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EDITORIAL

Psalm 74 offers help in troubled times. It is a lament that reflects upon the destruction of the Temple in 587/586BC. Israel was languishing for her sin. Unbelief and idolatry resulted in exile to a foreign land, a place that was a wilderness. The Psalm communicates painful experiences suffered in Babylon.

At the same time the Psalm also tells of what belonged to God's people in this distressing time. Although they were suffering, God was with them. In the lowest depths they had recourse to the highest appeal – to God who reigns over heaven and earth. A search for help elsewhere had been in vain (v. 9). Yet the help needed is available, 'God my King is from of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth' (v. 12).

This focus upon God leads to contemplation of divine truth. He reigns, for he is king (v. 12). He is king from of old. He is the same yesterday, today and forever. He is an ever present help in times of trouble. The Lord reigns, even when the opposition is ferocious and the experience has been devastating (v. 8).

These truths of God mean he is the refuge his people need. His past works provide comfort, for he has overcome the fiercest of enemies, demonstrating his ownership of his creation. Meditating upon these past works give reason for confidence in God and give rise to the Psalm's concluding appeals.

When enemies press against and threaten the way of life that God sets out in the Bible, or even life itself, the Psalm encourages readers to turn to God for help. Indeed, the Bible witnesses to God's working salvation. Christ overcomes death, meaning that nothing can separate us from God's love in Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:37-39).

Today, Christian newspapers tell of persecutions Christians face across the world – liberties taken away, and cases of injury and death. Closer to home, Christians may feel out of favour for their beliefs and often be reminded that 'here we have no lasting city' (Heb. 13:14).

Psalm 74 serves to teach us that with God there is recourse to the highest appeal. He is for his people. This is demonstrated by the covenant he has made to overcome evil (v. 20), which he has fulfilled through his Son Jesus Christ.

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