

Psalm 79

Author: Asaph

The Israelites are witnessing complete devastation of their homeland. The unthinkable has happened. The city has been reduced to rubble and the Temple turned to ashes.

“How long?” Asaph asks the Lord. “How long will you let this go on?”

70 years. Yes, the Israelites’ devastation would continue for 70 years. So many years of destruction is hard to imagine, but it was not without years of warning. The warnings were ignored, even mocked. Though God did not owe His children any advance notice, His love compelled Him to give them chances to repent.

Their hearts, cold and distant, had turned to the fiery pull of other gods. The once devoted children were now rebellious to His word and resistant to warnings. We want to profit from their loss, learn from their mistakes, and answer the burning question, “How come?”

How Come?

How could this have happened? To answer our burning question we are going to park in the book of Jeremiah. Jeremiah loved his people and his land. He had the very challenging task of facing his people with the truth of their idolatry and disobedience. Some job, huh? It is better that the truth come from one who loves us than one who doesn’t.

Mistake 1

Read Jeremiah 2:11b.

What mistake did God’s people make?

Our world is terribly enticing and contrary to God’s ways. It offers fast and now, while God asks us to wait and see. With its shouts of “It’s all about you”, we can barely hear the Spirit’s whisper, “It’s all about me.” Everything is wrapped beautifully with perfect teeth, thin bodies, fast cars, lavish homes, and growing careers. The price is too high! We can’t afford to exchange God’s glory for worthless idols.

Read Exodus 20:1. Write the verse below.

The Sunday School answer is, “Of course I don’t have idols. I worship only God.” That is the exact lie I told myself until I learned that an idol is any person or thing regarded with blind admiration, adoration, or devotion. Girls, we forfeit God’s glory in our lives when we give admiration, adoration, or devotion to someone or something other than Him. When we surrender our idols, we receive His power and glory. Not a bad exchange, huh?

Check our Jeremiah 2:25 for a quick word on how *not* to respond to God’s graceful warnings.

The pull of false gods can be so strong that we believe we *must* run after them (Jer. 2:25).

Mistake 2

Read Jeremiah 2:23

How did the Israelites respond to Jeremiah's accusations?

Denial is dangerous and disrupts our intimacy with God. We can exchange needless distress by simply acknowledging and confessing our sin. His forgiveness blankets our soul with an inexplicable peace, leaving us wondering why we did not confess sooner.

Mistake 3

Read Jeremiah 6:19

What was rejected? _____

We show contempt for God when we refuse to listen and obey His Word. In doing so, we invite the consequences of our disobedience into our life. Oh friend, God's Word has the power to heal, teach, and train (2 Tim.3:16-17). As we accept and obey His Word we are given the power to accomplish the impossible and the grace to give Him the glory.

Mistake 4

Read Jeremiah 7:23

What simple two-word command did God give? _____

Simple yet complex: obey me. All God wanted and still wants is our obedience. Not because He is bossy, but because He knows best. When we obey God, we exchange the insecurity of our free will for the security of His.

"How come" boils down to obedience. Had the Israelites obeyed God, they would not have exchanged God's glory for idols, freedom of forgiveness for the distress of denial, or the wise counsel of His Word for the destruction brought on by their own choices.

Studying this lesson has been as ghastly as standing in front of a full-length mirror completely naked. But God's truth will cover nakedness with robes of righteousness and clothe shame with grace. These new clothes never wear out, go out of style, and we can't ever outgrow them. Now that good news gives this woman great hope!