

Study Notes

The Story Behind the Psalms: 75-83

These Psalms formed a little book of Psalms. They were written by Asaph upon God's people being delivered from an enemy. We do not know exactly what deliverance this was. These were just general songs. They were used for congregational purposes. They were songs of praise thanking God for deliverance.

The Way They Were Used by God's People

They were used for public worship and praise. What a vital part congregational singing has in the service of the Lord! How it prepares the heart! Think of the blessedness of the choir specials, solos, duets, trios, quartets, sextets, singing groups, and of the congregational sing-in g. Think of the pastors whose hearts have been prepared to preach and of the people in the congregation who have been prepared for the message by Spirit-filled singing. Thank God for the Asaphs who write music and for the Asaphs who direct it. Praise God for the influence of the songs that we use day after day, week after week, year after year, songs that we sing sometimes too carelessly, songs whose meanings we overlook as we sing them. Just as the aforementioned songs and hundreds of others have blessed us, even so these Psalms were a similar blessing to the people of Israel.

Theme: When outraged by injustice, cry out to God, not against him. In times of disaster, our mood may be anger, but our trust must remain in God.

Author: Asaph (or one of his descendants), probably written after the Babylonians had leveled Jerusalem (see 2 Kings 25)

PSALM 79:6

According to the Old Testament, God's wrath and judgment often fell on entire nations because of the sins of people within those nations. Here Asaph pled for judgment on kingdoms that refused to acknowledge God's authority. Ironically, Asaph's own nation of Judah was being judged by God for refusing to do this very thing (2 Chronicles 36:14-20). These were people who had sworn allegiance to God but were now rejecting him. This made their judgment even worse.

PSALM 79:10

In the end, God's glory will be evident to all people, but in the meantime, we must endure suffering with patience and allow God to strengthen our character through it. For reasons that we do not know, God sometimes allows pagan people to scoff at believers. We should be prepared for criticism, jokes, and unkind remarks because God does not place us beyond the attacks of scoffers.

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Theme: A prayer for revival and restoration after experiencing destruction. God is our only hope for salvation.

Author: Asaph (or one of his descendants), probably written after the northern kingdom of Israel was defeated and its people deported to Assyria.

PSALM 80:3, 7, 19

Three times the writer calls on God to ♦turn us again to yourself.♦ Before God can turn us to himself, we must turn away from sin. Repentance involves humbling ourselves and turning to God to receive his forgiveness. As we turn to God, he helps us see ourselves, including our sin, more clearly. Then, as we see our sin, we must repeat the process of repentance. Only then can we constantly be restored to fellowship with God.

PSALM 80:17

♦The son of your choice♦ is probably not the Messiah but Israel, whom God calls elsewhere his ♦firstborn son♦ (Exodus 4:22). The psalmist is making a plea that God would restore his mercy to Israel, the people he chose to bring his message into the world.