

18. Psalm 78-84

December 18, 2014

From Psalm 78 to 80, you see many references of the exodus of Israel by God to the stubborn people of Israel. He didn't repeat them to brag about what He had done for them, rather for them to trust Him for their provision and protection instead of prostituting themselves spiritually to their neighbors' pagan idols.

It is really getting old to read the same sins of the Israel people time after time. But then again, how many times have we committed the same sins over and over? We are no different than they were.

Psalm 81

Psalm 81:10-13 I am the Lord your God, Who brought you out of the land of Egypt; Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it. 11 "But My people would not heed My voice, And Israel would have none of Me. 12 So I gave them over to their own stubborn heart, To walk in their own counsels. 13 "Oh, that My people would listen to Me, That Israel would walk in My ways!

Have you ever thought about being in the wilderness with the Israelites while they were wondering around for 40 years? I've thought about it, not because I'd love to camp in the wilderness. As a matter of fact, I do not like camping at all. I am so spoiled for our modern day amenities. Thank you very much.

Let's assume that the Israelites numbered about 2,000,000 people, which is what many Bible scholars estimate. In that case, do you know how much manna was needed to feed the Israelites in the wilderness? One scholar has estimated that they needed 3,000 tons of manna every day – about a little over 3 pounds of manna for each person per day. If this is the case, and if you take into account that God fed His people every day for 40 years, this means 43,800,000 tons of manna supernaturally appeared on the ground over a period of forty years.

This manna appeared so regularly, so faithfully, so "day in and day out," that after a while, the Israelites didn't even think too much of it anymore. During those forty years, young children were born and grew up thinking it was normal for 3,000 tons of manna to appear each morning out of thin air, literally. Listen, Supernatural provision became so commonplace among them that they forgot how supernatural it was and began to accept it as a normal, regular occurrence. That 's WRONG.

What could the false gods of their pagan nations possibly give to them? But they still wanted those idols over the Lord. Had His people obeyed Him, the Lord would have kept the promises in His covenant and blessed them with protection and provision as He promised.

Worship and service go together, and this means we must obey what the Lord commands if we are going to follow Him and worship Him. When a person or nation does not obey Him, He will do whatever it takes to get their attention even if it requires chastening. When we disobey the Lord, not only do we feel the pain of His chastening, but we also miss out on the blessings He so desires to give us.

Psalm 81:13 If my people would but listen to me, if Israel would follow my ways, (NIV)

The word 'if' in this verse of NIV is small, but it carries great big consequences. Our gracious God's desire is not to chasten us the moment we sin, rather to bless us when we obey Him.

Psalm 82

Psalm 82:1-8 God stands in the congregation of the mighty; He judges among the gods. 2 How long will you judge unjustly, And show partiality to the wicked? Selah 3 Defend the poor and fatherless; Do justice to the afflicted and needy. 4 Deliver the poor and needy; Free them from the hand of the wicked. 5 They do not know, nor do they understand; They walk about in darkness; All the foundations of the earth are unstable. 6 I said, " You are gods, And all of you are children of the Most High. 7 But you shall die like men, And fall like one of the princes." 8 Arise, O God, judge the earth; For You shall inherit all nations.

This chapter can be quite confusing to many and, of course, satan uses it to the max through the Mormon's false doctrines. These are a few things they claim:

- God was once a man like us.
- God has a tangible body of flesh and bone.
- God lives on a planet near the star K olob.
- God ("Heavenly Father") has at least one wife, their "Mother in Heaven," but she is so holy that they are not to discuss her nor pray to her .
- Jesus was married several times – Mary, Martha, and another Mary.
- They can become like God and rule over their own universe.
- There are many gods, ruling over their own planets.

The Lord our God is the Lawgiver as well as the Judge of the universe He created. He doesn't need a group of jury to decide ' guilty' or 'not guilty', nor does He need to hear the presentation from both sides, because He completely knows every detail of the facts as well as the very motives of each individual's heart. He executes judgments from His all-knowing capacity righteously. And there is no appeal or defense. His verdict is final.

The same Hebrew word 'elohim' which can be singular and plural were used in the word "God" and "gods". This "gods" are not the false gods of the pagan kingdoms. This title was given to people who have been given the awesome responsibility of representing the Lord on earth and interpreting and apply His law as judges.

John 10:34-36 Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in your law, 'I said, "You are gods"'? 35 If He called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), 36 do you say of Him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'?"

