

# God Awakening

*Book of Psalms*

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**Bible Text:** Psalm 78:65-72

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Let's take our Bibles and look together in Psalm 78 one more time. I'd like to pick up our reading from verse 65 down to verse 72 and speak to you about the Lord Awakening. I know that may sound like an unusual term, particularly since we know that God neither slumbers nor sleeps and yet it is a language that's used here in Psalm 78:65, "Then the Lord awaked as one out of sleep." Whenever you see the word "as" it's a similitude so it's not that he was sleeping and now he awoke but he was as one who "awaked as one out of sleep, and like a mighty man that shouteth by reason of wine."

"65 Then the Lord awaked as one out of sleep, and like a mighty man that shouteth by reason of wine. 66 And he smote his enemies in the hinder parts: he put them to a perpetual reproach. 67 Moreover he refused the tabernacle of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim: 68 But chose the tribe of Judah, the mount Zion which he loved. 69 And he built his sanctuary like high palaces, like the earth which he hath established for ever. 70 He chose David also his servant, and took him from the sheepfolds: 71 From following the ewes great with young he brought him to feed Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance. 72 So he fed them according to the integrity of his heart; and guided them by the skilfulness of his hands."

Let's have a word of prayer.

*Most gracious heavenly Father, as we take up your word for these few moments this morning, I pray that you would, indeed, open our hearts and cause us to see your glory, the glory that you have purposed to give to your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, and how he is clearly revealed and set forth here in your word. I pray that in these moments that we have, that you would prepared our hearts for this day of worship. How we need a word from you. How we need our souls refreshed in considering Christ our Savior. And I pray for your blessing by your Spirit as we look together in your word and are mindful to give you all the praise and the glory in our dear Savior's name. Amen.*

I got up this morning thinking about this particular portion and the message that I'll be preaching here in a little bit in our second hour and how important it is for us to use

Scriptural language regardless of whether we like the way it's put or not. Many times, we'll come across a particular portion of Scripture that we don't really feel comfortable with how it's written and have you ever found yourself wanting to change how it's written, to kind of fit your mindset? Nothing could be worse. Nothing is more evil than adding to or taking from the word of God and how the Lord has to grant us simplicity of language and even as it's written here, it's put in language, this is Scripture that is put in language that even a child can understand, at least in their natural reasoning.

And, again, that was on my mind this morning because we had our grandson with us and I've been burdened about even at a young age, here he is just a year and a half old but I remember what Paul wrote to Timothy that "from a child thou hast known the scriptures." So, I picked him up this morning when he woke up and took him outside and the Lord impressed me just to point to and talk about everything that God had made: God made the trees; God made the grass; God made the sky; God made the birds. Oh look, there's a squirrel. God made the squirrel. And even as he saw me sitting and preparing in my chair, he wanted me to sit down with him and build some blocks that he's having fun with and he'll kind of pat next to him and go, "Sit down. Sit down." I told him, "I would like to be able to get down and play with you but I'm reading God's word," and it was interesting to watch his eyes and facial expression, making the connection between God's word and what I'd been talking about, God in creation.

I know it's going to take the Spirit of God to give him a hearing, but it begins with a listening and that's what I pray for. I try not in the preaching to the congregation, try to figure out who is here and who isn't. You can drive yourself crazy but I'm thankful when people come to listen. I'm thankful because I know the Lord has brought them and I'm thankful that this book and this translation that we have here, the King James version, really they went back and analyzed it and came up after the analysis, with the fact that it is written in a language that a sixth grader should be able to understand. So, when people tell you the King James version is old English and no one can understand that, I would say that that says something pretty devastating to them about our educational system if a sixth grader cannot read this and understand it.

Even as this word begins and in Psalm 78 in verse 65, "Then the Lord awaked as one out of sleep, and like a mighty man that shouteth by reason of wine." Here you can see the word "Lord" that used here is not all capitals, it's not the word "Jehovah" but it is the word "Adonai" in the original and it means "a master"; it means "the master"; it is "one who is the Lord of the house; the Lord of creation." We can add there "the Lord of his people." Such is God, that no matter how dismal things may appear and even as we've been studying here in Psalm 78, we see how many times over and over and over again it says that the people, this people of Israel here in particular, but we could relate it to people in general, have turned back. It says there in verse 57, "and dealt unfaithfully like their fathers." You don't have to go far back to figure out why your children or my children behave the way they do. A lot of times we like to go all the way back to Adam but here it's not blaming Adam, it's the word "fathers" so it's speaking generically then of those that brought them into this world and even though we may not like to admit it,

when our children act up, when they rebel, the first thought that ought to come to our mind is, “You know what? They are just simply acting out that same nature that I have.”

