

Plea for God's Intervention
Completed Study Outline – Grace Bible Chapel
Psalm 83:1-18
Sunday – May 28th, 2017

CONTEXT of Psalm 83: - This is the last of the Psalm's of Asaph (Psalm 73-83). Israel pleads for help from God as the nations immediately surrounding are all joining together to completely destroy them (Vs. 4). Like many of the Psalms, this most likely has a near and far application. Israel has always had problems with its neighbors, and ironically it is obvious now 3000 years later they are in the exact same position with the same nations still desiring their destruction. If it has a near application, we do not know for sure the specific circumstance, and the same could be said of the far application. There are some biblical scholars who believe this is only referring to something that occurred 3000 years ago that God intercepted, and others who believe this must be more specifically referring to an end time battle of Israel with its surrounding neighbors prior to the battle of Armageddon. The battle of Armageddon specifically involves Russia and other none neighboring nations, therefore it is thought this is prophecy that will be fulfilled prior to the Armageddon battle, and explains why the near nations are not named in the Armageddon battle. As Psalm 79 is clearly prophetic, and Psalm 82:8 ends with a clear reference to the end, this last Psalm of Asaph likely does have prophetic relevance to a yet future event where Israel is once again protected of the Lord.

We will approach this passage recognizing the above, but dealing with the primary nature of Israel as God's covenant people making petition to God for their aid, and learn from the plea and prayer that we, as them, always and only have our well-being under God's sovereign protection. As with Israel, our enemies are numerous today, and we need God's continual protection, and we know that ultimately He will never leave us or forsake us – there is great comfort in His provision and this Psalm provides us a pattern of why that comfort is real.

Introduction:

- Read a portion of my outline context comments (beginning with 1st paragraph “there are” thru the end of the 2nd paragraph).
 - The near application could be the war described in 2 Chron 20 (Jehoshaphat's victory) although not all the nations listed in our context were listed as involved as here.
 - Regardless, Israel has been the object of hatred since its inception.
- Now, I don't know for sure if this Psalm is addressing a yet future war between Israel & its immediate neighbors, but I strongly think it is – but regardless, I do know God will take care of Israel because He has promised to do so – & ultimately, & God will take care of you & me if we are truly His.
- It is important for you and I to know God's Word. It is by knowing God's Word that we can know the will of God, and pray according to His will, and have peace & comfort by resting in what God is doing, & will do! It is part of living by faith.

I. Cry for God's Intervention (83:1)

- **Vs. 1** – There are two words used here for God – the first is “Elohim” – the almighty supreme God, & then just “el” – the almighty. We will see Jehovah used in Vs. 16 – the self existent eternal Lord.
 - The tension of this is seen in the “O God” making this urgent so that it is a desperate plea. He is not commanding God – but pleading, thus the “O” – it is almost as dramatic as someone in pain crying out.
 - He uses 3 negative terms of request in his cry that God would not be (quiet, silent, or still) all referring to the urgent specific need for action. Why?
 - From human perception we often think or see terrible things going on & it does not appear from our vantage that God is working – where is God?
 - In such situations we, whether realizing it or not, fail to believe Rm. 8:28.
 - On the other hand, we are not to be fatalistic – God has determined the end, but has also determined the means to the end – prayer is important!
 - We also are reminded these are God's covenant people being attacked, and therefore Asaph is praying a prayer fully in agreement with God's will.

II. Classed as God's enemies (83:2)

- **Vs. 2** – Here is the important concept for the tone of this prayer. Notice, Asaph does not make the prayer so much about Israel, but about God Himself.

Point: Prayer is not so much about us but about God. Our prayers need to focus on God's will, God's glory, God's purposes, trusting in God to always do what is best and right.

- Praying is like going before a judge – the judge of all the earth & making our best case before the judge. In doing so we don't ask the judge to do something contrary to law, or righteousness, or justice.
- Notice the personal nature of this praying on behalf of Israel.
 - "Your enemies" – by being enemies of Israel, they were really enemies of God (Gen. 12:3) – why? Because of God's unconditional covenant. Jer. 50:17-18; 24 – whatever is done to Israel is done in opposition to the Lord.
 - "have exalted themselves" – anytime any person does that which is contrary to God's revelation – anytime sin occurs it is an exalting of self – it is saying, I am my own god. I know better than God. It is a form of committing idolatry.

Point: It is a (Heb 10:31) "it is a terrifying thing...living God." For us today, we need to pray for our leaders that we might be a nation that supports Israel.

Point: All sinners are enemies of God, but here these are acting overtly against God because they are acting overtly against God's people – we could call them double enemies – nothing is more outrageous, insane, and personally destructive.

- Notice the phrase "those who hate You" – he again makes the issue a direct affront to God. Hating Israel, or hating God's people is hating God.
- By hating Israel / God – they have exalted themselves.

III. **Conspiring against God (83:3-8)** – How is this seen? Amazingly – the most energy spent on earth is by the evil plotting & planning against the righteous.

