

INTERPRETATION OF PSALM 77

I. INTRODUCTION AND INTRODUCE PANELISTS

II. PSALM 77

77 TO THE CHOIRMASTER: ACCORDING TO JEDUTHUN. A PSALM OF ASAPH.

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

¹⁶ When the waters saw you, O God,
when the waters saw you, they were
afraid;
indeed, the deep trembled.
¹⁷ The clouds poured out water;
the skies gave forth thunder;
your arrows flashed on every side.
¹⁸ The crash of your thunder was in the
whirlwind;
your lightnings lighted up the world;
the earth trembled and shook.
¹⁹ Your way was through the sea,
your path through the great waters;
yet your footprints were unseen.
²⁰ You led your people like a flock
by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

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III. ABOUT INTERPRETATION IN GENERAL (Dan Crabtree)

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IV. INTERPRETING HEBREW POETRY (Alex Hairgrove)

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V. INTERPRETING PSALM 77

Some questions from the text, with answers from Bob's research:

1. **PSA 77:2 - In what sense was he seeking comfort? What kind? What did Asaph want?**

What Asaph wants:

- Psa 77:2 - comfort
- Psa 77:4 - sleep
- Psa 77:4 - Answered prayer?
- Psa 77:7-9 - To be accepted, the Lord's favor, God's loving kindness, fulfilled promises, God's grace, compassion.
- Psa 77:15 - Redemption
- Psa 77:20 - To be led like Israel of old under Moses and Aaron.

2. **PSA 77:4 - Does "eyelids open" refer to sleeplessness?**

- NET - N. 7 - "eyelids open" - TN Heb "you held fast the guards of my eyes." The "guards of the eyes" apparently refers to his eyelids. The psalmist seems to be saying that God would not bring him relief, which would have allowed him to shut his eyes and get some sleep (see v. 2).
KJV - "holdest mine eyes waking," seems to indicate sleeplessness.
- Note that it is God who is keeping him awake.

3. **PSA 77:5 - Is Asaph thinking of his own history or Israel's?**

- Context of Psa 77:6 seems to indicate Asaph's personal history.
- But, why does Psa 77:5 say "ancient times" which best describes Israel's history.
- This could be evidence that Asaph speaks not so much of his personal struggle as his struggle on behalf of Israel. (His struggle IS Israel's struggle.)

4. **Psa 77:7-9 - Why this series of questions? How are they similar/ different?**

- All recall **God's initiating covenant love..** "reject" recalls the consequences for disobedience.
- Deut 27-27 - Instructions to covenant at Ebal and Gerizim / blessings and curses.
- Deut 30:1-5 - Promise of restoration

5. **Psa 77:7-9 - What is the difference between favorable, lovingkindness, promise, gracious, and compassion? Is this a paraphrase of Exodus 34:6?**

- It is everywhere in the Psalms, Here is a cross reference from Psa 77:9 at compassion: [Ps 25:6](#); [40:11](#); [51:1](#)
- The terms from Exodus 34:6 are found in Psalm 77:7-9.

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6. *How is Psalm 77:10 variously translated?*

- Darby, CSB, D-R, ESV, GNB, HCSB, LEB, LES, NAB, NASB95, NCV, NIRV/ NIV, - **EXPLANATORY**: weakness - the years of...; I am grieved that...; Now I have begun: this is the change...; Then I said, “I will appeal... to the years..” ; hcsb “so I say, “I am grieved...”
- ASV, BCP, AV/ KJV, GB KJB - **CONTRASTIVE**: infirmity; but I will , GB “This is my death: yet I remembered...” NIRV - Then I thought, “Here is what I will make my appeal to. For many years the Most High God showed how powerful his right hand is.” OR NIV Then I thought, “To this I will appeal: the years when the Most High stretched out his right hand.
- MSG, NET, GW, NLT - **EXCLAMATORY** – (MSG) Just my luck, the High God goes out of business...”; GW “It makes me feel sick...”; NET - Then I said, “I am sickened by the thought, that the sovereign One might become inactive. DSBS - “Without God’s grace I shall go mad”. *It is my grief (even to think) that the right hand of the Most High (by means of which God reveals himself to his world) could change—that is to say, that God could be untrue to himself!*

7. *Psa 77:13-15 - How great is our God?*

- Psa 77:14 – He works wonders
- Psa 77:14 – You made known your strength among the peoples
- Psa 77:15 - His power redeemed his people; the sons of Jacob and Joseph
- Psa 77:16-20 – He is great enough to part the waters so Israel could escape Egypt. This includes control of: waters, deeps, clouds, skies, lightning (arrows), thunder, earthquakes (“earth trembled” Psa 77:18), path through the sea, used ordinary men like Moses and Aaron.

8. *Psa 77:20 - Why does the Psalm end this way? It seems abrupt. How is it related to the first half of the Psalm?*

- MOTYER devotional notes “Pause for Thought”: .. **Here is a psalmist in deep trouble; he drives himself to prayer, past the point of exhaustion, and gets no relief. His soul still refuses to be comforted. But eventually - and surely by wonderfully tender divine grace - the solution dawns on his poor battered consciousness: “the years of the right hand of the Most High” (Psa 77:10). Now the point is this: the solution to every problem is the way of simple faith. It may not prove to be a simple thing to place faith, and to hold on to the way of faith, but faith itself is essentially simple - childlike trust. It was in this way that the eternal problem of getting right with God was solved, was it not - simple faith in Jesus? If the greatest problem yielded to faith, how much more lesser problems, however testing? It is the way to greet each new day, to face every new problem, rise to every new challenge - “Father, I trust you!” But - and how important this is - faith must rest on a sure foundation. Faith is not a leap in the dark; it is a leap from light into light. Faith is conviction leading to action on the basis of evidence - and the only sufficient evidence is what God has done, objectively, historically. That’s why the psalm stops so abruptly. It does not draw a conclusion but demonstrates a solution: the mind stored with, assured of, resting on the great facts of God’s salvation is a mind at rest.**

VI. CONCLUSION

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