

Whatever or whomever is the sacred property of God; one may be absolutely certain that enemies will try to creep into it and try to destroy it. God's people will discover at times they are afflicted by powerful enemies, who frankly are out to destroy them.

Enemies will always try to pollute God's sacred property and do what they can to prevent that property from remaining sacred property. Enemies are dangerous and they are discouraging. They will try to convince you that God is nowhere near you.

Psalm 74 is the second Psalm of book three of the Psalms. Dr. Merrill Unger made an interesting observation when he observed that book three in Psalms corresponds to book three in the Bible, Leviticus, because it centers on the holiness of God in priestly worship in the sanctuary.

Now we may observe from the superscription that this Psalm is "A maskil of Asaph." What this means is that Asaph wrote this Psalm with the idea that it would be very carefully studied. He wrote this for instructional purposes.

The main point of the Psalm is this:

WHEN ENEMIES INVADE THE SACRED WORSHIP PLACE OF GOD, PRAYER MUST BE MADE TO GOD FOR HIS DELIVERING HELP, ASKING GOD TO REMEMBER BOTH YOU AND YOUR ENEMIES.

Now the ultimate fulfillment of this Psalm will be when the Antichrist invades the temple in Jerusalem, and demands to be worshipped as God. It is at this point in the Tribulation when Israel will need to know this prayer of Psalm 74.

But there are several things we may glean from this Psalm that are very practical for us. There will be times when enemies will invade the sacred property of God, whether a building or a person. There will be times when enemies will invade your world and in those moments it will seem as if God is far removed. In fact, enemies can make things so miserable even in the church that one would think God is actually against His own elect. Those are the moments when this Psalm is needed.

There are four main points of instruction presented in this Psalm:

POINT #1 –Asaph questions God concerning His seeming rejection and anger. **74:1**

When enemies invade God's sacred property, God's people tend to think and perhaps at times ought to think that God has rejected them and is angry against them.

Now sometimes it is true that God does permit enemies to invade His property because His people have wandered away from Him. But God's people need to realize at least two things:

(Realization #1) - God is trying to get them to repent and turn back to Him when He does this.

He is trying to get us to change our thinking and our actions. In fact, one thing the invasion of enemies should do for each of us is cause us to cry out to God.

Charles Spurgeon said sin in our lives is usually at the bottom of all the hidings of God's face from us. It is imperative that we ask God to convict us and to reveal to us our sin so that we may repent of it, overcome it and forsake it so we may experience the blessings of God.

There are times when God will permit us to get beat up a bit and one of the first things we need to do is honestly analyze whether or not we have done anything to have caused it.

(Realization #2) - God will never be angry with His own family forever.

God will never be angry with His family forever. He may and does have His moments, but in those moments of anger are also moments of grace. When we find ourselves under attack, we may begin to think in ways that are theologically fuzzy.

POINT #2 – Asaph prayed and asked for God's help when enemies invaded His property.
74:2-11

There are six specific requests that are made:

(Request #1) - He asks God to remember the people He purchased. **74:2a**

Notice the theological lesson; God's people have been purchased of old. We learn in the Grace Age that we were chosen before "the foundation of the world" (Eph. 1:4).

(Request #2) - He asks God to remember the people He redeemed. **74:2b**

We may recall that there are three different Greek words used for redeem. Agorazo—pay the price for something and leave it in the market; Exagorazo—pay the price for something and take it out of the market; Lutroo—pay the price for something and take it and set it free. That is the word used in the Septuagint. Asaph asks God to remember that He paid the price for His people and He has set them free.

(Request #3) - He asks God to remember the place He has chosen. **74:2c**

God chose Jerusalem to be the place of worship and both the people and the place were being overrun by enemies.

When you are under attack, the doctrine of election is a precious doctrine to know. He chose you and He redeemed you and you are His property.

(Request #4) - He asks God to lift up His feet in view of what the enemies had done to His Sanctuary. **74:3-8**

God's sanctuary is God's sacred place of worship and the enemy had done terrible things:

Horrible Act #1 - The enemy had damaged everything within the sanctuary. **74:3b**

Asaph saw that people had done terrible things to a place that was God's sacred place.

