

**PSALMS**

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Psalm 78 as we continue our study through the Word of God. This Psalm is a teaching Psalm and it recounts the history of the nation of Israel. And this is something that is so important and many times is lacking. We need to teach our children, our grandchildren, we need to instruct the younger men and younger women in the things of God so that they can learn; they can grow in the Lord.

As you study the Scriptures and see what God tells His people, the Jews, you will see that He wants them to pass on to their children the ways of God, the commandments of God, the works of God, so that they will obtain the knowledge of God.

We see this played out for us in Deuteronomy chapter 6 and just listen to what God instructs His people to do. He says beginning in verse 1 of Deuteronomy chapter 6, **“Now this is the commandment, and these are the statutes and judgments which the LORD your God has commanded to teach you, that you may observe them in the land which you are crossing over to possess, that you may fear the LORD your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, you and your son and your grandson, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged. Therefore hear, O Israel, and be careful to observe it, that it may be well with you, and that you may multiply greatly as the LORD God of your fathers has promised you; ‘a land flowing with milk and honey.’ Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. And these words which I command you**

**today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.**” Deuteronomy 6:1-9.

As parents and even as grandparents we need to instruct our children and grandchildren not only in what God says, but let them see how He is working in our life. Let them see God is real, for if you don't, you will not impact them at all. So this Psalm was not only to be sung in the Temple worship, but it was to be used in the home to instruct their children about God.

With that said, let's begin reading in Psalm 78, starting in verse 1 and let's see what the Lord has for us as we study through His Word this evening as Asaph gives us this song of teaching or instruction.

## **PSALM 78**

### **VERSES 1-8**

1. The concern here is that future generations will not be taught the things of God. We are living in a time when this truth is being played out. And I think, many times, this is a result of prosperity, self-reliance. God warned the children of Israel in Deuteronomy chapter 8 that once they entered the land that they would not forget who brought them there and gave them these blessings. And they did not heed those warnings and they turned from God.

2. That is why I share with you how God brought me up to Manitowoc. That is why I share with you how God provided this building for us to meet in. That is why I share with you all that God is doing in the life of this church, in my life so it may encourage you in the work that God has called you to do.

A few weeks back Julie and I went down to Chicago to see Pastor Eric from Calvary Chapel Cardinal. They were dedicating a new building that God has provided for them to meet in. And what I loved was that he shared how God had provided for them, opened doors for them. In other words, you could see the hand of God moving them. And guess what? The praise and worship of God just broke forth. Make no mistake about it, as the truths of God are passed on the result is seen in their love of God, their keeping of His commandments, and they will be blessed by it.

3. Now here in verse 8 please understand that there is no Hebrew word for “grandfather” and so what the Psalmist is saying is that parents need to teach their children the things of God so they won’t grow up like their ancestors who rebelled against God. This, as we are going to see, is probably speaking of that generation that wandered in the wilderness.

In knowing that, how many people, out of the 2 to 3 million that left Egypt, entered into the promise land? Only two, Joshua and Caleb, all the rest died in the wilderness that were 20 years old and above, they did not enter into the land because of unbelief. (Numbers 14) How important it is not only to have a strong knowledge of God, but then to trust God in what He is doing, applying that knowledge to every day life and seeing that love passed on to your children and grandchildren!

4. Today we see parents feeling that their children need to make their own decisions about going to church, Bible study and-so-on. But the Bible tells us that we are to train up our children in the things of God in order that they may come to know God. If we let them do their own thing then they will succumb to the storms of this world and fall into the chaos of this culture!

We need to tell our children and grandchildren about the Lord and what He desires and the consequences of not following Him! It truly is our responsibility! And if you doubt that you can have an impact, then let me share this with you. Many of you are familiar with the famous pastor, Jonathan Edwards. His most famous sermon was called, “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God.” But he not only had an impact on his people but also upon his family. We are told that,

“A study was done that revealed that, of his direct descendants, fourteen became college presidents; one hundred one became college professors; one hundred six became ministers and missionaries; and one hundred eight became lawyers and doctors. On the other hand, a man named Jacob Jukes mocked Jonathan Edwards and the revival. Here is what happened to his family: four hundred were physically self-incapacitated. That is, they lost limbs or were otherwise unable to function due to inflictions from fights, brawls, etc.; three hundred ten became professional paupers; sixty became thieves; and seven were convicted of murder. Only twenty became tradesman, and ten of those twenty learned their trade while serving in a penitentiary.

