

PSALM 74

This psalm must have been written after the destruction of Solomon's temple and the desecration of the Holy City by the Babylonians. Israel was the sheep of God's pasture, his purchased people, his ransomed inheritance. An appeal is therefore made to God for protection. His former mercies are called to mind, his covenant is spoken of, and the perpetual evidence of his goodness to them are brought forward as grounds of assurance that he is waiting to be gracious to those who call upon him. In times of persecution and trouble, let us too pray without ceasing. The prayer of a righteous man avails much, and the Almighty may see fit, in his divine providence, to grant that deliverance which neither the wealth nor the power of man can procure for himself.

A Maskil of Asaph.

- 1 O God, why have You rejected *us* forever?
Why does Your anger smoke against the sheep of Your pasture?
- 2 Remember Your congregation, which You have purchased of old,
which You have redeemed to be the tribe of Your inheritance;
and this Mount Zion, where You have dwelt.
- 3 Turn Your footsteps toward the perpetual ruins;
the enemy has damaged everything within the sanctuary.
- 4 Your adversaries have roared in the midst of Your meeting place;
they have set up their own standards for signs.
- 5 It seems as if one had lifted up *his* axe in a forest of trees.
- 6 And now all its carved work they smash with hatchet and hammers.
- 7 They have burned Your sanctuary to the ground;
they have defiled the dwelling place of Your name.
- 8 They said in their heart, "Let us completely subdue them."
They have burned all the meeting places of God in the land.
- 9 We do not see our signs; there is no longer any prophet,
nor is there any among us who knows how long.
- 10 How long, O God, will the adversary revile, *and* the enemy spurn Your name forever?
- 11 Why do You withdraw Your hand, even Your right hand?
From within Your bosom, destroy *them*!

- 12 Yet God is my king from of old,
who works deeds of deliverance in the midst of the earth.
- 13 You divided the sea by Your strength;
You broke the heads of the sea monsters in the waters.
- 14 You crushed the heads of Leviathan;
You gave him as food for the creatures of the wilderness.
- 15 You broke open springs and torrents; You dried up ever-flowing streams.

16 Yours is the day, Yours also is the night; You have prepared the light and the sun.
17 You have established all the boundaries of the earth;
You have made summer and winter.

18 Remember this, O YAHWEH, that the enemy has reviled,
and a foolish people has spurned Your name.

19 Do not deliver the soul of Your turtledove to the wild beast;
do not forget the life of Your afflicted forever.

20 Consider the covenant;
for the dark places of the land are full of the habitations of violence.

21 Let not the oppressed return dishonored; let the afflicted and needy praise Your name.

22 Arise, O God, and plead Your own cause;
remember how the foolish man reproaches You all day long.

23 Do not forget the voice of Your adversaries,
the uproar of those who rise against You which ascends continually.

PRAYER

Blessed Lord Jesus, you sometimes call your faithful servants to bear their cross for your sake, and you sometimes afflict your Church that you may thereby cleanse her from iniquity. Help us bear with meekness and submission the decrees of your almighty wisdom. Give us grace to live according to the rules of our most holy faith, that we may have courage and comfort in suffering for it, if such be your good pleasure. Enable us to trust in your goodness for support and deliverance, and to fix our minds steadfastly on those heavenly joys with which the sufferings of this world are not worthy to be compared. And when you shall appear again with power and great glory, we shall be made like you, and will sing your praises for all eternity. Then shall we be honored to cast our crowns before your throne with humble gratitude and never-dying love. Amen.