Godly people pray and express why God should answer these prayers. **79:13**

There are three reasons in **verse 13**:

Reason #1 - Because God’s people are God’s sheep. **79:13a**

Reason #2 - Because God’s people will thank God forever. **79:13b**

Reason #3 - Because God’s people can testify of God’s help. **79:13c**

When we find ourselves being attacked and demeaned and we find ourselves feeling so helpless and hopeless, we need to run to God in prayer. God has a very special ear open to those who find themselves in depressing situations and in dark times.

There are four parting thoughts:

- 1) Godless people you know will do hurtful and even hateful things against you because you are God's property**
- 2) Godless people will mock and ridicule Godly people and their love for God and His Word.**
- 3) Godly people have every right to ask God for His help and His judgment.**
- 4) Godly people are still sinful people and need God's compassion and forgiveness.**