Jonathan Edwards embraced the things of God and taught them to his children. Jacob Jukes mocked the things of God. And the fruit of both men is apparent.”

- Jon Courson, Application Commentary, Old Testament, Volume 2, p. 97

May we learn the lesson and obey what God has said and train up our children in the ways of God. May they see that we live out what we say we believe and see the hand of God upon our lives! It is not time to be wishy-washy or compromise our faith. We need to stand strong in the things of God and let them see we refuse to compromise what we believe!

### VERSES 9-11

1. Now God is going to show us an example of what happens when a person, when people turn from God and to do this He speaks of Ephraim, a tribe of Israel. And in this illustration he shows how they went into a period of backsliding and apostasy. You see, after all God did for them, how He revealed Himself to them, they still turned from God, forgot His works.

2. Isn't it amazing how often we forget the things of God and have to be reminded of them! And for Ephraim, their turning from the Lord caused them to fail in battle. They could not defeat the enemy because they were not prepared!

3. Let's put some application to that. You see, we spend all kinds of money, time, effort in preparing our children educationally, the best schools. We spend so much time training them physically, all the sports you could imagine! We prepare our children occupationally so that they will have good jobs to provide for their families. We do all kinds of things to prepare our children and they are not necessarily wrong, but what ends up happening is they replace what is truly needed, the training up in the things of God! And thus, as they are not trained up in the things of God they end up failing and falling in the day of battle. Don't forget the covenant, don't forget to train up your children in the things of God even if they don't want to hear it, they don't like it! If you compromise your faith it will destroy theirs!

#### VERSES 12-20

1. Why does the Psalmist recount their history? To remind them of all that God has done for them. The amazing, the supernatural things that He did to provide for them and instead of praising the Lord and drawing close to Him, they complained and their hearts became hard towards God! All the miracles God did for them in the wilderness and they still died in unbelief, why? Because you can't live on a diet of miracles, but you must draw close to God and establish that relationship with Him according to His Word. You have to learn to place your whole life into His hands and trust Him. Let your faith grow like a muscle or your heart will grow cold towards God and all that He has done.

2. Now I think too often we are looking for the Red Sea to part, all these huge miracles and as we look and wait we miss all the things that God is doing here and now in our lives! You see, it is all those little steps of faith and those, what we might call “little miracles” that end up bringing us to the place that God wants us. But we miss out on what God is doing because we are not looking, we are not thanking Him, we have focused so much on what we want, those “big miracles” that we are missing out on so much and our hearts can grow distant towards God, we can become cold towards Him!

Think about all that God had done for Israel and they still rejected Him. He provided water for 2 to 3 million people in the desert and that is not an easy task for man, but for God, it is nothing for Him to do that. God stepped in and provides water out of the rock. In I Corinthians 10:4, Paul picks up on this and says, “**and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.**” Paul is telling us that the Rock they drank from “**was**” Christ who gives us living water to drink.

3. Now as we look at their lives we can easily see how carnal they were. They were never satisfied no matter what God did for them. They cried for water and God provided. And, instead of thanking God, they complained that they have no food. They are putting God down saying that He can't even prepare a table for them! Yes, God let them go through some tough times to test their faith, God was trying to get their faith to grow, but instead of trusting in God, all they did was murmur and complain. God did not bring them out of their bondage in Egypt so they could starve to death in the wilderness! And when you think about it, God did provide food for them, manna but they still were not satisfied!

Now before we start pointing the finger at them and saying how ungrateful they were, take a good look at your own life. When was the last time you just praised God and thanked Him? When was the last time you murmured and complained about the situation you are in? These lessons are here for our learning that we may grow by them in our relationship with God, trusting more and more in Him and less and less in self. Do you really believe that God has brought you out of the bondage of this world just to let you go and just take care of yourself? Of course not but what He is doing is trying to stretch you and help you to grow in faith. Not to complain but to praise the Lord!

