

Tehillim / Psalms 79 | ספר תהילים עט

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More about the Testimony, the Righteous, and the Unrighteous

In this week's study from *Tehillim / Psalms 79:1-13*, the psalm opens saying, א מְזִמּוֹר לְאַסָּף אֱלֹהִים בָּאוּ גוֹיִם | *A Psalm for Asaph. 79:1 O God, the nations have invaded Your inheritance; They have defiled Your holy temple; They have laid Jerusalem in ruins. (NASB)* This seems to be a description of the result of the Babylonian siege of the city and the Temple. Asaph continues saying, ב נָתַנוּ אֶת-נִבְלַת עֲבָדֶיךָ מֵאָכַל לְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם בְּשֵׁר חֲסִידֶיךָ לְחֵיתוֹ-אֲרָץ: ג שָׁפְכוּ דָמָם, ד הֵינּוּ חֲרָפָה לְשִׁכְנֵינוּ לְעַג וְקָלָס לְסִבִּיבוֹתֵינוּ: ה עַד-מָה יִהְיֶה תִּאֲנָף לְנִצָּח תִּבְעַר כְּמוֹ-אֵשׁ, ו שָׁפַף חֲמָתְךָ אֶל-הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יִדְעוּךָ וְעַל מַמְלְכוֹת אֲשֶׁר בְּשִׁמְךָ לֹא קָרְאוּ: ז כִּי-אָכַל אֶת-יַעֲקֹב וְאֶת-קִנְיָתְךָ: ח אֶל-תִּזְכֹּר-לָנוּ עֲוֹנוֹת רַאשֵׁינִים מִהֵר יִקְדְּמוּנוּ רַחֲמֶיךָ כִּי דְלוּנוּ מְאֹד: ט עֲזָרְנוּ, י לְמָה | יִאֲמְרוּ הַגּוֹיִם אֵיךָ אֱלֹהֵיהֶם יִנְדַע בְּגִיִּים [בְּגוֹיִם] לְעֵינֵינוּ נִקְמַת דָּם-עֲבָדֶיךָ, יא תִּבּוֹא לְפָנֶיךָ אֲנָקַת אֶסִיר כְּגֹדֶל זְרוּעֶךָ הוֹתֵר בְּנֵי תְמוֹתֶיךָ: יב וְהֵשֵׁב לְשִׁכְנֵינוּ שְׁבַעֲתִים אֶל-חֵיקֶם חֲרָפְתָם הַשְׁפוּךָ: יג יִצְאוּ מִרְעִיתֶךָ נוֹדָה לְךָ לְעוֹלָם לְדֹר וָדֹר נִסְפָּר תִּהְלֶתְךָ: יד אֲשֶׁר חֲרָפוּךָ אֲדַנְיָ: יוֹ אֲנִיחֵנוּ עִמָּךְ | *79:13 So we Your people and the sheep of Your pasture Will give thanks to You forever; To all generations we will tell of Your praise. (NASB)*

עברית	Hebrew	ארמי	Aramaic	ελληνικός	Greek
ספר תהלים פרק עט	ספר תהלים פרק עט	ספר טוביה פרק עט	ספר טוביה פרק עט	ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 79	ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 79
א מְזִמּוֹר לְאַסָּף אֱלֹהִים בָּאוּ גוֹיִם בְּנִחְלָתְךָ טְמְאוּ אֶת-הַיְכָל קִדְּשֶׁךָ שָׁמוּ אֶת-יְרוּשָׁלַם לְעֵיִם: ב נָתַנוּ אֶת-נִבְלַת עֲבָדֶיךָ מֵאָכַל לְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם בְּשֵׁר חֲסִידֶיךָ לְחֵיתוֹ-אֲרָץ: ג שָׁפְכוּ דָמָם כְּמִים סְבִיבוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַם וְאִין קוֹבֵר:	א תושבחה על ידי דאסף על חורבן בית מקדשא אמר ברוח נבואה אלהים עלין עמיא עממיאבאחסנתך סאיבו ית היכל קדשך שויאו ית ירושלם לצדו לצדו: ב יהבו ית גושמי עבדך למיכלא לעו- פא דשמיא בסר חסידך לחיות ארעא: ג שדון אדימהון היך מיא חזרנות ירושלם ולית דקביר: ד הוינא קלנא לשיבננא תולעבא וגוחכא לחזרניתנא:	א תושבחה על ידי דאסף על חורבן בית מקדשא אמר ברוח נבואה אלהים עלין עמיא עממיאבאחסנתך סאיבו ית היכל קדשך שויאו ית ירושלם לצדו לצדו: ב יהבו ית גושמי עבדך למיכלא לעו- פא דשמיא בסר חסידך לחיות ארעא: ג שדון אדימהון היך מיא חזרנות ירושלם ולית דקביר: ד הוינא קלנא לשיבננא תולעבא וגוחכא לחזרניתנא:	א תושבחה על ידי דאסף על חורבן בית מקדשא אמר ברוח נבואה אלהים עלין עמיא עממיאבאחסנתך סאיבו ית היכל קדשך שויאו ית ירושלם לצדו לצדו: ב יהבו ית גושמי עבדך למיכלא לעו- פא דשמיא בסר חסידך לחיות ארעא: ג שדון אדימהון היך מיא חזרנות ירושלם ולית דקביר: ד הוינא קלנא לשיבננא תולעבא וגוחכא לחזרניתנא:	79:1 ψαλμὸς τῷ Ασαφ ὁ θεὸς ἤλθοσαν ἔθνη εἰς τὴν κληρονομίαν σου ἐμίαναν τὸν ναὸν τὸν ἅγιόν σου ἔθεντο Ἱερουσαλημ εἰς ὄπωροφυλάκιον 79:2 ἔθεντο τὰ θνησιμαῖα τῶν δούλων σου βρώματα τοῖς πετεινοῖς τοῦ οὐρανοῦ τὰς σάρκας τῶν ὀσίων σου τοῖς θηρίοις τῆς γῆς 79:3 ἐξέχεαν τὸ αἷμα αὐτῶν ὡς ὕδωρ κύκλῳ Ἱερουσαλημ καὶ οὐκ ἦν ὁ θάπτων	79:1 ψαλμὸς τῷ Ασαφ ὁ θεὸς ἤλθοσαν ἔθνη εἰς τὴν κληρονομίαν σου ἐμίαναν τὸν ναὸν τὸν ἅγιόν σου ἔθεντο Ἱερουσαλημ εἰς ὄπωροφυλάκιον 79:2 ἔθεντο τὰ θνησιμαῖα τῶν δούλων σου βρώματα τοῖς πετεινοῖς τοῦ οὐρανοῦ τὰς σάρκας τῶν ὀσίων σου τοῖς θηρίοις τῆς γῆς 79:3 ἐξέχεαν τὸ αἷμα αὐτῶν ὡς ὕδωρ κύκλῳ Ἱερουσαλημ καὶ οὐκ ἦν ὁ θάπτων

