

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Psalms: God's Nurture Of The Inner Man In The Life Of Faith

LXXIV: Relying On God's Faithfulness During Long Trials

(Psalm 74:1-23)

I. Introduction

- A. A great trial that is nevertheless a short-lived trial is often easier to handle than a very prolonged trial.
- B. For prolonged trials, the believer has access to a Faithful God Who has persisted from antiquity to stay loyal to His people, a God Who can be trusted to help even in prolonged trials as Psalm 74:1-23 teaches (as follows):

II. Relying On God's Faithfulness During Long Trials, Psalm 74:1-23.

- A. The introductory remarks of this psalm are part of the first verse (Kittel, Biblia Hebraica, p. 1039), so we stay with the numbering system of the English Bible.
- B. We thus translate Psalm 74:1-23 as follows: (1) "Why, O Elohim, have you perpetually (*nesah*, B. D. B., A Heb. and Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 664) spurned us? Why does Your anger smolder against the sheep of Your pasture?" (2) "Remember the people You purchased of old, the tribe of Your inheritance, whom You redeemed, Mount Zion where You dwelt." (3) "Turn Your steps toward these perpetual (*nesah* again, v. 1) ruins, all this destruction the enemy has brought on the sanctuary." (4) "Your foes roared in the place where You met with us; they set up their standards as signs." (5) "They behaved like men wielding axes to cut through a thicket of trees." (6) "They smashed all the carved paneling with their axes and hatchets." (7) "They burned Your sanctuary to the ground; they defiled the dwelling place of Your Name." (8) "They said in their hearts, 'We will crush them completely!' They burned every place where God was worshipped in the land." (9) "We are given no miraculous signs; no prophets are left, and none of us knows how long this will be." (10) "How long will the enemy mock You, O Elohim? Will the foe revile Your Name perpetually (*nesah* again, cf. v. 1, 3)." (11) "Why do You hold back Your hand, Your right hand? Take it from the folds of Your garment and destroy them!" (12) "But Elohim is my King from old; You bring salvation upon the earth." (13) "It was You Who split open the sea by Your power; You broke the heads of the monster in the waters (fig. ref. to Egypt, B. K. C., O. T., p. 849)." (14) "You crushed the heads of Leviathan and gave him as food to the creatures of the desert." (15) "You opened up springs and streams; You dried up the ever flowing rivers." (16) "To You belongs the day -- yea, to You belongs the night; You established the sun and moon." (17) "You set all the boundaries of the earth; You made both summer and winter." (18) "Remember this -- the enemy has mocked, O Jahweh, how foolish people have reviled Your Name." (19) "Do not hand over the life of Your dove to the wild beasts; do not perpetually (*nesah* again, cf. v. 1, 3, 10) forget the lives of Your afflicted people." (20) "Have regard for Your covenant, because haunts of violence fill the dark places of the land." (21) "Do not let the oppressed retreat in disgrace; may the poor and needy praise Your Name." (22) "Rise up, O Elohim, and defend Your cause; remember how fools mock You all day long." (23) "Do not ignore the clamor of Your adversaries, the uproar of Your enemies, that rises continually."
- C. We note significant observations and applications of this psalm (as follows):
 1. This psalm was authored by an Asaph who lived later than the Asaph of David's era since it refers to the Babylonian destruction of the temple (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, ftn. to Psalm 74). This 70-year-long captivity was noted by the lack of prophets for the people (v. 9), H. C. Leupold, The Psalms, 1974, p. 533.
 2. The multiple uses of the word *nesah* (rendered "perpetually," v. 1, 3, 10, 19) signals a focus throughout the psalm on the great length of the trial of Israel's captivity, what is solved by recalling God's deliverance of Israel from Egypt following a long interval of captivity there (cf. Exodus 2:23-25; 12:40), Psalm 74:12-23.

Lesson: *When the believing remnant in the Babylonian Captivity sought relief from the longevity of their captivity in Babylon, they could recall God's ancient deliverance of Israel from Egypt following an even longer captivity there as hope in a consequently FAITHFUL God to deliver them as they trusted in Him in their current long trial.*

Application: *(1) If facing long trials, may we recall God's past help as in Israel's Exodus after a long oppression as hope that God is FAITHFUL over LONG time periods, EVER willing to help those who seek Him. (2) Jeremiah 29:10-14 predicted the 70-year-long Babylonian Captivity was designed to direct an habitually wayward Israel finally to turn fully to the Lord that He might bless her. Thus, God may allow long trials to occur to get us believers in Christ to become more faithful followers of Him that He might not have to discipline us like He did Israel in the Babylonian Captivity! (2 Chronicles 36:15-21)*