4. And make no mistake about it, God hears our murmurings and complaining and notice how He responds!



VERSES 21-22

1. Why was God so angry? Because of their lack of trust, they were calling God a liar. He promised to provide for them, and they could not believe that and turned away from God because of their unbelief. Unbelief destroys relationships and especially our relationship with God. Paul tells us in Hebrews 11:6, **“But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”**

Now let's think about this for a minute. When my dad said that he was going to pick me up after my track meet I did not wonder, “I hope he comes! I hope he doesn't forget to pick me up! I don't think he is coming!” Not at all, when my dad said he was coming to pick me up, his promise to me, I believed that he was, I trusted in him. Now Almighty God tells us that He is going to provide for us, He is going to care for us, that we can trust in His salvation and then people reject it or don't believe it. You see, it is impossible to please God apart from faith because faith is trusting in what you can't touch, feel, but it is something we believe because God has said it and we trust in Him! Can we trust God at His Word? We need to!

2. I have said this already but we need to be reminded of these things because we tend to forget so easily. Peter tells us in II Peter 1:12, **“For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth.”** We not only need to remind ourselves but we need to teach these things to our children and grandchildren. It is not how much we know but how well we know what we know that truly matters. Do we believe what God has said to us to the point of applying it to our lives, walking by faith and trusting in the promises that God has given to us in His Word. The children of Israel rejected it, did not believe it and God was angry with them for their unbelief even though He had shown Himself to them so many times!

#### VERSES 23-31

1. The children of Israel called the food that God sent them Manna, and that was a derogatory name. It means “What is it?” God called it “angels’ food”, but they once again complained about it, got tired of eating it. Manna bread, manna pancakes, manna-coitti! You know what I mean. God was providing their daily sustenance, the things they needed for them to live and grow by and they rejected it, they didn’t see the blessing but it just was common to them now and it didn’t satisfy any longer!

In fact, they murmured, they complained about this manna so much, that finally God gave them what they desired. He sent thousands of quails, flying in at about 36 inches high, perfect for batting practice, and they had so much quail that they stuffed themselves on it. (Numbers 11:31-35). This is a picture of carnality; it was lust, they were trying to satisfy their flesh and in doing so they rejected God’s food and wanted something that was dead.

Psalm 106 picks up on this time and exposes their spiritual condition. We read, **“They soon forgot His works; They did not wait for His counsel, But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, And tested God in the desert. And He gave them their request, But sent leanness into their soul.”** Psalm 106:13-15. I wonder how often we settle for what we want instead of what God wants! I wonder how often we hinder our relationship with God; we cause our faith to weaken because we are lusting after things instead of taking in the bread of life and trusting in the Lord. We go after dead things instead of the bread of life! And here’s the thing. If you complain enough you may get what you want but in the end, you will suffer for it! This is a powerful lesson that we need to learn and apply to our lives. Take those daily provisions of God into your life, feed on the bread of life and not the things of this world that in the end, bring about death and destruction!

You see, we are told in Numbers chapter 11 that because they would not let go of these carnal lusts, God’s anger burned against them and many died and were buried in a place called Kibroth Hattaavah, or “graves of craving.” And what motivates those carnal desires? ***THE FLESH!*** But as Christians, our spirits are to be in control of the flesh, as the Holy Spirit strengthens us and guides us. It is as Paul said in Galatians 5:16, **“I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.”** There is the promise of God to us, do we believe it? If we do then we need to walk in the Spirit trusting in the promises of God to us!

VERSES 32-33

1. God wanted them to enter the Promise Land, but it was a walk of faith, which they rejected. Thus, they wandered in the wilderness for 40 years until all died of that generation except Joshua and Caleb, who brought the next generation into the land that God promised them. And as you have seen, God is there to guide us, He is there to provide for us, God will direct our lives and yes, God will correct us when we have gone down the wrong path. The problem is unbelief and because of that many have their lives filled with vanity, emptiness and failures. They are filled with fear, terror, trouble instead of the peace of God which surpasses all understanding! That peace comes in knowing God and then believing in His promises because you will not have the peace of God in your life unless you trust Him fully with your life!

VERSES 34-39

1. God loved them too much to leave them in the condition they were in, so He chastened them to draw them back. The problem was that this was not a repentance of the heart, but a superficial thing. God brought judgment upon them, and they did not like it, so they said some spiritual words, but their hearts were far from God. It is not that God did not try to draw them back; they just refused to turn back with their whole heart.

