

**Psalms 79:0 ¶ A Psalm of Asaph.**

This psalm is written as a prayer for God to deliver His people.

**Psalms 79:1 ¶ O God, the heathen are come into thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled; they have laid Jerusalem on heaps.**

**Psalms 79:2 The dead bodies of thy servants have they given *to be* meat unto the fowls of the heaven, the flesh of thy saints unto the beasts of the earth.**

**Psalms 79:3 Their blood have they shed like water round about Jerusalem; and *there was* none to bury *them*.**

**Psalms 79:4 We are become a reproach to our neighbours, a scorn and derision to them that are round about us.**

Since this identified as a psalm of Asaph, I assume he is speaking prophetically, because I don't see this descriptive of any time during David or Solomon's rule. I guess it is also possible that this is a different Asaph—possibly one of his descendants. The psalmist is obviously referencing a time when Jerusalem has been laid waste and most of its people killed. There weren't even enough people left to properly bury all the dead; they were left to be eaten by the wild animals. Events have made them the laughingstock of the surrounding peoples. Their neighbors must have ridiculed the idea that their God was more powerful than all other gods if He would allow such mistreatment from their enemies. Or maybe they were laughing because they thought that their God had decided to reject them.

Spurgeon regarding burials (v3): "This was a serious trial and grievous horror to the Jews, who evinced much care concerning their burials."

It's also interesting how often the psalmist references the fact that the acts of these heathen enemies are against "thine" inheritance, "thy" holy temple, "thy" servants and "thy" saints. Even though these things had occurred at the hand of God's judgment, the psalmist makes an appeal to God's mercy and compassion for His people in light of the honor of His name.

First thoughts are that the reference is to the destruction of Jerusalem by the armies of Babylon; however, it also seems to apply to the final battle of Armageddon described in Revelation with the reference to so much blood.

*Revelation 14:19–20 "And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs."*

**Psalms 79:5 How long, Lord? wilt thou be angry for ever? shall thy jealousy burn like fire?**

The psalmist realizes that this destruction was an act of God's judgment because He was angry with His people. God had warned them repeatedly in the very

beginning that He was a jealous God and would not tolerate their worship of false gods.

*Exodus 34:14 "For thou shalt worship no other god: for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God...."*

*Deuteronomy 4:24 "For the Lord thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God."*

*Deuteronomy 5:6-9 "I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. Thou shalt have none other gods before me. Thou shalt not make thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the waters beneath the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God...."*

The psalmist just wondered if God was going to stay angry with them forever, like a fire that cannot be put out.

**Psalms 79:6 ¶ Pour out thy wrath upon the heathen that have not known thee, and upon the kingdoms that have not called upon thy name.**

**Psalms 79:7 For they have devoured Jacob, and laid waste his dwelling place.**

**Psalms 79:8 O remember not against us former iniquities: let thy tender mercies speedily prevent us: for we are brought very low.**

Because of God's covenant with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and subsequently with David, the psalmist knew in his heart that God's judgment would have an ending, and He would once again respond to His people with mercy and compassion.

Based on that knowledge, he began to pray for God to pour out His wrath on the those of the heathen/Gentile nations that did not accept Him as God. He notes that they have destroyed His people and the land that He gave them. He asked the LORD to forget their former sins of His people. The Hebrew for "prevent" references "to anticipate," so I think the psalmist is asking with anticipation in faith for God to avenge His people and come to their aid based on His covenant promises. He declared their need to be great.

That is an important truth for every child of God to remember. God's promises are faithful and true. We can always pray in confidence when we are pleading with Him in accordance with His will.

*John 15:7 "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."*

**Psalms 79:9 Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name: and deliver us, and purge away our sins, for thy name's sake.**

**Psalms 79:10 Wherefore should the heathen say, Where *is* their God? let him be known among the heathen in our sight *by* the revenging of the blood of thy servants *which is* shed.**

Following the example of Moses before him, the psalmist asks God to consider the glory of His name among the heathen. He asks that God deliver His people and forgive them of their sins “for thy name’s sake.

