

# **Psalms: God's Worship & Prayer Guide**

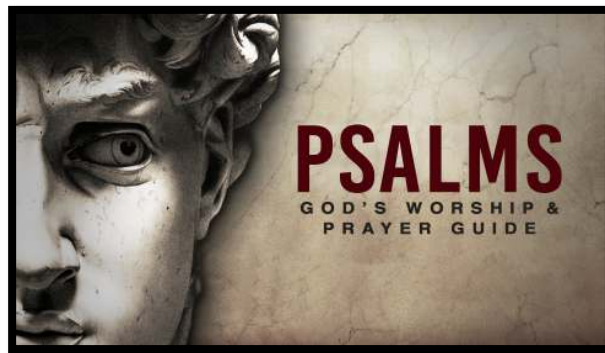
## **Crucible Christianity**

Psalm 74

Written By

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**W**hat are God's people to do when their institutions are devastated by ruthless enemies? How should Christians respond when the culture implodes and into the power vacuum steps ideologically driven people bent on silencing the Church, the voice of truth and morality?

In January of 1933, Hitler was basically a low-level politician nobody really listened to. However, by July of 1933, through intimidation, lies, and propaganda designed to elevate him and efface all opponents, he had seized full control of Germany. Only one thing stood in his way from total totalitarian rule: the Church.

Two thirds of the German population of 45,000,000 people were Protestants, primarily Lutherans. They were typically quite patriotic, conservative, and they kept to themselves for the most part, leaving political life to the politicians. For Hitler, however, they posed a problem because everyone had to answer to him as the ruler of all.

What did the Fuhrer do to take control of the Church? He began to state that a loyal Church is a positive one. From his perspective, this meant they parroted his party lines and ideology above all else. To deviate, to oppose, to debate meant you had embraced negativity, and this would not be tolerated. So, to take possession of the Church, he negotiated a "peace" agreement with Rome which removed Catholic opposition, and he was instrumental in getting the twenty-eight key Protestant denominations to write a new constitution, one espousing his nationalistic beliefs. He turned in appointed, by political fiat, Ludwig Muller, a no-named naval chaplain, to be the new bishop of the new ecclesiastical entity.

When the churchmen overthrew Hitler's appointee in a May 27<sup>th</sup> election, government run media cast Muller in a positive light. With the thinking of the people primed by this propaganda,

Hitler had his officials raid the offices of the church entity. Once in control they forcibly placed Muller, their puppet, as the bishop, the leader of all the churches. Immediately, officials demanded the churches collectively offer praise and thanksgiving in their worship services for the much needed takeover, Nazi flags were to be hung on the walls of the local churches, and pastors were mandated to read a proclamation which stated that “all those who are concerned . . . feel deeply thankful that the state should have assumed, in addition to all its tremendous tasks, the great load and burden of reorganizing the church.”<sup>1</sup>

Not all Christians bowed a knee to the new dictator. A few brave pastors like Martin Niemöller, a former Naval submarine officer from WWI, Hans Jacobi, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer stood in Hitler’s way. Why? Because they believed in the God-ordained independence of the Church, and they vehemently and respectfully opposed any attempt by Statist powers to wed the State with the Church in order to control the speech and the people of said Church. They paid for their biblical views dearly. The Gestapo eventually arrested Niemöller on trumped up charges, which cost him years in a dark, dank prison, and they hung Bonhoeffer. His book *The Cost of Discipleship* still impacts Christians many years after his untimely death.

This was not the first time godless leaders opposed God’s people, nor will it be the last from what we know of the prophetic sections of Paul’s final letter to Timothy (1 Tim. 3) and his second letter to the Thessalonian church (2 Thess. 2). As the world scene is groomed for the appearance of the Anti-christ by showcasing the supposed superior nature of totalitarian rule, coupled with a disdain for laws which restrict the consolidation of political power, followed by a mocking dislike for moral, spiritual people who will not fall in line, we should all expect to see threats to the Church, universal and local.

Knowing this is coming our way, knowing it is occurring in many societal sectors (as I’m sure Niemöller, Jacobi, and Bonhoeffer did), the question before us is clear:

## How Are We To Respond When Godly Institutions Are Attacked? (Psalm 74)

The answer to this complex query is answered definitively, though not exhaustively, in Psalm 74. In twenty-three verses, the Psalmist describes his thinking as a spiritual man and a priest (a pastor) after the Babylonian army not only conquered his country in 586 B.C., but laughingly and mockingly destroyed the beautiful Holy Temple of God, the center of the nation’s spiritual life. Like Niemöller, Jacobi, and Bonhoeffer, he was shocked at how quickly and easily his nation imploded, and at how readily the invading force systematically dismantled everything associated with the worship of their God in order to elevate their idolatrous gods. In light of this, we find his words drip with deep sorrow, painful passion, and perplexing questions. Watching all of this transpire was a catastrophe he never thought he . . . and the people . . . would ever witness, but now the unthinkable, the abhorrent, and the unimaginable had occurred.

Now what were they to do? How were they to process this evil event in light of their faith? And what about God? Where was He? Why didn’t He show up and defend them? Should they cower in fear or should they stand strong and true, spiritually speaking? How could they do the

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<sup>1</sup> Charles Colson and Ellen Santilli Vaughn, *Kingdoms in Conflict* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1987), 132.

latter when their center of spiritual life lay in complete ruins? Answers to the questions emerge as we work our way through the structural form of the inspired text, and the answers we will encounter are ones we, too, need to unearth for the forces of darkness are always seeking to storm the gates of the Church (Eph. 6:10ff; 2 Cor. 10:1-6).

With verse one we run headlong into heart wrenching questions from a godly man who had to watch the godless prevail. I, therefore, logically call this verse . . .

### The Reality (Psalm 74:1)

What is the reality? Invaders defeated Israel's forces and wasted no time trashing the Temple of God. The sadness of this tragedy led the Psalmist to pose questions you would have posed:

Contemplation of Asaph. O God, why have You cast us off forever? Why does Your anger smoke against the sheep of Your pasture?

Since this Psalm was definitely written *after* the fall of the Temple in 586 B.C., and Asaph served under the time of David (1011-971 B.C.), we can safely surmise a priest of the line of Asaph must have written these words either immediately after the catastrophe or sometime during the ensuing Babylonian captivity.

The questions are the Psalmist honest, authentic, transparent and *gut-wrenching*. Even though the Psalmist knew, as we see later, that God was, in fact, with him/them, the event caused human emotions to burst forth from his mouth. The advancement of outright evil, the unchecked victory of the godless left him and the people feeling totally abandoned by God. You can just hear the additional questions behind this question: "God, how could you have permitted this? Why did you allow these evil, power-hungry people to topple the focal point of our faith, the Temple?"

In the Hebrew text, the opening question is most emphatic by placing the interrogative at the head of the sentence **לְאֶסֶף לְמָה אֱלֹהִים זָנְחָתָּ** (Ps. 74:1). By using the name of God as the Creator from Genesis 1:1, the psalmist heightens the import of the question. "How could you the all-powerful Creator permit this? How could you possibly walk away from your people?" His second question, which he introduced by an implied interrogative to make it even more emphatic by means of ellipsis (where a word is purposeful omitted), wonders why God, the Shepherd, was so angry toward His chosen sheep.

Did the Psalmist know the answers to these questions? Yes. As a priest, who taught the Word of God in the Temple, he of all people knew God, by definition, is omnipresent (Acts 17:24-28; Heb. 4:13). He knew from the Torah and the Prophets that God had warned His people that if they rejected His Law and embraced the gods of the nations He would eventually, though temporarily, "cast them off" (Jer. 16:14-15; Ezek. 11:14-21). He knew God, who is holy, will only tolerate sin among His chosen people for so long, and then He will move in judgment to discipline them. Again, He said this much through the Torah and the Prophets.

But it is one thing to know biblical truth, and the warnings attached to it, and quite another to experience the divine blowback when unchecked sin and willful apostasy among God's people had finally challenged God's patience and grace one too many times. From their Exodus in 1446 B.C. to the fall of the nation in 586 B.C., God had been more than patient. And He had warned them countless times that His judgment and discipline would most certainly arrive unless they repented of their collective sin (2 Chron. 36:15-21; Jer. 6-10; 25:1, 13; 23:1). Yet even though

the priests and the people knew all of this, it was hard to stomach God's discipline when it finally arrived.

What is the word for us here? The same. As evil progresses, as prophesied, as people fall away from the faith, as the Church is sifted by persecution and opposition, as saints compromise sound doctrine in order to get along with a godless society, we must realize that God will discipline us in order to awaken us (Heb. 6:4-8; 10:26-31; 12:1-11). Further, when His discipline arrives, we must not be afraid to be honest about how we feel concerning what we are seeing and experiencing. So, what are your questions as you watch the advancement of barbarians inside the gates? Don't be afraid to pose those to God because He is listening and He wants you to work through those thorny, tough questions so you can move on to spiritual health and wholeness.

With his perplexing theological questions before God, the Psalmist next moves to . . .

## The Request (Psalm 74:2)

His request has probably been your request many times as you see the advancements of the wicked on various societal fronts:

<sup>2</sup> Remember Your congregation, *which* You have purchased of old, the tribe of Your inheritance, *which* You have redeemed-- This Mount Zion where You have dwelt.

*Remember* in Hebrew, *zakar* (זָכַר), is a command from a lesser (the Psalmist) to a greater (God). Lexically, it does not mean the Psalmist is disrespectfully asking God, who knows all, to remember something. Far from it. The word means to remember with action. He seeks to get God to come to Israel's assistance by remembering that it was He who created and redeemed them originally in the mighty Exodus (Deut. 32:6; Ex. 15:13). The implication is clear: How could He, who is Israel's Father and Creator, and the One who chose Mount Zion for His Temple, walk away from them, His covenant people, forever? Point is, He couldn't because of who He is and what He has promised them.

What is the import for us? We, too, can and should ask God to act definitively in troublesome times when we see wickedness advancing and the Church looking as if it is in a state of retreat. Yes, we can ask for God, who has given us the New Covenant, who is our Abba Father (Rom. 8), who has purchased us with His precious blood (Acts 20:28; Eph. 1:14), who resides in us as His local temples (1 Cor. 6:16) to remember us, to come to our aid, to help us even though He disciplines us or permits persecution to refine, hone, and mold us into His holy image.

What, then, is your request from God in the time in which you live?

- Lord, will you help me to feel your presence when times are tough?
- Lord, will you enable me to have an abiding peace even in chaotic times?
- Lord, will you show us how to defend the local church when the Adversary attacks in ways we did not anticipate?
- Lord, will you give us a glimmer of hope in seemingly hopeless times?
- Lord, well, you can fill in your own blanks, right?

Moving from expressing his emotionally charged questions and laying his personal request before God's throne, the Psalmist predictably dives into the essence of his spiritual turmoil. I call these six verses . . .

## The Ruination (Psalm 74:3-8)

Before he gets into the horror of what happened to the Temple, the Psalmist respectfully offers up another command to God, viz., an honorable request from an inferior to a superior:

<sup>3</sup> Lift up Your feet to the perpetual desolations. The enemy has damaged everything in the sanctuary.



