

Psalms 77:0 ¶ To the chief Musician, to Jeduthun, A Psalm of Asaph.

One of the psalms written by Asaph and given to Jeduthun, one of his co-leaders of the music ministry at the temple.

As I read through this psalm several times, it is apparent that the psalmist is going through a pressing time of trouble; and he is searching for an answer from God.

Psalms 77:1 ¶ I cried unto God with my voice, *even* unto God with my voice; and he gave ear unto me.

Psalms 77:2 In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord: my sore ran in the night, and ceased not: my soul refused to be comforted.

Psalms 77:3 I remembered God, and was troubled: I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed. Selah.

Asaph opens his psalm with his attention fixed squarely on himself and his situation. I can certainly identify. When times are tough and/or our hearts are breaking, it is most natural to focus on self rather than fixing our eyes on the character and promises of God. He admits that he knows that God has heard his prayer, but he just doesn't think God is paying any attention to him; and he wonders why.

His trouble is such that he can't get any sleep. The Hebrew for "sore" seems to be a reference to praying to God with uplifted hands throughout the night, but he could find no comfort. As he tried to understand why God would ignore him, he became even more troubled.

The Hebrew for "complained" indicates that he was talking to himself as he tried to reason things out, but all he felt was darkness surrounding him.

I have to admit that there have been times that I have wondered if God was listening because the answer(s) that I expected were not forthcoming in light of my expectation as I considered the scripture.

Selah = a pause, a time for meditation or reflection

Psalms 77:4 Thou holdest mine eyes waking: I am so troubled that I cannot speak.

Asaph attributes his wakefulness to God's doing and his distress so acute that he can no longer give voice to his prayers.

Psalms 77:5 I have considered the days of old, the years of ancient times.

Psalms 77:6 I call to remembrance my song in the night: I commune with mine own heart: and my spirit made diligent search.

Finally, Asaph turns his thoughts in a different direction. He begins to think about years past and the ancient history of his people. He remembers when he sang songs in the night to find comfort. I think the NLT expressed the last part well: "*I search my soul and think about the difference now.*"

**Psalms 77:7 Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will he be favourable no more?
Psalms 77:8 Is his mercy clean gone for ever? doth *his* promise fail for evermore?
Psalms 77:9 Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies? Selah.**

In this section, Asaph is transparent about his thoughts, his doubts. Would God really cast him off forever? Would he never again experience God's favor? Would he never again experience God's mercy? Will God not keep His promises? Does God no longer care; will He never again show His kindness? Is God so angry that He is withholding His tender love and compassion?

God has been clear in His word to declare His character. Though we may question God's ways in dealing with us, we should never question His character throughout the process. Asaph was honest enough to share his doubts, but he doesn't stop there. He continues his meditations and works His focus back to God's faithfulness as shown through his actions in dealing with His people.

God always receives His repentant children and is eager to show them His favor. Jeremiah tells us that His compassions are new every morning.

Lamentations 3:22–23 "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is thy faithfulness."

God always keeps His word, His promises.

Psalms 119:160 "Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever."

Ezekiel 12:25 "For I am the Lord: I will speak, and the word that I shall speak shall come to pass...."

Selah = a pause, an opportunity for meditation and reflection

Psalms 77:10 And I said, This *is* my infirmity: *but I will remember* the years of the right hand of the most High.

I liked the CJB for verse 10: *"Then I add, "That's my weakness — [supposing] the Most High's right hand could change."* How true it is that we are so quickly apt to let our troubles cause us to question God's character; for that is exactly what we do when, as His child, we think that He must have forgotten us, or no longer loves us, or is allowing evil to affect us outside of His sovereign purpose for good cause. His word is full of the truth that God is love and is intimately involved with all that affects us.

1 John 4:8 "He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love."

Romans 8:28 "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

Psalms 139:1–4 “O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether.”

Psalms 77:11 ¶ I will remember the works of the Lord: surely I will remember thy wonders of old.

Psalms 77:12 I will meditate also of all thy work, and talk of thy doings.

Asaph’s thoughts have finally turned him in the right direction. He turns his thoughts to the works of the LORD and the great wonders of old that He had performed on behalf of His people. Instead of focusing on his own circumstances, he has decided to meditate on God’s goodness and talk about all He had done.

I liked Spurgeon’s thoughts: “Sweet work to enter into Jehovah’s work of grace, and there to lie down and ruminate, every thought being absorbed in the one precious subject. It is well that the overflow of the mouth should indicate the good matter which fills the heart....A meditative man should be a talker, otherwise he is a mental miser, a mill which grinds corn only for the miller.”

Psalms 77:13 Thy way, O God, *is* in the sanctuary: who *is so* great a God as *our* God?

Psalms 77:14 Thou *art* the God that doest wonders: thou hast declared thy strength among the people.

Psalms 77:15 Thou hast with *thine* arm redeemed thy people, the sons of Jacob and Joseph. Selah.

The Hebrew for the word “sanctuary” makes reference to being clean and holy. Asaph is declaring God to be holy. His question is rhetorical and is intended to convey that there is no being as great as God. Only God can do the mighty wonders that He has performed on behalf of His people. It is only through the strength of God that the sons of Jacob and Joseph, the people of Israel, were delivered from out of Egypt.

Selah = a pause, an opportunity for meditation and reflection

Psalms 77:16 The waters saw thee, O God, the waters saw thee; they were afraid: the depths also were troubled.

Psalms 77:17 The clouds poured out water: the skies sent out a sound: thine arrows also went abroad.

Psalms 77:18 The voice of thy thunder *was* in the heaven: the lightnings lightened the world: the earth trembled and shook.

In this section, I think Asaph is picturing how God parted the Red Sea to provide a way of escape from Pharaoh’s army. He pictures the waters as terrified as God gave the command and sent out thunder and lightning from the heavens that lit up the skies and shook the earth.

I never pictured God using a thunderstorm in the process. Maybe he used the thunderstorm in keeping the Pharaoh’s army away as the great winds formed the path through the sea.

Exodus 14:21 "And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided."

Psalms 77:19 Thy way *is* in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known.

Psalms 77:20 Thou leddest thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

The fact is that God made a path through the great waters and led the people to safety under the leadership of Moses and Aaron.

Exodus 14:22 "And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left."

"thy footsteps are not known" – The translators reference the fact that God's steps could not be seen, but I think the main point is that the people had to step out in faith to take the path God set before them—a path that must have been quite scary as far as I am concerned.

I liked this observation from the New Bible Commentary on the ending of the psalm: "With this the psalm ends abruptly—designedly so. It is as if the psalmist said to himself 'That's it! That's the way forward—not prayer for circumstances to be changed (1-4), nor fretful recollection that things are not what they used to be (5-9), but remembering the works of God and the God who performed the works.'"