

## Psalms 76

This evening - we're continuing our overview of the Old Testament book titled Psalms.

With this as our focus - let's open our Bibles to Psalms chapter 76 - and as we make our way to the 76th Psalm...

...I should take a moment to point out that - this is the fourth - of 11 consecutive songs - written by a seer named Asaph.

And it's here in this Psalm - where we find Asaph - singing the praises of the King of kings - and the Lord of lords.

It's here in the 76th Psalm - where we find Asaph - proclaiming the praises of our glorious God.

And it's here in this song - where we not only learn about the greatness of His name...

...but - we will also consider the excellence of His judgments.

And not only that - - but - Asaph also presents us with a prescription...

...for how we should worship the great God of Israel.

With this as our focus - let's turn our attention to the lyrics that we find here in the 76th Psalm.

Look with me - beginning there at verse 1 - where Asaph writes...

Psa 76:1 To the Chief Musician. On stringed instruments. A Psalm of Asaph. A Song.

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

Psa 76:2 In Salem also is His tabernacle,  
And His dwelling place in Zion.

Psa 76:3 There He broke the arrows of the bow,  
The shield and sword of battle. Selah

Here in the beginning of this Psalm - we find Asaph - proclaiming the praises - of the God Who is known in Judah.

Judah was not only the name of Israel's fourth son...

...but the land that God gave to the descendants of Judah was also known by the same name.

And so - when Asaph informs us that God is known in Judah...

...he was referring to the region of southern Israel - which belonged to the descendants of Judah.

And according to Asaph - God was not only known in the land that belonged to Judah...

...but - His name was also great - in all of Israel.

That word - great - found there in verse 1 - was translated from a Hebrew word...

...was used to emphasize the importance, size, and significance of something or someone.

The same word was used to attribute theological importance in various ways...

...to things of great significance - like the magnificence of God's name.

From this - we can see that - the name of God was not only significant in the land of Israel...

...but - His name was also magnified by those who publicly proclaimed the greatness of God.

And with this as our focus - we should take a moment to consider the list of names...

...that help us to grasp the greatness of God.

Here in our text tonight - we find Asaph using the term - Elohim - in reference to God.

And in this context - the term - Elohim - refers to the singular plurality of our Creator.

In other words - the God of Israel is One God - Who has revealed Himself as a being...

...Who eternally exists as a plurality of persons...

...which is later revealed as being the Father - the Son - and the Holy Spirit.

We also find the Hebrew word - El - being used as the prefix to a few more names for God.

For example - it's in Genesis 17 - verse 1 - where the Lord referred to Himself as - El-Shaddai...

...which is translated - Almighty God - or - The All-Sufficient One.

It's in Genesis 21 verse 33 - where the Lord referred to Himself as El Olam...

...which is translated - everlasting God - or in other words - this name reveals the infinite omnipresence of our God.

And in Deuteronomy 26 verse 19 - we also find the Lord - referring to Himself as El Elyon - which means God Most High.

Just to be clear - this name refers to God's omnipotence over all of creation.

I should also remind you that this is the same God Who revealed His name to Moses - with the four consonants - YHWH.

Some scholars render this as Jehovah - - while others believe that the best rendering is Yahweh.

Either way - this name simply means - the existing One - which is based on the infinite nature of our God.

I should also point out that - this name is also attached to several descriptors...

...which help us to better understand the name of the Lord.

For example - it's in Genesis 22 verse 14 - where Abraham referred to the Lord as Jehovah Jireh - which means - God our Provider.

The reason why was because - God provided Abraham with a lamb - that served as a substitutionary sacrifice for his son - Isaac.

This of course was a picture of the Lamb of God - the Lord Jesus...

...Who offered Himself as a sacrifice for our sins.

It's in Exodus 15 verse 26 - where the Lord referred to Himself as Jehovah Rapha - which means God our healer.

And we can rejoice in knowing that the Lord is the great Physician...

...Who is preparing a place for us - where there will be no more tears - nor sorrow - nor crying - nor death.

Not only that - but - we can also look to the Lord today - for healing - physically, spiritually, and emotionally.

And according to His perfect plan - in His sovereign timing...

...those who trust in Jesus - will be healed.

It's in Exodus 17 verse 15 - where Moses built an altar - and worshipped Jehovah Nissi - which is translated - The-LORD-Is-My-Banner.

This name helps us to see that God is the One Who protects His people - as He guides us into every victory.

In Exodus 31 verse 13 - we find the Lord - revealing Himself as Jehovah Mekoddishkem - which means - the Lord Who sanctifies.

And what this means is that - Jehovah is the One Who is helping those who trust in Him - to become Holy - just as He is Holy.