This anthropomorphic command (Note: God does not have feet . . . man does) is as unusual as it is breathtaking. Essentially, the Psalmist is so overcome with the advancement and victory of evil overall which is holy he asks God in so many words, “Could you get on your feet and quickly come and help us in light of the desolated nature of your Temple?” Put differently, he is saying, “Could you stop dragging your feet?” Whoa. That’s some request of God. Why did the Psalmist say this? He spoke this way because his emotions

had kicked into high gear. Ever been there in your battle with evil? Ever been so frustrated at the almost unhindered advance of darkness you feel like saying something like this? If so, I’d counsel you to tread lightly for you are walking on holy ground before a holy God. It is one thing to ask God to hurry up and deal with sin and sinners, and quite another to forcefully tell Him to get on with His kingdom program. He, as we shall see, is always working to accomplish His lofty salvific/kingdom plans even when you don’t think, or feel, He is. So, speak respectfully even when you are fearful and frustrated.

Starting in verse 4, the Psalmist lays out what happened:

<sup>4</sup> Your enemies roar in the midst of Your meeting place; they set up their banners for signs. <sup>5</sup> They seem like men who lift up axes among the thick trees. <sup>6</sup> And now they break down its carved work, all at once, with axes and hammers. <sup>7</sup> They have set fire to Your sanctuary; they have defiled the dwelling place of Your name to the ground. <sup>8</sup> They said in their hearts, “Let us destroy them altogether.” They have burned up all the meeting places of God in the land.

Once the Babylonian army breached the security of the Temple, they wasted no time, like Hitler, denigrating and destroying everything related to the worship of the true God. 2 Kings chapter 25:1-21 recounts the step by step brutal overthrow of Jerusalem and finally the Temple. Like hungry lions they roared in victory as they stood in the Temple precincts for in their eyes their gods were more powerful than Israel’s God. Walls were draped, as in Hitler’s day, with their national and militaristic flags. Drunk with victory, they used axes to chop up anything and

everything God had commanded the Israelites to make for His Temple (1 Kings 6:18-22). Metal items were beaten into unrecognizable, distorted shapes with hammers. In the end, they laughed as they torched the place where the fire of God's presence had been prior to His departure in Ezekiel's day (Ezek. 10).

For any saint looking at the burning Temple and hearing the mocking laughter of the godless troops, this must have been the saddest of all days. God had permitted the godless Babylonians to discipline His stiff-necked people after calling them to repent for some 490 years, and anyone in touch with God's Word would have known this, but to watch it all unfold must have just been, well, too much. It is too much, isn't it, when you see darkness dominate light, when you see the unholy gain power over the holy, when you witness the immoral overtake the moral, and when falsity masquerading as truth becomes the order of the day. It is too much when you watch prophecy being fulfilled as God moves to discipline and judge.

What should you do if you are in the shoes of the Psalmist? Do what he did. Tell the Lord who loves you and is with you what pains you for He is listening. Get your emotions, your issues, your questions, your spiritual tension out on the proverbial table. It will not surprise Him, and I'm sure it will be cathartic for you. So, have a little talk with Jesus, tell Him about your troubles, and then expect Him to eventually give you a flash of much needed wisdom and insight.

Moving from detailing to God the pain of what you've seen naturally leads to what we can identify as . . .

## The Request (Psalm 74:9-11)

Once again, the Psalmist's words couldn't be more emotional:

<sup>9</sup> We do not see our signs; *there is no longer any prophet; nor is there any among us who knows how long.* <sup>10</sup> O God, how long will the adversary reproach? Will the enemy blaspheme Your name forever? <sup>11</sup> Why do You withdraw Your hand, even Your right hand? *Take it out of Your bosom and destroy them.*

Even though they did have the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel post-fall, it felt like they had no prophets present anymore to give them a word from God. God, however, had given them many words for hundreds of years, through men like Samuel, Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Micah, Zephaniah, Habakkuk and they had, for the most part, rejected them all, choosing to serve the gods of their culture and to live as laws unto themselves apart from God's life-giving laws.