It is as Paul said in II Corinthians 7:10, “**For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.**” You see, repentance leads to a change in activity, worldly sorrow is just lip service and it truly leads to death as the children of Israel found out.

2. What I want you to see here is the tremendous long-suffering, patience of God towards man. He forgave their chronic backsliding; they did not get what they truly deserved because He understands the weakness of man. But also understand that we are accountable for our actions. God has shown us what we need to do and if we reject that there are consequences to our actions!

#### VERSES 40-55

1. God is so compassionate, but there comes a point where He brings judgment upon us for our actions. Not to get back at us, but to get us back on track. You see, you can't surprise God by what you do, but you can grieve Him.

2. Now didn't the Psalmist already go over the history of the children of Israel? Yes he did. Then why is he doing it again? To remind them and us what God has done, all the salvation by signs and wonders he brought to them and they have forgotten!

And here's the thing. God does not honor unbelief. He wants to work in us and through us, but if we refuse to believe, we can limit Him. Matthew tells us of Jesus' words, in speaking of His home town, Nazareth, "**Now He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief.**" Matthew 13:58. May we not have hearts of unbelief towards what God has promised us because He is more than able to bring it to pass! Let us not hinder what God wants to do in us and through us!

3. Now as the Psalmist recounts the plagues in Egypt he is showing God's mighty hand, and yet the children of Israel still did not trust God. And he speaks of Ham, one of Noah's three sons, why? The reason he speaks of Ham is because some of his descendants settled in the area of Egypt. Thus, they were the ones that placed Israel in slavery and were affected by the plagues and the death of their firstborn.

And Asaph speaks of how God brought them through the Red Sea and destroyed their enemies. Then to Mount Horeb, which is the general name of the mountain range which Mount Sinai was part of. Then, by the leadership of Moses they were lead to the boarder of the Promise Land. From there, under the leadership of Joshua, they were lead into the Promise Land. After taking the enemy strongholds in the land, the land was divided up between the 12 tribes and their responsibility was to drive out the remaining pockets of enemy resistance, which they failed to do. Unbelief causes us to miss all that God has for us as we see here with the children of Israel!

#### VERSES 56-64

1. A deceitful bow was one you could not trust, and God is saying that Israel was to faithfully represent Him, and He could not depend on them, they failed and turned against Him. How did they turn against Him? They sought after carved images to worship by. They worshiped in the high places and these were nothing more than places of pagan worship. You see, in these areas they would carve trees into phallic symbols, the groves, and worship these gods through sexual acts. All that God had done for them and they went after false gods to worship and it grieved the heart of God!

2. We are told that God “**... forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh.**” What does that mean? Keep in mind that when they first entered the land the Tabernacle was set up in the area of Ephraim, in a town called Shiloh. From there it was moved to Gibeah during the days of Samuel, and finally ending up in Jerusalem during the days of David.

But through this God is teaching them a lesson and us a lesson. Listen carefully to what the prophet Jeremiah said, and keep in mind that he was a prophet during the time of Josiah on into the time of their captivity! In Jeremiah 7:1-14 we are told, “**The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, ‘Stand in the gate of the Lord’s house, and proclaim there this word, and say, ‘Hear the word of the Lord, all you of Judah who enter in at these gates to worship the Lord!’” Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: ‘Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place. Do not trust in these lying words, saying, “The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are these.” For if you thoroughly amend your ways and your doings, if you thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbor, if you do not oppress the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place, or walk after other gods to your hurt, then I will cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers forever and ever. Behold, you trust in lying words that cannot profit. Will you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, burn incense to Baal, and walk after other gods whom you do not know, and then come and stand before Me in this house which is called by My name, and say, “We are delivered to do all these abominations”?** Has this house, which is called by My name, become a den of thieves in your eyes? Behold, I, even I, have seen it,’ says the Lord. ‘But go now to

**My place which was in Shiloh, where I set My name at the first, and see what I did to it because of the wickedness of My people Israel. And now, because you have done all these works,' says the Lord, 'and I spoke to you, rising up early and speaking, but you did not hear, and I called you, but you did not answer, therefore I will do to the house which is called by My name, in which you trust, and to this place which I gave to you and your fathers, as I have done to Shiloh.'"**

You see, they went to Temple or we would say to church and they truly believed they could live like the devil and by going to church they would get a blessing, they were saved and the Lord is saying they are not. And he wants them to look at Shiloh, learn from what has happened, take a good look!

