

Psalm 78 - Prelude

We've now come to the *sixth* chapter that is in the 'Third Book' (Leviticus) of the Psalms, and it's still part of the portion (chapters 73-83) that are concerning *The Sanctuary in Relation to Man*. And let's remember that Psalms 73 had the subject/title of "***Outside the Sanctuary. Effect. Distraction***" as it taught us of the destruction of being far from God (outside the Sanctuary) versus the safety of being close to God (inside the Sanctuary). And truly, we can only be close to our Heavenly Father (*in* the Sanctuary) when we are *spiritually* close to Him. And the only way we can be *spiritually* close to God is to have His Words (through studying the Bible) and Holy Spirit (which is given to us when we believe in, *and obey*, His Word) in our heart and mind. And *that's* what keeps us safe, and strong, *no matter* how hard times get.

And then, Psalm 74 had a different subject/title because it explained how the Sanctuary was *defiled*. Thus, the subject/title was "***The Enemy in the Sanctuary***". The historical fulfillment of this was during the Babylonian's *final* invasion of Jerusalem, when they looted and burned all houses, even the Temple. This indeed was the enemy *in* the Sanctuary, defiling it. But, while this Psalm had a historical fulfillment, it was also quite *prophetical* of a time (soon) coming in the future. And that time is called the 'great tribulation' in the New Testament (Mth 24:21, Rev 7:14), but in the Old Testament it's referred to as 'the time of Jacob's trouble' (Jer 30:7). This is when the enemy (Satan) will defile God's Sanctuary when he is kicked out of heaven, to earth, with his fallen angels. When he's here, he'll convince the world (through great lies, flattery, signs and wonders) to allow him to rule the world *and worship him* (and his wicked beast governing system) as though he is God Almighty (the Savior of the world). So, while the Sanctuary was *physically* defiled during the days the Psalm was written, the coming desolation will be far worse. For it'll be *Satan himself* defiling Jerusalem, the Sanctuary *and* (worst of all) the *hearts of God's children*, by his seducing them to worship him as he stands in the Sanctuary, in the Temple, proclaiming himself to be God (the Savior and King of *all*).

And then, chapter Ps 75 also had a different title than the past two. The subject/title was "***God's Anointed in the Sanctuary***". And was, essentially, an answer to the Psalmist's plea (in Ps 74:22) when the Psalmist asked: "*Arise, O God, plead Thine own cause; remember how the foolish man reproacheth Thee daily*". And, in Psalm 75, God *definitely* 'pleaded His cause' to the enemy. It was thus a *strong* warning to the wicked that the Judge is *very* near and that He has a 'cup of wrath' that *will* be poured out upon them. But it wasn't only a warning to the enemy; it was also an *encouragement* to all who love, fear and obey our Heavenly Father (and Jesus Christ) that their long wait for justice was soon to be at an end. Because, as Isa 61:2 says, the day of vengeance of our God *is what comforts* all those who are oppressed and mourn for the desolations of the enemy (which Psalm 74 spoke of). And then, Psalm 76 had yet a different title/subject, although it was still concerning the 'Sanctuary in relation to man' as all 73-83 chapters are. So, the subject/title of that Psalm was "***The Destruction of the Enemies in the***

Sanctuary”. And while, historically speaking, we were not told *when* this was written, the Psalm was written during a time when God Almighty gave Israel a *mighty* victory over their enemies, who truly were God’s enemies too (for they blasphemed Him). And therefore, it was another beautifully *prophetic* Psalm that taught us what God will *soon* do to *His* enemies, who fight against Him and His faithful servants. He *will* destroy all their weapons of war and save all those who love, fear and obey Him in the process. So, it too was an ‘answer’ to the Psalmist’s plea back in Ps 74:22.

And then, in the last chapter (Psalm 77), we saw that it had a subject/title that was very similar to Psalm 73, which was “*Outside the Sanctuary, Effect and Distraction*”. But Psalm 77 subject/title is “***Outside the Sanctuary, Effect and Misery***”. And the reason that was because the Psalmist began the Psalm by being *very* focused on himself and his problems. However, like Psalms 73, the Psalmist finally came around to realizing what his problem was, which was that his heart and mind was ‘outside the sanctuary’ and *that’s* why he was so miserable. This is important to understand because being consumed with ‘self’ (which is what being ‘outside the sanctuary’ is) not only brings misery, but also keeps us on a ‘pity party’ and will eventually bring about depression if we don’t learn to stop it, as this Psalmist did. So, it was another excellent Psalm to teach us how to *discipline* our own ‘inner man’ (heart and mind) to *stay focused* on God (the truth, reality – which is being ‘in the Sanctuary’) and *not* our ‘self’ (i.e. being ‘outside the Sanctuary’).

