

Psalm 77

Title: Remembering God

Author and Date: Asaph

Key Verses: Psalm 76:3, 6, 11, and 12

Type: Individual Lament (Complaint)

Outline

- A. Present distress: trouble brings remembrance (verses 1-9).
- B. Past deliverance: remembrance brings praise (verse 10-20).

Notes

Title: “For the Chief Musician; after the manner of Jeduthun. A Psalm of Asaph.” For “Chief Musician”, see the notes on the title of Psalm 4. For “Jeduthun”, see the notes on the title of Psalm 39 and 62. For “Asaph”, see the notes on the title of Psalm 50 and Psalm 73.

Summary: Psalm 77 is an individual lament (see the mention of “trouble” in verses 2 and 4, and “complain” in verse 3). The psalmist cries out to God day and night for help in time of trouble and he believes that God will hear him (verses 1-2). He remembers God, but he is still in trouble and despair (verse 3). He remembers God (verses 4-6) and it causes him to ask six questions concerning God’s love and favor for his people. He wants to know if God has changed and is now being unmerciful to his people (verses 7-9).

Remembering God causes the psalmist to praise God and gain comfort, courage, and hope in time of trouble. (Verses 10-20 resemble more of a praise hymn than a lament.) The psalmist continues to remember God (verses 10-12) and it causes him to reflect upon the great deeds and wonders of God. He is holy, great, strong, and redeeming (verses 13-15). God also shows his greatness in guiding the Israelites through the wilderness wanderings by the hand of Moses and Aaron (verses 16-20).

Verse 3: For “Selah”, see the notes on Psalm 3.

Verse 6: “My song in the night” (KJV) refers to the time when the psalmist was happy and without trouble (Psa. 42:8).

Verses 7-9: Note the six rhetorical questions asked by the psalmist. Each question is answered with a “No”. The psalmist is basically asking if God has changed in his character where God is no longer loving, gracious, favorable, etc.

Verse 9: For “Selah”, see the notes on Psalm 3.

Verse 10: “Change” is found the RSV instead of “the years of” (KJV). The psalmist’s infirmity or grief is found in his belief that God has changed his character (see the comments on verses 7-9).

Verse 12: Note the Hebrew parallelism: “meditate” is parallel to “muse”.

Verse 15: God “redeemed” the sons of Jacob and Joseph out of bondage in Egypt. For “Selah”, see the notes on Psalm 3.

Verses 16-20: These verses refer to God’s guiding the Israelites through the wilderness by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

Questions

1. What does the psalmist do with his voice (verse 1)?
2. What does the psalmist do in the day of his trouble (verse 2)?
3. What happens when the psalmist remembers God (verse 3)?
4. How troubled is the psalmist (verse 4)?
5. What does the psalmist consider (verse 5)?
6. What does the psalmist call to remembrance (verse 6)?
7. What six questions does the psalmist ask concerning God (verses 7-9)?
8. What does the psalmist promise to do concerning God (verses 10-12)?

9. What additional question does the psalmist ask concerning God (verse 13)?

10. How does the psalmist describe God (verses 14-15)?

11. How does the psalmist describe God's wonders in the waters, the clouds, the thunder, and the sea (verses 16-19)?

12. How does God lead his people (verse 20)?

Applications for Today

1. It is good to cry to God in the day of our trouble (verses 1-3). Why did Israel cry to God (Ex. 2:23; 1 Sam. 7:8)? What does God do to those who cry to him (Lk. 18:7; Gal. 4:6; Heb. 5:7)?

2. It is good to remember God in the day of our trouble (verses 4-6)? What did Israel fail to do (Judg. 8:34)? What counsel is given in Isaiah 46:9?

3. When trouble comes, God's people want to know if God still cares for them (verses 7-9). What does Moses say in Deuteronomy 4:31?

4. There is no god great like God (verse 13). Our great God does great deeds and wonders, so he can help us through our troubles (verses 10-20). How is our great God described (Deut. 7:21; 10:17; Psa. 95:3)? How should we act in the presence of our great God (Neh. 8:6)?