You see, Shiloh was to be an object lesson for the nation. When they first entered the land they set up the Tabernacle in Shiloh and later as the nation was divided, the Northern Kingdom of Israel ran into idolatry and God judged them for it. And Shiloh became no longer a place of worship, but a barren wasteland that remains in that condition today. But the people refused to look and listen to what God was saying. When we were in Israel we went to Shiloh and it is still barren today, just as God said. No one is living there! Thus, obey the Lord or there are consequences. Look at what He has done in the past to those who have turned against Him. Don't turn from Him and face His judgment, but turn to Him and receive His grace and mercy!



3. Keep in mind that idolatry was a constant problem for Israel, and finally, God's judgment was poured out upon them. In 721 B. C. the Northern Kingdom of Israel was taken into captivity by the Assyrians. And in 606 B. C. the Southern Kingdom of Judah was taken into captivity by the Babylonians with this first invasion, and the final deportation occurred in 586 B. C. as the Babylonians leveled the city and the Temple. God warned them and they refused to listen. Are we listening?

#### VERSES 65-66

1. God did deliver His people and judged the nations that took them into captivity. But here's the thing. That did not mean there were no lasting consequences to their actions. They would never again dwell in Shiloh! Look, listen and obey the Lord.

And folk's, we can say, "Hey, if I sin God will forgive me. I can just come back to Him and He is there with His arms open wide!" Yes, God does forgive and His grace and mercy are beyond amazing. But the problem is that things will be different. Yes, forgiveness is complete but there will be scars, there will be lost opportunities that occur in our lives. We will not be able to go back to the way it was, but we can move on. The key is not going there in the first place, that is what God desires!

#### VERSES 67-72

1. Joseph and Ephraim are a picture of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, which was wicked from the start and God rejected them. God gave the honor to Judah and it is from the tribe of Judah from which the Messiah would come from and it was in Mount Zion where the Messiah will set-up His Kingdom.

2. This Psalm is looking at Israel's history, from their deliverance in Egypt, to their captivity because of their idolatry, and ending with the focus on David, a man after God's own heart. David was the standard from which all the Kings of Israel were to be judged by. Remember, that the people chose their first King, Saul, for he was tall, dark and handsome. But he was a lousy king. They got what they wanted but not what they needed! They needed a shepherd, like David for the qualities of a shepherd were needed in caring for the people. Thus, God chose David! May we have that kind of a heart that is in love with God and willing to be used wherever He leads!

3. Let me close this Psalm with these words from William MacDonald. He wrote,

And so the Psalm closes on this peaceful, pastoral note. But before leaving it, we must remind ourselves that Israel's history is only a mirror of our own. And if anything, we are more culpable than they because our privileges are so much greater. Living in the full blaze of Calvary's love, why should we ever complain, or rebel, or limit the Lord, or fail to be thankful? Yet we stand condemned. We have provoked the Holy One of Israel times without number. We have grieved Him by a thousand falls. We have murmured and grumbled in spite of countless blessings.

God's patience is not inexhaustible. There comes a time when He allows us to taste the bitterness of our backsliding. If we despise His grace, we will experience His government. If we refuse to serve Him faithfully and loyally, He will find others to do it. We will miss the blessing, and will never find a better master to serve.

- William MacDonald, *Believer's Bible Commentary*, p. 670

May we learn the lesson and walk by faith and not by sight. May we keep falling in love with Jesus over and over again and not let that love grow cold. God loves us more than we will ever know but He also loves us too much to leave us walking where we should not be walking. Look at Israel and learn and then walk accordingly!

### **PSALM 79**

This Psalm was written by one of Asaph's descendants, around 586 B. C., after the Babylonians made a final siege upon Jerusalem, destroying the city and the Temple, and carrying the remaining people away into captivity. The reason we can be so sure about this is because the Psalm heading is, "*Avenge the Defilement of Jerusalem*" and Jerusalem was defiled by the Babylonians in their invasion! For us we can see that when things are a mess, when things are going up in smoke, our hope must be in the Lord. So let's begin reading in verse 1 of Psalm 79.