Yes, it goes back to Adam but it’s a point that is shown here that unless God intervenes and that’s the sense here of the word “awakened as one out of sleep,” the picture is if God just leaves men and women to themselves, even our own children, they will turn back. They will continually turn back and deal unfaithfully and turn aside like a deceitful bow. We talk about taking a gun and aiming it and getting it sighted in, well a deceitful bow is one that has a little bit of a bend in it that may not even be perceptible but when you pull it back to shoot it, it will always cause the arrow to miss the mark. That’s really what the word “sin” means. One of the synonyms for “sin” in Scripture is “to miss the mark.” So, no matter how well you sight in that arrow, every time you pull back and shoot, because the bow is crooked, the arrow will miss the mark.

Why is that men and women and even our children and ourselves, continue to miss the mark? It’s because the bow is crooked. I don’t care how much a person endeavors to aim at the glory of God, even us sitting here, we’d have to confess this morning that we have never hit it. I remember one old preacher, hearing him say when someone asked him when did he first start preaching to the glory of God? And he paused and he said, “I’d like to begin.” You can never even, as a preacher preaching the gospel, say that I have hit the mark when it comes to the glory of God. Anybody that has ever stood here or stood in a pulpit and endeavored to preach the truth and set Christ forth and God in all his glory, will always comes away sitting down in a slump and feeling inside, “You know what? I really messed that up.” Not because of the reaction of the people but just simply falling short of the glory of God. How do you take things pertaining to the glory of God in Christ and declare it in such a way as to give him glory.

Verse 58, “they provoked him to anger.” Notice, “with their high places.” Isn’t it amazing that most of the time naturally minded religious people worry about, “Did I lie? Did I cheat? Did I break the speed limit? Did I get angry?” But notice what it is in Scripture again and again that provokes God to anger. The high places here represent places of worship. Other than that one place that God ordained where his name should dwell and that is in the temple, in the tabernacle, where there were the sacrifices, where was the High Priest. They went aside; they went backward. When it says in verse 57 “they turned back,” it’s a willful turning away from *the* one sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It’s like people today that may come and sit and listen here to this message and our prayer is that Christ is exalted in his sacrifice as the only sacrifice for sinners, but if someone leaves and decides, “I want to go down the road even though they’re not preaching the gospel, but I need something for my kids,” I need a youth program, I need something to that effect, that they leave for that reason and subject themselves to idolatry, it says here “they provoked him to anger with their high places and moved him to jealousy with their graven images.” That is the one thing that we find in Scripture that is of importance to God because he has declared his Son to be the only image.

That is, he is the visible image of the invisible God and any other way of worship is idolatry. You know, a lot of people even look at our society today in the United States and say, "Well, things are really starting to look bad. Look what's happening with murderers and the crimes and all of this is increasing." The erosion, if you will, of this society has been for some time because it's been in the way that people worshipped. It's been in that free-will self-righteous religion that has just taken this land like a flood.

When I was over in Africa, I used to say, because I saw a lot of religions that originated here in the United States and missionaries going over to continue to propagate those false doctrines, I likened it to toxic waste, that the United States has been dumping its religious toxic waste on the world for some time and this is what God describes as what provokes him to anger. It's why he destroyed the children of Israel in the desert but preserved a remnant to bring them into the Land. It says in verse 59, "when God heard this he was wroth and greatly abhorred Israel." There is a view of God today that he is love that he, in essence, would never hurt anybody and even though we provoke him, he's kind of like that grandfather, the old grandfather sitting on his chair on the porch and the kids are misbehaving around him and he kind of just sloughs it off.

This is a pretty strong word that's used here in Psalm 78:59, "abhorred." To be abhorrent to somebody is to provoke their hatred. To abhor something is to hate it and here, again, we have to be careful when we come to Scriptures that may not fit our way of thinking because the Scriptures say that God is love and yet the Scriptures say, what? "Jacob have I loved, Esau have I hated." It doesn't mean "like less" but it's the same sense here as "abhorred."