<p>ד הַיְינּוּ חֲרָפָה לְשִׁכְנֵינוּ לַעַג וְקָלָס לְסִבִּיבוֹתֵינוּ: ה עַד-מָה יְהוָה תִּאָּנָּף לְנִצָּח תִּבְעַר כְּמוֹ-אֵשׁ קִנְאָתָּךְ: ו וְשָׁפָךְ חַמְתָּךְ אֶל-הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יִדְעוּךָ וְעַל מַמְלָכוֹת אֲשֶׁר בְּשִׁמְךָ לֹא קָרְאוּ: ז כִּי-אָכַל אֶת-יַעֲקֹב וְאֶת-נְוֵהוּ הַשְּׂמֹר: ח אֶל-תִּזְכֹּר-לָנוּ עֲוֹנוֹת רֵאשִׁימִים מִהָרָה יִקְדָּמוּנוּ רַחֲמֶיךָ כִּי דְלוֹנוּ מְאֹד: ט עֲזָרְנוּ אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׁעֵנוּ עַל-דָּבָר כְּבוֹד-שְׁמֶךָ וְהַצִּילָנוּ וְכִפֵּר עַל-חַטֹּאתֵינוּ לְמַעַן שְׁמֶךָ: י לְמָה יֵאמְרוּ הַגּוֹיִם אֵיךְ אֱלֹהֵיהֶם יִנְדַע בְּגִימִים [בְּגִימִים] לְעֵינֵינוּ נִקְמַת דָּם-עֲבָדֶיךָ הַשְּׁפוּךְ: יא תָּבוֹא לְפָנֶיךָ אֲנִיקַת אֲסִיר כְּגֹדֶל זְרוּעֶךָ הוֹתֵר בְּנֵי תְמוֹתָה: יב וְהִשָּׁב לְשִׁכְנֵינוּ שְׁבַע-תִּים אֶל-חִיקֶם חֲרָפְתֶם אֲשֶׁר חָרְפוּךָ אֲדַנִּי: יג וְאֲנַחְנוּ עִמָּךְ וְצֹאן מְרַעִי-תָּךְ נוֹדָה לָּךְ לְעוֹלָם לְדֹר וָדֹר נִסְפָּר תִּהְלָתָךְ:</p>	<p>ה עד אימתי יהוה תתקוף לעלמי תבער תתבער היך אשא טנניתך טננך: ו שדי חמתך על עממיא דלא חכימו יתך ועל מלכוותא די ארי בשמך לא צליאו: ז ארום גמרו ית בית יעקב וית בית מקדשיה אצ-דיאו: ח לא תדכר לנא עלוון עיווין דמן שירוויא בסרהוביא יקדמון לך טבוותך ארום איתמסכנא לחדא: ט סעיד יתנא אלהא פורקנא מטול איקר שמך ופרוק יתנא וכפר על חובנא בגלל שמך: י למה יימרון עמיא עממיא אן האן אלההון יתגלי בעמיא למחמ{נ} יינא פורענות אדם עבדך דאשתפיד: יא תיעול קדמך אנקתא דאסירי היך סוגי תקוף אד-רעך שרי בניא דמתמסרין למיתותא: יב ואתיב לשיבכנא על חד שבעה גומלא על פורענות קיימיהון וחיסודן די חסדו יתך יהוה: יג ואנחנא עמך ועאן רעייתך נודי קדמך לעלם דרי לדרי דריא נתני תושבחתך:</p>	<p>79:4 ἐγενήθημεν ὄνειδος τοῖς γείτοσιν ἡμῶν μυκτηρισμὸς καὶ χλευασμὸς τοῖς κύκλω ἡμῶν 79:5 ἕως πότε κύριε ὀργισθήσῃ εἰς τέλος ἐκκαυθήσεται ὡς πῦρ ὁ ζῆλός σου 79:6 ἔκχεον τὴν ὀργὴν σου ἐπὶ ἔθνη τὰ μὴ γινώσκοντά σε καὶ ἐπὶ βασιλείας αἱ τὸ ὄνομά σου οὐκ ἐπεκαλέσαντο 79:7 ὅτι κατέφαγον τὸν Ἰακώβ καὶ τὸν τόπον αὐτοῦ ἠρήμωσαν 79:8 μὴ μνησθῆς ἡμῶν ἀνομιῶν ἀρχαίων ταχὺ προκαταλαβέτωσαν ἡμᾶς οἱ οἰκτιρμοὶ σου ὅτι ἐπρωχέυσαμεν σφόδρα 79:9 βοήθησον ἡμῖν ὁ θεὸς ὁ σωτὴρ ἡμῶν ἕνεκα τῆς δόξης τοῦ ὀνόματός σου κύριε ῥῦσαι ἡμᾶς καὶ ἰλάσθητι ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις ἡμῶν ἕνεκα τοῦ ὀνόματός σου 79:10 μήποτε εἶπωσιν τὰ ἔθνη ποῦ ἐστὶν ὁ θεὸς αὐτῶν καὶ γνωσθήτω ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν ἐνώπιον τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν ἡμῶν ἢ ἐκδίκησις τοῦ αἵματος τῶν δούλων σου τοῦ ἐκκεχυμένου 79:11 εἰσελθάτω ἐνώπιόν σου ὁ στεναγμὸς τῶν πεπεδημένων κατὰ τὴν μεγαλωσύνην τοῦ βραχίονός σου περιποιήσαι τοὺς υἱοὺς τῶν τεθνατωμένων 79:12 ἀπόδος τοῖς γείτοσιν ἡμῶν ἑπταπλασίονα εἰς τὸν κόλπον αὐτῶν τὸν ὄνειδισμὸν αὐτῶν ὃν ὠνειδίσάν σε κύριε 79:13 ἡμεῖς δὲ λαός σου καὶ πρόβατα τῆς νομῆς σου ἀνθομολογησόμεθά σοι εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα εἰς γενεάν καὶ γενεάν ἐξαγγελοῦμεν τὴν αἰνεσίαν σου</p>
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<p>Tehillim / Psalms 79 A Psalm for Asaph. 79:1 O God, the nations have invaded Your inheritance; They have defiled Your holy temple; They have laid Jerusalem in ruins. 79:2 They have given the dead bodies of Your servants for food to the birds of the heavens, The flesh of Your godly ones to the beasts of the earth. 79:3 They have poured out their blood like water round about Jerusalem; And there was no one to bury them. 79:4 We have become a reproach to our neighbors, A scoffing and derision to those around us. 79:5 How long, O Lord? Will You be angry forever? Will Your jealousy burn like fire? 79:6 Pour out Your wrath upon the nations which do not know You, And upon the kingdoms which do not call upon Your name. 79:7 For they have devoured Jacob And laid waste his habitation. 79:8 Do not remember the iniquities of our forefathers against us; Let Your compassion come quickly to meet us, For we are brought very low. 79:9 Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of Your name; And deliver us and forgive our sins for Your name's sake. 79:10 Why should the nations say, 'Where is their God?' Let there be known among the nations in our sight, Vengeance for the blood of Your servants which has been shed. 79:11 Let the groaning of the prisoner come before You; According to the greatness of Your power preserve those who are doomed to die. 79:12 And return to our neighbors sevenfold into their bosom The reproach with which they have reproached You, O Lord. 79:13 So we Your people and the sheep of Your pasture Will give thanks to You forever; To all generations we will tell of Your praise. (NASB)</p>	<p>Toviyah / Psalms 79 79:1 A psalm composed by Asaph about the destruction of the Temple. He said in the spirit of prophecy: O God, the Gentiles are entering your inheritance; they have defiled your holy temple, they have made Jerusalem a desolation. 79:2 They have given the bodies of your servants to the birds of heaven for food, the flesh of your pious ones to the wild beasts. 79:3 They have poured out their blood like water around Jerusalem, and there is none to bury. 79:4 We have become a disgrace to our neighbors, a subject of scorn and mockery to our surroundings. 79:5 How long, O Lord, will you be fierce – forever? [How long] will your zeal burn like fire? 79:6 Pour out your wrath on the Gentiles who have not known you, and on the kingdoms who have not prayed in your name. 79:7 For they have destroyed the house of Jacob, and made desolate his sanctuary. 79:8 Do not remember against us trespasses which were from the beginning; in haste, may your favors go before us, for we have become very destitute. 79:9 Help us, O God our redemption, because of your glorious name; and redeem us, and atone for our sins, for the sake of your name. 79:10 Why should the Gentiles say, "Where is their God?" Let the punishment for the blood of your servants that has been spilled be revealed in our sight among the Gentiles. 79:11 Let the groan of the prisoners come before you like the great strength of your arm; release the children who have been handed over to death. 79:12 And give back to our neighbors a seven-fold requital for the punishment of their oaths, and the aspersions they cast on you, O Lord. 79:13 But we are your people, and the sheep of your pasture; we will give thanks in your presence forever; for all generations we will recite your praise. (EMC)</p>	<p>Psalmoi / Psalms 79 A Psalm for Asaph. 79:1 O God, the heathen are come into thine inheritance; they have polluted thy holy temple; they have made Jerusalem a storehouse of fruits. 79:2 They have given the dead bodies of thy servants to be food for the birds of the sky, the flesh of thy holy ones for the wild beasts of the earth. 79:3 They have shed their blood as water, round about Jerusalem; and there was none to bury them. 79:4 We are become a reproach to our neighbours, a scorn and derision to them that are round about us. 79:5 How long, O Lord? wilt thou be angry for ever? shall thy jealousy burn like fire? 79:6 Pour out thy wrath upon the heathen that have not known thee, and upon the kingdoms which have not called upon thy name. 79:7 For they have devoured Jacob, and laid his place waste. 79:8 Remember not our old transgressions; let thy tender mercies speedily prevent us; for we are greatly impoverished. 79:9 Help us, O God our Saviour; for the glory of thy name, O Lord, deliver us; and be merciful to our sins, for thy name's sake. 79:10 Lets haply they should say among the heathen, Where is their God? and let the avenging of thy servant's blood that has been shed be known among the heathen before our eyes. 79:11 Let the groaning of the prisoners come in before thee; according to the greatness of thine arm preserve the sons of the slain ones. 79:12 Repay to our neighbors sevenfold into their bosom their reproach, with which they have reproached thee, O Lord. 79:13 For we are thy people and the sheep of thy pasture; we will give thee thanks for ever; we will declare thy praise throughout all generations. (LXX)</p>
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א מְזֹמֹר לְאַסָּף אֱלֹהִים בָּאוּ | בְּנִחְלָתְךָ טְמְאוּ אֶת-הַיְכָל קִדְשְׁךָ שָׁמוּ אֶת-יְרוּשָׁלַם לְעֵינַיִם: *A Psalm for Asaph. 79:1 O God (אֱלֹהִים), the nations have invaded (בָּאוּ גוֹיִם) Your inheritance (בְּנִחְלָתְךָ); They have defiled (טְמְאוּ) Your holy temple (אֶת-הַיְכָל קִדְשְׁךָ); They have laid Jerusalem in ruins (אֶת-יְרוּשָׁלַם לְעֵינַיִם).* (NASB) We are told that this Psalm is composed by Asaph and he seems to be speaking to the Lord about what is taking place in Jerusalem. Note that the Aramaic Targum states, א תושבחה על ידי דאסף על חורבן בית מקדשא אמר ברוח נבואה אלהים עלין, *79:1 A psalm composed by Asaph*

about the destruction of the Temple. He said in the spirit of prophecy: O God, the Gentiles are entering your inheritance; they have defiled your holy temple, they have made Jerusalem a desolation. (EMC) The rabbis say specifically this psalm is a description of the result of the Babylonian siege of the city and the Temple. Notice how the nations are said to have come into God's inheritance and made the holy place to be unclean. The Apostolic Writings places great emphasis upon the "inheritance" just as we read the great emphasis that is shown in the Torah on the inheritance for God's people. As part of God's family, we share in the blessings of Abraham (*Galatians 4:7*). The Apostle Paul said the following in *Ephesians 1:18-23*.

Ephesians 1:18-23

1:18 I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, 1:19 and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might 1:20 which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places 1:21 far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. 1:22 And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, 1:23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all. (NASB)

Notice how Paul says "the riches of the glory of His inheritance IN the saints..." Paul describes the inheritance of the Messiah is in the saints, which is similar to Asaph's words speaking of God's inheritance in which the enemy has invaded. He also speaks of the power and authority the Lord God has placed in the name of Yeshua, and how the enemy has been defeated in the Messiah, all of these things are given to us as we abide in Him, the Messiah. Paul also tells us that as being part of the family of God, we are given "the riches of his grace (mercy) ... kindness ... patience ... glory ... wisdom ... and power " (*Ephesians 1:7, Romans 2:4, 9:23, 11:33, and Ephesians 3:16 and 2:4*). We also one day will receive eternal life and the Lord places His Spirit inside of us as a way to show His desire to dwell in our midst, that He will be our guide and will work in our lives to change us from the inside out. The inheritance the Lord provides us is priceless, it is righteous and pure, and nobody can take this inheritance from us, it cannot be destroyed by war or economic disaster.

Notice something from the rabbinic literature, the rabbis teach that what is given with love is sustained through love. For example, the dissemination of Torah through copying and remixing is endangered when its sources are co-modified and controlled by private interests.

Mishnah Avot 5:17

Whenever love depends upon something and it passes, then the love passes away too. But if love does not depend upon some ulterior interest then the love will never pass away. What is an example of the love which depended upon some material advantage? That of Amnon for Tamar. And what is an example of the love which did not depend upon some ulterior interest? That of David and Jonathan.

כָּל אֲהָבָה שֶׁהִיא תְלוּיָהּ בְּדָבָר , בְּטֵל דָּבָר , בְּטֵלָה אֲהָבָה . וְשֵׂאִינָהּ תְלוּיָהּ בְּדָבָר , אֵינָהּ בְּטֵלָה לְעוֹלָם .
 אִיזוֹ הִיא אֲהָבָה הַתְלוּיָהּ בְּדָבָר , זוֹ אֲהָבָת אִמְנוֹן וְתָמָר . וְשֵׂאִינָהּ תְלוּיָהּ בְּדָבָר , זוֹ אֲהָבַת דָּוִד וַיהוֹנָתָן :

Notice how they say that love should not be based upon an ulterior interest. The Lord does not have an ulterior interest, His love is pure for us and thus His blessings are for our benefit due to his mercy and grace. In addition, the transmission of Torah requires open uninterrupted channels for dissemination.

Olam, Netiv Hatorah 7:3.

If one studies Torah only for oneself, then they set a limit upon what they might uncover;

alone. And this is a shame, since the attribute of lovingkindness (hesed, grace) in Torah is without limit. Therefore, study Torah in order to teach others in order for the study to attach itself to hesed (grace).

אם לומד התורה שתהיה אצלו, בדבר זה יש גבול לתורה כאשר תהיה נמצאת אצלו בלבד, ואין ראוי שתקרא תורת חסד שהחסד מתפשט בלי גבול. וכאשר למוד התורה מתפשט לאחרים אז היא תורת חסד

Note the context of the Torah (התורה) and grace (חסד), in the sense that the one who studies Torah is not to keep it to one's self, the Torah is meant for sharing, and this is done within the attribute of lovingkindness (חסד, hesed, grace) towards others. These are important points since the purpose of studying God's word is for the purpose of grace, in the sense that what we learn we should share with others.

Asaph in his psalm appears to be describing to the Lord what is taking place in Jerusalem. He seems to be reminding God of what is taking place, as if He does not know what is happening saying, "O God, the heathen are come into thine inheritance" (*Tehillim / Psalm 74:2 and 78:62*). According to the Psalm, Israel is "God's inheritance" and that His holy temple has been defiled, made unclean (טמא) or impure. The Babylonians entered into the temple. Their setting their feet in the temple defiled the holy place. When one would go up to the temple to worship, he or she would separate themselves in Teshuvah, perform a mikvah in repentance, and seek the Lord in the humbleness of heart. The Babylonians do no such thing, they go up and defile the place with their blood stained hands and feet. They break in without reverence for the Lord and seize the temple treasures and ornaments (*Jeremiah 52:17-23*), and then set fire to that sacred place (*Jeremiah 52:13*). We are told that they laid *Jerusalem in ruins* (אַת-יְרוּשָׁלַם לְעֵיִים). This was done as prophesied according to *Jeremiah 9:11, 26:18, and Micah 3:12*, by the Babylonians.

