

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: A holiday hymn. This hymn celebrates the Exodus from Egypt ♦ God ♦ s goodness versus Israel ♦ s waywardness. God is our deliverer in spite of our wanderings.

Author: Asaph

PSALM 81:1-5

ISRAEL ♦ S HOLIDAYS REMINDED THE NATION OF GOD ♦ S GREAT MIRACLES. THEY WERE TIMES OF REJOICING AND TIMES TO RENEW ONE ♦ S STRENGTH FOR LIFE ♦ S DAILY STRUGGLES. AT CHRISTMAS, DO YOUR THOUGHTS REVOLVE MOSTLY AROUND PRESENTS? IS EASTER ONLY A WARM ANTICIPATION OF SPRING AND THANKSGIVING ONLY A GOOD MEAL? REMEMBER THE SPIRITUAL ORIGINS OF THESE SPECIAL DAYS, AND USE THEM AS OPPORTUNITIES TO WORSHIP GOD FOR HIS GOODNESS TO YOU, YOUR FAMILY, AND YOUR NATION.

PSALM 81:2-4

DAVID INSTITUTED MUSIC FOR THE TEMPLE WORSHIP SERVICES (1 CHRONICLES 25). MUSIC AND WORSHIP GO HAND IN HAND. WORSHIP INVOLVES THE WHOLE PERSON, AND MUSIC HELPS LIFT A PERSON ♦ S THOUGHTS AND EMOTIONS TO GOD. THROUGH MUSIC WE CAN REFLECT UPON OUR NEEDS AND SHORTCOMINGS AS WELL AS CELEBRATE GOD ♦ S GREATNESS.

PSALM 81:11, 12

GOD LET THE ISRAELITES GO ON BLINDLY, STUBBORNLY, AND SELFISHLY, WHEN THEY SHOULD HAVE BEEN OBEYING AND FOLLOWING GOD ♦ S DESIRES. GOD SOMETIMES LETS US CONTINUE IN OUR STUBBORNNESS TO BRING US TO OUR SENSES. HE DOES NOT KEEP US FROM REBELLING BECAUSE HE WANTS US TO LEARN THE CONSEQUENCES OF SIN. HE USES THESE EXPERIENCES TO TURN PEOPLE AWAY FROM GREATER SIN TO FAITH IN HIM.

PSALM 81:13-16

GOD HAD PROVIDED IN HIS COVENANT THAT HE WOULD RESTORE HIS PEOPLE IF THEY WOULD LISTEN TO HIM AND RETURN TO HIM (EXODUS 23:22-27; LEVITICUS 26:3-13; DEUTERONOMY 7:12-26; 28:1-14).

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Theme: A fair judge. God will judge the wicked who have unfairly treated others.

Author: Asaph

PSALM 82:6

THIS PSALM CALLS THE RULERS AND JUDGES OF ISRAEL ♦ GODS ♦ AND ♦ CHILDREN OF THE MOST HIGH. ♦ THEY WERE CALLED GODS BECAUSE THEY REPRESENTED GOD IN EXECUTING JUDGMENT. JOHN 10:34-36 RECORDS JESUS USING THIS PASSAGE TO DEFEND HIS CLAIMS TO BE GOD. HIS ARGUMENT WAS AS FOLLOWS: IF GOD WOULD CALL MERE PEOPLE ♦ GODS, ♦ WHY WAS IT BLASPHEMOUS FOR HIM, THE TRUE SON OF GOD, TO DECLARE HIMSELF EQUAL WITH GOD?