

Evening Sermon – October 4, 2020

“O God, Why?” Psalm 74

A Contemplation of Asaph.

This is a Psalm written for instruction –

I. Asaph’s question: Why have you cast us off forever?

¹ O God, why have You cast us off forever? Why does Your anger smoke against the sheep of Your pasture? Psalm 74:1

1. God did not cast His people off, forever – Asaph knew this, but

it is a true expression of how Asaph felt ---

2. It was TRUE God was agree with His people –
Sin, grave sin!

II. Asaph’s prayer –

1. Remember –

² Remember Your congregation, which You have purchased of old, The tribe of Your inheritance, which You have redeemed—This Mount Zion where You have dwelt. Psalm 74:2

- A. You purchased us -
- B. They were God’s people -
- C. They were redeemed –
- D. God dwelt with them -

2. Move to help us, ³Lift up Your feet to the perpetual desolations.
Psalm 74: 3 A Because –

A. The sanctuary has been damaged -
... The enemy has damaged everything in the sanctuary. Psalm 74:3

B. The meeting place defiled

⁴Your enemies roar in the midst of Your meeting place; They set up their banners for signs. Psalm 74:4

C. Like lumberjacks they cut things down -

⁵They seem like men who lift up Axes among the thick trees.

⁶And now they break down its carved work, all at once,

With axes and hammers. Psalm 74:5-6

“Once men were renowned for felling the cedars and preparing them for building the temple, but now the axe finds other work, and men are as proud of destroying as their fathers were of erecting.” C.H. Spurgeon

D. They set God’s house on fire -

⁷They have set fire to Your sanctuary; They have defiled the dwelling place of Your name to the ground. ⁸They said in their hearts, “Let us destroy them altogether.” They have burned up all the meeting places of God in the land. Psalm 74:7-8

3. God’s people have no hope without God’s help –

A. There were no “signs” -

⁹ We do not see our signs; Psalm 74:9 A

Five memorials or tokens of God’s special presence they were missing. One was the ark of the covenant; another, the fire from heaven upon the brazen altar; the third, the Shechinah, or cloud that rested upon the mercy-seat; the fourth, the Urim and Thummim which were in the breast-plate of the high-priest; and the fifth, the spirit of prophecy. J.C. Philpot

B. Prophets were gone -

There is no longer any prophet; Psalm 74:9 B

Verse 9.—“There is no more any prophet.” By us it ought to be observed what they do not say: It is not,—here is no more any giant or warlike leader who may deliver us from the adversary: but, there is no more any prophet. And yet when the prophets were with them, they were contemptible in the eyes of all, maltreated by the wicked and put to death.—*Musculus*.

The prophets were disrespected, until they were fully taken away, the same is true today!

C. No one knew, “how long” -

Nor is there any among us who knows how long. Psalm 74:9 C

Are we there yet?

¹⁰ O God, how long will the adversary reproach? Will the enemy blaspheme Your name forever? Psalm 74:10

- *Even martyrs in Heaven pray this prayer, for justice, vengeance*

⁹ When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. ¹⁰ And they cried with a loud voice, saying, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?” ¹¹ Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both *the number of* their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed.

Revelation 6:9–11 (NKJV)

- *Sinners would blaspheme, sin against God, forever if they could, but God stops them -*

“This is every sinner’s case in regard of sin: did not death put out the candle of life, the sinner would sin still. Should the sinner live forever, he would sin forever; and, therefore, it is a righteous thing with God to punish him for ever in hellish torments.”

Thomas Brooks

D. Why? Destroy!

¹¹ **Why do You withdraw Your hand, even Your right hand? Take it out of Your bosom and destroy them.** Psalm 74:11

III. Asaph’s faith in the dark & difficult time –

1. *He still counted God his King -*

¹² **For God is my King from of old,** Psalm 74:12 A

2. God was still his Savior -

Working salvation in the midst of the earth. Psalm 74:12 B

3. He remembered and recounted to God his knowledge of God’s working in history -

¹³ **You divided the sea by Your strength; You broke the heads of the sea serpents in the waters.** ¹⁴ **You broke the heads of Leviathan in**

pieces, *And* gave him as food to the people inhabiting the wilderness.

¹⁵ **You broke open the fountain and the flood; You dried up mighty rivers.** Psalm 74:13-15

4. He saw God in control of his world, the weather and Asaph’s situation -

¹⁶ **The day is Yours, the night also is Yours; You have prepared the light and the sun.** ¹⁷ **You have set all the borders of the earth; You have made summer and winter.** Psalm 74:16-17

5. The enemy was not only Asaph’s or Israel’s, but God’s -

¹⁸ **Remember this, that the enemy has reproached, O LORD, And that a foolish people has blasphemed Your name.** ¹⁹ **Oh, do not deliver the life of Your turtledove to the wild beast! Do not forget the life of Your poor forever.** ²⁰ **Have respect to the covenant; For the dark places of the earth are full of the haunts of cruelty.** ²¹ **Oh, do not let the oppressed return ashamed! Let the poor and needy praise Your name.** ²² **Arise, O God, plead Your own cause; Remember how the foolish man reproaches You daily.** ²³ **Do not forget the voice of Your enemies; The tumult of those who rise up against You increases continually.** Psalm 74:18-23

6. Asaph brings up God’s covenant promises –

²⁰ **Have respect to the covenant; For the dark places of the earth are full of the haunts of cruelty.** Psalm 74:20

Verse 20.—“Have respect unto the covenant.” Those persons and preachers who decline to think and speak of gospel mercies and free salvation as secured by *covenant*, deprive themselves and others of much of the blessed comforts of God’s word. Such was not the manner of the inspired Psalmist.—*William S. Plumer.*

7. Asaph’s prayer is a prayer that still had not been answered, rather things were getting WORSE –

²³ **Do not forget the voice of Your enemies; The tumult of those who rise up against You increases continually.** Psalm 74:23

*Verse 23.—*If we are compelled to close our most solemn and urgent devotions, and our most earnest supplications, without seeing one ray of light beaming upon our path, it may comfort us to remember that so the pious Psalmist closed this complaint. To hope against hope is the most blessed kind of hope.—*William S. Plumer.*

Arnold Brevick