

O God, Do Something about the Enemy!

God knows what to do, but He wants to hear you on the issue

Psalm 83

Don Ruhl • Savage Street, Grants Pass, Oregon • February 10, In the year of our Lord, 2013

Scripture Reader and Reading: Dan Calvert – Judges 7.24, 25

Song Leader and Song Suggestions: Kevin Michael – No suggestions, other than the greatness of our God

Prelude:

I. In Matthew 6, Jesus instructed us against vain repetitions in prayer, for

- A. our Father does not hear us based on the amount of words that we use, and
- B. Jesus revealed the Father's omniscience in our lives,

8 "...your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him" (Matt 6.8).

II. Yet, Jesus still instructed us to pray.

- A. Evidently, God knows what to do in our lives, but
- B. He wants to hear what we have to say on matters, and
 - 1. He will act accordingly,
 - 2. sometimes changing what He was going to do.

III. Other times, He does nothing,

- A. waiting to see what His children will do,
- B. wanting them to speak to Him, so that
 - 1. when He does act,
 - 2. we will do that it was Him.

IV. I believe Psalm 83 provides such an example.

Persuasion:

I. Psalm 83.0 – Asaph Knew the Enemy

- o A Song.
A Psalm of Asaph.

(Psa 83.0).

- A. Asaph lived during the days of David
- B. when Israel engaged in many wars, because
 - 1. their enemies wanted to topple Israel
 - 2. during the time of its strongest king.
- C. However, Asaph knew what to do about it, and
 - 1. wrote this psalm,
 - 2. whether sung or prayed,
 - a) believing that God would hear the petition, and
 - b) the Holy Spirit preserved it that Christians might learn how to pray.

II. Psalm 83.1 – O God, Act!

1 Do not keep silent, O God!
Do not hold Your peace,
And do not be still, O God!
(Psa 83.1)

- A. God appeared detached.
 - 1. We cannot see Him.
 - 2. Is He acting?
- B. Asaph implored God not to remain inactive.
 - 1. Do not keep silent.
 - 2. Do not hold Your peace.
 - 3. Do not be still.
- C. We do what we can, but
 - 1. we remember You, the God of heaven, and
 - 2. we want You involved in our lives.

III. Psalm 83.2-8 – O God, the Enemy Acts!

- 2 For behold, Your enemies make a tumult;
And those who hate You have lifted up their head.
- 3 They have taken crafty counsel against Your people,
And consulted together against Your sheltered ones.
- 4 They have said, “Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation,
That the name of Israel may be remembered no more.”
- 5 For they have consulted together with one consent;
They form a confederacy against You:
- 6 The tents of Edom and the Ishmaelites;
Moab and the Hagrites;
- 7 Gebal, Ammon, and Amalek;
Philistia with the inhabitants of Tyre;
- 8 Assyria also has joined with them;
They have helped the children of Lot.
(Psa 83.2-8)

A. Asaph saw the purpose of the enemy:

1. They make a tumult.
2. They hate God.
3. They have lifted up their head.
4. They have taken crafty counsel against God’s people.
5. They desire to cut off God’s people.

B. The confederacy included:

1. Edom
2. Ishmaelites
3. Moab
4. Hagrites
5. Gebal
6. Ammon

7. Amalek

8. Philistia

9. Tyre

10. Assyria

a) All of them offering their help to the children of Lot,

b) Moab (number 3 on the list), and

c) Ammon (number 6 on the list).

C. The world was against Israel, and

1. I often think that the world is against the church.

2. Think of those who want to silence us:

a) Atheists

b) Evolutionists

c) Humanists

d) Secular liberals

e) The homosexual movement

f) Liberal mainline churches

g) Muslims

h) Communists

i) Entertainment industry

j) Liberal politicians

D. All these enemies against God's people then and now,

1. outnumber us, out-finance us, outgun us, but

2. if we are on God's team, we cannot lose.

4 For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory

that has overcome the world—our faith (1Jo 5.4).

- a) Truly, as Jesus warned the apostles,
- b) all nations will hate us (Matt 24.9).

E. Here is what we should see in verses 2–8.

- 1. Those who hate God,
- 2. hate His people.
 - a) Those who hate God’s people,
 - b) hate God.
 - (1) That stirs Him up, and
 - (a) in combination with our prayers,
 - (b) He acts.
 - (2) I like the way the Messiah spoke through Zechariah, speaking of us,

8 For thus says the Lord of hosts: “He sent Me after glory, to the nations which plunder you; *for he who touches you touches the apple of His eye.* 9 For surely *I will shake My hand against them*, and they shall become spoil for *their servants*. Then you will know that the Lord of hosts has sent Me” (Zec 2.8, 9).