In Judges 6 - verse 24 - Gideon called God - Jehovah Shalom - which means - the Lord our Peace.

And what this means is that - those who trust in Him - will enjoy the peace that passes all understanding.

In the 23rd Psalm - we find King David - referring to the Lord as Jehovah Raah - which is rendered - the Lord my Shepherd.

And from this - we can see that Jehovah is like a good shepherd...

...Who wants to lead - feed - and intercede for those who trust in Him.

In Jeremiah 23 verse 6 - Jeremiah referred to our God as Jehovah Tsidkenu - which means - the Lord our Righteousness.

What this means us that - those who trust in Him - will receive the imputation of His righteousness...

...and in this way - we are justified from every sin.

In Ezekiel 48 verse 35 - we find the Lord - revealing Himself as Jehovah Shammah - which is rendered - the Lord is There.

This name helps us to realize that - the Lord is always present with His people.

And listen - those who draw near to Him - - will discover that He is right here with us.

Finally - it's in 1 Samuel 17 verse 45 - where king David referred to the Lord as Jehovah Sabaoth - which is rendered - the Lord of Hosts.

Just to be clear - David was describing Jehovah in a military context...

...as the Almighty God Who commands the armies of Heaven.

And as we consider all of these descriptive names of

...we have a better understanding of what Asaph means - when he declared...

“...His name is great in Israel.”

We should consider how Asaph described the dwelling place of the Lord - it's there in verse 2 - where he declared...

Psa 76:2 In Salem also is His tabernacle,  
And His dwelling place in Zion.

The God - Who's name is great in Israel - is the same God Who met with His people - there at the tabernacle in Salem.

And just to be clear - the word - Salem - - or - Shalom - means peace.

This is also the name of the ancient city - which became known as Jeru-SALEM...

...which means - teaching of peace.

From this - we can see that Asaph wrote this song - after David moved the Ark of the covenant to Jerusalem...

...where it was placed in the new tabernacle that David commissioned to be created...

...prior to the construction of the temple.

At the same time - I should also remind you that - the tabernacle was a place holder...

...which was pointing to the day when the Son of God would tabernacle with us.

With this in mind - let's consider the statement that Asaph made - in light of the incarnation of Christ.

Notice with me again - there in the beginning of verse 2 - where Asaph declared: "In Salem also is His tabernacle"

Now - remember - Salem means peace - and the tabernacle prophetically points to Jesus.

And what this means is that - those who are in Jesus - are also resting in peace.

I like the way that the Lord Jesus put it - in John chapter 14 - it's verse 27 - where He declared...

Jhn 14:27        "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

Those who are sealed into the tabernacle of the Lord Jesus - will enjoy the perfect peace of salvation.

And the reason why is because - those who trust in Jesus...

...have been given the victory - over the enemy.

Let's consider again how Asaph put it - there in verse 3 - where he declared...

Psa 76:3 There He broke the arrows of the bow,  
The shield and sword of battle. Selah

Now - I have no doubt that Asaph was referring to the military victory that the Lord gave to David...

...on the day when the armies of Israel - conquered the city of Salem.

And at the same time - we can also be sure that this also applies to the day...

...when the Lord Jesus defeated the enemy - there on the old rugged cross...

...which was outside the city walls of Jerusalem.

Those who trust in the tabernacle of our Messiah - are resting in Salem...

...and the reason why is because - Jesus broke the arrows of the enemy - and He disarmed their sword and shield...

...so that we could become more than conquerors - by faith in Christ Jesus.

I like the way that Paul put it - in Colossians chapter 2 - it's beginning at verse 13 - where he declared...

Col 2:13 ...you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses,

Col 2:14 having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

Col 2:15 Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.

When Christ Jesus died on the cross for us - - He not only wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was written against us...

...but - He also disarmed the principalities and powers of the enemy.

And listen - it was at that point in time when He made a public spectacle of them...

...as His death - burial - and resurrection secured the victory - for those who trust in Him.

Therefore - those who trust in Christ Jesus - are resting in the peace of our God.

With all of this mind mind - let's consider how Asaph worshipped our glorious God.

Look with me again - there at the 76th Psalm - I wanna draw your attention to verse 4 - where he sang the praises of the Lord by declaring...

Psa 76:4 You are more glorious and excellent  
Than the mountains of prey.

Psa 76:5 The stouthearted were plundered;  
They have sunk into their sleep;  
And none of the mighty men have found the use of their hands.

Psa 76:6 At Your rebuke, O God of Jacob,  
Both the chariot and horse were cast into a dead sleep.

Psa 76:7 You, Yourself, are to be feared;  
And who may stand in Your presence  
When once You are angry?

