

The Book of PSALMS

Psalms 74 – 77

“Salvation—Exaltation—A Song—Remembrance”

Psalm 74 – “SALVATION!”

This Psalm by Asaph is in relation to the destruction Jerusalem in 586B.C. by Nebuchadnezzar. (Asaph was a Levite and the son of Berachiah the Gershonite (2 Chron 20:14). Asaph sounded cymbals before the ARK OF THE COVENANT when it was moved from the house of Obed-Edom to Jerusalem (1 Chron 15:16-19). Asaph's family became one of the three families given responsibility for music and song in the Temple (1 Chron 25:1-9). Following the Captivity, 128 singers from this family returned from Babylon and conducted the singing when the foundations of Zerubbabel's temple were laid (Ezra 2:41; 3:10). Twelve psalms (Ps 50; 73:1-83:18) are attributed to the family of Asaph.)

(v1-8) Why the destruction?

(v9-17) God is omnipotent, yet silent, why?

(Insight on “light” vs. 16 – LIGHT is illumination; the opposite of darkness. The Bible also speaks of light as the symbol of God's presence and righteous activity. Light has been associated with the presence, truth, and redemptive activity of God since creation. Before man was created, light was brought into being by the Creator: ***“Then God said, Let there be light; and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good”*** (Gen 1:3-4). Throughout the Bible, light represents truth, goodness, and God's redemptive work. Darkness, on the other hand, symbolizes error, evil, and the works of Satan (Gen 1:4). Several of the miracles recorded in the Bible are related to light and darkness: the "Pillar of Fire" that guided the Israelites in the wilderness (Ex 3:21), the sun standing still at Gibeon at Joshua's request (Josh 10:12-13), and the fall of darkness at midday when Jesus was being crucified (Matt 27:45). Man's misguided fascination with light caused some cultures of the ancient world to worship the sun and moon. Ur in Babylonia and several of the Canaanite cities had elaborate systems of moon worship. Use of light was common in the festivals of the Greek cults, especially those honoring Dionysus and Apollo.

God or God's Word, the Bible, are frequently represented as lights or lamps to enlighten and guide the believer (1 John 1:5). ***“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path”*** (Ps 119:105). The Psalmist also declared, ***“The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?”*** (Ps 27:1). Light is also used as a symbol of holiness and purity. Paul counseled the Christians at Rome to ***“put on the armor of light”*** (Rom 13:12). The New Testament presents Jesus as the personification of light or divine illumination: ***“I am the light of the world”*** (John 8:12). Jesus plainly stated that those who rejected this divine light would bring judgment upon themselves ***“He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.”*** (John 3:18-21). Jesus and the New Testament writers extended the figure of light to include faithful Christian witnesses, who were called ***“children of light”*** (Eph 5:8). (From Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary)

(v18-23) Remember God they're against you.

Psalm 75 – “EXALTATION!”

This is a psalm or song of triumph & faith.

(v1-3) God will judge uprightly (Matthew 24; Rev. 6 – 19; Great white throne- Rev. 20:11-15; *“earth and inhabitants dissolved”*- 2 Peter 3:10-13)

(v4-7) Humility before exaltation:

- Come & learn humility- **Matt 11:28-30-** *Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”*

- Conversion is humbling- **Matt 18:2-5-** *Then Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them, and said, “Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore whoever humbles himself as*

this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever receives one little child like this in My name receives Me.

- A Christian's humble life- Matt 20:25-28- *But Jesus called them to Himself and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave -- just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."*

- A Christian's humble service- Matt 23:11-12- *But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.* (v8) **Observe the cup of wrath for the wicked;** Jeremiah, the prophet gives us further understanding in **Jeremiah 25:15-29**; as well as other prophets (Isa 29:9; 51:17,22; 63:6; Jer 25:15-16; 49:12; Ezek 23:32-34; Hab 2:16). Warren Wiersbe writes, "You find the image repeated in the New Testament (Rev 14:8-10; 16:19; 18:6). *"Babylon was a golden cup in the Lord's hand that made all the earth drunk"* (Jer 51:7). Though this message centered mainly on the Gentiles, note that Jeremiah began his list with Jerusalem, and the cities of Judah (25:18): judgment begins with God's people (Ezek 9:6; 1 Peter 4:17). **"See, I am beginning to bring disaster on the city that bears my Name, and will you indeed go unpunished?"** (Jer 25:29) How did Jeremiah make the various nations drink the cup of God's wrath? Certainly he didn't travel from nation to nation and meet with their leaders. There wasn't time for such an itinerary, and they wouldn't have welcomed him to their courts anyway. Perhaps he invited representatives of the various nations present in Jerusalem (see 27:3) to have a meal with him, preached his message to them, and then passed the cup around. It could have been another "action sermon" that would have gotten attention in the city, and when the foreign visitors returned to their own nations, they would have reported what the strange prophet in Jerusalem had said and done. To drink a cup is a symbol of submission to the will of God. *"The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?"* (John 18:11) Jeremiah called the nations to submit to God's will, surrender to Nebuchadnezzar, and he spared destruction. Jeremiah would later illustrate this message by wearing a yoke (Jer 27). If the nations didn't drink the cup of submission, they would end up drinking the cup of judgment and *"get drunk and vomit, and fall, to rise no more"* (25:27, NIV).

(v9-10) Sing praises to our God for the power of the wicked will be broken and the righteous will be exalted!

Psalm 76 – “A SONG OF GOD’S VICTORIOUS POWER!”

(v1-3) God is victorious! (Salem is the ancient name of Jerusalem, meaning *“the habitation of peace”*)

(v4-6) God is glorious!

(v7-9) God is a deliverer!

(v10-12) God is awesome! (*“the wrath of man shall praise you”*- 2 Thess. Ch. 2)

Psalm 77 – “REMEMBRANCE”

This Psalm reveals a deep soul searching, because of the perplexity of life. Faith has its problems, but faith can find the solution through the Word of God and prayer.

(v1-3) God hears our prayers

(v4-6) Remembrance and search of God

(v7-15) Questions about God are answered by His past dealings and promises

(v16-20) Remember the power of God at the Red Sea