



Psalm 79-81

Scripture Memory

Luke 2:2

“(And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.)”

Regarding Lesson 13 of Summer Quarter 2010...

Our Sunday school lesson for today is taken from *The Believer's Spiritual Vitamin Pills: A Study in the Book of Psalms*, written by Dr. David J. Tessman. Used by permission.

Psalm 79 — A Prayer for National Blessings

Olsen: “The 79th Psalm is another Psalm ascribed to Asaph, who...was one of the chief singers who led the congregation of Israel during the time of King David’s reign. Asaph not only was a skilled musician, but he possessed a deep spiritual understanding of the ways of God and the longing of the human heart for fellowship with God. In this particular Psalm its musical strain is in the nature of a wail. It is not a Psalm where praise rises to the heavens with great hallelujah outbursts, or where the heart is flowing over with thanksgiving unto God; but it is a lamentation, a dirge, because of the dire straits which Israel specifically was in as a result of the defilement of Jerusalem by the Gentiles.”

The Holy Spirit’s having given this Psalm twice shows the reality of setbacks in God’s work and the vital importance of prayer to God at such times. Phillips: “There are times when we are driven to such extremity that there is nothing left for us to do but pray. All human resources have been exhausted, nobody is left but God. God allows that to happen to us because we so easily forget Him when all is going well.”

Let us analyze Asaph’s prayer.

I. The Prayer’s Complaints. 79:1-4 (Why he prayed)

- Where was the enemy of God’s people? Vs. 1
- What happened to their testimony? Vs. 4

II. The Prayer’s Arguments. 79:5-12 (What he prayed)

- Can you discover and write down one of Asaph’s arguments?

III. The Prayer’s Praises. 79:13

- How long should Christians thank God? Vs. 13

Psalm 80 — A Plea for Revival

When this Psalm was written, it was a time of great disaster. The nation was trampled down under the foot of foreign invaders. Four times Asaph pleads for God to again bless His people as in times of old. How many times, families, churches, our own individual hearts grow cold and indifferent and everything seems to be going wrong. In times like these, we need to pray for revival. Revival is never worked up but prayed down. Consider carefully Asaph’s prayer to God for revival.

I. Plead God’s Relationship to His People. 80:1-3

- What relationship does Jehovah bear to His people? Vs. 1

- Who must do the turning for us to have true revival? Vs. 3

II. Plead God's Problems to His People. 80:4-7

- How did their problems make God seem to them? Vs. 4

III. Plead God's Past Dealings With His People. 80:8-16

- God's people were compared to what plant? Vs. 8

IV. Plead God's Messiah, The Lord Jesus Christ. 80:17-19

The Psalm ends with its theme chorus again emphasized. Are you going through a long, difficult valley experience? Is everything going wrong, your enemies triumphing over you, prayers going totally unanswered because heaven is completely silent? Then keep on praying for God to send His blessings again. Plead with earnestness but plead with the arguments above. Romans 8:26

Psalm 81 — When Missing A Great Opportunity

Asaph was the poet of Israel's history and the national songster of the sanctuary. He dipped into history (vs. 7) to urge the present worshippers to live for God (vs. 8). Our music must not only focus on our great God but on our great responsibility to this great God. This song was intended to be sung at one or more of the great national Festivals. Jews today feel it was designed for the Feast of Trumpets at the New Year (vs. 3).

In verses 10-16 Asaph rehearses the missed opportunity of Israel. At times in our Christian life, we will be personally responsible for missing some great opportunity that in retrospect we note God brought our way. What do we do? How do we react? Do we become depressed, give up, or become angry? The Holy Spirit gave us a Psalm to teach us the importance of grasping our opportunities.

When missing a great opportunity...

I. Praise God For His Past Blessings and Opportunities. 81:1-7

- How are we to sing unto God? Vs. 1
- What past blessing was focused upon? Vs. 7

II. Remind Yourself of the Resultant Blessings of Fully Obeying God. 81:8-16

- Asaph review for teaching purposes what might have happened if the people fully obeyed God. Let us use past failings as lessons to the next generation. In your own words lists the three Divine blessings upon a fully obedient believer:

Vs. 14

Vs. 15

Vs. 16