- **Vs. 3** – "shrewd plans" – word means cunning plans – these people stay up at night using all their faculties to destroy God's elect. Think of Haman & how he plotted to destroy Israel – it is satanic, it is a particularly terrible evil.
 - "Conspire together" – evil people who otherwise can't stand each other will get together when it comes to their hatred of God & His people. Remember the Pharisees & Sadducees in their plotting against Christ.
- **Vs. 4** – What is their goal? "come let us...remembered no more" – (Rev. 12) informs us of Satan's primary goal is to destroy Israel, and it is interesting this continues to be seen as the countries in this Psalm (surrounding Israel) all have the same goal – destroy Israel.
- **Vs. 5** – In continued prayer – the Psalmist again makes it personal to the Lord "against You." Think again of God's covenant (Gen. 12:3) "I will bless.."
 - These surrounding Israel also have made a covenant – "together." They have made themselves direct purposeful enemies of God Himself by covenant.

Point: The prayer on behalf of Israel is made not on the basis of Israel's worthiness, but on the basis of their relationship with God. As Christian's, we also are under covenant – the new covenant in Christ's blood. Our Father is God, our appeal to Him is based not on our worthiness, but on our relationship thru Jesus Christ.

- **Vs. 6-8** – Beginning here thru Vs. 8 the Psalmist lists the nations aligned against Israel by this covenant. Then & today the locations have not changed.
 - Edom – southern Jordan
 - Moab- central Jordan
 - Hagrites – Egypt
 - Gebal – Lebanon
 - Ammon – northern Jordan
 - Amalek – Sinai Peninsula

- Philistia – Gaza Strip
- Tyre – Lebanon
- Assyria - Syria
- “have become a help...Lot” - the sons of Lot were Moab & Ammon, the origin of the Moabites / Ammonites (Gen. 19:37-38). The purpose of destroying Israel originated from these, & was joined in by the surrounding nations.

Point: It should raise our amazement level at the precise nature of this prophecy from 3000 years ago – still applicable today with the re-gathered Israel.

IV. **Call for consistency (83:9-12)** We have said before – prayer is like making a case in court before a judge. The writer has made his case for Israel based on covenant, now he makes his case based on God’s character being consistent.

- **Vs. 9** – “Deal with them as with” in other words deal with them consistent with what You have done in the past.
 - Often the winning argument in current cases will be based on past rulings – the argument is justice based on consistency.
 - Midian – Numb 31 –Moses destroyed Midianites because of their treachery against Israel (just as we have been discussing).
 - Sisera – was the commander of the forces of Jabin destroyed by the forces of Deborah the judge of Israel at the brook Kishon (Judges 4-5).
- **Vs. 10** – “Endor” was in the vicinity of Mt. Tabor. “As dung for the ground” – they perished in the most gruesome manner – the soil was enriched by their bodies.
- **Vs. 11** – Oreb & Zeeb were rulers of additional Midianites slain by Gideon in (Judges 7:25). Zebah & Zalmunna were also high officials of Midian slain by Gideon (Judges 8:5, 21).
- **Vs. 12** – All of these had this in common - “Who said...the pastures of God” – the argument presented is these being prayed concerning seek, like these mentioned, to thwart God’s will by stealing the land given of God to Israel.

Point: The history of Israel is one of promise, care, & protection within the covenant of Moses. When that covenant was violated, Israel was punished. Here, the writer, is claiming the covenant with God & making his argument based on God’s character of consistency.

V. **Concern for God’s honor (83:13-18)**

- **Vs. 13–16a, 17** – launches a graphic call for God’s intervention of vengeance according to the case already stated.
 - **Vs. 13** - “Make them like” – they have all these evil plans – foul their plans – make them nothing more than air blowing.
 - **Vs. 14** – Pursue them like a forest fire – relentless, unstoppable, & consuming.
 - **Vs. 15** – Bring upon them true shame for their actions.
 - **Vs. 16a** – They are proud – “fill their faces with dishonor” – replace their pride with baffled confusion & hopelessness to quell their spirit to brokenness.
 - **Vs. 17** – a summary of how they should feel based on their futile effort to defy the Lord by stealing the land from Israel.
- **Vs. 16b** – “That they may seek Your name forever” – that is they might come to their senses and recognize the true God, acknowledge You, & ultimately fear You, and instead appreciatively seek You as their only hope.

Point: here we see a strange dichotomy – in the midst of calling on God for their destruction is a statement of turning them to acknowledgement. Because of the placement – I believe again this is more a prayer for God’s honor than for their repentance. We are ever reminded in the will of God there will come a time when “every knee shall bow” (Rom. 14:11). God will see to it.

Vs. 18 – We see this placement in Vs. 18 – this I believe is the capstone of the Psalmist’s entire case for God’s intervention – it is not based on the honor of Israel, or again their deserving, but so that the name of the Lord will be honored.

Mal. 1:11 – “My name will be great among the nations.”

- God’s honor must be upheld, and His name honored among the nations.
- Each of us has our part in honoring God where we live, & in our sphere of influence before others – are you and I honoring God with our lives?

Closing:

- Praying according to God’s will is always praying based on God’s character, never upon our deserving. We are His children and can call upon Him in all circumstances – we pray that His will be done, & His will is always best, & always according to His character, His plan, and to uphold His name.
- In that regard, His will – will always be best for us! He knows what is best – we can trust Him.