

## Psalm 76

The connection to the **Leviticus 6-7** reading is **verse 11** - "Make vows and repay them" (see **Leviticus 7:11-16** concerning peace offerings, vows and thank offerings).

Superscript: To the chief Musician on Neginoth, A Psalm or Song of Asaph.

"On *Neginoth*," - stringed instruments for musical accompaniment.

**Psalm 76:1** - "In Judah is God known: his name is great in Israel."

"known" = "freshly made known," "revealed anew" by a recent wonderful deliverance. But which one?

The Syriac inscription is, "when Rabbah of the children of Ammon was destroyed" - described in **2 Samuel 12:26** or **2 Chronicles 20:1**

The Septuagint version, as well as the Vulgate and Ethiopic versions, entitle the psalm "an ode against the Assyrian." This would reference the defeat of Sennacherib and his army, which came up against Jerusalem in the time of Hezekiah, and was destroyed by an angel in one night, and so "slept their sleep," and a dead one, which agrees with **Psalm 76:5**.

Rashi gives this reason for such an interpretation: because no enemy fell at or near Jerusalem except for Sennacherib, as it is said in **Psalm 76:3**: "there brake he the arrows of the bow." Not one arrow was allowed to be thrown into the city during that seige.

See **2 Kings 19:32** - "Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shield, nor cast a bank against it."

The word translated "arrows" signifies "sparks or coals of fire" (see **Job 5:7**) and is used of arrows, because they fly swiftly, as sparks do, or because of their brightness, or because they can be fiery; so we read of "the fiery darts of Satan" (**Ephesians 6:16**), and perhaps they may be meant here: when Christ our Lord suffered near Jerusalem, he spoiled principalities and powers, and broke their strength and might, and made peace by the blood of his cross, in which he triumphed over them. - *Gills Exposition*

The latter part of the Syriac inscription agrees: "moreover it shows the vengeance of the judgment of Christ against the ungodly."

**Psalm 76:2** - "In Salem also is his tabernacle, and his dwelling place in Zion."

"tabernacle" = *suk* - a booth, hut. (The Feast of Tabernacles is called Sukkoth)

"dwelling place" = *mehona* - den, refuge, covert - usually used of the habitat of wild beasts, especially lions.

It is possible that the Psalmist intends to describe God as the lion of Judah, who has issued forth from His lair, and seized His prey. (Isaiah 31:4)- Cambridge Bible

Compare **Psalm 27:5** - "For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion (*suk*) in the secret of his tabernacle (*ohel* - tent) shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock."

The Septuagint has "his place was in peace (*salem*)."

Salem is identified with Jerusalem (**Genesis 14:18**), and the Targum of this passage equates the two. See **Isaiah 33:20**.

**Psalm 76:3** - "There brake he the arrows of the bow, the shield, and the sword, and the battle. Selah."

**Psalm 76:4** - "Thou art more glorious and excellent than the mountains of prey."

i.e. mountains inhabited by beasts of prey, as lions and leopards.

Rashi - "mightier than the mountains of prey": Stronger than the predatory giants, who are as tall as mountains, but against You, their might is not known.

**Psalm 76:5** - "The stouthearted are spoiled, they have slept their sleep: and none of the men of might have found their hands."

The Assyrian army, its officers and generals, that came up against Jerusalem, with great resolution and courage, and with daring impiety and blasphemy against the God of heaven, as Rabshakeh and others exhibited.

See **2 Kings 18:32-33** - "...hearken not unto Hezekiah, when he persuadeth you, saying, The LORD will deliver us. Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered at all his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria?"

"found their hands" - Targum: "they were not able to lay hold on their armor with their hands."

**Psalm 76:6** - "At thy rebuke, O God of Jacob, both the chariot and horse are cast into a dead sleep."

- **2 Kings 19:35** - "And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the LORD went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses."

Rabbi and grammarian David Kimchi (Spain, 1160 -1235) notes that the word translated "cast into a dead sleep" is in the singular, and he interprets it as the king, the head of the men of might. But the Assyrian king Sennacherib was not slain - he departed to his own country. So Kimchi suggests it refers to the future chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, described in **Ezekiel 39:1**. In that case, it could also refer to the beast or false prophet, who being destroyed, the flesh of his captains and horsemen shall be the food of the fowls of the air, at the supper of the great God, **Revelation 19:17**.

- *Gill's Exposition*

**Psalm 76:8-9** - "Thou didst cause judgment to be heard from heaven; the earth feared, and was still, When God arose to judgment, to save all the meek of the earth. Selah."

i.e. when an angel was sent down from heaven, and destroyed the Assyrian army. It could also point to the seven vials of his wrath He will pour upon the earth (Revelation 16) or at the Last Judgment.

"the earth feared, and was still" - Aben Ezra (Spain, 1089 - c.1167) observes: "the earth feared," these are the wicked; "and was still," they are the righteous; so the Targum, "the land of the people feared, the land of Israel was still."

**Psalm 76:10** - "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain."

Targum: "when thou art angry with thy people, thou hast mercy on them, and they shall confess unto thy name"

But Rashi says this points to the anger of the wicked as being turned into praise of God. Nebuchadnezzar's anger at Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego is transformed into "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him" (**Daniel 3:28**).

"the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain" - It will prevent and stop; the remaining wicked men are prevented and restrained from showing their pride and their wrath.

**Psalm 76:11** - "Vow, and pay unto the LORD your God: let all that be round about him bring presents unto him that ought to be feared."

"vow" = *nadar* - it is in the imperative - it's a command, one of the few places God's people are told to make a vow. But this involves what is more of a thank offering for the great deliverance God had accomplished for them.

For us it means spiritual sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving.

Targum: "all ye that dwell round about his sanctuary, let them bring offerings into the house of the sanctuary of the terrible One." The allusion is to the situation of the camp of Israel, and the Tabernacle in the wilderness.

Spiritually, the “offerings” to be brought to Him are the sacrifices of prayer and praise; in fact the offering of the whole person, body and soul, as a living sacrifice.

**Psalm 76:12** - "He shall cut off the spirit of princes: he is terrible to the kings of the earth."

“He shall cut off the pride of their spirits,” as in the Targum. God will humble their proud spirits, and bring them down.

The destruction of the wicked is expressed by cutting down the vine of the earth, and casting it into the winepress of God's wrath, **Revelation 14:17**. So he will be to the kings of the earth that have committed fornication with the Great Whore, who will be in the utmost panic at the time of her destruction, **Revelation 18:9**.

The Targum is, "he is to be feared above all the kings of the earth."