*Numbers 14:11–16 “And the Lord said unto Moses, How long will this people provoke me? and how long will it be ere they believe me, for all the signs which I have shewed among them? I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them, and will make of thee a greater nation and mightier than they. And Moses said unto the Lord, Then the Egyptians shall hear it, (for thou broughtest up this people in thy might from among them;) And they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land: for they have heard that thou Lord art among this people, that thou Lord art seen face to face, and that thy cloud standeth over them, and that thou goest before them, by day time in a pillar of a cloud, and in a pillar of fire by night. Now if thou shalt kill all this people as one man, then the nations which have heard the fame of thee will speak, saying, Because the Lord was not able to bring this people into the land which he sware unto them, therefore he hath slain them in the wilderness.”*

I think the order is backward—deliver then forgive—but probably fitting in light of the fact that it was His deliverance that would cause the heathen to take notice. When God avenges His people, it is often quite obvious that only He could have intervened and brought about such deliverance.

I have a set of dvd’s called, “Against All Odds, Israel Survives,” that provides evidence that God is once again intervening for His people in miraculous ways. One day soon, according to the prophet Ezekiel, God will once again intervene so obviously for His people, that all the nations will take notice. It will be at a time when Israel is attacked by a coalition of Russia, Iran, Turkey and others—a coalition that has not existed until current times.

*Ezekiel 38:18 & 39:4- “And it shall come to pass at the same time when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, saith the Lord God, that my fury shall come up in my face....Thou shalt fall upon the mountains of Israel, thou, and all thy bands, and the people that is with thee....And I will send a fire on Magog, and among them that dwell carelessly in the isles: and they shall know that I am the Lord. So will I make my holy name known in the midst of my people Israel; and I will not let them pollute my holy name any more: **and the heathen shall know that I am the Lord, the Holy One in Israel.**”*

As His chosen people, Israel is still positioned as God’s servant—albeit a very rebellious servant. Though they have rejected their Messiah, God is still using them to accomplish His purposes. In fact, there are many times that God has even used heathen kings to accomplish His purposes.

*Isaiah 41:8 "But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend."*

*Jeremiah 25:9 "Behold, I will send and take all the families of the north, saith the Lord, and **Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon, my servant**, and will bring them against this land, and against the inhabitants thereof, and against all these nations round about, and will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, and an hissing, and perpetual desolations."*

*Isaiah 44:24 & 28 Thus saith the Lord, thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I am the Lord that maketh all things....That saith of **Cyrus, He is my shepherd**, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid."*

**Psalms 79:11 Let the sighing of the prisoner come before thee; according to the greatness of thy power preserve thou those that are appointed to die;**  
**Psalms 79:12 And render unto our neighbours sevenfold into their bosom their reproach, wherewith they have reproached thee, O Lord.**

The NLT is quite clear: *"Listen to the moaning of the prisoners. Demonstrate your great power by saving those condemned to die. O Lord, take sevenfold vengeance on our neighbors for the scorn they have hurled at you."*

Notice that the basis for the request for God to take vengeance on the surrounding people that have scorned Israel is because that scorn is ultimately directed at God.

Spurgeon re verse 12: *"They denied thine existence, mocked thy power, insulted thy worship, and destroyed thy house; up, therefore, O Lord, and make them feel to the full that thou art not to be mocked with impunity. Pour into their laps good store of shame because they dared insult the God of Israel. Recompense them fully, till they have received the perfect number of punishments."*

**Psalms 79:13 So we thy people and sheep of thy pasture will give thee thanks for ever: we will shew forth thy praise to all generations.**

The psalmist closes with a promise on behalf of the people to show their gratitude to God for His deliverance, mercy and forgiveness by praising Him now and in future generations. He pictures them as sheep under the protective care of their Great Shepherd.