**November 29, 2022**

**BIBLE STUDY**

**Refuge Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ of the Apostolic Faith, Inc.**

25200 Sorrento Avenue, Sorrento, FL 32776; 352.383.5052

Web Site: [www.RefugeSorrento.com](http://www.RefugeSorrento.com)

**Elder Alfonzo Baptiste, Pastor**

**Bishop M. Ruel McCoy, Sr., Diocesan**

**ARISE, O GOD, PLEAD THINE OWN CAUSE**

**Psalms 74:1-23**

**{Maschil of Asaph.}**

***Psalms 74:1-2***

***1 “O God, why hast thou cast [us] off for ever? [why] doth thine anger smoke against the sheep of thy pasture?"***

***2 "Remember thy congregation, [which] thou hast purchased of old; the rod of thine inheritance, [which] thou hast redeemed; this mount Zion, wherein thou hast dwelt."***

The content of this psalm concerning the perpetual ruins of Jerusalem and the damage to the sanctuary indicates that it was written sometime after the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem (586 BC). By the opening expression, why have You rejected us? The psalmist did not mean that God had forsaken His people. Rather, he was describing his feelings in the midst of Israel’s affliction at the hands of their enemies. Despite his emotions, the psalmist had an unshakable conviction that Israel, the sheep of Your pasture, were always God’s people.

***Psalm 23:1 “The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.”***

***Psalm 100:3 “Know ye that the Lord he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.”***

Asaph prayed, Remember Your congregation, which You have purchased of old, Which You have redeemed. This is the same terminology used by Moses at the time of the exodus (Exodus 15:13-18) to describe God’s relationship with Israel, His inheritance (Psalms 28:9). He also asked the Lord to remember Mount Zion, where You have dwelt in the temple (2:6; 9:11). So many times, it appears that God has cast off the church and that He is not going to help. The sheep of thy pasture are the believers in Christ. The church seems to be going through one of those difficult times now. The faithful never give up, even when they are going through terrible problems. Their faith remains strong. The church {Zion} belongs to you, God. Jesus shed His precious blood to purchase the souls of the people. This is His inheritance. What is happening? God, please do not forget us. The plan from the foundation of the earth was that Jesus would come to this earth as Saviour and redeem His creation. Asaph is asking God, has He forgotten this? He urges God to remember both the congregation that he had redeemed and Mount Zion where he dwelled.

***Psalms 74:3-4***

***3 "Lift up thy feet unto the perpetual desolations; [even] all [that] the enemy hath done wickedly in the sanctuary."***

***4 "Thine enemies roar in the midst of thy congregations; they set up their ensigns [for] signs."***

The evil ones are not out in the world in this lesson. They are in the church. They are there to destroy the very structure of the church. We know that the devil, like a roaring lion, is going to and fro, seeking whom he may devour. This is saying the devil is on the pew with you at church. Signs of the times are everywhere. One of the signs is the Christian rock music in the church. Has the rock music joined the church, or has the church joined the rock music? Have we brought the world into the church? Have we turned our worship services into a time of entertainment? Would God examine our service and declare it holy? The wolf came in when the sheep were asleep. The signs of the enemy is everywhere.

***Psalms 74:5-7***

***5 "[A man] was famous according as he had lifted up axes upon the thick trees."***

***6 "But now they break down the carved work thereof at once with axes and hammers."***

***7 "They have cast fire into thy sanctuary, they have defiled [by casting down] the dwelling place of thy name to the ground."***

The sad thing in our society today is that the axe is not used in building. It is used in tearing down. In the name of social progress, buildings are being burned and looted. Are you sure this is progress, when we spend our time tearing down what someone else has constructed? The beautiful carved work that took hundreds of hours to produce is being torn down and replaced with concrete. Is this progress, or a society with no respect for beauty? Our young people, it seems, are tearing down the old establishment. In the Bible that is rebellion, not progress. We know that many of God's sanctuaries were destroyed by armies who conquered the land. There seems to be no end of this type problem. Many churches today have been burned to the ground. The invaders had smashed and burned God’s dwelling place.