Now, this next Psalm also has the subject/title of “***Outside the Sanctuary***” but with no additional words about it (i.e. ‘effect and distraction’ in Ps 73 and ‘effect and misery’ in Ps 77). And the reason for this is because the Psalmist is not speaking of *his own* being ‘outside the sanctuary’ but rather, he’s going to give us an excellent history lesson of how many times *Israel* was ‘outside the sanctuary’, as well as the *effects* of it. So, this Psalm has a very important ‘moral’ to it. It shows us that *Divine history contains more than what appears on the surface*. And that’s why 1 Cor 10:11 tells us the history in the Bible was recorded for *our* ‘admonition’, which means *a calling attention to* (reminder), i.e. (by implication) *mild rebuke or warning* (#3559). So, the history of this Psalm – which covers parts of Israel’s history from the time of Moses to the days of David – is still of vital importance today; for it is we who are living in the ‘generation of the fig tree’ [<https://t.me/BibleStudyTruth/950>] upon ‘whom the ends of the world are soon to come’ (1 Cor 10:11)...

Psalm 78

1 Mas'-chil of A'-saph.

Now, this is another ‘*Mas'-chil*’ Psalm. And it is the **tenth**, out of thirteen (32, 42, 44, 45, 52, 53, 54, 55, 74, **78**, 88, 89 & 142), of such Psalms. And, let’s remember what this means: the word **Mas’-chil** means *instructive*, i.e. *a didactic poem* (#4905). And it comes from the prime root

sakal (#7919) that means **to be** (causatively, *make* or *act*) *circumspect* and hence, *intelligent*. And apx. 65 XI further explains **it's an 'Understanding' or 'Instruction' Psalm**, for public use (worship and learning). Unlike the "Michtam" Psalms (which are all by David) these 'Mas-chil' Psalms are by *various* authors, *except* for six of them, which are by David. Apx. 65 also tells us that 'Mas-chil' means *to look at, scrutinize, to look well into anything* (1 Sam 18:30); hence the noun will mean *understanding arising from deep consideration* (Prov 13:15, Neh 8:8). Thus, theses 'Maschil' Psalms *gives us the basis of all true instruction and understanding*.

Indeed, the **first** 'Maschil' Psalm, chapter 32, taught us the importance of sincerely repenting *and* how to do so. It showed us that *true* repentance not only requires acknowledging our sins (breaking God's Laws), transgressions (rebellion against God) and iniquities (having a corrupted/perverse, or even evil spirit) – but that we must *also* study God's Word to learn *how* to do what's right (which is what cleans our heart and mind) and learning to actually implement His Word into our daily thoughts, desires, words and actions. And true repentance also requires trusting in our Father's Word; meaning the promises He's given us for doing what's right in obeying His Word. So, that was essentially the first great lesson of the "Mas'-chil" Psalms and the **second** one (chpt 42) followed up that lesson by teaching us to kick out our worries and fears, and trust in the Lord (YHVH) *no matter what happens to us*. And then the **third** 'Mas'chil' Psalm (44), taught us to remember history (that which the Bible teaches us) because it shows that our Heavenly Father is *always* true to His word to punish the wicked and reward the righteous. But it also showed us that, even after we've sincerely repented for our sins, we will also have to endure the chastisements that come from our Heavenly Father (because we sinned); but that is to our benefit, as Heb 12 explains. If we keep humble and obedient to Him, then blessings *will* come.