Horrible Act #2 - The enemy had set up their own worship structure. **74:4**

These people were not interested in a worship that conformed to God's Word or standards.

Horrible Act #3 - The enemy had smashed and burned sacred things. **74:5-7a**

These enemies treated God's sacred things as nothing more than a tree you chop down. They wrecked sacred things and burned sacred things.

Horrible Act #4 - The enemy had attempted to eliminate anything connected to God. **74:7b-8**

Notice their hearts were against God. Their hearts defiled His name and His place of worship.

This is a prediction of what the Antichrist will do in the Tribulation. Anything connected to the true God will be destroyed. When God's people see evil things infiltrating the church, this is when they need to cry out to Him.

(Request #5) - He asks God to lift up His feet because true teachers are gone. **74:9**

This is a scary verse of Scripture. Men who know God's Word will be rarer and rarer, until there will not be anymore around. One of the most terrible judgments God can ever give is to take away those who truly know God and know how to accurately communicate His Word. **We must not ever minimize the importance of a true teacher of God's Word because when they are gone, there is no guarantee they will be replaced.**

(Request #6) - He asks God how long He will allow these enemies to flourish. **74:10-11**

Clearly Asaph believed in the sovereignty of God. He believed that God controlled time, including the time when He permits an enemy to flourish.

God has tremendous power in His right hand. He has the ability to protect and bless and Asaph knew that. He asks God to focus His attention on those enemies and destroy them. It appeared that God was inactive, but Asaph asks Him to move now.

POINT #3 – Asaph reflected on the mighty works God had done in the past. **74:12-17**

There were ten works upon which Asaph reflected:

(Work #1) - Asaph realized God was his king from old. **74:12a**—God is the Sovereign King

(Work #2) - Asaph realized God does delivering things on this earth. **74:12b**

God is a delivering God and delivers people on the earth all the time. Asaph specifically refers to a series of cosmological judgments that God has done:

(Work #3) - Asaph realized God used His strength to divide the seas. **74:13a**—Red Sea

(Work #4) - Asaph realized God used His strength to destroy sea monsters. **74:13b-14**

Could be a reference to the flood, the Red Sea or future destruction in the Tribulation.

(Work #5) - Asaph realized God breaks open the springs. **74:15a**

Again it could be a reference to the flood, the Red Sea or the Tribulation.

(Work #6) - Asaph realized God dries up the springs. **74:15b**

God will definitely do this during the Tribulation.

(Work #7) - Asaph realized God is the source of day and night. **74:16a**

(Work #8) - Asaph realized God is the source of light and darkness. **74:16b**

(Work #9) - Asaph realized God established all boundaries of the earth. **74:17a**

(Work #10) - Asaph realized that God established the seasons. **74:17b**

Asaph is acknowledging that I am praying to a powerful and sovereign God.

POINT #4 – Asaph presents arguments to God as to why He should help. **74:18-23**

There are seven arguments he presents:

(Argument #1) - Enemies of God's people revile God and ridicule His name. **74:18**

Those who spurn or think lightly of the name of God are very foolish.

(Argument #2) - Enemies of God's people want to devour God's people. **74:19**

This describes a time when God's people will appear to be as helpless as a turtle dove about to be devoured.

(Argument #3) - God's people are in a covenant relationship with God. **74:20a**

God has entered into a covenant relationship with His people. When things are very dark, they need to remember that.

(Argument #4) - Enemies of God's people are violent people. **74:20b**

There will come a day when violence will dominate Israel.

(Argument #5) - God can intervene so that His people are not oppressed or dishonored.
74:21

(Argument #6) - God can arise and plead His own cause against foolish men who are His adversaries. **74:22**

(Argument #7) - God should not forget how His adversaries rise up against Him continually.
74:23

Asaph does not want God to forget what these evil people did.

PARTING THOUGHTS:

- 1. When enemies attack us we need to ask God if we have done something to bring this on.**
- 2. When enemies are in our midst, there will be a minimizing of that which is sacred.**
- 3. When enemies are in our midst, there will be a loss of focus on the greatness of God.**
- 4. When we are surrounded by enemies, we need to pray.**