Asaph continues saying, ב נַתַּנוּ אֶת-נִבְלַת עֲבָדֶיךָ מֵאֲכָל לְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם בְּשָׂר חֲסִידֶיךָ לְחֵיתוֹ-אֲרָץ: ג שָׁפְכוּ כַּמַּיִם סְבִיבוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַם וְאִין קוֹבֵר: *79:2 They have given the dead bodies of Your servants for food to the birds of the heavens, The flesh of Your godly ones to the beasts of the earth. 79:3 They have poured out their blood like water round about Jerusalem; And there was no one to bury them. (NASB)* He describes a great slaughter. Does the Lord God cause slaughter? In the Torah, the Lord commanded "Total War" in the sense that all of the people in the Land of Canaan were to be put to death (see *Devarim / Deuteronomy 7:1-2, 20:16-18*). This sort of command does not fit well with the Western concept of God being the sugar daddy in the sky (e.g. *the word of faith moment, name it and claim it theologies*). The command to kill all the Canaanite people seems to be at odds with the way in which the Torah describes the God of Israel as merciful, and long suffering. In the prophets and the writings, we learn of the Lord's profound care and concern for the poor, the oppressed, the down trodden, and the orphan, etc. The Lord demands justice, and seeks for the people to repent of their unjust ways so that He does not need to judge them. The prophet Ezekiel says in *33:11 I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his ways and live. (NASB)* Examples of this may be found in the Lord sending Jonah to a pagan city (Nineveh) because of His mercy and desire for men to repent. *John 4:11* states that "who do not know their right hand from their left," indicating their lack of understanding the ways of God. Another example may be taken from Parashat Vayera when the Lord took counsel in Abraham concerning Sodom and Gomorrah. *Bereshit / Genesis 18:25 Will you indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked? Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city. Will you then sweep away the place and not spare it for the fifty righteous who are in it? Far be it from you to do such a thing, to put the righteous to death with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Far be that from you! shall not the judge of all the earth do what is just? (KJV)* Abraham goes on to discuss with the Lord over 40, 30, 20, and 10 righteous men. The Lord God said for the sake of 10 righteous men He would not destroy that place. There was found only one (Lot) and that was questionable, the angels saving Lot may simply have been a function of Abraham's prayers for him and not because of his righteousness. Note that Lot is not mentioned in the Torah as being spiritually minded, outside of the fact that he left Ha-

ran and was traveling with Abram. There does not appear to be any spiritual aspect to Lot's traveling with Abram outside of the concept that he and Abram were good friends, though 2 Peter 2:7 states that Lot was a righteous man. This conclusion is drawn from the absence in the Torah of Lot being mentioned as having participated in the offerings Abram was bringing before the Lord. All of the encounters with God had been only between Abram and God. Abraham was in the process of connecting with God through prayer and the sacrificial system. Today we connect with our Father in heaven through His Son Yeshua the Messiah. When we pray in His name believing, our Father hears us. To be like Lot is to look towards the material and earthly things. To be like Abraham, place your faith in God's Messiah Yeshua, and start living for Him because in Him is everything we have been discussing thus far, we have the connection to heaven, we have the promises of God, we will be blessed, and we have the sweet fragrance of the atonement Yeshua provided on our behalf in the heavenly holy of holies!

In *Bereshit / Genesis 13:6*, we are told “*And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together; for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together.*” וְלֹא־נִשְׂאָ אֶתֶּם הָאָרֶץ לְשֹׁבְתָהּ: יְהִי־יְהִי כִּי־הָיָה רְכוּשָׁם רָב וְלֹא יָכֹלוּ לְשֹׁבְתָהּ יַחְדָּו: Here we are given a little more info about Lot. The Lord God had blessed Lot while he remained with Abram. We read that Abram gave Lot his choice to go wherever he wanted to and the narrative in the Torah states the following regarding Lot's choice.

Bereshit / Genesis 13:10-12

13:10 Lot lifted up his eyes and saw all the valley of the Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere this was before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt as you go to Zoar. 13:11 So Lot chose for himself all the valley of the Jordan, and Lot journeyed eastward. Thus they separated from each other. 13:12 Abram settled in the land of Canaan, while Lot settled in the cities of the valley, and moved his tents as far as Sodom. (NASB)

We are told that Lot traveled with Abram down into Egypt and back, and both of them become very wealthy in cattle. It might be that Abram being generous divided the cattle Pharaoh had given him with Lot because there simply was too much wealth for one man to handle. As a result, the land was unable to sustain them both and they agreed together that they would part ways. Notice how Lot did not consider the blessings the Lord God had given to Abram had passed to him as well while he was joined with Abram. The Torah concept here is in joining ourselves with Israel, we also will take part in the blessings of God. According to *Bereshit / Genesis 13:10-12*, Lot was more interested in wealth and the material things as opposed to faith in the Lord and spiritual things. Remember, there does not appear to be any spiritual aspect to Lot's traveling with Abram outside of the concept that he and Abram were good friends. The context of the psalm states that destruction comes by reason of the unrighteous in Israel and the pious ones, the righteous one got caught in God's wrath upon the sinful nation.

Notice here that the Psalm states, ב נִתְּנוּ אֶת־גְּבֹלַת עֶבְדֶיךָ מֵאֲכָל לְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם בְּשָׂר חֲסִידֶיךָ לְחִיתוֹ־אָרֶץ: *79:2 They have given the dead bodies of Your servants for food to the birds of the heavens, The flesh of Your godly ones to the beasts of the earth. 79:3 They have poured out their blood like water round about Jerusalem; And there was no one to bury them. (NASB)* Here Asaph states this is the slaughter of God's servants. The Aramaic Targum states, ב יִהְיוּ יַת גּוֹשְׁמֵי עֲבָדְךָ *79:2 לְמִיכְלָא לְעוֹפָא דְשַׁמַּיָא בְּסַר חֲסִידְךָ לְחִיּוֹת אַרְעָא: ג שְׂדוֹן אַדְמֵהוֹן הֵיךְ מִיָּא חֲזַרְנוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַם וְלִית דְּקַבֵּיר: 79:3 They have given the bodies of your servants to the birds of heaven for food, the flesh of your pious ones to the wild beasts. 79:3 They have poured out their blood like water around Jerusalem, and there is none to bury. (EMC)* The interesting point about the MT and the Targum translations is Asaph states the flesh of the godly ones, the flesh of the pious ones have been given to the beasts of the field. This suggests that the it is possible for the children of God to get caught in the wrath that is poured out upon the wicked. Do you think this is possible? This does seem to be possible when we consider Parashat Korach; Moshe instructed the people saying, in *Bamidbar / Numbers 16:23-35*,

Pour out Your wrath upon the nations which do not know You, And upon the kingdoms which do not call upon Your name. 79:7 For they have devoured Jacob And laid waste his habitation. (NASB) The Aramaic Targum states, ד הוינא קלנא לשיבבנא תולעבא וגוחכא לחזרנינא: ה עד אימתי יהוה תתקוף לעלמי תבער, תתבער היך אשא טנניתך טננד: ו שדי חימתך על עממיא דלא חכימו יתך ועל מלכוותא די ארי בשמך לא צליאו: 79:4 *We have become a disgrace to our neighbors, a subject of scorn and mockery to our surroundings. 79:5 How long, O Lord, will you be fierce – forever? [How long] will your zeal burn like fire? 79:6 Pour out your wrath on the Gentiles who have not known you, and on the kingdoms who have not prayed in your name. 79:7 For they have destroyed the house of Jacob, and made desolate his sanctuary. (EMC)* How does the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple mount, and of the entire nation cause Israel to become a reproach to their neighbors? He describes the “reproach” (חַרְפָּה) meaning “to scorn, or to have contempt” for someone saying that their neighbors use scoffing and derision as a way of describing Israel and more specifically, the God of Israel. Not only is Israel’s name being taken in vain, the Lord God in heaven also is being scoffed upon for the destruction of the nation. Asaph asks the Lord how long will He be angry with the sins of the people because he knows according to the Torah, as another psalmist declares in *Tehillim / Psalms 108:4-5* “For thy steadfast love is great above the heavens, thy faithfulness reaches to the clouds. Be exalted, O God, above the heavens! Let thy glory be over all the earth!” (NASB) Studying the Scriptures we know that judgment from God is delayed, often for very long periods of time, and as a result some suppose that it will never happen. Yet individuals who have experienced the judgment of God for the failure to correct sinful failings in their lives will testify that when God does judge sin He is both relentless and thorough. The prophet Isaiah (*Isaiah 28:21-29*) reveals God’s reluctance to judge his people, that is found in the Torah description of his long-suffering and patience (*Shemot / Exodus 34*).

Isaiah 28:21-29

28:21 For the Lord will rise up as at Mount Perazim, He will be stirred up as in the valley of Gibeon, To do His task, His unusual task, And to work His work, His extraordinary work. 28:22 And now do not carry on as scoffers, Or your fetters will be made stronger; For I have heard from the Lord God of hosts Of decisive destruction on all the earth. 28:23 Give ear and hear my voice, Listen and hear my words. 28:24 Does the farmer plow continually to plant seed? Does he continually turn and harrow the ground? 28:25 Does he not level its surface And sow dill and scatter cummin And plant wheat in rows, Barley in its place and rye within its area? 28:26 For his God instructs and teaches him properly. 28:27 For dill is not threshed with a threshing sledge, Nor is the cartwheel driven over cummin; But dill is beaten out with a rod, and cummin with a club. 28:28 Grain for bread is crushed, Indeed, he does not continue to thresh it forever. Because the wheel of his cart and his horses eventually damage it, He does not thresh it longer. 28:29 This also comes from the Lord of hosts, Who has made His counsel wonderful and His wisdom great. (NASB)

The parallel here is the different grains represent differing peoples within the nation who commit differing sins. Each person will be punished accordingly, based upon his sin in this world. The punishment however is not something that is forever, but only for a temporary time, for the purpose of separating out the most important part, which is paralleled to the separating of the wheat from the chaff. The process of punishment is meant to lead one to Teshuvah corresponding then to a change in one’s ways to follow and walk in God’s ways as opposed to what seems right on one’s own eyes. Solomon said in *Lamentations 3*, “Why should a living man complain, a man, about the punishment of his sins?” We should not complain but be thankful for the Lord’s chastening, because this is a sign of the Lord’s love for His people, and corresponds to the Lord’s supernatural attempts to draw us back to Him. If you are going through some sort of pain or hardship, I ask the question, “What have you learned about yourself, about the Lord in heaven, and about others?” The reason being, life is about serving the Lord and others, and we can learn a lot about ourselves in the process,

by our own attitudes towards the Lord and others.