And then the **fourth** 'Mas'chil' Psalm (45), taught us about the 'royal marriage' that's soon to come between Jesus Christ and His virgin Bride, who are His faithful 'saints'. And then in the **fifth** 'Mas'chil' Psalm (Ps 52) we learned how our Heavenly Father *will* punish the wicked ones, which are those who hate righteousness and truth but cleave to lies and wickedness. The wicked truly do not get away with anything. And then in the **sixth** 'Mas'chil' (Ps 53) we saw our Heavenly Father speak of the 'depravity of man' and His faithfulness to *defeat* it. And then in the **seventh** 'Mas'chil' Psalm (Ps 54) we saw David speak of the perverse men who were unjustly seeking his life in the wilderness, and his calls that the Lord would reward them evil (punish them) for their wickedness by 'cutting them off', which did happen to Saul, eventually, for he was killed in battle with the Philistines. And then in the **eighth** 'Mas'chil' Psalm (Ps 55) we saw David (again) pray to God for help from the enemy (which was likely when his son, Absalom, led a rebellion against him). For, not only was he being physically oppressed (they were trying to kill him) but he was also deeply pained due to the terrible betrayal of close friends and family (Absalom and his advisor Ahithophel). And while their oppressions (physical and spiritual) were very difficult for David, he taught us that the way to defeat the enemy is *always* to turn to our

Heavenly Father for help. For He is *always* faithful to save, and protect, those who love and obey Him *while* punishing the wicked ones. So long as we don't forsake Him, our Heavenly Father will *never* forsake us. And then in the **ninth** 'Mas'chil' Psalm (Ps 74) we saw the Psalmist mourning because the enemy was in the Sanctuary, looting and even burning it (destroying it). And they not only defiled God's Tabernacle but all the rest of the homes in Jerusalem, as well as their meeting places and national standards. But the Psalmist comforted himself (as Asaph's Psalms so often do) by reminding himself of the history of God's graciousness, and power, towards His people and His faithfulness to destroy the wicked ones, especially when they are blaspheming His name.

So, of a truth, these Psalms are *great* 'instruction' and give us understanding in how to 'defeat our enemies'. It *only* comes by *trusting in our Heavenly Father* – His Word, His promises, His Laws, His Son (Jesus Christ) and in His Holy Spirit – for guidance, comfort strength and understanding that we need to endure all the hard times. For hard times *are* coming (Rev 12:7-17, 2 Thess 2) and we'll need these critical 'instructions' on how to 'defeat the enemy' at that time, and likely before then too! And let's always remember, as 1 Cor 10:13 tells us, our Heavenly Father won't let us be tested (or tempted) above what we can handle. He'll *always* give us the strength and understanding to get through anything that comes our way **if** we continue to bind our 'inner man' to Him *wholeheartedly* and 'keep His way', meaning to obey Him with all our heart, mind, soul *and strength* (Mk 12:30). And that important Scripture (1 Cor 10:13) also tells us the things we go through are not uncommon. Others have dealt with the same kinds of temptations, and tribulations, as the Psalms so often point out. So, we *should* learn from the beautiful examples in God's Word (in the Psalms as well), as 1 Cor 10:11 tells us too.

Now, we're also told that this Psalm 78 is another '*Psalm of A'-saph*'. So, this Psalm is now the **seventh**, of twelve, Psalms with this 'title'. Psalms 50 was in the 'Exodus Book' while all the others (Ps 73-83) are in this 'Leviticus Book', that we're currently studying. So, this Psalm was either written *by* A'-saph or ***given to him*** for public use in worship. However, we've learned that not all the Psalms of A'-saph were the *same* A'-saph that lived during the days of David and Solomon; simply because the things that were described in some of the Psalms did not happen during the days of David or Solomon (like destruction of the Temple). So, some of these 'Psalms (and/or songs) of 'A'-saph' were written by ***a successor bearing the same name***. However, in this Psalm, we don't have any indication (from the context of the Psalm) exactly when it was written, because most of it contains history; we only know it had to of been written *after* David became king and brought the Ark of the Covenant to Israel. So, it very well could have been the same A'-saph as in David and Solomon's time; we just don't know for sure. And don't forget, the original A'saph was one of three 'chief' *musicians* who had authority over the others (1 Chron 16:4-8, 37, 1 Chron 25:1,6) at that time.

But regardless of when it was written, it's still a *wonderful* Psalm full of wisdom and understanding (as the word 'Maschil' points out) for us to glean from. And, as the *Companion Bible* also points out: **Biblical history** (such as this Psalm gives) **is truly a moral lesson**; it thus shows us *there's more to Divine history than 'meets the eye'*. But, further to that, this Psalm also explains to us how (and why) God chose Zion, in Jerusalem, for the place He would allow His Tabernacle (and then the permanent Temple) to dwell in. And this point also has a very important *spiritual* (moral) lesson for us as well...

So, we'll pick this up in part 1...

AMEN.