#### **VERSES 1-4**

1. During the final siege of Jerusalem, the city was leveled and burned to the ground. Why did all this happen? It was because of their sin, their rebellion against the Lord and their refusal to turn back to Him. God warned them but they turned away from Him. And not only was the city destroyed, but so was the Temple, it was defiled or tarnished!

How does that relate to us today? Think about our bodies and who resides in us as Christians. Paul tells us in I Corinthians 3:16, “**Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?**” So when we sin, our bodies as the temple of God, is defiled, our temple has been tarnished. That should cause us to walk in holiness as He is holy!

2. Not only was the city and Temple destroyed, but the Babylonians slaughtered the people and left their bodies out in the open to be eaten by the animals. In fact, historian Josephus tells us bodies were thrown over the wall by the tens of thousands. Look at the death and destruction that took place and I think this also relates to us. You see, Paul tells us in Romans 6:23, “**For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.**” That is just the way it is, the wages of sin is death. Death to our health, death to our joy, death to our relationships, death, death and more death is just the result of sin in our life! But there is a gift that God has given to us and that is found in Jesus and that life is found in obedience to Him. We are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone but we can still bring death to many things in our life by walking in sin. Thus, the warning to all of us, the wages of sin is ***DEATH!***

#### VERSES 5-7

1. We see the Psalmist cry out to God for deliverance from this captivity. It is the cry to forgive, to restore, it is the cry of repentance and we will see this more as we move on. But here we see the cry of how long this is going to continue on, how long will they remain in captivity?

We don't have to guess because Jeremiah tells us the captivity was to last 70 years. The reason for their captivity was their idolatry; the length of time in captivity was the result of not letting the land have its Sabbath rest. You see, God commanded them that when they entered the land they were to let the land rest every 7th year, and He would provide food for them during that time. But they refused to obey for 490 years and now God was taking those 70 years back, the 70 years they refused to give Him, but now they had no choice.

2. And we see Asaph calling for God to punish their enemies. And yes, the Babylonians were bad but the children of Israel should have known better. God warned them over and over again and they refused to listen and God held them accountable for what they did! And Peter makes a good point when he writes in I Peter 4:17, “**For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?**”

God brought judgment upon His people for their refusal to turn back to Him and He is holding them more accountable than the Babylonians for they should have known better. And yes, the Babylonians will be judged for their wickedness, that is not the issue. The point here is that God's people had turned from Him and God was chastening them so that they may return to the place of blessing!

VERSES 8-10

1. Asaph is calling for God's mercy to come into their lives and for God to forgive them of their sins. It is a call to repentance! Now as we look how God responds in this situation we might say that this is truly "tough love." What I mean by that is this. Judah has been living in rebellion against God for years, refusing to hear the prophets and turn from their evil ways. And now that judgment has come upon them they are crying out for God's mercy, but He seems to be silent. Why is God silent here?

God is patient, He is waiting until they had come to the end of themselves and were willing to get right with Him. Not just "Get me out of this situation!" but a "Draw me close to you Lord. My desire is to dwell with you!" You see, He also allows the consequences of our actions to affect us so that we may not travel down that same path of destruction again.

Let's face it; the chastening of God is not easy. As God removes those things from our lives that are destructive, it can be painful. But may we be like the Psalmist and say, "Lord, do whatever it takes to change me!"

2. The Psalmist is also calling for God to defeat their enemies so that the enemies of God won't have a chance to boast about what they have done, so they won't be able to mock the Lord. Make no mistake about it; this is a sad result when we sin against God because we give the enemies of God an opportunity to mock Him! Thus, **REPENT!**

VERSES 11-13

1. Asaph continues to cry out for God to spare them from death and to bring upon the Babylonians 7 times more punishment than what they have done to them. The result of their deliverance is that they would praise the Lord. That is what they said, but that is not what truly took place. We should not make deals with God, “Lord if you do this then I will go to church!” That is foolish, if you refuse to come to church unless God blesses you in some way then you will never come to church because you will always have some excuse.