***Psalms 74:8 "They said in their hearts, Let us destroy them together: they have burned up all the synagogues of God in the land."***

We see that the enemy of the church believes that the thing to do, is destroy their meeting place and thereby destroy their faith. They need to look at the history of the church. Throughout history, the growth of the church has been the greatest in time of persecution. When the Christians were forbidden access to the temple in Jerusalem, they scattered to the adjoining areas and started churches. Many of them met in people's homes. The church grew greatly during this time of persecution.

***Psalms 74:9 "We see not our signs: [there is] no more any prophet: neither [is there] among us any that knoweth how long."***

It was not long after the crucifixion of Jesus, that the temple in Jerusalem was destroyed. Perhaps, this is speaking prophetically of this, but it could, also, be speaking of now. This could be speaking of the famine of the Word of God that is being experienced now. It is very difficult to get people interested in true Bible study. The 34th chapter of Ezekiel, speaking prophetically of our time, speaks harshly of the shepherds. It speaks of the judgment of God which falls. There has begun, again, to be a move in much of the world for small groups to meet in homes, or even out in open fields. Many church buildings have been sold and used for purposes other than church. We need an awakening to the Word of God today in our land. We must get into God's Word and find out what the will of God is for our lives.

***Psalms 74:10 "O God, how long shall the adversary reproach? Shall the enemy blaspheme thy name for ever?"***

Just as Asaph asks here, how long will this go on, we must ask, too? The only chance for us is for the Word of God to sweep across our land and fill us with the knowledge of God. Our glass, or cup, is empty. We must let God fill our cup to overflowing with His Word and His Spirit and renew our faith in Him. The enemy can not steal the Word of God that you have stored away in your heart. Please get yourself a King James version of the Bible and study it every day. The reason I believe in this Bible is because, it was the first Bible widely used by the common people. Some of the new versions of the Bible are connected with the new age movement. Be careful reading them.

***Psalms 74:11 "Why withdrawest thou thy hand, even thy right hand? Pluck [it] out of thy bosom."***

The Right Hand of God is Jesus Christ. It may appear that Jesus has folded His arms and stopped helping us. This is not so. Jesus never walks away from any of us, we have walked away from Him. The seemingly inactivity of Jesus is because of our lack of time spent in prayer.

***Psalms 74:12 "For God [is] my King of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth."***

One of the good things about looking back to their faith of old is, the fact that God came through for them in their need. He did not fail them, and He will not fail us. Salvation is still offered to whosoever will. The falling off is on our part, not His.

***Psalms 74:13 "Thou didst divide the sea by thy strength: thou brakest the heads of the dragons in the waters."***

Now we see some remembrance of the deliverance by the Right Hand of God. The Red sea parted and delivered the Israelites, while the evil ones of Egypt were destroyed in this same sea. The dragons here are the warriors of Pharaoh.

***Psalms 74:14 "Thou brakest the heads of leviathan in pieces, [and] gavest him [to be] meat to the people inhabiting the wilderness."***

The birds of the air ate the drowned bodies of the Egyptians killed in the Red sea. I do not believe the people ate the bodies. This must mean that they spoiled the riches of the bodies that washed upon the shore.

***Psalms 74:15 "Thou didst cleave the fountain and the flood: thou driedst up mighty rivers."***

We know that when they stepped into the water with the ark of the covenant at the river Jordan, it parted like the Red sea. It seemed that the necessary thing to do to get the water to part, was to enter the edge with the ark.

***Joshua 3:13 "And it shall come to pass, as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests that bear the ark of the LORD, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of Jordan, [that] the waters of Jordan shall be cut off [from] the waters that come down from above; and they shall stand upon an heap."***

***Psalms 74:16-17***

***16 "The day [is] thine, the night also [is] thine: thou hast prepared the light and the sun."***

***17 "Thou hast set all the borders of the earth: thou hast made summer and winter."***

It was God that established an evening and a morning making up a day. Notice, that the Light and the sun are two different things. The Light of the world is Jesus Christ. He is the source of all Light. The sun is a fixture that we see light in. In the act of creation, the Word or the Right Hand, as mentioned here, set all the boundaries. When the moon was created, one of its jobs was for the changing of the seasons.

