

# 13

PSALM 79:1-13

## HOW LONG, LORD?



### THIS WEEK'S **focus**

Have you ever been going through something difficult and had a friend put her or his hand on your shoulder or send you a text asking, "What's really going on?" It shows that your friend cares and is eager to know the details of what you are going through. We all need friends like this. This week we will explore Psalm 79, a psalm that outlines some of the devastation God's people experienced. Through the psalmist's heartbreaking words, we will learn that we can bring our cares to the Lord during painful moments.



### CENTRAL **truth**

We can bring our cares to the Lord during painful times.



EXPLORE

# scripture

PSALM 79:1-13

## PSALM 79:1-4

*A psalm of Asaph.* **1** God, the nations have invaded your inheritance, desecrated your holy temple, and turned Jerusalem into ruins. **2** They gave the corpses of your servants to the birds of the sky for food, the flesh of your faithful ones to the beasts of

the earth. **3** They poured out their blood like water all around Jerusalem, and there was no one to bury them. **4** We have become an object of reproach to our neighbors, a source of mockery and ridicule to those around us.

## PSALM 79:5-8

**5** How long, Lord? Will you be angry forever? Will your jealousy keep burning like fire? **6** Pour out your wrath on the nations that don't acknowledge you, on the kingdoms that don't call on your name, **7** for they have

devoured Jacob and devastated his homeland. **8** Do not hold past iniquities against us; let your compassion come to us quickly, for we have become very weak.

## PSALM 79:9-13

**9** God of our salvation, help us, for the glory of your name. Rescue us and atone for our sins, for your name's sake. **10** Why should the nations ask, "Where is their God?" Before our eyes, let vengeance for the shed blood of your servants be known among the nations. **11** Let the groans of the prisoners reach you;

according to your great power, preserve those condemned to die. **12** Pay back sevenfold to our neighbors the reproach they have hurled at you, Lord. **13** Then we, your people, the sheep of your pasture, will thank you forever; we will declare your praise to generation after generation.

# 13

PSALM 79:1-13  
CONVERSATION

## questions

### ▶ READ PSALM 79:1-4.

**.01** Why do you think the psalmist emphasizes that the land, temple, and people are the Lord's?

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**.02** What can we learn from the psalmist's honesty before the Lord about the tragedy his people experienced?

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### ▶ READ PSALM 79:5-8.

**.03** What does the psalmist mean when he uses the phrase "How long, Lord?"

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### CULTURE

At this point in history, Israel was divided into a northern kingdom and a southern kingdom. The northern kingdom was devastated by Assyria, and the southern kingdom—Judah—was devastated by Babylon, a world superpower at that time. Judah's unfaithfulness to the Lord and moral corruption led to the Lord's judgment. Through prophets like Isaiah, Jeremiah, Micah, Zephaniah, Habakkuk, and Ezekiel, Judah was called to be faithful to the Lord and the coming judgment was forewarned. Despite the devastation they eventually experienced, God promised to extend grace to His people and eventually bring judgment upon Babylon (see Zeph. 3:11-20; Micah 2:12-13; Jer. 50).

**.04** What does it mean for the Lord to be jealous?  
How is it different than human jealousy?

**.05** What do the psalmist's words in verse 8 teach us  
about God's character?

**▶ READ PSALM 79:9-13.**

**.06** What type of help does the psalmist request from  
the Lord?

**.07** What does the taunt of the nations in  
verse 10 mean?

**.08** Why is it significant that this psalm ends on a  
note of hope?



## CONTEXT

In the title of this psalm, we learn that it is a psalm of Asaph. He was a Levite musician who David assigned to serve in the tabernacle until the temple was finished (see 1 Chron. 6:39).<sup>1</sup> In fact, Asaph was the father of a clan of musicians who continued to serve throughout the history of the temple.<sup>2</sup> Psalms 50 and 73–83 have Asaph included in their titles.

<sup>1</sup> Chad Brand et al., eds., "Asaph," in *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2003), Logos Bible Software version, 122.



# 13

PSALM 79:1-13  
NOW  
what?



## CENTRAL truth

We can bring our cares to the Lord during painful moments.

**.09** What is something difficult you are going through that we can pray for as a small group?

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**.10** Why is it important for us to know that God is both merciful and just?

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**.11** What are some ways we can practice honesty with the Lord in prayer?

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**.12** Who is someone suffering in our church community who we can encourage and serve?

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# DAILY devotions

## MEMORIZE PSALM 79:13

### 7 ARROWS FOR BIBLE READING



What does this passage say?