The same is true with our praise of God. We praise Him because He is God and not only because of what He is going to do in our life or what we want Him to do in our life. He deserves our worship no matter what we are going through for He is ***GOD!***

2. Let me conclude this Psalm with this to think about. Maybe things are a mess in your life right now. Maybe everything seems to be going up in smoke! Maybe things are falling down around you! And maybe the reason is that there is some rebellion in your life like there was here with the children of Israel. The wonderful thing here is that all you need to do is repent before God and you will experience His forgiveness in your life. God does not want you in bondage, in captivity but if you don't turn to Him that is exactly where you will find yourself! And it is not just turning to Him, but following after Him, walking where He is leading you!

**PSALM 80**

This Psalm, written by one of Asaph's descendants, may have been written in regards to the Northern Kingdom of Israel being taken into captivity by the Assyrians in 721 B. C. as well as the time the Assyrians tried to come against the Southern Kingdom of Judah and God delivered them.

**VERSES 1-3**

1. As you read this you can hear the Psalmist's plea to God to hear his cry and deliver them. And his focus is God, the One who dwells between the Cherubim in the Holy of Holies. In this dark time they want the light of God to shine forth and save them! There is nothing wrong with crying out to God like that. The key is waiting on God to bring His salvation to the situation instead of getting in the way!



2. Now in verse 2 it speaks of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh. Why? Think of it like this. When the children of Israel set up camp in the wilderness, they set up with 3 tribes on each of the four sides, with one lead tribe representing each side. To the east was Issachar, Zebulun who were under the lead tribe of Judah and whose banner was the lion. To the west were Manasseh, Benjamin who were under the lead tribe of Ephraim and whose banner was the ox. To the south were Simeon and Gad who were under the lead tribe of Reuben and whose banner was a man. And to the north were Naphtali, Asher who were under the lead tribe of Dan and whose banner was an eagle. And when they set up camp, the Tabernacle was in the middle and the tribes would go due east, west, north and south. Now if you were able to fly above their camp you would see that they were set up in the shape of a cross, and dwelling right in the middle of the cross was the Tabernacle, the Holy of Holies, the place where God dwelt. A few thousand years later this picture came to life as God hung on the cross of Calvary for our sins.

Now, I think these three tribes represent the nation but more importantly, when it was time to move during their wilderness wanderings, they were the ones right behind the procession of the Kohathites who were carrying the Ark. In other words, “Lord, begin a work to save us and we will follow you just as Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh followed the Ark in the wilderness!” Make no mistake about it; our deliverance is not going to come from anyone or anything else but the Lord! May we follow Him all the days of our life!

VERSES 4-7

1. Keep in mind that the Assyrians mocked God's people as they carried them away into captivity and God sat silently. And the Psalmist is crying out to God to save them, to restore them. That of course is speaking of the Northern Kingdom of Israel.

VERSES 8-13

1. God brought Israel out from Egypt into the land He promised them and they spread out from the Mediterranean Sea to the west, and to the Euphrates River on the east. And God likens them to a vine which He planted and now has uprooted. And again, they see themselves as the innocent victims of God's wrath, when the reality is they were into idolatry which they refused to repent and turn from. They were blinded to their sin and it was that sin that brought the Northern Kingdom of Israel into captivity!

VERSES 14-18

1. He is asking God to restore them and make them fruitful once again. God is very gracious and merciful but make no mistake about it, you can't fool God. He knows what is in your heart and you will manifest what is in your heart outwardly. You can hide it from people for a time but eventually it will come out. But you can't hide it from God.

2. Now I think that verse 17 is looking into the future and the Psalmist is speaking of Jesus, the true vine and we are the branches that are connected to Him. When we are, we are fruitful, when we sever that relationship; we become dry, brittle and unfruitful. (John 15:1-11). That is what happened to the nation of Israel and it can happen to us!

VERSE 19

1. This is the third time in this 19 verse Psalm that we see this same phrase spoken, **“Restore us, O LORD God of hosts; Cause Your face to shine, And we shall be saved!”** Why does he repeat this? Because he understands that there is no hope for salvation, no hope to be saved from the enemy apart from Christ! He understands the power of God and we must too! God does not want us in bondage, in captivity but we must turn to Him and repent so that we may be restored!

And like Israel, this nation needs to be restored to the Lord. We need to be praying for our leaders, our nation, marriages, children and-so-on. We need to cry out, **“Restore us, O LORD God of hosts; Cause Your face to shine, And we shall be saved!”**