



PSALM 76

Who Can Stand Before You?

This is Holly with Presence Point and welcome to our *Psalms for Shepherds* series. Today we're in *Psalm 76*, a psalm where Asaph shares four basic truths about our Jehovah God:

1. God wants us to know Him
2. God wants us to trust Him
3. God wants us to fear Him, and
4. God wants us to obey Him.

This psalm is entitled *Who Can Stand Before You? Psalm 76*.

In Judah God is known;
his name is great in Israel.

² His abode has been established in Salem (peace),
his dwelling place in Zion (the citadel).

³ There he broke the flashing arrows,
the shield, the sword, and the weapons of war. Selah

⁴ Glorious are you, more majestic than the mountains full of prey.
mighty, noble, majestic, splendid;

⁵ The stouthearted (or valiant) were stripped of their spoil;
they sank into sleep;
all the men of war were unable to use their hands.

⁶ At your rebuke, O God of Jacob,
both rider and horse lay stunned.

⁷ But you, you are to be feared!
Who can stand before you when once your anger is roused?

⁸ From the heavens you uttered judgment;
the earth feared and was still when God arose to establish judgment,
to save all the humble of the earth. Selah

¹⁰ Surely the wrath of man shall praise you;
the remnant^[a] of wrath you will put on like a belt.

¹¹ Make your vows to the Lord your God and perform them;
let all around him bring gifts to him who is to be feared,

¹² who cuts off the spirit of princes,
who is to be feared by the kings of the earth.

It's believed that that background of this psalm is probably related to God's judgment of the Assyrian army as recorded in Isaiah 37-38 and 2 Kings 18-19. There are other "Zion" psalms as well, but the emphasis in this psalm is on the God who accomplished the victory and not on the miracle itself. We must agree with the psalmist that God's mighty works reveal the greatness of His character and His power. It's important to note that Asaph named both Israel and Judah in the first verse of this psalm, most likely because although the kingdoms had been divided politically, there was still only one covenant people in the Lord's eyes. God's name was great in Judah and Jerusalem, but it needed to be magnified among the neighboring nations, as well. When you read the passages I referenced earlier in 2 Kings and Isaiah, the account of Assyria's invasion of Judah, you see how difficult King Hezekiah's situation was and how much faith he needed to trust God for victory. But the God of glory, more magnificent than the brightest light and more majestic than the mountains, wiped out the Assyrian soldiers as they slept. Instead of Assyria plundering Jerusalem, Jerusalem plundered Assyria, and the Assyria was defeated by Judah in a miraculous display of an act that only Jehovah could do! He put an end to the soldiers and their chariot horses, and He took the weapons, and put the fear of the Lord into their leaders.

As miraculous as that was, the bigger question might be why? Because King Hezekiah, the prophet Isaiah, and the elders of Judah in Jerusalem all listened to God's Word and put their faith in the Lord. In fact, the fear of the Lord is a major theme in this psalm. A. W. Tozer once said, "No one can know the true grace of God, who has not first known the fear of God." Of this psalm, Warren Wiersbe says, "From His throne in heaven, the Lord announced the verdict, and the trial was over. There could be no appeal because God's court is the very highest and His judgment leaves the defendants speechless." God's judgement accomplish at least three purposes, Wiersbe says. They bring glory to God as they reveal His justice and holiness, they punish the wicked for their evil deeds, and they bring salvation to those who trust the Lord.

Compared to the wrath of God, the wrath of man is absolutely nothing. In fact, the more men rage against Him, the more God is glorified! In fact, the longer Pharaoh refused to submit to God (if you go back to Exodus) you'll see the more Egypt was destroyed and the more God was glorified. Instead of resisting the Lord our job is to be grateful to Him for rescuing us, for saving us from our sins, because resisting is simply a losing battle anyway. There will be a day when every ruler of the earth will bow to Jesus Christ and worship Him as King of Kings. If you close your eyes for a moment, just picture, everyone on their knees bowing to the God of hosts. Won't that be absolutely remarkable to witness?

Dear shepherd leader, I pray you want to know the Father, you want to trust Him, that you want to reverently fear Him, and that because of those desires, you also deeply want to obey Him. For that is what will make us the most effective influencers no matter where we lead, where we shepherd. May you live deeply into your calling this week, my friend. Take care.