***Psalms 74:18 "Remember this, [that] the enemy hath reproached, O LORD, and [that] the foolish people have blasphemed thy name."***

For us to know who the foolish are, we would first have to know who the wise are. The beginning of wisdom is the fear of God. We see, then, that the foolish are those who do not fear God. Just before the return of the Lord, the evil will wax worse and worse. Using God's name in vain has become a daily affair with many.

***II Timothy 3:13 "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived." The third chapter of second Timothy is about the end time.***

***II Timothy 3:1 "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come."***

The description of this time continues in this chapter. Read it all. It is our time. The blaspheming of the name of God should tell us, if nothing else does.

***Psalms 74:19 "O deliver not the soul of thy turtledove unto the multitude [of the wicked]: forget not the congregation of thy poor for ever."***

A turtledove is harmless. The church is to be as harmless as a dove. We must remember that the enemy can not do anything to God's people without God's permission. judgment begins at the house of God. Has God allowed this to happen, to wake us up?

***Psalms 74:20-21***

***20 "Have respect unto the covenant: for the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty."***

***21 "O let not the oppressed return ashamed: let the poor and needy praise thy name."***

Asaph is reminding God of His covenant with Abraham. It is not God that has forgotten the covenant. It is God's people. That covenant had 2 sides to it. There were blessings, if the people obeyed God. There were curses, if they disobeyed God. It seems the whole world is almost dark today. The way to do away with darkness is turn on the Light. Christians, let your Light shine. Do away with the dark places.

***Matthew 5:16 "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."***

If we need God, cry out to Him. He never turns a deaf ear to His children. Before you call on Him, make sure He will not be ashamed to call you His child.

***Psalms 74:22-23***

***22 "Arise, O God, plead thine own cause: remember how the foolish man reproacheth thee daily."***

***23 "Forget not the voice of thine enemies: the tumult of those that rise up against thee increaseth continually."***

There will come a time when this very thing will happen, but it will be during the wrath of God. How horrible to be left here to live through such a terrible time: Every judgment that comes upon the people of the earth at that time is followed by, and they repented not. God will plead His cause with fire and wormwood for water. This will not be a pleasant time at all. In fact, the Bible says this time of trouble is worse than has ever been known upon this earth. Please awake while there is yet time. Don't wait until God has to plead His own case. Preachers, tell the people now, while there is still time to repent. Blow the warning on the trumpet. Don't sit back, knowing this is about to happen and not warn the people. Pray on the porch of the church. Get them into the kingdom, if you have to go and drag them out of the fire by their feet. Awake! America, judgment is coming. See the signs. Know that the enemy is a fierce opponent. Be ready to fight the good fight. Prepare for the battle. Learn the Word of God, so that when you open your mouth the two-edged sword will come flying out to divide the Word properly. There is tumult everywhere we look. Prepare for war. This is a holy war. Our weapon is the two-edged sword. This is the Word of God. Keep your powder dry. DO NOT WATER DOWN THE WORD OF GOD. Keep your weapon at your side. Put on the whole armour of God. Wear the knees of your garment out, by praying on your knees. Lay your life on the line for the army of God. We must not let the enemy win.

**QUESTIONS**

1. What does the Psalmist say, smokes against the sheep of the pasture?
2. Who are the sheep it is speaking of?
3. Who does Zion belong to?
4. What was the plan from the foundation of the earth for the church?
5. The devil, like a roaring lion, is going to and fro trying to do what?
6. What are some of the signs in the church that there are problems?
7. What is the axe used for now?
8. What is a sign of society with no respect for beauty?
9. How were many of the sanctuaries destroyed?
10. When is the greatest time of growth for the church?
11. What happened when the Christians were forbidden access to the temple in Jerusalem?
12. What chapter in Ezekiel speaks harshly of the shepherds?
13. The enemy can not steal the Word of God that is stored \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_.
14. Who is the Right Hand of God?
15. Why is Jesus seemingly inactive in our lives?
16. What is good about looking back at the faith of old?
17. Who established the evening and morning making a day?
18. Who is the Light of the world?
19. How can we do away with the darkness?
20. When will God plead His own cause?
21. Awake America \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is coming.