Now was the time for discipline because the people had rejected the words of the prophets because they didn't like what the prophets, like Amos, had to say because it challenged their wicked lifestyles and loose moral thinking (Amos 8). Yet as we see here, there comes a time in the discipline when the saint wakes up and craves the Word of God above all else. Why? He craves it because he knows it will give him answers for the wild world in which he lives, it will give Him hope for the future, and it will show him how he is supposed to live so divine blessing holds cursing at bay. He craves it because it will tell him the advancement of the wicked will not be forever. In fact, in Israel's day their captivity had a divine cap at 70 years. They would, therefore, serve one year for every seven-year Sabbatical rest they failed to observe, or 490 years of disobedience (Lev. 25:1-4; Jer. 25:11-12).

And so it always is. Spiritual light shall overcome darkness. Truth will be the victor over lies. Righteousness shall reign over unrighteousness. The last shall be first. The Lord shall appear

at the right divine time to deal with the wicked so wickedness will never advance again (Matt. 24; Rev. 19). In the meantime, as we battle with the forces of darkness here, as we live with the repercussions of a Christ-rejecting world in a sin spiral into oblivion (Rom. 1), as we witness the dismantling of holy things and holy teachings, it is not wrong, as I've said, to lay your raw requests about before the throne of the Lord Jesus.

Isaiah, who prophesied from 739 B.C. to 687 B.C. (the last year of King Hezekiah's reign), had seen his share of wickedness and had spoken up about it. According to Isaiah 5, he knew full-well the spiritual rot among the people of God and he castigated them for it. Under the reign of Hezekiah, he had witnessed how God used the Assyrians to defeat the compromised and godless ten northern tribes in 722 B.C. And he, as God's prophet, had not only seen into God's throne room (Isa. 6), he was given precise and powerful prophecies about the coming Messiah and King, Jesus, the Christ (Isa. 2; 7:14; 9:6; 53). All of this, however, didn't keep him, like the Psalmist, from getting real and raw before God's throne. In Isaiah 63 and 64, written some 100 years before the fall of Jerusalem and the burning of the Temple, he prophesied what would occur. In the spirit of the Psalmist, he spoke prophetically about what needed to happen as a result of the tragedy:

Oh, that You would rend the heavens! That You would come down! That the mountains might shake at Your presence-- <sup>2</sup> As fire burns brushwood, as fire causes water to boil-- To make Your name known to Your adversaries, *that* the nations may tremble at Your presence! <sup>3</sup> When You did awesome things *for which* we did not look, You came down, the mountains shook at Your presence. <sup>4</sup> For since the beginning of the world *Men* have not heard nor perceived by the ear, nor has the eye seen any God besides You, who acts for the one who waits for Him. <sup>5</sup> You meet him who rejoices and does righteousness, *who* remembers You in Your ways. You are indeed angry, for we have sinned-- in these ways we continue; and we need to be saved. <sup>6</sup> But we are all like an unclean *thing*, and all our righteousnesses *are* like filthy rags; we all fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away. <sup>7</sup> And *there is* no one who calls on Your name, who stirs himself up to take hold of You; for You have hidden Your face from us, and have consumed us because of our iniquities. <sup>8</sup> But now, O LORD, You *are* our Father; we *are* the clay, and You our potter; and all we *are* the work of Your hand. <sup>9</sup> Do not be furious, O LORD, nor remember iniquity forever; Indeed, please look-- we all *are* Your people! <sup>10</sup> Your holy cities are a wilderness, Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation. <sup>11</sup> Our holy and beautiful temple, where our fathers praised You, is burned up with fire; and all our pleasant things are laid waste (Isa. 64).

In the middle of this emotional plea based on the spiritual compromise of the people, followed by the eventual judgment of God, the prophet laid out the request all Jews at that time should make: Father, please remove your disciplinary hand and restore us in light of our heartfelt confession of any sin we have committed.

What, as I have said before, is your real and raw request to God in the tumultuous times in which you live?