Psa 76:8 You caused judgment to be heard from heaven;  
The earth feared and was still,

Psa 76:9 When God arose to judgment,  
To deliver all the oppressed of the earth. Selah

Here in these verses - we find Asaph - focusing our attention on the glorious excellence of God.

And as we consider the way that he compared the glory and excellence of God - to the mountains of prey...

...we should take a moment to consider the glory - and excellence of a mountain.

I grew up in Phoenix Arizona - which is a valley that is surrounded by Mountains.

And having spent time hiking the Superstition Mountains - and Camelback Mountain - Shaw Butte and Lookout Mountain...

...I remember being amazed - both at the base - looking up - and at the peaks - looking down.

And while the Mountains of the Earth are truly glorious - and majestic...

...how much more is the God Who created the Earth.

And while it's true that God is more glorious - and more majestic - than the mountains of the Earth...

...it's also true that He is more powerful - than all the armies of the world.

And it's for this reason that Asaph sang the praises of the God Who enabled Israel - to conquer their enemies...

...by disabling the mighty men who tried to attack them.

Let's consider how Asaph put it - there in verses 5 and 6 - where he declared...

Psa 76:5 The stouthearted were plundered;  
They have sunk into their sleep;  
And none of the mighty men have found the use of their hands.  
Psa 76:6 At Your rebuke, O God of Jacob,  
Both the chariot and horse were cast into a dead sleep.

The mightiest men are weak - when compared to God - - and the strongest steed is put to sleep - by the God Who created them.

I like the way that Paul summed it up in Romans 8 - where he asked...

Rom 8:31b If God is for us, who can be against us?

Let's consider how Asaph put it - there in verse 7 - where He asked...

Psa 76:7 You, Yourself, are to be feared;  
And who may stand in Your presence  
When once You are angry?

Known that God is more massive than the largest mountains - and seeing how His more mighty than the armies of the world...

...mankind will do well to realize that there is no hope for those who provoke God to anger.

I can't help but to remember the warning that the Lord Jesus presented - in Matthew chapter 10 - it's verse 28 where He declared...

Mat 10:28 "...do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

Rather than living in fear of those who have no real power over us...

...we will all do well to remember that - God is the One Who will decide where we all end up for eternity.

And it's for this reason that we should seek the mercy of our Messiah...

...because - He alone is able to save us from the wrath of God.

Let's consider how Asaph explained it - here in the 76th Psalm - look with me again - beginning there at verse 8 - where he declared...

Psa 76:8 You caused judgment to be heard from heaven;  
The earth feared and was still,

Psa 76:9 When God arose to judgment,  
To deliver all the oppressed of the earth. Selah

Here in these verses - we find Asaph - describing the way in which the judgment of God caused the Earth to fear - and then was still.

In other words - the earth trembled during the judgment of God and then it stood silent before it's Creator.

And what this seems to mean is that - the judgment of God resulted in a massive earthquake.

Now - this is not to suggest that every earthquake is an act of God.

At the same time - there should be no doubt that - there have been times...

...when the Lord used a natural disasters - like an earthquake - to bring judgment upon the wicked.

For example - it's in Genesis 7 - where we learn that the Lord causes the earth to break up at the time of Noah's flood.

And in Number 16 - we learn about the way that the Lord used an Earthquake - to punish Korah's rebellion.

In 1st Samuel 14 - we learn about the day when the Lord used an Earthquake - to punish the Philistines.

And in Matthew 27 - we learn about the earthquake that took place during the crucifixion of Christ Jesus.

It was at that point in time when the veil of the temple was torn in two - from top to bottom.

Not only that - but - the Lord Jesus also told us about the increasing number of earthquakes which will occur...

...as a sign that clues us in to the fact that - the time of His return is on the Horizon.

And it's on the day of His return - when the Mount of Olives will be split in two...

...as the Lord Jesus wages war against the armies of this world.

With all of this in mind - there should be no doubt that there are times when the Lord uses earthquakes - and other natural disasters...

...to punish those who will not repent of their wickedness.

And at the same time - the Lord uses the same judgments - to deliver those who trust in Him.

That word - deliver - found there in verse 9 - was used of those who are saved from trouble.

The same word was also used of those who are victorious.

And what this means is that - those who trust in the Lord will be delivered...

...while the soul of those who reject our Redeemer will be destroyed in hell.

And in both cases - the glory of God will be revealed.

Let's consider how Asaph explained it - here in the 76th Psalm.

Look with me - beginning there at verse 10 - where he declared...

Psa 76:10    Surely the wrath of man shall praise You;  
With the remainder of wrath You shall gird Yourself.

Psa 76:11    Make vows to the LORD your God, and pay them;  
Let all who are around Him bring presents to Him who ought to be feared.