What does this passage tell us about God?



What did this passage mean to its original audience?



How does this passage change the way I relate to people?



What does this passage tell us about humans?



How does this passage prompt me to pray?



What does this passage demand of me?

day 1

## PSALM 79:1-4

### DWELL

Through the psalmist's cry to the Lord, we learn that foreign invaders—Babylon—defiled the Lord's temple, killed many people, and left Jerusalem in ruins. This defeat was utterly humiliating for God's people. While the descriptions of the devastation that God's people experienced in these verses are intense and horrific, they are also honest. Whatever it is we may be going through, we are challenged through the psalmist's words to be completely transparent and vulnerable with the Lord.



What type of devastation does the author describe in these verses?



How can the psalmist's honesty challenge the way you pray?

### MEMORIZE

Using colored pencils or pens, creatively write out Psalm 79:13 on a piece of paper. Read the verse out loud five times. Finally, try to say it out loud five times without looking, trying to picture it in your mind instead.

### PRAY

*Lord, thank You for being a God whom I can be honest with. Teach me to continually bring my burdens and cares to You.*



day 2

# PSALM 79:5-8

## DWELL

The psalmist acknowledges the Lord's righteous anger toward His people for their rebellion and appeals to the Lord's compassion. By breaking their covenant with the Lord, the people of Israel revealed that their allegiance was not truly to God alone—and He was provoked to jealous wrath. The psalmist not only asks the Lord to redirect His anger toward the foreign invaders, but he also asks for God to deal with them on the basis of His mercy rather than their sin against Him. We serve a God who is both just and merciful, and we can trust in His good character.

↑ What does this passage reveal about the Lord's character?

→ Think of someone you know who is suffering. How can you comfort this person with your presence and friendship this week?

## MEMORIZE

Type out Psalm 79:13 in the Notes app on your phone or another device. Take a screenshot of it and set it as your lock screen or wallpaper.

## PRAY

*Heavenly Father, thank You for being compassionate and just. By the Spirit's power, help me to reflect Your good character into the world.*

day 3

# PSALM 79:9-13

## DWELL

The psalmist rightly acknowledges that the Lord is the God of salvation, and he appeals to God for help. Not only did God's people need help after the destruction of Jerusalem—they needed His help with their sin. While the psalmist calls on God to deal with their enemies, the psalm ends not on a sorrowful note but on a note of hope. The Lord would remain faithful to His people; the Good Shepherd would not abandon His sheep. Whatever pain or heartbreak you're experiencing, know that the Lord is with you and will not abandon you.

↓ Why is it important that the psalmist ends this psalm on a note of hope?

↑ How have you experienced the Lord's care and provision during a difficult time?

## MEMORIZE

Set reminders on your phone to read Psalm 79:13 three times each day (such as in the morning, the afternoon, and the evening).

## PRAY

*Lord, You are the mighty Shepherd who cares for Your flock. Thank You for being with me and promising to never abandon me.*



day 4

# LAMENTATIONS

## 3:19-24

### DWELL

This passage reveals the depth and intensity of Jeremiah's grief. Yet, like the psalmist at the end of Psalm 79, the prophet resolves to have hope. Though his circumstances were tragic, Jeremiah proclaims that the Lord is faithful, and His mercy never ends. Amid whatever we're going through, we must be quick to remind ourselves of the Lord's good character.



How can Jeremiah's words give you words to pray during a difficult time?



Who is another believer whom you can rely on to remind you of God's character during a tough time?

### MEMORIZE

Say the book, chapter, and verse number for Psalm 79:13 out loud several times. Then read aloud just the first few words of the verse. Do this a few times a day and see if you can memorize more each time.

### PRAY

*Heavenly Father, because of who You are, I do not need to be gripped by fear or despair. In Christ, I have an unshakable hope.*

day 5

# 1 PETER

## 5:6-7

### DWELL

In this portion of his letter to believers, the apostle Peter teaches that all believers are called to show humility with one another and with God. True godly humility looks like depending on the Lord and casting our cares on Him. The sovereign Lord who is in control of all things cares about us and invites us to bring our burdens, concerns, and sorrow to Him.



Why do you think Peter placed this encouragement toward the end of his letter to these believers?



How can you make bringing your cares to the Lord a regular practice?

### MEMORIZE

Write down the first letter of each word of Psalm 79:13 on a note card. At least five times today, see if you can say the verse just by looking at the letters.

### PRAY

*Lord, help me to bring my burdens and cares to You in prayer. May Your care for me give me comfort through this day.*