ח אל-תִּזְכֹּר-לָנוּ עֲוֹנֹת רֵאשֵׁנִים מִיָּהָר יִקְדְּמוּנוּ רַחֲמֶיךָ כִּי דָלוּנוּ מְאֹד: ט עֲזְרֵנוּ | אֱלֹהֵי אֲשָׁפָה: 9:8 *Do not remember the iniquities of our forefathers against us; Let Your compassion come quickly to meet us, For we are brought very low. 79:9 Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of Your name; And deliver us and forgive our sins for Your name's sake. (NASB)* The Aramaic Targum states, ח לא תדכר לנא עלוון עיווין דמן שירוויא בסרהוביא יקדמון, ט סעיד יתנא אלהא פורקננא מטול איקר שמך ופרוק יתנא וכפר על חובנא לך טבוותך ארום איתמסכננא לחדא: ט עזרנו | אלהי אשפה: 79:8 *Do not remember against us trespasses which were from the beginning; in haste, may your favors go before us, for we have become very destitute. 79:9 Help us, O God our redemption, because of your glorious name; and redeem us, and atone for our sins, for the sake of your name. (EMC)* Notice how Asaph asks that the Lord to not remember the iniquities of our forefathers. Are the people paying for their fathers sins? Let's examine the Torah on this topic:

Do Children Suffer for Sins of their Fathers?

1. Yes, they do.

- (*Shemot / Exodus 20:5*) “You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me,”
- (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 5:9*) “You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, and on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me,”
- (*Shemot / Exodus 34:6-7*) “Then the Lord passed by in front of him and proclaimed, “The Lord, the Lord God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; 7who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations.”
- (*1 Corinthians 15:22*) “For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive.”

2. No, they don't.

- (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 24:16*) “Fathers shall not be put to death for their sons, nor shall sons be put to death for their fathers; everyone shall be put to death for his own sin.”
- (*Ezekiel 18:20*) “The person who sins will die. The son will not bear the punishment for the father's iniquity, nor will the father bear the punishment for the son's iniquity; the righteousness of the righteous will be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked will be upon himself.”

Shemot / Exodus 20:5 is among the Ten Commandments which are arranged in a particular way, (i) an introduction of who was making the covenant (*Shemot / Exodus 20:2*), (ii) what the covenant maker had done (*20:2*), (iii) the moral imperatives (commands, *20:3-17*), (iv) rewards (*20:6, 12*), and (v) punishments (*20:5, 7*). In the family unit, when the father misleads his family, the effects of that misleading are often felt for generations. This is because there is a spiritual unfaithfulness to God's Word, the children learn the ways

of their father and thus learn to be unfaithful in the covenant of God. This is exactly the situation in which these verses deal with the sins visited upon the children. If a father rejects the covenant of God and takes his family into sin, the rejection of God's covenant also brings the family along and the children will suffer the consequences, as the Scriptures state, often for several generations. This is not an issue of what is fair and unfair because the family also chooses to follow along with the father. The consequences of sin affect many generations. On the other hand, *Devarim / Deuteronomy 24:16* deals with legal matters as the context (24:6-19) shows, and *Ezekiel 18:20* is merely restating what is written in the Torah. Note how we are told that a person will die for their own sins, they will not die for someone else's sins, and the Lord God will visit upon the descendants of the rebellious generation the consequences of the rebellious fathers' sins. The delayed response is given so that everyone has an opportunity to repent and turn from their sins.

י לְמָה | יֵאמְרוּ הַגּוֹיִם אֵיךְ אֱלֹהֵיהֶם יִנְדַע בְּגוֹיִם [בְּגוֹיִם] לְעֵינֵינוּ נִקְמַת דָּם-עֲבָדֶיךָ, הַשְׁפוּדָה: יֵאָמְרוּ לְפָנֶיךָ אֲנִי אֶקְרָא אֶסִיר כְּגִדְלֵי זְרוּעֶךָ הוֹתֵר בְּנֵי תְמוֹתֶיךָ: יב וְהִשָּׁב לְשִׁכְנֵינוּ שְׂבָעֵתִים אֶל-חֵיקֶם חֲרָפְתָם לְמָה יִמְרוֹן עַמִּיא עַמִּיא אֵן הָאֵן אֱלֹהֵהוֹן יִתְגַּלִּי, 79:10 *Why should the nations say, 'Where is their God?' Let there be known among the nations in our sight, Vengeance for the blood of Your servants which has been shed. 79:11 Let the groaning of the prisoner come before You; According to the greatness of Your power preserve those who are doomed to die. 79:12 And return to our neighbors sevenfold into their bosom The reproach with which they have reproached You, O Lord. (NASB)* The Aramaic Targum states, בעמיי למחמ {נ} יינא פורענות אדם עבדך דאשתפיד: יא תיעול קדמך אנקתא דאסירי היך סוגי תקוף אדרעך שרי בניא דמתמסרין למיתותא: יב ואתיב לשיבבנא על חד שבעה גומלא על פורענות קיימיהון וחסודן די חסדו יתך

י לְמָה יִמְרוֹן עַמִּיא עַמִּיא אֵן הָאֵן אֱלֹהֵהוֹן יִתְגַּלִּי, 79:10 *Why should the Gentiles say, "Where is their God?" Let the punishment for the blood of your servants that has been spilled be revealed in our sight among the Gentiles. 79:11 Let the groan of the prisoners come before you like the great strength of your arm; release the children who have been handed over to death. 79:12 And give back to our neighbors a seven-fold requital for the punishment of their oaths, and the aspersions they cast on you, O Lord. (EMC)* The Septuagint states, 79:10 μήποτε εἶπωσιν τὰ ἔθνη ποῦ ἐστὶν ὁ θεὸς αὐτῶν καὶ γνωσθήτω ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν ἐνώπιον τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν ἡμῶν ἡ ἐκδίκησις τοῦ αἵματος τῶν δούλων σου τοῦ ἐκκεχυμένου 79:11 εἰσελθάτω ἐνώπιόν σου ὁ στεναγμὸς τῶν πεπεδημένων κατὰ τὴν μεγαλωσύνην τοῦ βραχίονός σου περιποίησαι τοὺς υἱοὺς τῶν τεθανατωμένων 79:12 ἀπόδος τοῖς γείτοσιν ἡμῶν ἑπταπλασίονα εἰς τὸν κόλπον αὐτῶν τὸν ὀνειδισμόν αὐτῶν ὃν ὀνειδίσαν σε κύριε 79:10 *Lets haply they should say among the heathen, Where is their God? and let the avenging of thy servant's blood that has been shed be known among the heathen before our eyes. 79:11 Let the groaning of the prisoners come in before thee; according to the greatness of thine arm preserve the sons of the slain ones. 79:12 Repay to our neighbours sevenfold into their bosom their reproach, with which they have reproached thee, O Lord. (LXX)* Asaph questions the nations claims that there is no God, or that the God of Israel does not exist. He then states "Let there be known among the nations in our sight" in the sense that the Lord will destroy those who do not believe in Him. Note how the rabbis translate this to say that the Lord will be revealed to the Gentiles in the sight of Israel for the sake of the blood of God's servants. Asaph asks for the requital (Targum) whereas the MT states asking the Lord to return to their neighbors sevenfold into their bosom. What is it that Asaph is asking to be returned? It is the reproach by which his neighbors gave to the Lord according to the Septuagint. The word "reproach" (חֲרָפְתָם) as a noun means "the expression of disapproval, disappointment, scorn." I mentioned earlier the one thing that we should ask ourselves when we are going through troubles, is "What have I learned?" The reason being is through the troubles we have, we can learn a lot about who we are, our attitude towards God, towards others, and towards our situation. We can learn how the Lord is working to draw us near to Him. We can learn about other people's attitudes towards us and towards God for His apparent slowness to respond to the situation, just as we are reading and learning about Asaph and his responses to the Lord's long-suffering.

יג וְאֲנַחְנוּ עִמָּךְ | וְצֹאן מְרֵעִיָתְךָ נוֹדָה לָּךְ לְעוֹלָם לְדָר וְדָר נִסְפָּר תְּהִלָּתְךָ: 79:13 *So we Your people and the sheep of Your pasture Will give thanks to You forever; To all generations we will tell of Your praise. (NASB)* The Aramaic Targum states, יג וּאֲנַחְנָא עִמָּךְ וְעֹאן רַעֲיִיתְךָ נוֹדֵי קְדַמְךָ לְעֵלַם דְּרֵי לְדָרֵי,

:דריא נתני תושבחתך: 79:13 *But we are your people, and the sheep of your pasture; we will give thanks in your presence forever; for all generations we will recite your praise. (EMC)* The Septuagint states, 79:13 ἡμεῖς δὲ λαός σου καὶ πρόβατα τῆς νομῆς σου ἀνθομολογησόμεθά σοι εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα εἰς γενεὰν καὶ γενεὰν ἐξαγγελοῦμεν τὴν αἶνεσίμ σου 79:13 *For we are thy people and the sheep of thy pasture; we will give thee thanks for ever; we will declare thy praise throughout all generations. (LXX)* The point Asaph may be making is with regard to the way in which the Lord works in our lives. He chastises us for the purpose of drawing us to Him, to repent, and to turn from our sins. We are to use the difficult times to share with our children how the Lord has worked in our lives for good, and to draw us back to Him. Looking back on our history, we recognize how the Lord has worked in our lives to sustain us and to keep us. It is in this way that what Asaph is saying is true, 79:13 ... *Your people and the sheep of Your pasture Will give thanks to You forever; To all generations we will tell of Your praise. (NASB)* And most importantly, how the Lord has provided for His people by sending His Son Yeshua the Messiah! Let's Pray!

Rabbinic Commentary

The Rabbinic Commentary (Midrash) on *Tehillim / Psalms 79* has 5 parts. Reading through the Midrash we will be looking at Part 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5. Let's begin by outlining *Midrash Tehillim Chapter 79, Parts 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5*.

Outline of Midrash Tehillim / Psalms, Chapter 79, Part 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5

Part 1

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying, “*A Psalm of Asaph. O God, the heathen are come into Your inheritance; they have defiled Your Holy Temple; they have laid Jerusalem in heaps (Tehillim / Psalms 79:1).*”
- The פתיחתא (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*These words are to be considered in the light of the verse The kings of the earth and all the inhabitants of the world would not have believed that the adversary and the enemy would have entered into the gates of Jerusalem (Lamentations 4:12).*”
- The משל (mashal) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the פתיחתא (Petihta), the rabbis begin with comments regarding the unbelievability of the enemy entering into Jerusalem.
- The נמשל (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the משל (mashal), the rabbis expand upon the mashal saying it was the Lord who raised up the Assyrian army and it was the Lord who struck the army down.
- The Concluding phrase says, “*When the men of Jerusalem provoked their Creator, the Holy One blessed be He, meant to bring up Nebuchadnezzar against them to destroy Jerusalem and banish Israel from the land, as is said, Behold, I will send and take Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, My servant (Jeremiah 43:10).*”

Part 2

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying, “*Rabbi Levi taught that for eighteen years a divine voice kept crying out in the house of Nebuchadnezzar, saying, Wicked servant, go up and destroy the house of your Master, for the children of your Master does not listen to Him.*”
- The פתיחתא (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*And Nebuchadnezzar was afraid to come up because he knew what had happened to Sennacherib in the days of Hezekiah, and he did not believe that the Holy One blessed be He, would destroy Jerusalem.*”

- The מִשָּׁל (mashal) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the פְּתִיחַתָּא (Petihta), the rabbis discuss the divine voice in which the king of Babylon did not listen to.
- The נִמְשָׁל (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the מִשָּׁל (mashal), the rabbis expand upon the mashal saying that the king of Babylon used divination to decide whether to attack Jerusalem or not.
- The Concluding phrase says, “*Behold, the enemies did come in and did defile Your Holy Place and did kill Your children, as is said, O God, the heathen are come into Your inheritance; they have defiled Your holy Temple, they have given the dead bodies of Your servants to be food unto the birds of the heaven (Tehillim / Psalms 79:1-2). Hence it is said, The kings of the earth would have entered into the gates of Jerusalem. (Lamentations 4:12)*”

Part 3

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דִּבּוּר הַמַּתְחִיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying, “*A Psalm of Asaph. O God, the heathen are come into Your inheritance (Tehillim / Psalms 79:1).*”
- The פְּתִיחַתָּא (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*But should Asaph have composed a Psalm of praise? Should it not have been a dirge?*”
- The מִשָּׁל (mashal) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the פְּתִיחַתָּא (Petihta), the rabbis comment upon the psalmist’s words to say shouldn’t this have been a dirge?
- The נִמְשָׁל (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the מִשָּׁל (mashal), the rabbis expand upon the mashal speaking of how David went up upon the mountain to lament in his psalm.
- The Concluding phrase says, “*He has poured out His fierce anger; and He has kindled a fire in Zion, and it has devoured the foundations thereof (Lamentations 4:11). Therefore, it is A Psalm of Asaph.*”

Part 4

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דִּבּוּר הַמַּתְחִיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying, “*The heathen are come into Your inheritance; they have defiled Your Holy Temple (Tehillim / Psalms 79:1)...*”
- The פְּתִיחַתָּא (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*Then, You did permit to come in.*”
- The מִשָּׁל (mashal) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the פְּתִיחַתָּא (Petihta), the rabbis comment upon the psalmist’s words with a discussion of the common man who draws near to the Tabernacle, and compares this to the two holy men who drew near (Nadav and Avihu) and they died, should not the heathen who draw near also die?
- The נִמְשָׁל (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the מִשָּׁל (mashal), the rabbis expand upon the mashal saying that these heathen men had permission to enter into the Tabernacle and not be destroyed..
- The Concluding phrase says, “*Thus, Scripture says, Then it will be, if the wicked men deserve to be beaten, that the judge will cause him to lie down, and to be beaten before his face, according to the measure of his wickedness, but goes on directly Lest your brother should be dishonored before your eyes (Devarim / Deuteronomy 25:2-3) that is, He was called a wicked man to begin with, but after he was beaten, behold, he is again your brother.*”

Part 5

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דִּבּוּר הַמַּתְחִיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying, “*Their blood have they shed like water (Tehillim / Psalms 79:3).*”
- The פְּתִיחַתָּא (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*The heathen shed Israel’s blood as if it were the blood of beasts, of which it is said, You may pour it out upon the earth as water (Devarim / Deuteronomy 12:16).*”
- The מִשָּׁל (mashal) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the פְּתִיחַתָּא (Petihta), the rabbis comment upon

the psalmist's words saying that the heathen slay-ed the people, they poured out their blood, and did not even allow their bones to be buried..

- The נמשל (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the משל (mashal), the rabbis expand upon the mashal and state that the Lord God in heaven makes the soul pay.
- The Concluding phrase says, “*No, still more to pay, for the heathen say that they offend not in what they do to us, as is said, All that found them have devoured them; and their adversaries said, We offend not because they have sinned against the Lord (Jeremiah 50:7).*”

Midrash Tehillim 79, Part 1 opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתהיל) saying, “*A Psalm of Asaph. O God, the heathen are come into Your inheritance; they have defiled Your Holy Temple; they have laid Jerusalem in heaps (Tehillim / Psalms 79:1).*” The homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*These words are to be considered in the light of the verse The kings of the earth and all the inhabitants of the world would not have believed that the adversary and the enemy would have entered into the gates of Jerusalem (Lamentations 4:12).*” The reason it was possible for the enemy to enter into the gates of Jerusalem, was because of the absence of justice that was encountered in Hezekiah's days and onward to Manasseh's reign (note Manasseh was the son of Hezekiah). According to the book of the Kings, Manasseh reversed the centralizing reforms of his father Hezekiah, and re-established the local shrines. The re-establishing of the local areas of worship to false gods may possibly have been for economic reasons with Assyria. He restored the worship of Baal, and Asherah (2 Kings 21) in the Temple and promoted the Assyrian cult throughout Judah. His reign may be described as reactionary in relation to his father's; and the book of 2 Kings suggests that he may have executed the supporters of his father's reforms. So Israel under the leadership of the king returned to their pagan worship, and the land was filled with injustice. In various places, in the rabbinic literature, the Chazal (חז"ל) note the great extent and severity of the idol worship during the period of Manasseh.

Talmud Yerushalmi Sanhedrin 10:2

Menasheh... did not forgo a single idolatrous practice in the world.

Talmud Bavli Sanhedrin 102b

Rav Ashi terminated the lecture at “Three Kings.” He said: “Tomorrow, we will commence with our colleagues.” [That night] Menasheh came and appeared to him in a dream, saying: “You have called us your colleagues and the colleagues of your father; now, from what part [of the bread] is [the piece for reciting] the ha-motzi to be taken?” He said to him: “I do not know.” He said to him: “You have not learned this, yet you call us your colleagues!” He said to him: “Teach it to me, and tomorrow I will teach it in your name at the session.” He said to him: “From the part that is baked into a crust.” He then asked him: “Since you are so wise, why did you worship idols?” he answered: “Were you there, you would have caught up the skirt of your garment and sped after me.” The next day he observed to the students: “We will commence with our teachers [so referring to the Three Kings].”

Talmud Bavli Sanhedrin 103b

Menasheh cut out the Divine Name [from the Torah], and broke down the altar:

Talmud Bavli Zevachim 61b

The fire that came down during the days of Shelomo did not depart until Menasheh came and caused it to leave.

There are many midrashim that emphasize Manasseh's actions were an attempt to bring God's resting of His Shekhina in Jerusalem to an end. So the question, “*Why do the rabbis say that all of the kings and inhabitants of the earth would not have believed the adversary and the enemy would enter the gates of Jeru-*

salem?” The reason was Israel had sinned and the Lord had removed His presence from their midst. The midrash continues saying the following:

Who would have believed that after the miracles which were wrought within her gates in the days of Sennacherib, Jerusalem would have been subdued by the might of her enemies. Think of the miracles of the past. After the troop of Amalek had come to Ziklag and burned it, and had taken captive everyone men, women, and children, that was in it, as soon as David came and found Ziklag burnt and her inhabitants taken captive, he sat down, he and his men, and wept. According to Scripture, what did David ask of the Holy One blessed be He? Should I pursue after this troop? Will I overtake them? And He answered him, Pursue, for you will surely overtake them, fall upon them, and strike them, as is said, And David struck them from the twilight even unto the evening of the next day (1 Samuel 30:17). (Midrash Tehillim 91, Pat 1)

The Lord destroyed an entire army (2 Kings 19:35 *Then it happened that night that the angel of the Lord went out and struck 185, 000 in the camp of the Assyrians; and when men rose early in the morning, behold, all of them were dead. 19:36 So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and returned home, and lived at Nineveh. 19:37 It came about as he was worshiping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer killed him with the sword; and they escaped into the land of Ararat. And Esarhaddon his son became king in his place. NASB*) and performed a great miracle destroying the army. Another story is paralleled to David returning and finding Ziklag destroyed and the men’s women and children taken. David sat, wept, and prayed, and the Lord enabled him and his men to overcome those who had taken them. In this manner of thinking, though the Lord has worked powerfully in the past, even in our own lives, and if we are involved in sin without repentance, the consequences will be that the enemy, the adversary will enter your gates and cause all kinds of trouble, hardships, and destruction.

The midrash continues saying the following:

This, Asa could not do. Therefore, he said to the Holy One blessed be He, Master of the universe, there is no strength in me to pursue Zerah the Ethiopian king. What did the Holy One blessed be He do? The Lord struck the Ethiopians before Asa (2 Chronicles 14:11). Jehoshaphat, too, stood up and said, Master of the universe, there is no strength in me to pursue them, or to make war against them; but we will wait here, and You pursue them until they are struck down. And so the Holy One blessed be He, did, as is said, And when they began in singing and praise, the Lord set ambushes against the children of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they struck one another (2 Chronicles 20:22). How did God bring this about? He clothed the armies of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir in mirror like brilliance, so that when they looked at one another they saw their own reflection; taking these reflections, however, for Israelites lying in ambush, they struck one another. When Sennacherib came, Hezekiah stood up and likewise said, There is no strength in me to pursue, or even to look upon battles. In the hour when I sleep on my couch, You wage our battles. The Holy One blessed be He, replied, This I will do for you. Sleep on your couch, and I will wage the battle. What does Scripture go on to say? And it came to pass that night, the angel of the Lord went forth, and struck the camp of the Assyrians five thousand one hundred and forty (2 Kings 19:35) and all these were governors, dukes, and marshals, in addition to their uncounted hosts. And many of their hosts had previously gone away. Our masters said, Only one out of every sixty remained, yet those that remained filled the Land of Israel, for it is said, the radial bone of his wings will be spread over the land (Isaiah 8:8); and the radial bone of a cock’s wing is but one sixtieth of the spread of his wings. All these Assyrians died. And how many were left alive? Rab said, Ten, for it is said, that a child may write them down (Isaiah 10:19). And what character does a child write most easily? The

Yod which stands for ten. Rabbi Eleazar said, Six, for it is said, That a child may write them down. And what character does a child write down most easily? The vav which stands for six. Rabbi Judah said, five, for the verse, Two...three berries in the top of the uppermost bough (Isaiah 17:6) proves that five of the Assyrians were left alive. Rabbi Tanhum and Rabbi Hiyya said, Nine of them were left alive, for the verse four...five in the branches, proves that there were nine. Rabbi Tanhum son of Hanilai said, fourteen, for in the verse, Two...three berries in the top of the uppermost bough, four...five in the branches of the fruitful tree, the words two...three prove that there were five; the words four...five prove that there were nine more; thus fourteen of them were left alive. And Nebuchadnezzar was one of them. (Midrash Tehillim 79, Part 1)

Other examples given are those for the Lord striking down the Ethiopian king (2 Chronicles 14:11), and the Lord caused Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir who had come against Judah to strike one another (2 Chronicles 20:22). The point of the midrash appears to be that the Lord raises up armies and the Lord is the One who is able to strike them down. Midrash Tehillim 79, Part 1 concludes saying, “*When the men of Jerusalem provoked their Creator, the Holy One blessed be He, meant to bring up Nebuchadnezzar against them to destroy Jerusalem and banish Israel from the land, as is said, Behold, I will send and take Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, My servant (Jeremiah 43:10).*” The Lord is able to raise up armies, but if the people repent and turn from their evil ways and return to the way of the Lord, God is able to send those armies away and to deliver His people. That is the significance of having a heart that seeks the Lord, and to repent, and turn from sin. These are the things we should be asking the Lord God to help us in doing, to live repentant lives, to be humble, to do justice, and to take care of the poor.

Midrash Tehillim 79, Part 2 opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתהיל) saying, “*Rabbi Levi taught that for eighteen years a divine voice kept crying out in the house of Nebuchadnezzar, saying, Wicked servant, go up and destroy the house of your Master, for the children of your Master does not listen to Him.*” The homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*And Nebuchadnezzar was afraid to come up because he knew what had happened to Sennacherib in the days of Hezekiah, and he did not believe that the Holy One blessed be He, would destroy Jerusalem.*” The rabbinic literature states Nebuchadnezzar, the “wicked one” (“*ha-rasha,*” *Talmud Bavli Meg. 11a, Hag. 13b, and Pes. 118a*), was a son or descendant of the Queen of Sheba by her marriage with Solomon, and a son-in-law of Sennacherib (*Targum to Isa. 10:32. Lam. Rabbah, Introduction, 23, says “a grandson”*), with whom he took part in the expedition of the Assyrians against Hezekiah, being one of the few who were not destroyed by the angels before Jerusalem (*Talmud Bavli Sanhedrin. 95b*). Nebuchadnezzar was merciless toward the conquered people. By his command the exiles on their way to Babylon were not allowed to stop even for a moment, as the king feared that they would pray during the respite granted them and that God would be willing to help them as soon as they repented (*Lamentations Rabbah 5:6, Pesik. Rabbah 28*). According to the midrash, Nebuchadnezzar did not feel safe until the exiles reached the Euphrates, the boundary-line of Babylon. Then he made a great feast on board his ship, while the princes of Judah lay chained and naked by the river. (*Pesik. Rabbah I, Midrash Tehillim 137, and Lamentations Rabbah 5:13*).

The entire midrash states the following:

מדרש תהלים פרק עט סימן ב

ב אמר ר' לוי שמונה עשרה שנה היתה בת קול מכרזת לתוך ביתו של נבוכדנצר ואומרת עבדא בישא סק וחריב ביתא דמרך, דבני מרך לא שמעין ליה, והיה מתיירא לעלות, לפי שהיה יודע מה שהגיע לסנחריב בימי חזקיה, ולא היה מאמין שהקב"ה מחריב את ירוש"ל, מה עשה עמד מקסם לידע אם לעלות אם לאו, שנאמר כי עמד מלך (לשם) בבל (על) [אל] אם הדרך (על) [בראש] שני הדרכים לקסם קסם [קלקל בחצים] [יחזקאל כא כו], מלמד שהיה זורק את החץ לשם אנטוכיא או לשם צור או לשם לודקיא, והיה החץ נשבר, וכשהיה יורה חץ לשם ירושלים לא נשבר והיה יודע שהיא עתידה להיות בידו חריבה, כיון שראה כן התחיל לומר לפני הקב"ה רבוננו של עולם מי האמין שיכנסו השונאין לירושלים ומחריבין אותה, ונכנסין למקום שלא היתה ברייה יכולה ליגע בה, הרי נכנסו השונאין וטמאו מקדשך, והרגו את בניך, שנאמר אלהים באו גוים בנחלתך [לכך נאמר לא האמינו מלכי ארץ (איכה ד יב)].

Midrash Tehillim 79, Part 2

2. Rabbi Levi taught that for eighteen years a divine voice kept crying out in the house of Nebuchadnezzar, saying, Wicked servant, go up and destroy the house of your Master; for the children of your Master does not listen to Him. And Nebuchadnezzar was afraid to come up because he knew what had happened to Sennacherib in the days of Hezekiah, and he did not believe that the Holy One blessed be He, would destroy Jerusalem. What did Nebuchadnezzar do? He set a diviner to find out whether he should go up or not, for it is said, The king of Babylon stands at the parting of the way, at the head of the two ways, to use divination; he shoots the arrow to and fro (Ezekiel 21:26). This verse teaches that when he shot the arrow in the direction of Antioch, or in the direction of Tyre, or in the direction of Laodicea, the arrow broke, but when he shot an arrow in the direction of Jerusalem, it did not break. Thus, he knew that Jerusalem would be destroyed by his hand. When he knew that Jerusalem would be destroyed by his hand. When he perceived this, he said at once to the Holy One blessed be He, Master of the universe, who would have believed that enemies would enter into Jerusalem and destroy it, could enter the very place which no mortal has ever been able to approach. Behold, the enemies did come in and did defile Your Holy Place and did kill Your children, as is said, O God, the heathen are come into Your inheritance; they have defiled Your holy Temple, they have given the dead bodies of Your servants to be food unto the birds of the heaven (Tehillim / Psalms 79:1-2). Hence it is said, The kings of the earth would have entered into the gates of Jerusalem. (Lamentations 4:12)

According to the midrash, Nebuchadnezzar was afraid to come up against Jerusalem because of what had happened to Sennacherib in the days of Hezekiah. So, he sought the advice of a diviner. “Divination” describes a variety of ritualized practices and/or observations in objects whereby a man aims to acquire a hidden knowledge encoded in nature or natural processes that are beyond human control. In the Near East, divination was systematized in Mesopotamia, in the Babylonian and Assyrian periods. Today, many people dabble in the mystical and the occult arts. The Scriptures take a clear position on this subject, strongly denouncing the practices of the occult. The Tanach condemns and forbids these practices several times (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 18:9-14, Isaiah 44:25, Jeremiah 27:9, 2 Kings 21:6, and 23:24*). Divination and spiritism were despised practices of the heathens (*Ezekiel 21:21, Isaiah 19:3, 1 Samuel 28*). Scripture says that one of the reasons King Saul died was “because he consulted a medium for guidance” rather than the Lord God in heaven (*1 Chronicles 10:13-14*). God’s Word indicates that these practices are the ways of evil and are rooted in tricks and deception which are designed to lead us astray. For example, although the Scriptures do not go into great detail concerning astrology, the Lord makes His position clear (*Jeremiah 10:2, 27:9-10, Daniel 2:1-4, 4:7, 5:7-9*). Astrology is an ancient gentile practice we should stay away from, both its beliefs and predictions. Our lives are not determined by the stars or movement of planets. It is also important to note how occult worship is often connected to and associated with the practice of worshiping the sun, moon and stars (*and the deities or demons associated with them*) (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 4:19, 17:2-5, 2 Kings 21:3-5, Zephaniah 1:5, Job 31:26-28, and Jeremiah 8:1-2*). The Bible strongly warns people not to consult mediums and spiritists for the truth, but to inquire of the Lord God in heaven (*Isaiah 8:19*). In the Scriptures we are provided with examples showing the folly and failures of those who claimed the ability to predict the future based on their own powers or those of spirits (see *Daniel 2:27*). The Lord God calls the word of diviners “nonsense,” “lies,” and “deception” for foolish people (*Ezekiel 13:8, Jeremiah 14:14, Isaiah 44:25*). The Lord said, “Woe to the foolish prophets who follow their own spirit and have seen nothing!” (*Ezekiel 13:3*). If an Israelite walked in the deceitful practice of being a medium, it was punishable by death (*Vayikra / Leviticus 20:27*). The presence of a medium or spiritist among God’s

people of Israel was also considered a defilement (*Vayikra / Leviticus 19:31*). These practices direct us to rely upon ourselves rather than to rely by faith in the One True God, the Creator, the Living God. This is how the heathen peoples walked and practiced their religions, and so Nebuchadnezzar did what he knew to do and consulted a lie, he chose to believe the lie rather than to trust in the voice that spoke crying out in his house to go up and destroy the children of Israel according to the Midrash. Note how the midrash describes the diviner attempting to provide an answer for Nebuchadnezzar, the midrash states, “*He set a diviner to find out whether he should go up or not, for it is said, The king of Babylon stands at the parting of the way, at the head of the two ways, to use divination; he shoots the arrow to and fro (Ezekiel 21:26).*” We are told how the divination worked, the midrash states, “*This verse teaches that when he shot the arrow in the direction of Antioch, or in the direction of Tyre, or in the direction of Laodicea, the arrow broke, but when he shot an arrow in the direction of Jerusalem, it did not break. Thus, he knew that Jerusalem would be destroyed by his hand. When he knew that Jerusalem would be destroyed by his hand.*” As can be seen the ridiculous nature of the interpretation of omens and signs. We are not to look to omens or “*signs*” to direct our lives. The Scriptures teach us not to be doing these things. The Torah states that these things are an “*abomination*” before God and is foolishness (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 18:10-12*). Look to the Lord God in heaven, His Messiah Yeshua, and His instructions for life as provided in the Torah, the Tanach, and the Apostolic Writings. To do otherwise is to foolishly deceive yourself, or allow the evil one and others to deceive you.

Midrash Tehillim 79, Part 2 concludes saying, “*Behold, the enemies did come in and did defile Your Holy Place and did kill Your children, as is said, O God, the heathen are come into Your inheritance; they have defiled Your holy Temple, they have given the dead bodies of Your servants to be food unto the birds of the heaven (Tehillim / Psalms 79:1-2). Hence it is said, The kings of the earth would have entered into the gates of Jerusalem. (Lamentations 4:12)*” The point is that the Lord raised up Nebuchadnezzar for the purpose of punishing His people due to their sins and specifically because they were unrepentant for their sins, meaning they did not seek the truth, they did not seek the Lord God in heaven, and they did not seek to turn from their sins. As a result, the Lord brought the kingdom from the north to defile and destroy, and give the dead bodies over as food to the birds of heaven.

Midrash Tehillim 79, Part 3 opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתהיל) saying, “*A Psalm of Asaph. O God, the heathen are come into Your inheritance (Tehillim / Psalms 79:1).*” The homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*But should Asaph have composed a Psalm of praise? Should it not have been a dirge?*” Why do you think the rabbis are asking whether Asaph should have composed a Psalm of praise when the heathen are come into the inheritance of God? May this be a reference to what Isaiah the prophet stated in *Isaiah 2:1-8*?

Isaiah 2:1-8

2:1 The word which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. 2:2 Now it will come about that In the last days The mountain of the house of the Lord Will be established as the chief of the mountains, And will be raised above the hills; And all the nations will stream to it. 2:3 And many peoples will come and say, ‘Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, To the house of the God of Jacob; That He may teach us concerning His ways And that we may walk in His paths.’ For the law will go forth from Zion And the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. 2:4 And He will judge between the nations, And will render decisions for many peoples; And they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, And never again will they learn war. 2:5 Come, house of Jacob, and let us walk in the light of the Lord. 2:6 For You have abandoned Your people, the house of Jacob, Because they are filled with influences from the east, And they are soothsayers like the Philistines, And they strike bargains with the children of foreigners. 2:7 Their land has also been filled with silver and gold And there is no end to their treasures; Their land has also been filled with horses And there is no end to their chariots. 2:8 Their land has also been filled with idols; They worship the work of their hands, That which their fingers have made. (NASB)

Notice how Isaiah states that the mountain of the house of the Lord will be established and all the nations will come to seek the Lord. Isaiah contrasts this with what is actually happening in the Land of Israel, how Jacob has abandoned the people, they have been influenced by eastern religions and soothsayers (the occult) and how the land is filled with idols. There seems to be a connection here to these things and the heathen coming into God's inheritance. Notice how the practices of the occult, idolatry, and adultery are connected to the heathen coming into the inheritance. The idea may be since God's people practice these things the nations practice, it is as an invitation for the nations to come into God's inheritance. When they are here, they have no respect for the kingdom, for holiness, or fear of the Lord and the holy place and so they destroy everything that is connected to the Lord God in heaven, and go against every command, statute, and moral imperative. The entire midrash states the following:

<p style="text-align: center;">מדרש תהלים פרק עט סימן ג</p> <p>ג מזמור לאסף אלהים באו גוים בנחלתך. וכן מזמור היה לו לומר, אינו אלא בכייה], וכן כיוצא בדבר אתה אומר ודוד עולה במעלה הזי- תים עולה ובוכה (ש"ב שמואל ב' טו ל), וכתוב מזמור לדוד בברחו (תהלים ג א), זהו שאמר הכתוב שמחה לצדיק עשות משפט (משלי כא טו), הצדיקים פורעין ומזמרין להקב"ה, וכן אמר אסף מזמור לאסף אלהים באו גוים וגו', משל למלך שהיה לו בן והיה קשה ולא היה שומע לו, מה עשה המלך, כיון שנתמלא חימה נכנס לחופתו של בנו והיה מחתך ומ- קרע ומשליך את הוילאות עד שנקרעו כולם והשליכן, אמר המלך לא יפה עשיתי שקרעתי חופתו של בני, ואני יכול לעשות יפה ממנה ולא הרגתיו בחמתי, שאם הרגתיו בן אחי היה יורשני, מוטב שירשני בני, כך אמר אסף לא יפה עשה הקב"ה שהפיג חמתו בעצים ובאבנים ולא בבניו, וכן הוא אומר כלה ה' את חמתו שפך חרון אפו ויצת אש בציון (איכה ד יא), לכך מזמור לאסף אלהים.</p>	<p>Midrash Tehillim 79, Part 3</p> <p>3. <i>A Psalm of Asaph. O God, the heathen are come into Your inheritance (Tehillim / Psalms 79:1). But should Asaph have composed a Psalm of praise? Should it not have been a dirge? Likewise, though you read, And David went up by the ascent of the Mount of Olives, and wept as he went up (2 Samuel 15:30), yet it is said, A Psalm of David, when he fled from Absalom his son (Tehillim / Psalms 3:1). Scripture says, however, It is a joy to the righteous to do judgment, they compose Psalms to the Holy One blessed be He. Hence, Asaph said, A Psalm of Asaph. O God, the heathen are come into Your inheritance, etc. A parable of a king with a son who was stubborn and would not obey. What did the king do? When he became filled with wrath, he went into his son's pavilion and cut and tore and threw about the hangings until they were all ripped to pieces, and then he flung them out. The king said, Have I not done well? I have torn apart my son's pavilion, I can make another pavilion more beautiful, but I have not slain my son in my wrath. Had I slain my son, my brother's son would be my heir. It is better that my own son be my heir. So, too, Asaph said, Did not the Holy One blessed be He, do well in venting His wrath upon the sticks and stones and not upon His children? As Scripture says, The Lord has accomplished His fury. He has poured out His fierce anger; and He has kindled a fire in Zion, and it has devoured the foundations thereof (Lamentations 4:11). Therefore, it is A Psalm of Asaph.</i></p>
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The rabbis speak of the type of psalm that should have been composed, and lead into the emotional response of David when he was forced to flee king Saul, and then lead into a parable of the righteous king and the unrighteous son. The king went in and destroyed the son's pavilion, cut, tore, and threw out everything, and then stated that he will rebuild the pavilion to be better, and that he did not kill his son in his wrath. It is important to note the mercy shown by the king who destroys the sinful objects, but not the son that he loves. The comparison is if he had killed his own son, his brothers son would become the heir, which may be a reference to the nations who have no part as heirs to the kingdom of God (e.g. Jacob and Esau).

Midrash Tehillim 79, Part 3 concludes saying, "As Scripture says, *The Lord has accomplished His fury. He has poured out His fierce anger; and He has kindled a fire in Zion, and it has devoured the foundations thereof (Lamentations 4:11). Therefore, it is A Psalm of Asaph.*" What does it mean that the Lord has kindled a fire in Zion which has devoured the foundations? To show the completeness of the destruction of the Temple mount. Fire is said to have devoured down to the very foundations of the what is True and Just. The

Lord's anger is said to have been poured out, and both men, women, children, and infants perish from thirst and hunger (*Lamentations 2:11-12*). In this Scripture the word פָּרַשׁ (*to break apart, disperse*) equals פָּרַס, (*to split up, divide*) as in *Micah 3:3*, which states to break down into pieces, to divide, this is what happened on the Temple mount, every rock was overturned and removed (*Isaiah 58:7, Jeremiah 16:7*).

Midrash Tehillim 79, Part 4 opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתחיל) saying, “*The heathen are come into Your inheritance; they have defiled Your Holy Temple (Tehillim / Psalms 79:1)...*” The homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*Then, You did permit to come in.*” The entire midrash states the following:

<p>מדרש תהלים פרק עט סימן ז</p> <p>ד באו גוים בנחלתך. הנחת אותם ליכ- נס ולא אמרת בתורתך והזר הקרב יומת (במדבר א נא), ולא הזר בלבד, אלא שני בני אהרן הקדושים נכנסו להקריב ונשרפו, וכן עוזיהו לא לכבודך נכנס, ומה היה בידו, לא קטורת להקטיר לפ- ניך, ויצא מצורע, ולא עוד אלא שרעשה הארץ, ואותם הערלים הנחתם שיכנסו, אמר לו נכנסו שלא ברשות לפיכך נג- עתי בהם, אבל אלו נכנסו ברשות ואני צויתים, שנאמר כי הנני קורא לכל מש- פחות ממלכות צפונה נאום ה' (ירמיה א טו), אמר הקב"ה מה עשו, שמו את ירושלים לעיים, ואני מחדשה, שנאמר תחת הנחושת אביא זהב [וגו'] (ישעיה ס יז), אמר לפניו רבונו של עולם הרי אתה מחדש את אלו, בניך שנהרגו מה תהא עליהם, שנאמר נתנו את נבלת עבדיך מאכל לעוף השמים בשר חסי- דים לחיתו ארץ (תהלים ע"ט פסוק ב), וכי חסידים היו והרי הוא אומר סוסים מזויינים משכים היו [וגו'] (ירמיה ה ח), אלא כיון שנעשה בהן דין, חסידים היו, וכן הוא אומר והיה אם בן הכות הרשע (דברים כה ב), וכתוב ונקלה אחיך לעיניך (שם שם דברים כ"ה ג), בתחלה נקרא רשע, ועכשיו כיון שלקה הרי הוא אחיך.</p>	<p>Midrash Tehillim 79, Part 4</p> <p>4. <i>The heathen are come into Your inheritance; they have defiled Your Holy Temple (Tehillim / Psalms 79:1), Then, You did permit to come in. But did You not say in Your Torah, The common man that draws near will be put to death (Bamidbar / Numbers 1:51)? And not only the common man; even when the two sons of Aaron, who were holy men, came into the sanctuary to bring offerings, they were consumed by fire. Likewise, Uzziah; did he not come into the sanctuary for Your honor? For what was in his hand? Was it not incense to burn before You? And he went forth a leper. No, more. The very earth quaked. But the uncircumcised ones, they You permitted to come unscathed into the Sanctuary. God replied, Asaph, the others came into it without permission, therefore I struck them. But these came into it with permission. I have commanded them to do so, as is said, For lo, I will call all the families of the kingdoms of the north, says the Lord; and they will come, and they will set everyone his throne at the entrance of the gates of Jerusalem. (Jeremiah 1:15) The Holy One blessed be He, said further to Asaph, what did the heathen do? They made Jerusalem into heaps. But I will set it up anew, as is said, For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver; etc. (Isaiah 60:17). Asaph asked god, Master of the Universe, the heaps You will renew, but Your children who were slain, what of them? The dead bodies of Your servants have they given to be food unto the fowls of heaven, the flesh of Your saints unto the beasts of the earth (Tehillim / Psalms 79:2). But were they saints? Behold, Scripture says of them, They were as fed horses in the morning, everyone one neighed after his neighbors wife (Jeremiah 5:8). Asaph meant, however, that once judgment was executed upon them, they became saints. Thus, Scripture says, Then it will be, if the wicked men deserve to be beaten, that the judge will cause him to lie down, and to be beaten before his face, according to the measure of his wickedness, but goes on directly Lest your brother should be dishonored before your eyes (Devarim / Deuteronomy 25:2-3) that is, He was called a wicked man to begin with, but after he was beaten, behold, he is again your brother.</i></p>
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The rabbis suggests that the heathen nations entering into the Land, into the inheritance, is the result of the Lord allowing them to do so. The midrash continues quoting from the Torah in *Bamidbar / Numbers 1:51* saying that the common man will die who draws near to the holy place. Even those who are set apart (e.g. Nadav and Avihu), who were holy men and who functioned in the service to the Lord were put to death,

they were consumed by fire. The idea put forth here is that those who have permission live, and those who do not have permission die. The midrash states that the Lord called out to the families of the north to come down. We are told that they will set up each man his throne at the gate to Jerusalem. In the Tanach, the word “gates” is used in various ways, (i) gates function as a defense of guard against enemies, (ii) the word gate refers to an entire city and to the rulers or army of a city. In *Devarim / Deuteronomy 16:5* it says ‘You are not allowed to sacrifice the Passover in any of your towns which the Lord your God is giving you; (NASB, ה לא :לך: (תוכל לזבח את-הפסח באחד שעריך אשר-יהנה אליהך נתן לך: where “gates” is translated as “towns” in the commandment to not sacrifice the Passover in any of your gates / towns which the Lord God is giving you. (Note *Devarim / Deuteronomy 17:2* shows a similar use). The City Gate is a Place of Power and Authority!

Parashat Vayishlach (*Bereshit / Genesis 32:3-36:43*) offers additional insights into the importance of the city gates. The Lord gives Jacob a new name “Israel” and Jacob returns and settles in Eretz Canaan. While in the land, Jacob settles down near the city of shechem (*Bereshit / Genesis 33:18*). Settling near Shechem, Shechem the son of Khamor sees Dina, the daughter of Jacob, and desires to take her as a wife. א ותצא דינה בת-לאה אשר ילדה ליעקב לראות בבנות הארץ: ב וירא אתה שכם בן-חמור החוי נשיא הארץ ויקח אתה וישכב אתה ויענה: ג ותדבק נפשו בדינה בת-יעקב ויאהב את-הנער וידבר על-לב הנער: ד ויאמר שכם אל-חמור אביו לאמר קח-לי את-הילדה הזאת לאשה: ה ויעקב שמע כי טמא את-דינה בתו ובניו היו את-מקנהו בשדה והחרש יעקב עד-באם: ו ויצא חמור אבי-שכם אל-יעקב לדבר אתו: ז ובני יעקב באו מן-השדה כשמעם ויתעצבו האנשים ויחר להם מאד כי נבלה עשה בישראל לשכב את-בת-יעקב וכן לא יעשה: ח וידבר חמור אתם: 34:1 Now Dinah the daughter of Leah, whom she had borne to Jacob, went out to visit the daughters of the land. 34:2 When Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, the prince of the land, saw her, he took her and lay with her by force. 34:3 He was deeply attracted to Dinah the daughter of Jacob, and he loved the girl and spoke tenderly to her. 34:4 So Shechem spoke to his father Hamor, saying, ‘Get me this young girl for a wife.’ 34:5 Now Jacob heard that he had defiled Dinah his daughter; but his sons were with his livestock in the field, so Jacob kept silent until they came in. 34:6 Then Hamor the father of Shechem went out to Jacob to speak with him. 34:7 Now the sons of Jacob came in from the field when they heard it; and the men were grieved, and they were very angry because he had done a disgraceful thing in Israel by lying with Jacob’s daughter, for such a thing ought not to be done. 34:8 But Hamor spoke with them, saying, ‘The soul of my son Shechem longs for your daughter; please give her to him in marriage. (NASB) The sons of Jacob tell Shechem and Khamor that if they are circumcised, they will exchange their sons and daughters and they will be one people. (*Bereshit / Genesis 34:13-16*) Hearing this, Khamor and his son Shechem go to the gate of the city and tell the men of the city what they want to do, to be circumcised. It is then written that all of the city agreed (*Bereshit / Genesis 34:24-26*) because they desired to acquire all of Israel’s wealth.

Bereshit / Genesis 34:24-26

34:24 All who went out of the gate of his city listened to Hamor and to his son Shechem, and every male was circumcised, all who went out of the gate of his city. 34:25 Now it came about on the third day, when they were in pain, that two of Jacob's sons, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brothers, each took his sword and came upon the city unawares, and killed every male. 34:26 They killed Hamor and his son Shechem with the edge of the sword, and took Dinah from Shechem's house, and went forth. (NASB)

ספר בראשית פרק לד

כד וישמעו אל-חמור ואל-שכם בנו כל-יצאי שער עירו וימלו כל-זכר כל-יצאי שער עירו: כה ויהי ביום השלישי בהיותם כאבים ויקחו שני-בני-יעקב שמעון ולוי אחי דינה איש חרב ויבאו על-העיר בטח ויהרגו כל-זכר: כו ואת-חמור ואת-שכם בנו הרגו לפי-חרב ויקחו את-דינה מבית שכם ויצאו:

The Torah reveals to us that sitting at the gate of the city, was known biblically as a place or position of power. The one who controls the gate is the one who has the power to allow someone in or out of the city. Sitting at the gates enabled one to know everything that is going on in the city, especially that of a walled city. These Scripture verses reveal the importance of the city gates. In God's Kingdom, the gate is the only way whereby we gain access into heaven or into a relationship with the Lord through the covenant. Yeshua said in *John 10:1* "I tell you the truth, the man who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber." (NIV) Yeshua then says in *John 10:9* "I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture." (NIV) and in *John 14:6* he answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. (NIV) In Parashat Vayishlach, all of the men who entered in and went out through the gate of the city must be circumcised according to the agreement. Similarly today, the Lord circumcises our hearts, along with the instruction from the Torah to circumcise our own hearts, meaning that we are to show forth the effort to draw near, to be humble, and to perform Teshuvah in order to enter in through the gates to the Kingdom of Heaven. This is accomplished by faith in God's gate keeper, Yeshua the Messiah! These Scriptures direct us to the true gate, the door, the way, the truth, and the life, the living word of God, the only way to the Lord our Father who is in heaven.

Another example may be taken from the book of *Ruth 3:11* which states, 'Now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you whatever you ask, for all my people in the city know that you are a woman of excellence. (NASB) equating "gate" with the "city." *Isaiah 14:31* also equates "gate" with "city." In these various instances the noun is used as a substitute for something with which it is closely associated. Take for example *Tehillim / Psalms 24:7* that states *24:7 Lift up your heads, O gates, And be lifted up, O ancient doors, That the King of glory may come in!* (NASB) whereas the LXX says "lift up your gates, O rulers." Here this appears to be a reference to our hearts as a gateway. The rulers of the city control the gates and therefore the gates refer to the city. In a parallel fashion, our hearts are the gateway to our soul and our spirit. The gate is the power and protection of a city. Keeping this in mind, we read the following in *Judges 16:1-3*.

Judges 16:1-3

16:1 Now Samson went to Gaza and saw a harlot there, and went in to her. 16:2 When it was told to the Gazites, saying, 'Samson has come here,' they surrounded the place and lay in wait for him all night at the gate of the city. And they kept silent all night, saying, 'Let us wait until the morning light, then we will kill him.' 16:3 Now Samson lay until midnight, and at midnight he arose and took hold of the doors of the city gate and the two posts and pulled them up along with the bars; then he put them on his shoulders and carried them up to the top of the mountain which is opposite Hebron. (NASB)

According to *Judges 16:1-3* the men of the city were laying in wait for Samson to kill him at the gate of the city which would illustrate the strength of the city. Samson then rose up at midnight and took the city gate and carried them to the top of the mountain. Samson was making a show of his strength that was in the Lord and how their strength was nothing compared to his. Another important point to note is the connection to the harlotry that Samson was involved with in Delilah, and how Midrash Tehillim 79 Part 4 connects adultery to the gate. The midrash states, "The dead bodies of Your servants have they given to be food unto the fowls of heaven, the flesh of Your saints unto the beasts of the earth (*Tehillim / Psalms 79:2*). But were they saints? Behold, Scripture says of them, They were as fed horses in the morning, everyone one neighed after his neighbors wife (*Jeremiah 5:8*)." The Lord destroyed the wicked servants because they behaved as neighing horses, each man after his neighbors wife. They were living in sexual sin. The heart that functions as a gateway to our soul and spirit, needs to be guarded against sexual sin and lust.

Midrash Tehillim 79, Part 4 concludes saying, "Thus, Scripture says, Then it will be, if the wicked men deserve to be beaten, that the judge will cause him to lie down, and to be beaten before his face, according to the measure of his wickedness, but goes on directly Lest your brother should be dishonored before your eyes (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 25:2-3*) that is, He was called a wicked man to begin with, but after he was

beaten, behold, he is again your brother.” Why is a man called wicked before he was beaten, and then a brother afterwards? Are repentance and turning from evil involved? The idea may be that this man committed crimes that required punishment, and in this case lashes with the whip. Afterwards, the man is returned to his family, and in the sense of “*being a brother,*” he is restored to the community and not degraded before the eyes of the community. The whipping should have taught him not to commit the crime again since we do not commit crimes against our families, at least if we love one another, that will not happen.

Midrash Tehillim 79, Part 5 opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתחיל) saying, “*Their blood have they shed like water (Tehillim / Psalms 79:3).*” The homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*The heathen shed Israel’s blood as if it were the blood of beasts, of which it is said, You may pour it out upon the earth as water (Devarim / Deuteronomy 12:16).*” The entire midrash states the following:

<p>מדרש תהלים פרק עט סימן ה</p> <p>ה שפכו דם כמים. כדם בהמה, שנאמר על הארץ תשפכנו כמים (דברים יב יו). סביבות ירושלים ואין קובר. להודיעך שאפילו העצמות לא הניחו לקבור, בשר ודם חייב לחבירו מאה מנה, אמר לו תן לי מעותי, אמר לו אין לי, מה יש לעשות הולך לו, אבל הקב"ה אינו כן, אלא גובה מן הנפש, יצאה הנפש גובה מן הבשר, וכה"א מנפש ועד בשר יכלה (ישעיה י יח), אין לו נפש ולא בשר גובה מן העצמות, שנאמר בעת ההיא נאם ה' יוציאו את עצמות מלכי יהודה [וגו'] (ירמיה ח א), ולא עוד אלא שמ"ה חרפין אותנו, שנאמר היינו חרפה לש"כנינו (תהלים ע"ט פסוק ד), ולא עוד אלא שהן אומרים לא נאשם עליהם, שנאמר אמרו לא נאשם (ירמיה נ ז).</p>	<p>Midrash Tehillim 79, Part 5</p> <p>5. <i>Their blood have they shed like water (Tehillim / Psalms 79:3). The heathen shed Israel’s blood as if it were the blood of beasts, of which it is said, You may pour it out upon the earth as water (Devarim / Deuteronomy 12:16). And the words round about Jerusalem; and there was none to bury them, tell you that the heathen did not permit even the bones to be buried. When a mortal owes one hundred minas to his friend, and his friend says, Give me my money, and he answers, I have no money, what is there for his friend to do? He must go along. Not so the Holy One blessed be He. He makes the soul pay. When the soul goes forth, He makes the body pay, as is said, He will consume both soul and body (Isaiah 10:18). When there is neither soul nor body, He makes the bones pay, as is said, At that time, says the Lord, they will bring out the bones of the kings of Judah and the bones of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, out of their graves (Jeremiah 8:1). No, to pay even more, for the heathen taunt us, as is said, We are become a taunt to our neighbors, a scorn and derision to them that are round about us (Tehillim / Psalms 79:4). No, still more to pay, for the heathen say that they offend not in what they do to us, as is said, All that found them have devoured them; and their adversaries said, We offend not because they have sinned against the Lord (Jeremiah 50:7).</i></p>
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The rabbis open with comments on the blood of men being poured out like the blood of animals on the earth, and say that the heathen shed the blood of the men of Israel like that of the beasts of the field. The midrash states that the heathen do not allow the bones to be buried. The idea here is that the land is defiled if the dead are not buried. Thinking about the history of the heathen nations, for example, in the history of the Mongols, when they would conquer cities and peoples, they would create separate piles of heads of men, women and children and the severed heads were piled into pyramids; and even cats and dogs were killed in the streets. The point of doing such things was to demoralize the people and to place fear in the hearts of the people and the nation. The decaying heads, flesh, and bones functioned to defile the land.

The comments on the war and blood being poured out are placed in contrast to a man owing money to his brother. When his friend asks to be paid, and the man is unable to pay, his friend can only go along and wait for his friend to pay. The Lord God in heaven however has no such restriction, the Lord makes the soul pay. When the soul leaves the body, the Lord makes both pay for sins. This is why the Scriptures state in *1 Corinthians 6:20 For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.* (NASB, ἠγοράσθητε γὰρ τιμῆς: δοξάσατε δὴ τὸν θεὸν ἐν τῷ σώματι ὑμῶν.) Here we are told “*egorasthete*” ἠγοράσθητε, “*that you are bought,*” and “*times*” τιμῆς, “*at a price,*” and this price was to pay for the alienation that occurs between man and God because of sin. Yeshua paid the price for us to redeem us from

our sins and restore the relationship with our Father in heaven that we once had lost. The Midrash says that when there is neither soul or body to make payment, the Lord makes the bones pay (אין לו נפש ולא בשר) (גובה מן העצמות). The midrash suggests that the bones are brought out and mocked. What is interesting is the use of the word העצמות and the root word עצם can have the meaning “bone, a thing or object, or the essence of something.” The idea here is that when the living have nothing more to pay, the very essence of who they were is brought out and mocked.

Midrash Tehillim 79, Part 5 closes saying, “No, still more to pay, for the heathen say that they offend not in what they do to us, as is said, All that found them have devoured them; and their adversaries said, We offend not because they have sinned against the Lord (Jeremiah 50:7).” The midrash closes with the fault of these things not being laid upon Babylon, but upon those who have sinned. The Lord brought these things because of the extent of, and the long lasting nature of the sin of the nation of Israel. They had plenty of time to repent and turn from their sins. Today we are being given time to repent of our sins and to believe in the Messiah Yeshua, to have faith in the payment that he made on our behalf. Time is ticking, if you are waiting to make a decision about Yeshua, do not wait too long, because we do not know how long we have in this world. And if you are taken out of this world without accepting the gift of redemption from Yeshua, that would be a great loss, because payment is required, and according to the midrash, without a ransom unto God, payment will come by the way of the body and the soul! Let’s Pray!

Heavenly Father,

We thank you for the mercies you show us every day. Lord we recognize that the Scriptures were given as a way to remember your great and mighty work in our lives. Thank You for sustaining and keeping us so that we are able to look back on our lives and see how You have been working. We ask for help, strength, and the resolve to live with the expectant hope that you are present in our lives. We thank You for the promises You have made and Your continued faithfulness. Help us to keep our feet on the path of righteousness and truth according to Your Word, and also to have the desire to walk in Your ways. Thank You for giving us the faith to believe in Yeshua the Messiah and for always calling our hearts back to You Lord! Please have mercy on us, forgive us for our sins. We thank You Lord for sending Your son Yeshua that we may enter into the covenant of peace that You have promised to Your people. Help us to grow in our faith, to walk in the spirit, and apply these truths to our lives. We praise Your Holy Name and give You all of the honor, and the glory, and the praise forever and ever.

In Yeshua’s (Jesus’) Name we pray! Amen!

Be Blessed in Yeshua, Christ our Messiah!

הללויה לאדוננו מורנו ורבינו ישוע מלך המשיח לעולם ועד:
Hallelujah for our Lord, our Teacher, our Rabbi,
“Yeshua” King Messiah forever and ever

Notes