



MESSAGE/SERIES:

“From the Ashes of Despair”-Pastor Michael Baker

DATE: May 19, 2019

SCRIPTURE FOR THIS WEEK: OPENING SCRIPTURE:

Psalm 77:1-15, 3:4, 86:7, Psalm 50:14-15, Isaiah 26:16-19, Psalm 143:6-7, Psalm 42:5-8, 43:5, Habakkuk 3:2, Psalm 74:2, 1 Peter 2:9-11, Hebrews 5:7

[Psalms 77:1-15]

¹ *I cry aloud to God, aloud to God, and he will hear me.*

² *In the day of my trouble I seek the Lord;
in the night my hand is stretched out without wearying;
my soul refuses to be comforted.*

³ When I remember God, I moan;
when I meditate, my spirit faints. Selah

⁴ You hold my eyelids open;
I am so troubled that I cannot speak.

⁵ I consider the days of old,
the years long ago.

⁶ I said, "Let me remember my song in the night;
let me meditate in my heart."
Then my spirit made a diligent search:

⁷ "Will the Lord spurn forever,
and never again be favorable?

⁸ Has his steadfast love forever ceased?
Are his promises at an end for all time?

⁹ Has God forgotten to be gracious?
Has he in anger shut up his compassion?" Selah

¹⁰ Then I said, "I will appeal to this,
to the years of the right hand of the Most High."

¹¹ I will remember the deeds of the Lord;
yes, I will remember your wonders of old.

¹² I will ponder all your work,
and meditate on your mighty deeds.

¹³ Your way, O God, is holy.
What god is great like our God?

¹⁴ You are the God who works wonders;
you have made known your might among the peoples.

¹⁵ You with your arm redeemed your people,
the children of Jacob and Joseph. Selah

BACKGROUND:

Asaph as the worship leader of the temple cannot worship and finds himself in despair. How will the worship leader get back to a place of internal purity in his worship in order to lead others to God again?

This psalm is obviously written right after the destruction of Jerusalem and the enslavement of Israel. Written in approximately 916 BC...

Asaph sees the destruction all around him and cannot see a victorious ending to this season of life he is currently in. *Many had died... Many had been enslaved...* and God was nowhere in sight that he could tell...

OUTLINE:

I. Asaph's TRANSPARENT PRAYER (v1-2)

- A. Asaph's role in the temple was to lead in worship and he like us found himself far from the light and all he could see was the darkness
 - 1. Israel had sinned
 - 2. Israel was being judged
 - a) *Many had died in the onslaught against Jerusalem*
 - b) *Many had been slaves*
 - 3. God's promises to His people did not seem to be being fulfilled
 - a) *Although God had promised to discipline*
 - b) *Although they did not understand the true reality of the prophecies given (progressive revelation)*

II. Asaph's MEMORABLE MEDITATION (v3-6)

- A. (v3) Remember God and...
 - 1. **Moan=be loud**, *make a noise, i.e., break the sound waves with great decibels (Ps 46:4[EB 3]); 2. LN 25.135–25.145 (qal) groan loudly*, *moan, lament, i.e., make a moaning or crying sound as signal of a distressing feeling in a person*
- B. (v3) Meditate and
 - 1. **Spirit Faints= be overwhelmed**

- C. (v4) Doubt, disturbed=**be troubled**, be disturbed, i.e., be in a mental state of distress and worry relating to a situation
 - 1. *Could not sleep (no peace/joy)*
 - 2. *Could not speak (communicate)*

III. Asaph's INTENSE QUESTIONING (v7-9)

- A. Asaph almost lost his faith as he personally felt rejected of God
 - 1. *As an individual*
 - 2. *As representing the people of God*
- B. Asaph questioning is also a confession of his doubts to God
- C. Asaph's questioning reveals internal/emotional conflicts come to the surface
- D. Asaph's questioning about God's length of rejection indicates a need to know more about God
 - 1. *Our belief system is tested in places of weakness and reveals areas of needed study*
 - 2. *When we cry out for help in glorifying God, He promises to give us that help*
 - a) **Wisdom**=James 1:5 "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. ⁶ But let him ask in faith, with no doubting,"
 - b) **Faith**=Mark 9:24 "And Jesus said to him, " 'If you can!' All things are possible for one who believes." ²⁴ Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, "I believe; help my unbelief!"