Jesus is using a typical, rabbinical argument – arguing from the lesser to the greater . If, then, these terms can be applied to ordinary mortal human beings, how could Jesus be accused of blasphemy when He applies them to Himself whom God the Father sanctified and sent into the world on a special mission? Blasphemy only applies to the ones who are not God, but yet claim to be God. Jesus is not offering a false claim; rather He is merely pointing out what He is by rights.

Since the twisted and unbelieving Supreme Court Justices ruled to ban prayers in school in 1963, anti-Christian verdicts flooded this country. More and more atheists and anti-Christian people embolden to go against God and they are getting favors

from the federal and local judges. I believe that it is only going to get worse. In this country, the definition of "illegal" became very blurred and frequently ignored by the media, local, state, and federal governments, and courts of all levels.

These judges will face the Ultimate Judge someday and they will be accountable for every decision they made. Their privilege brings responsibility, and responsibility brings accountability.

Psalm 84

Psalm 84:1-12 How lovely is Your tabernacle, O Lord of hosts! 2 My soul longs, yes, even faints For the courts of the Lord; My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God. 3 Even the sparrow has found a home, And the swallow a nest for herself, Where she may lay her young-- Even Your altars, O Lord of hosts, My King and my God. 4 Blessed are those who dwell in Your house; They will still be praising You. Selah 5 Blessed is the man whose strength is in You, Whose heart is set on pilgrimage. 6 As they pass through the Valley of Baca, They make it a spring; The rain also covers it with pools. 7 They go from strength to strength; Each one appears before God in Zion. 8 O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer; Give ear, O God of Jacob! Selah 9 O God, behold our shield, And look upon the face of Your anointed. 10 For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God Than dwell in the tents of wickedness. 11 For the Lord God is a sun and shield; The Lord will give grace and glory; No good thing will He withhold From those who walk uprightly. 12 O Lord of hosts, Blessed is the man who trusts in You!

The author of this psalm could not go to Jerusalem to celebrate one of the three annual feasts. These annual feasts reminded them that they were still pilgrims on this earth, as are God's people today. Though the author could not attend the feast he wanted to go, it didn't rob him of the blessings of fellowship with the Lord. What an attitude we can learn from this man!!!

This psalm can be divided neatly into three sections, 4 verses for each:

1) Blessed are those who dwell in Your house

Yes, we can worship the Lord anytime and anywhere because the Lord our God doesn't live in man-made buildings. We don't have to be in a certain place to adore Him, worship Him, and honor Him. But it is very important to get together with the fellow believers in the Lord to worship in unison in the corporate setting. By doing so, we can edify one another and admonish each other. Besides, it is a command from the Lord:

Hebrews 10:24-25 And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, 25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

I've learned that the frequent excuse, "I don't have to go to church to worship God" is the one by a typical lame believer who actually doesn't worship the Lord at all.

2) Blessed is the man whose strength is in You

Though this author was far away from the temple, his heart was there to worship the Lord.

Here is an interesting fact about "the Valley of Baca". It is nowhere identified in Scripture. The word "Baca" in Hebrews means "balsam tree," and the sap of this

tree oozes like tears. The “Valley of Baca” is a name for any difficult and painful place in life where everything seems hopeless and helpless, much like the “valley of the shadow of death” from Psalm 23.

3) Blessed is the man who trusts in You

At the beginning of this Psalm, we find the information about the unnamed author – a son of Korah. Do you remember Korah who rebelled against God and Moses and was slain by the Lord in Numbers 16? The family of Korah was a part of Levites who were assigned to guard the threshold of the sanctuary. This Levite author was not looking for a higher and better position, rather he was satisfied with his where he sat at the threshold of the temple, just to be close to the Lord.

To men and women of faith, the Lord is all they need. To them He is like the sun is to our earth – the source of light and life. Without the Lord, we can have neither physical nor spiritual life.

I like what Corrie ten Boom, a Dutch Christian Holocaust survivor who helped many Jews escape the Nazis during World War II said, “You may never know that Jesus is all you need, until Jesus is all you have.” How did she know? Because Jesus was all she had in the concentration camps.

1 Peter 5:10 But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.

Our Lord is the giving God. He gives grace and glory – His grace for our journey and glory at the end of the journey. By now, we should know that we don’t get everything we want from the Lord and we should be thankful for that.

Just as Corrie ten Boom said, Jesus is all we need, because He is the Provider for our protection and provision, and most of all, He is our Life.