- Lord, I need a word.
- Lord, I need some assurance everything is going to be all right.
- Lord, help my faith be strong in the storm I'm facing.
- Lord, forgive me for feeling so overcome and defeated.

You speak and He will respond in short order for He is your Father as well.

From feelings of fear and frustration, the Psalm moves in a whole new, healthier spiritual direction in the ensuing verses. Is this not how it goes on the walk of faith? Like the disciples cowering in fear in the middle of a storm on the Sea of Galilee with Jesus asleep below deck, we, too, cower for the storms we see. But then there comes the moment where the clouds break, when the sun shines its powerful beams on the tossing sea in front of us, when God steps up on deck and reminds us who He is and what He is capable of when the unthinkable happens.

If you are struggling with the unraveling of the culture by godless barbarians, if you are fearful of what impact this will have on the Church of Jesus Christ, maybe, just maybe, it's time for . . .

### The Remembrance (Psalm 74:12-17)

In six verses the Psalmist stops his fretting and takes us on a much needed tour of Old Testament history, making sure he showcases the greatness of the living God.

<sup>12</sup> For God is my King from of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth.

In Hebrew, there is no main verb in the first clause. This is a figure of speech called ellipsis and it is purposefully used in order to create a powerful emphasis. God IS the King of King and Lord of Lord from ancient times, really from beyond all time as we know it for He is eternal. He is always on His throne. He is always in complete control. He never takes a break from exercising His regal authority over His creation. He is never caught napping or looking the other way. He is never distracted concerning anything, be it a given fish swimming through the Indian Ocean or a cumulus cloud passing over the plains of Kansas. He is THE King of Glory who is the King at all times. You might need to read that one more time to let it sink into the soil of your aching heart.

What does the King do? He is *always* working (the participle here is either durative or iterative. If the former it means He is always bringing redemptive acts, or if the latter it means He sets things up occasionally in time and space to bring salvation to His people) to set up saving moments for His people. Some of those saving moments are detailed in the ensuing verses:

<sup>13</sup> You divided the sea by Your strength; you broke the heads of the sea serpents in the waters. <sup>14</sup> You broke the heads of Leviathan in pieces, *and* gave him *as* food to the people inhabiting the wilderness.

The King accomplished this in the Exodus, but you will remember Israel was in captivity for 430 years while God set the world stage for His grand deliverance. Parting the Red Sea (Ex. 14) stands as one of the greatest miracles of the OT because in it God not only did the unthinkable, he broke the back of the Canaanite god, Yam, associated with water.

Next up for review and remembrance was the Noahic flood:



<sup>15</sup> You broke open the fountain and the flood;

Similar language is employed in Genesis 7:11 and 8:2. When evil ran amuck, God eventually set the stage for old man Noah and his family to be saved the world-wide flood by boarding a boat they constructed far from water. The story is a constant reminder of God's provision for His beleaguered people and for His ultimate opposition to barbarians.

With the last part of verse 15, the Psalmist focuses on how God parted the Jordan in 1406 B.C. for the Israelites to cross over into the Promised Land (Josh. 3):

You dried up mighty rivers (v. 15).

This all occurred when the Jordan was a flood tide and rushing headlong downhill into the Dead Sea. What a gap this must have been to allow some two million Israelites to cross over, and to think they did it all on river bed which was dried immediately. With a God like this, why are you worried by the actions of the wicked? Sure, they might prosper and be effective in the short-term; however, in the here and now God is working to set up world events to deal them a destructive blow, be what it may. Do you have faith in Him? If so, great. If not, if your faith is faltering, then it's time for some much needed rehearsal of times of some of His more amazing feats of salvation.

You might also be in need of remember just who He is:

<sup>16</sup> The day is Yours, the night also is Yours; You have prepared the light and the sun.

<sup>17</sup> You have set all the borders of the earth; You have made summer and winter.

Who can't see the import of these two inspired verses? Combined they emphasize one key life concept: God is sovereignly and powerfully in control of everything. He controls the cosmos, with all of its forces, to make night and day happen all of the time. And the sun? He set that ball of fire burning at 27 million degrees Fahrenheit in our galaxy so we could have light, heat, plants, food, and so forth. As for borders, He moved all the seven major tectonic plates to position the nations just where He wanted them for His purposes. The predictable arrival of summer and winter are all part of His duties as the Creator (Gen. 1:4-5). The bottom line is clear: *Since He controls all of these colossal things, the activity and advancement of the wicked is really no issue for Him.* No wonder He laughs at the wicked (Psalm 37) and calls the godless nation's a drop in the bucket (Isa. 40:15).

- They will not thwart His plans.
- They will not derail His promises.
- They will not overpower His wishes.

Divine perspective is just what the divine Doctor ordered for you, and for me, in these trying, turbulent times we live in. God has got this! (Sorry for the bad grammar).

Armed with a refreshed perspective on God, the Psalmist waxed eloquent one more time with some pivotal requests which burned on his heart and mind as a godly man. You can go and learn from him, I'm sure.

## The Request (Psalm 74:18-23)

In rapid fire succession, “Asaph” presents basically six bold requests of God in light of the national and spiritual tragedy.

Number one focuses on God and how the activity of the wicked have insulted Him:

<sup>18</sup> Remember this, *that* the enemy has reproached, O LORD, and *that* a foolish people has blasphemed Your name.

How foolish it is when a tragedy occurs, God’s people pray, and the godless mock them for paying.

Number two focuses on the believer dealing with the exploits of the wicked:

<sup>19</sup> Oh, do not deliver the life of Your turtledove to the wild beast! Do not forget the life of Your poor forever.

His point is well-taken. God, how you could let your innocent people be devoured by a wild beast? I don’t think you could because you are compassionate.

Number three zeros in on God’s Word and His ancient promises:

<sup>20</sup> Have respect to the covenant; for the dark places of the earth are full of the haunts of cruelty.

Here he is just asking God to remember the Abrahamic, Mosaic, Palestinian, and New Covenants. Of course, the God who made and “signed” this contracts is ultimately desirous of bringing each one to fruition.

Number four, is a concern for others:

<sup>21</sup> Oh, do not let the oppressed return ashamed! Let the poor and needy praise Your name.

God always has a big heart for those who have been disadvantaged because of the exploits of sinful people, so the request is in order.

Number five, circles back to the person of God.

<sup>22</sup> Arise, O God, plead Your own cause; remember how the foolish man reproaches You daily.

“Asaph” simply reminds God how foolish man mocks Him on a daily basis. The upshot is easy to spot: God, I know you have a limit concerning this, so could you reach that limit soon?

Number six, is consumed with the enemies of God:

<sup>23</sup> Do not forget the voice of Your enemies; the tumult of those who rise up against You increases continually. (Ps. 74).

One last time the Psalmist reminds God of the perpetual wickedness spewing from the mouths of those who don’t fear Him at all. They mock His existence. They laugh at His people. They curse

His people. They belittle His saints as if they are mindless fools. They cancel them because they won't kowtow to their ideology. They constantly turn up the rhetoric in order to silence saints and to sideline God (as if that were possible). Hence, with his final request he begs God to reach the point where He has had enough of the vile voices of the wicked and moves to silence them, forever.

Interesting. When all hope seemed to be lost, the Psalmist didn't say what He was going to do, but He asked God to step into world history and right the wrongs so righteousness could reign supremely. As you take stock of your life and the continual encroachment of wickedness in politics, education, work, laws, sexuality, the church, and so forth, what will your six big requests be of God? He's waiting to hear from you. And while you're waiting on Him, realize it might take Him a little while to set up events to bring respite, but respite will come because bringing peace is His ultimate desire.