All sin, all sinners are abhorrent to God outside of the Lord Jesus Christ. I know that's not a popular message but that is the truth and, again, there is that saying that we hear all the time, "Well, God loves the sinner but hates the sin." That's the way it's portrayed. There, again, they are trying to fit the Scriptures to their pattern, mindset. Well, it doesn't say here in verse 59 "when God heard this he was wroth and greatly abhorred Israel's sin," it says "he abhorred Israel." Now, what Israel did he abhorred, that natural Israel, that fleshly Israel. I don't care how religious they may have seemed, before a holy God, they were abhorrent to him apart from the one sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Such it is with any sinners today. God hates, the Scriptures say, all workers of iniquity. And all those that are workers of iniquity, particularly, are ones who attempt to come into his presence and to present unto him the works of their hands apart from the Lord Jesus Christ and his work alone. So, it says "he forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent which he placed among men, and delivered his strength into captivity and his glory into the enemy's hand." You see, this was the part which men found unbelievable. They, in their minds, somewhat reasoned, "Well, as long as we have the tabernacle, as long as we have the physical tabernacle of God, we're safe." I liken it to people that come to a place where the gospel is preached and even though they themselves are still lost, they find some measure of comfort in being in a place where the grace of God is preached and yet God says at any time he could remove it. He could remove this candlestick; he could

remove this light. What then would be their end? It would be no different than when it was there because they've been lost all along.

He delivered his strength unto captivity. Again, our mindset of God is that he would never do that but you remember the whole book of Habakkuk was about that, how when Habakkuk learned that God was going to raise up an evil nation and bring it against Israel and destroy that temple, that tabernacle, that it raised in his mind that question, "How are you, God, being pure? Of pure eyes that can behold evil? How could you do this?" And yet, it says there that he stood in his post and he watched and he waited to see how God would answer.

Again, it comes back to what we saw last time, that God is just in all that he does. What he does is right and it's right because he does it. The reason is that God can take this tabernacle and that altar and that priesthood and deliver them into the hands of the enemy. It's God way of saying, "Okay, you want idolatry? Take it and go into these nations who worship other gods and dwell there for a while and see how you like it." Well, we know the end; the end was death. But God could do that because in reality, salvation wasn't in those emblems. You see, they had to be careful even to make an idol of the priest or an idol of the altar or an idol of the lamps. But salvation wasn't in those things; the salvation was in what they typified. So, by casting them away it in no way did away with God's salvation because the people that God purposed to save, the Israel that God purposed to save, was in that representative that those types looked forward to and the pictures portrayed his Son the Lord Jesus Christ. So, even delivering these into captivity, his strength into the enemy's hand, his glory, that being tarnished, it really wasn't his glory that was tarnished. It was just those emblems.

You know, we need to be aware of the same thing: not to make an idol even of this Bible which is God's word. Yes, but it's paper and ink unless the Spirit of God open our eyes and cause us to see who it portrays. I know there are a lot of people who would say, "What if the day comes when they won't allow us to read this Bible anymore? Or, they come and burn the Bibles?" Well, welcome to history. That has happened in the past. There have been many of the Lord's people that have been scattered without any ability to get a hold of a copy of God's word and read it and all that they had was what remained in the heart, what God had been pleased to reveal in their heart from his word but that sustained them even though all this other was taken away.

I find comfort in that because I know there is going to be a day perhaps if I don't die and am taken out suddenly in a heart attack but if I'm, by God's will, ordained to wither away on a bed and can't read and these things are taken away, I'm thankful my salvation is not dependent upon me being able to read physically this word. That the same Christ that is represented here would be the one who would sustain me, the one who paid with his own blood for my sin, would be the one to keep me.

So, we read how the Lord gave that people over unto the sword, he was wroth with his inheritance. Again, not with the true Israel but with all professors. You know, Christ said, "Broad is the way that leads to destruction." What was he talking about? He said, "Many

there are that are on that way, the broad way.” I would hate to have a church name that is called Broad Way Baptist Church but I’ve seen some. It’s like cool. You know, they’re whole idea is we’re not exclusive, we’re inclusive. Even the word “community” when you see the word community attached to a church today, it’s open doors, open arms and open heart. That’s their motto and that’s the view that they have of their God, that’s how he is.

So, for God now to make a difference and to divide, he’s not angry toward that people that Christ has redeemed. His anger here when it says “he was wroth with his people, wroth with his inheritance,” he’s talking about that national Israel that he was preserving until Christ should come.

And it says “the fire consumed their young men and their maidens were not given to marriage.” You see, age is no factor with God. Some people wonder whenever he takes out a young person from this life, they died suddenly, our reaction is that they died too soon. No, they died exactly when God purposed and unless Christ has paid their debt, they will be ushered into an eternal condemnation.

It says, verse 64, “Their priests fell by the sword; and their widows made no lamentation.” You see, God is no respecter of persons. Such is the consequence of sin and being eternally separated from Christ. So, it’s in that context that we see here in verse 65, “Then the Lord awaked,” and it relates back to Isaiah 1 that if God had not kept himself a remnant we would all be as Sodom and Gomorrah, totally destroyed. That’s the important thing to remember: Lot was not preserved alive because he was any better than those Sodomites that were there. It was a mercy that the Lord sent his messenger to deliver him out. Even though he hesitated, even though he held back and even in coming out his wife followed for a while and then she was separated out. The Lord continues to separate out those that are his from even professors. It’s not whether we confess Christ. This is modern day evangelism, so called. “If you’ll just walk that aisle and confess Christ and own him then he’ll own you.” No, it’s not me confessing him, it’s him confessing me. It’s him acknowledging that I am his.

So, for the salvation of this people we read that “the Lord awoke as one out of sleep. He smote his enemies in the hinder parts. He put them to perpetual reproach. He refused the tabernacle of Joseph, chose not the tribe of Ephraim.” Notice, verse 68, “But chose the tribe of Judah, the mount Zion which he loved.” Here is where his particular love is manifest. When it says that he chose the tribe of Judah, if you read Scripture for any amount of time, you understand that that means he chose one out of the tribe of Judah, the lion of Judah, the Lord Jesus Christ.

And in him, in that one, he loved mount Zion. Mount Zion being a type and picture of his church made up of Jew and Gentile, made up of every one that when Christ came, he redeemed. And he built his sanctuary like high palaces, like “the earth which he hath established forever.” There is a sanctuary that has come out of the Lord awakening. You see in verse 65 there and awakening in the sense – it says “shouting like a mighty man by reason of wine.” Wine representing the Spirit of God. Our Lord coming to this earth and

conquering every enemy of his spiritual people. That's what it's describing. And building the sanctuary. Christ said, "I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

When it says in verse 70, "He chose David also his servant, and took him from the sheepfolds," he's speaking here of this one of the tribe of Judah that David typified. Many times, as you read through the prophets, you'll find that David is used as a synonym of Christ. He chose David's seed and "and took him from the sheepfolds: from following the ewes great with young he brought him to feed Jacob his people." Christ is the Great Shepherd. He is the Great I Am and he's the Good Shepherd. He's the Chief Shepherd and Jacob, his people. You think of Jacob, that word harks back to Jacob being a supplanter. Nothing in him that merited being the Lord's and yet the Lord purposed to save him for Christ's sake and Israel his inheritance.

It says, "So he fed them according to the integrity of his heart; and guided them by the skillfulness of his hands." David, being a type of Christ. It, again, reminds us that salvation is of the Lord and he feeds his sheep according to the integrity of Christ's heart and he guides them with the skillfulness of his hands. There is no righteousness in here, it's that righteousness which the Lord Jesus Christ worked out and accomplished for his people and it's his hands, the skillfulness of his hands that have accomplished this salvation on their behalf.

So, God awakening. It seemed as if he was asleep. That's the key word there in verse 65, "Then the Lord awaked *as* one out of sleep." It just appeared that he was sleeping but in time, he came and accomplished that salvation. That's when he revealed to Simeon, remember there when the Spirit led Simeon after Christ's birth and they brought him on the eighth day according to the law and Simeon took that little baby, Jesus, in his hands and said "now I can die for now mine eyes have seen the salvation of the Lord." That was the Lord beginning to accomplish all that had been foretold and Christ coming, living, dying and rising again to set him on high where now he is seated in the heavenlies and he continues as the Great High Priest, the Great Shepherd, to feed and to guide his people and protect them. What a Savior he is.