

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

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

LXXIX: Exempling A Godly Prayer For Vengeance

(Psalm 79:1-13)

I. Introduction

- A. Many in Christendom teach that vengeance is evil, that we must automatically forgive all who wrong us.
- B. Actually, Jesus in Luke 17:3 taught that we can forgive only if the one who wronged us repents, and Romans 12:19 claims we Christians should make room for God to avenge us of those who wrong us.
- C. Psalm 79:1-13 thus examples a godly prayer for vengeance, and we view it for our insight and edification:

II. Exempling A Godly Prayer For Vengeance, Psalm 79:1-13.

- A. The introductory remarks of this psalm comprise the first part of verse one in the Hebrew text (Kittel, Biblia Hebraica, p. 1046), so we stay with the numbering system of the English Bible.
- B. We thus translate Psalm 79:1-13 as follows:
 - 1. "O Elohim, the [pagan] nations (**goy**, *Ibid.*; H. A. W., T. W. O. T., 1980, v. I, p. 153-154) have invaded Your inheritance; they have defiled Your holy temple, they have reduced Jerusalem to rubble," Psa. 79:1.
 - 2. "They have given the dead bodies of Your servants as food to the birds of the air, the flesh of Your saints to the beasts of the earth," Psalm 79:2.
 - 3. "They have poured out blood like water all around Jerusalem, and there is no one to bury the dead," v. 3.
 - 4. "We are the objects of reproach to our neighbors, of scorn and derision to those around us," Psalm 79:4.
 - 5. "How long, O Jahweh? Will You be angry forever? How long will Your jealousy burn like fire?" (ver. 5)
 - 6. "Pour out Your wrath on the [pagan] nations (**goy** again, cf. v. 1) that do not acknowledge You, on the kingdoms that do not call on Your name," Psalm 79:6.
 - 7. "because they have devoured Jacob and destroyed his homeland," Psalm 79:7.
 - 8. "Do not hold against us the sins of the fathers; may Your soft, mother-like compassion (**rahamim**, B. D. B., A Heb. and Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 933) come quickly to meet us, for we are in desperate need," v. 8.
 - 9. "Help us, O Elohim our Savior, for the glory of Your name; deliver us and forgive our sins for Your name's sake," Psalm 79:9.
 - 10. "Why should the [pagan] nations (**goy**, v. 6, 1) say, 'Where is their Elohim?' Before our eyes, make known among the [pagan] nations (**goy** again) that You avenge the outpoured blood of Your servants," Psa. 79:10.
 - 11. "May the groans of the prisoners come before You; by the strength of Your arm preserve those condemned to die," Psalm 79:11.
 - 12. "Pay back into the laps of our neighbors seven times the reproach they have hurled at You, O Adonai," 12.
 - 13. "Then we Your people, the sheep of Your pasture, will praise You forever; from generation to generation we will recount Your praise," Psalm 79:13.
- C. We note significant observations and applications of this psalm (as follows):
 - 1. This psalm was authored after Babylon's invasion of Jerusalem in 586 B. C. (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to Psalm 79:1-5), which calamity the Mosaic Covenant (Deut. 28:1-68) with several of the prophets had predicted would occur due to Israel's sins ([a] v. 2 - unburied bodies that scavenger animals eat, cf. Deut. 28:15, 26; [b] v. 3 - slaying of Israel's people, cf. Deut. 28:25 and [c] v. 4 - being made a reproach, cf. Deut. 28:37), so the psalmist rightly acknowledged the nation's sins, Psalm 79:5, 8.
 - 2. The psalmist then appealed to Scriptural grounds for divine vengeance ([a] v. 1a - defiling God's temple in violation of Num. 3:38; [b] v. 7, 9 - devouring Jacob in violation of God's unconditional Abrahamic Covenant to bless him, cf. Gen. 12:1-3 and [c] v. 11 - the suffering of Hebrews by the Babylonians opposite God's unconditional Abrahamic Covenant stipulations, cf. Gen. 12:1-3).
 - 3. The psalmist then urged the Lord to protect His testimony by avenging His people of Babylon, Ps. 79:10.
 - 4. Finally, the psalmist offered thanksgiving and praise to God for His vengeance and deliverance, Ps. 79:13.

Lesson: *The psalmist's godly prayer for divine vengeance included (1) confession of sin that led God to allow Judah's abuse by Babylon, (2) appealing to the Scriptural grounds for God's vengeance, (3) appealing to the need to protect God's testimony via vengeance (4) and offering to thank and praise the Lord for His vengeance.*

Application: *May we follow the psalmist's example in praying to God for due vengeance while yet treating our oppressor graciously as Romans 12:19-21 instructs us to do today.*