Psa 76:12    He shall cut off the spirit of princes;  
He is awesome to the kings of the earth.

Here in these verses - we find Asaph - describing the way in which the wrath of man will praise the Lord.

But now - what does this mean - that the wrath of man will praise the Lord?

In order to grasp his point - let's consider this verse - from the New Living Translation - where we read...

Psa 76:10 Human defiance only enhances your glory,  
for you use it as a weapon.

In other words - those who defy the Lord will actually glorify our God...

...as they receive the just punishment that they deserve.

I like the way that the scholars who created the New English Translation rendered verse 10 - they put it like this...

Psa 76:10 Certainly your angry judgment upon men will bring you praise; you reveal your anger in full measure.

In other words - those who trust in the Lord will praise Him - on the day when He pours out His wrath upon the wicked.

And what this means is that - those who are delivered - and those who are destroyed - will both glorify God.

I like the way that Paul put it - in Romans chapter 9 - it's beginning at verse 22 - where he asked...

Rom 9:22 What if God, wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction,

Rom 9:23 and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory,

Rom 9:24 even us whom He called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?

According to Paul - the Lord is patiently postponing the day of wrath...

...so that He can make known the riches of His glory - which He pours into the vessels of mercy.

And listen - if you're wondering if you're a vessel of wrath or a vessel of mercy...

...then - it'll help you to know that the vessels of mercy are those who trust in our Messiah...

...while the vessels of wrath who are prepared for destruction...

...are those who reject our Redeemer.

Now - as we consider the distinction between these two groups...

...we must not fail to notice the point of application that Asaph presented here in the final verses of this chapter.

Look with me again - beginning there at verse 11 - where Asaph declared...

Psa 76:11 Make vows to the LORD your God, and pay them;  
Let all who are around Him bring presents to Him who ought to be feared.

Psa 76:12 He shall cut off the spirit of princes;  
He is awesome to the kings of the earth.

Now - just to be clear - a vow - or votive offering was a voluntary offering - which was above and beyond the required tithe.

And while the Israelites weren't required to present the Lord with these voluntary offerings...

...Asaph encouraged those who want to worship the Lord to make vows - and then pay them.

And it's there in the second half of verse 11 - where Asaph encouraged them to bring God presents.

That word - presents - was translated from a Hebrew word - which described a gift - offered as homage.

To sum it up with simplicity - Asaph was encouraging his audience to worship the Lord...

...by bringing freewill offerings and gifts of homage to the tabernacle there in Jerusalem.

In similar fashion - believers have been called to being freewill offerings and gifts of homage to Lord - here at our Christian congregation.

We find the first example of this in the primitive church - as the disciples in Jerusalem brought their gifts to church.

And according to Luke - they laid those voluntary offerings at the feet of the apostles.

It's in Acts chapter 4 - where Luke tell us that...

Act 4:34b ...all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold,

Act 4:35 and laid them at the apostles' feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need.

In other words - the first Christians there in Jerusalem began to give what they could...

...in order to glorify God - by supporting the work of the ministry

We find Paul encouraging the continuation of this practice - in 2nd Corinthians chapter 9 - where he declared...

2Co 9:5 I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren to go to you ahead of time, and prepare your generous gift beforehand, which you

had previously promised, that it may be ready as a matter of generosity and not as a grudging obligation.

2Co 9:6 But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.

2Co 9:7 So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.

Paul was encouraging the Christians in Corinth to worship the Lord - by giving freewill offerings - according to the leading of the Lord.

And while it's true that we are no longer bound by the law of the tithe...

...it's also true that we've been called to become generous believers...

...who are cheerfully supporting the work of the ministry.

And in this way - we are worshipping the Lord.

Just to be clear - the word - worship - is based on to root words - which includes - weorth - meaning "worthy" or "honorable."

And the suffix - ship - is the state of being of whatever comes before it.

What this means is that - worship - or - "worthship." really refers to the state of being worthy.

Therefore - those who want to worship the Lord in Spirit and in Truth...

...should spend some time considering the worth of our God.

And listen - those who truly grasp the infinite worth of our almighty God...

...will be led to worship Him with freewill offerings - and gifts of homage.

Now - as we begin to wrap up this study of the 76th Psalm - we must not fail to notice what Asaph said - there in the last verse.

It's verse 12 - where he declared...

Psa 76:12 He shall cut off the spirit of princes;  
He is awesome to the kings of the earth.

In other words - our God is going to humble the spirit of earthly leaders...

...until He is feared by the kings of the earth.

And with that being the case - we will all do well to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God...

...so that we can become those believers - who properly proclaim the praises of the Lord.