

Psalm 79:1-13

Introduction: Psalm 78:69 seems like all is right with the world. And then comes Psalm 79. What happened? 400 years after the joy of Psalm 78 we find the devastation of Psalm 79. Note that this is a community psalm (we, us, ours), not an individual psalm (I, me, mine). It is similar to Psalm 74 that focuses more on the destruction of the Temple.

Superscription: *A Psalm of Asaph*

Desperate situations are a real possibility—79:1-5

- 1) The immediate human cause of Israel's desperation—79:1-4 (they)
 - a) Desecration—79:1
 - i) ¹ *O God, the nations have come into Your inheritance;*
 - ii) **they** have defiled Your holy temple;
 - iii) **they** have made Jerusalem a heap of ruins.
 - b) Savage slaughter—79:2-3 (cf. Jeremiah 7:33-34; 16:3-4)
 - i) ² **They** have given the corpses of Your servants as food to the birds of the sky,
 - ii) (**they** have given) *the flesh of Your loyal followers to the wild animals of the earth.*
 - iii) ³ **They** have poured out their blood (lit. "bloods") like water all around Jerusalem,
 - iv) *and there is no one burying.*
- 2) The ultimate Divine cause of Israel's desperation—79:4-5 (shift to we, our, us)
 - a) Humiliation—79:4 (no sympathy from the neighbors, only contempt)
 - i) ⁴ **We** have become a disgrace to **our** neighbors,
 - ii) *a scoffing and a belittling to those around us.*
 - b) ⁵ *How long, O Yahweh, will You be angry forever?*
 - c) (How long) *Will Your jealousy (re: Israel's idolatry) burn like fire?*
 - d) Their only hope is that God will bring an end to their judgment.

Prayer requests to God are appropriate in our desperation—79:6-12

- 1) Godward wrath toward the immediate cause—79:6-7 (they)
 - a) The nations do what they do based on their theology—79:6
 - i) They didn't acknowledge Yahweh's authority—⁶ *Pour out Your wrath on the nations that do not know You,*
 - ii) They didn't worship Yahweh—and (pour out Your wrath) *on the kingdoms that do not call upon Your name.*
 - b) The nations are responsible for their behavior—79:7 ⁷ *For they have devoured Jacob, and devastated his habitation.*
 - c) NB the parallel thoughts in Jeremiah 10:25
- 2) Godward forgiveness toward His people—79:8-9 (shift to our, us)
 - a) Concerning the past—79:8
 - i) ⁸ *Do not remember our former iniquities against us;*

- ii) *let Your tender mercies come quickly to meet us,*
 - (1) Why? *because we are brought very low.*
 - (a) The land has been ruined, the Temple destroyed, people slaughtered, and the survivors have nothing left but guilt and grief—they are indeed very low. (Ross)
- b) Concerning the future—79:9
 - i) ⁹ *Help us, O God of our salvation,*
 - (1) Godward motive—*for the glory of Your name;*
 - ii) *and rescue us, and forgive our sins,*
 - (1) Godward motive—*for Your name's sake.*
 - iii) His name is the revelation of His nature. A mark of spiritual maturity is one's concern for the reputation of God.
- 3) A legitimate question for God—79:10a ¹⁰ *Why should the nation say, "Where is their God?"*
- 4) Vengeance toward the nations—79:10b *Let the vengeance of the blood of Your servants which has been shed be known among the nations before our eyes.*
- 5) Godward mercy toward His people—70:11
 - a) ¹¹ *Let the groans of the prisoner come before You;*
 - b) *according to the greatness of Your power preserve those condemned to die* (lit. "sons of death").
- 6) Godward justice toward the nations—79:12 ¹² *And return to our neighbors sevenfold into their bosom the disgrace with which they have disgraced You, O Adonai.*
 - a) May they receive from others what they have done to God.
 - b) The defeat of a nation was believed to be a defeat of its God.

A determination to worship—19:13

- 1) They are not independent of God—¹³ *Then we, Your people and the sheep of Your pasture, will give thanks to You forever;*
- 2) They are not the last in their line—*to all generations we will recount Your praise.*
(i.e. talk about Your works that prompt worship)

Take-home truth: We make God's name known to the world when we live faithfully, pray earnestly, and praise God publicly for His nature and His works.