IV. Asaph's TRIUMPHANT TURNING-POINT (v10-15)

- A. Asaph takes a quick pivot and connects the past to His present state
 - B. Asaph will Remember=make a public declaration of and internally application
 - 1. (v11)Remember= "to remember, think of, mention_."--Remember and share.
 - 2. (v12)Ponder= "to meditate, moan, growl, utter, speak"
 - a) *Asaph set it in His mind to believe God that was and is to be The I **AM** that He said He...and he committed to making Him known even though God had not yet shown His hand in the present circumstances (Exodus 3:14).*
-

OTHER STUDY HELPS:

Character study of Asaph ā'saf [Heb. 'āsāp; Gk. *Asaph*].

1. Ancestor of Hezekiah's recorder Joah (2 K. 18:18, 37).

2. One of David's three chief musicians, along with Heman and Jeduthun (Ethan), and the reputed author of Pss. 50 and 73–82; the son of Berechiah (1 Ch. 6:39). After the ark was taken to Jerusalem (15:16–19), he conducted with cymbals the music performed in the tent of the ark (16:5, 7, 37). Heman and Jeduthun did the same at Gibeon (vv 41f). Four of Asaph's sons (fellow guild members?) were among those appointed to conduct under him sections of the great chorus (25:1ff), and all took part at the dedication of the temple (2 Ch. 5:12). The "sons of Asaph" formed a musical guild and were prominent in temple worship, especially as singers (cf. 1 Ch. 25:1ff; 1 Esd. 1:15).

Asaph is said to have "prophesied under the direction of the king," through his music (1 Ch. 25:2); and Jeduthun and Heman are called "royal seers" (v 5; 2 Ch. 35:15); cf. 1 S. 10:5.

Geoffrey W. Bromiley, ed., "Asaph," *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Revised* (Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1979–1988), 309–310.

ASAPH (Ā' sāph) Personal name meaning "he collected." 1. Father of court official under King Hezekiah (715–686 b.c.), who in sadness reported the threats of Assyria to the king (2 Kings 18). 2. Levite musician that David appointed to serve in the tabernacle until the temple was completed (1 Chron. 6:39). Asaph was the father of the clan of temple musicians who served through the history of the temple. A member of the clan was among the first to return from exile in 537 b.c. (1 Chron. 9:15). Part of the musical responsibility included sounding the cymbal (1 Chron. 15:19). David established the tradition of delivering psalms to Asaph for the temple singers to sing (1 Chron. 16:7). Asaph and the singers ministered daily (1 Chron. 16:37). Their musical service could be called "prophesying" (1 Chron. 25:1–7). Descendants of Asaph delivered prophetic messages under God's Spirit (2 Chron. 20:14–19). Later generations sang the songs of Asaph "the seer" (2 Chron. 29:30). Psalms 50 and 73–83 are titled "Psalms of Asaph" or similar titles. This may refer to authorship, the singers who used the Psalms in worship, or to a special collection of psalms.

Chad Brand et al., eds., "Asaph," *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2003), 122–123.

DEFINITIONS:

MEDITATE: 77:3,6,12- “**meditate**, muse on, consider, think on, i.e., ponder and so give serious consideration to information, or a situation (Jdg 5:10; 1Ki 18:27; Ps 77:4[EB 3],7[EB 6],13[EB 12]; 119:15, 23, 27, 48, 78, 148; 145:5+), note: in context, this musing can lead to despair and complaint, or wonder and elation

James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains : Hebrew (Old Testament)* (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997).

PROGRESSIVE REVELATION: God’s revelation was not given all at once but over the course of many centuries as redemptive history unfolded. During that course of history, revelation progressed from the beginnings of the Old Testament to the fullness of the New Testament.

Sidney Greidanus, *The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text: Interpreting and Preaching Biblical Literature* (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1988), 112.

-----Message from Pastor Michael-----
Church,

If you find yourself in despair like Asaph know that God is there and ready to respond to you. Despair is common and can be the groundwork for depression if not dealt with promptly. I see a lot of despair in the universal church due to perception and belief system. If we do not get serious with our God and knowing Him more we will not be able to restore the worship He deserves. I pray through this study you will be able to start the process of prayer, meditation, questioning, and repentance that will undoubtedly lead to the feet of Jesus and His peace that passes all understanding will fill your heart and life again.

Love in Christ,
Pastor Michael

MY PERSONAL STUDY NOTES:
