

Psalm 78:56-72

Part 1

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[00:00:00] Verse 56, at the end, Psalm 76, the first word, the opening of the Episcopal Hebrews, that begins with the great name, that begins with God, and that's to command the attention, our attention of course with textual literature, a course that we have read, and really I don't want to go beyond the first two chapters of Hebrews, I don't want to anticipate the readings so much as to follow, but to confine ourselves to where we began this morning. And so the great consideration is God himself, and surely that must be so, in the light of [00:01:09] human failure, and particularly so in this nation of Israel.

And in a psalm like this, this is the psalm which draws attention. The time when God took the world, brought out Egypt, the wilderness, and even the land, its very significance, and the great failure of this nation, really, in consequence, was in the land.

That's a very powerful thing. To be brought into the privileges, divine power, under divine leadership, and in the land, the land flowing with milk and honey, there was their single failure. [00:02:06] They had fail in the wilderness. I suppose they had their first sin invented in the golden calf. And that, governmentally, had its consequences. These things are taken up, and I believe the emphasis in taking it up is to show divine resource in the presence of human failure, uniform failure, under all conditions, that still there is divine resource. Going back to the time of God's sovereign choice in Abraham, this helps us to understand this. And this is what is taken up. I said I wanted to go back to 2nd chapter of Hebrews, but here I'm alluding to 6th chapter.

And here we have God's word of His own.

And of course, there are the unconditional promises that were made to Abraham, depending [00:03:08] solely on God himself. And this time tells us that subsequently, as they were under the law that they ascended to the kingdom of God. And this is what we see. That all the aspects of things, as far as the fulfillment of the promises, I told you at 9, in that they were made subject to their obedience.

The land and life would be subject to their obedience. And so the whole history of history lives on those terms to emphasize that when it depends upon man, there's nothing assured.

And this is the history.

This is the triumph, the time of probation.

[00:04:02] And every one of us should learn a lesson from this. We may suppose, Romans 3 supposes, that some will claim exception to what God has said. But we have to be reminded, love me, we have this in our experiences. It has to be brought home to us personally, that we can't claim ourselves to be an exception when God promises that there's none that doeth business. And we may think we're the exception, but all we can do is to prove that we must be chosen in the whole.

No, not one.

So, in the presence of this demonstration that depends upon man, and where there's nothing for man and nothing for God, this does not proceed.

The beginning of God, with that nation, which were of an unconditional sort, and so in the [00:05:03] presence of their failure, we have God reverting all of us, the time has come for God to assert himself, to show that he has resolved, even to fulfill God's promises, even in the presence of a nation of whom it is said so often that they are stiff-necked and reverent. We have a summary of this in the Pentateuch Romans by the Apocryphal. It even says they answer God back. And we only need to read the book of Numbers, the wilderness book, it's a correspondence book for Hebrews, to learn the obduracy and that the people who have taken up these privileges, they lack appreciation.

We find in chapter 12 of Hebrews of Numbers, they despise, they despise Moses, they despise [00:06:01] the land, they despise the manna, and they even despise God.

Very scholarly.

And so, we have illustrated to us in the book of Numbers, in fact, how that, I believe we have to refer to chapter 15 of Numbers, a chapter that has a place of distinction in keeping with the consistent statement of the statement. And that is in chapter 15, after it is being said, in regard to their responsibility and failure, they will not come into the land. Their partnership is true to the list. Chapter 15 tells us where he is going to land. And we have a list there. We can go down half a chapter, where it refers to burnt offerings, and meat offerings, and those offerings which show that there is another aspect of things anticipated, when that which [00:07:08] will give God pleasure and the occasion for him to take his people up in a sovereign way in the acceptance and the protection of another. And so, in the light of the New Testament, you can read Psalm 78, you can understand the book of Numbers in the light of the New Testament, and here we have in the psalm one verse following another of their doings and how they failed, and then we come to the time when they lost the ark to the Pentecost. Well, of course, how the perfect things were in the book of Exodus, to remind us that God began with the ark.

He did.

Overlaid wood, overlaid outside and inside with gold, in which he put the famous stone, Aaron's rod that burned the pot of manna.

[00:08:04] In beginning with the ark, in 25 of Exodus, it goes on to the grave of Nazareth, and how blessed it is that God shows us where we begin in the ark of these matters. We begin with the grave of Nazareth, and as we progress in apprehending God's grace in Christ, it leads us to this thought that Christ has begun with the ark. God begins with the ark. And this corresponds to the book of Hebrews, where God begins and shows that in the presence of the King of this nature, his resource is

in that glorious person. And here in this psalm, for the solemn gift of affairs, for using the ark to the Christians, it will prevent them from having the annual day of fullness, no forgiveness of sins, no function of priesthood, whatever sin offering, no mercies, but it will be sprinkled upon [00:09:08] them and before them. Now this was the consequent rejection of the complete ruin of the man's responsibility in the losing of the ark, and that, I repeat, has to be rolled into the land. The single failure is to be registered there. And so we get this great relief which corresponds to how God takes this matter up in Christ in the epistle of Hebrews. The one who has made by himself purification for sins and sat down. The one who has bringing many sons to glory the whole journey completed in a missionary way. And the competency is interactive. And so here in that liturgy, what actually happens in their losing the ark, God takes [00:10:03] the matter up and this shows how sovereignty, a divine prerogative, where God can access even when man has run out, God begins. That's just what we have in the Book of Life. Where death ends all human efforts, and after all, Christ went to where we really were.

This is what it was for him to come to where we were in the place of death and in the place of the curse.

But such a person as he who came there, and let us note that in Hebrews 2, we have to remind you that we have the manhood side in chapter 2, but he can't lose sight of the purity side in chapter 2.

For it takes not all the seed of angels, it takes not all the angels by the hand, but it takes all the seed of angels by the hand. And the first one to do that is none other than God himself.

[00:11:05] To change a station, as it were, to go into a war station, it is not the province of any one of God's creatures to change their station. But here it is, in Hebrews, where the children were found, he was part of flesh and blood. And because the children were partakers of flesh and blood, we pardon the saying that through death we might know him who had the power of death, or the death of his death, to deliver us through fear of death for all our lifetime, some day, to bondage. And here we have an allusion to this resource that God has in Christ, as in the way that God has bound himself. And so it says, a remarkable statement, the Lord awoke, as though he were insensible or indifferent for the whole night, and no doubt he is. If people in that predicament could conclude that God has forsaken them, in fact he has [00:12:06] forsaken them in Ezekiel 8 and Ezekiel 9, the Lord fears not. The Lord has forsaken the earth, the Lord fears not. But blessed be God we have this, which is really that which is a divine prerogative to act at a time when man has wasted himself like a prodigal, and like Israel who has got himself into the face of this gullible judgment, the Lord awoke as a man out of a heap, and he shouted as a mighty man by reason of mind, and this is what he does to his enemies, this is what the cross means, this is what he was in his strong principalities and powers and making of a show of them over me. This is the Lord Jesus, not taking by wicked hands, but throwing the enemy and all his [00:13:08] angels into open conflict with a loop, and only one issue, and that is to wrap the enemy completely, and make a show of them openly, triumphing over them is.

So we have a solution to this, and God retorts to Christ, the Lord awoke as one out of a heap, as a mighty man, and shouted by reason of mind, and what was not expected to happen and he spat the enemy, and he tells us we are only the losers, and this is another divine prerogative. God can refuse, and it is so, and God can choose, and he chose David, and we have to stand by the whole, all will stand by, and see God do as he pleases, and thus God is pleased to show his consideration for the remanded creature, in the sending of Christ [00:14:07] our Saviour into this world, and to act in this way for us, as death was a reality for him, as we were remanded this afternoon, facing death, going into

death, died for us, not moving mortars, but he went lower than any living person, he went lower, the extremes of suffering and shame, and glory meet in that one person, our Lord Jesus Christ, and this is something for us, each of us individually, as individuals we may, we may look slightly at one another, in a bit confident at this, that the Lord has an eye on each one of us, and no matter what anyone may say, and all the scriptures say, and all the Lord has done, and all the Lord is, each one of us is a, the one there speaking now, the one there [00:15:05] drawing attention to, is speaking of glory, rich with his name, he is my Saviour who died for me, died for us, what a precious thought that is for every one of us, we may be limited in our, surely we are limited in what we can say, and how far we can go in this vast, vast tonne of letters and records to the Lord Jesus Christ, that every one of us can say, that glorious person, he died for me, and I belong to him, and when it says, sons brought with glory, I'm one of those, and if later, as we anticipate later, it puts the matter, if he comes to you, the knowledge of that glorious person is sufficient to keep us above all trials, pressure, and difficulties, without eye on that person, he is sufficient, there [00:16:04] is any uncertainty to fail, and so praise God, this is an intimation of this power, of this resource, in our glorious failure, in this choice of David, of course David recovered the ark, just as the Lord Jesus will recover everything from God until handing it to God, yes, he recovered everything, he recovered us, but he recovered everything that was against him, everything that missed to be reconciled, and even in the realm of the judged, they will have to admit that everything that was judged is right, everything is about, and heaven and earth is things, and infernal things are mentioned in Philippians 2, and [00:17:01] how we praise God, how fitting it is that in the name of Jesus every knee, everyone has two knees, all knees, one tongue, every creature has a tongue and two knees, and every tongue will confess, and every knee will bow, and it is for the person of Jesus, by divine decree, what a glorious, what a glorious theme we are occupied with in the epistle of Hebrews, and here a brief allusion to the one whom God anticipates, and we can surely see how this choosing, this divine prerogative, this choice, as well as this refusing, turn away from man altogether, but rely strongly upon the Lord Jesus Christ. This is what Mary the Virgin gives, Christ, divine resource in wisdom and power, the one by whom God will effect everything, the lack of judgment will be taken by a couple like [00:18:06] this. So, blessing is only understood in that blessed person.

It is in the communion of that person that we enjoy these things, and it is in the communion with our glorious Saviour that we are led into these things, not by the word, the matter of Scripture alone, let us speak to it with our hearts, in the matter of self-judgment as a daily, as a momentary, as often as ever we breathe.

This matter of self-judgment is essential if we are going to get any prohibitional error in reading the Scriptures, for it is in this matter of self-judgment that we live. Christ is full of grace. Man is brought up by the cross. Christ is everything. We have lost Him. We have Christ again. For may the Lord encourage us in our time together for this day to come.