- 3. Oh, God, hasten that day!

IV. Selah

- A. Think of all that the Bible shows us
 - 1. God has done against His enemies
 - 2. who are also enemies of His people.
- B. It should overwhelm you to see just how much He cares for us.
 - 1. He repeatedly tells us to pray to Him about
 - a) our problems and

- b) problem people in our lives.
- 2. He wants to help, but
 - a) He will back off,
 - b) if we do not want Him.

V. Psalm 83.9-15 – O God, Act Against the Enemy!

- 9 Deal with them as with Midian,
As with Sisera,
As with Jabin at the Brook Kishon,
- 10 Who perished at En Dor,
Who became as refuse on the earth.
- 11 Make their nobles like Oreb and like Zeeb,
Yes, all their princes like Zebah and Zalmunna,
- 12 Who said, “Let us take for ourselves
The pastures of God for a possession.”
- 13 O my God, make them like the whirling dust,
Like the chaff before the wind!
- 14 As the fire burns the woods,
And as the flame sets the mountains on fire,
- 15 So pursue them with Your tempest,
And frighten them with Your storm.
(Psa 83.9-15)

A. Asaph wanted God to deal with the enemy

- 1. As He did with Midian,
 - a) as with Sisera,
 - b) as with Jabin,
 - (1) who perished and
 - (2) who became as refuse.
- 2. Deal with the enemy like Oreb and Zeeb,
 - a) like Zebah and Zalmunna.
 - b) They planned to take the pastures of God for a possession.

3. Asaph used back-to-back episodes from the Book of Judges
 - a) to remind God of His dealings with Israel's enemies in the past,
 - b) defeating Jabin, king of Canaan, and the commander of his army, Sisera,
 - (1) by causing the Canaanites to fall by Israelite swords, and
 - (2) by having Jael drive a tent peg through the temples of Sisera, and
 - c) dispatching Oreb and Zeeb, the princes of the Midianites,
 - (1) whom Gideon and his army fought, and
 - (2) Gideon's army beheaded the princes and brought their heads to him,
 - (a) they continued to pursue the kings of the Midianites,
 - (b) Zebah and Zalmunna, whom Gideon himself killed.

B. Therefore, Asaph wanted the Lord to deal with Israel's current enemies,

1. as He had those of the past.
2. The psalmists did this frequently,
 - a) recounting to God how He had acted in the past,
 - b) imploring Him to continue to do as before.

C. Asaph pleaded further that God deal with them

1. like the whirling dust,
2. like the chaff before the wind, and
3. as fire burns a forest, setting a whole mountain on fire,
 - a) so Asaph wanted God to pursue them with His tempest, and
 - b) to frighten them with His storm.

VI. Psalm 83.16-18 – O God, Act to Save or to Shame the Enemy!

- 16 Fill their faces with shame,
That they may seek Your name, O Lord.
- 17 Let them be confounded and dismayed forever;
Yes, let them be put to shame and perish,

18 That they may know that You, whose name alone is the Lord,
Are the Most High over all the earth.
(Psa 83.16-18)

A. The first possible goal of God's wrath:

1. Fill their faces with shame
2. that it would lead them to seek the name of the Lord.

B. The second possible goal of God's wrath:

1. Let them experience confounding and dismaying forever
2. that their shame would lead to their perishing.

C. The third possible goal of God's wrath:

1. That the shame they experienced at the hands of God
2. would make them know
 - a) that God is the Most High over all the Earth.
 - b) That they would also know that His name alone is Lord,
 - (1) not just *adonai*, but
 - (2) LORD, Jehovah, Yahweh, according to the Hebrew.

D. Please observe that even in the Old Testament,

1. the Holy Spirit wanted us to know
2. that the Old Testament has a message for all the Earth.
 - a) All the Earth then, and all the Earth now,
 - b) needs to know the God of ancient Israel, because
 - (1) they shall experience the consequences of this psalm,
 - (2) if they continue to conspire against the Lord's people.

E. He is the Most High over all the earth, because

1. as the Book of Numbers declares, He is

22 "...the God of the spirits of all flesh..." (Num 16.22),

2. and as the Book of Job says,

10 "In whose hand is the life of every living thing,
And the breath of all mankind?"
(Job 12.10)

3. and as the Book of Acts says,

26 "And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all
the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the
boundaries of their dwellings... 28 for in Him we live and move and have
our being, as also some of your own poets have said, 'For we are also His
offspring'" (Acts 17.26, 28),

4. and as the Book of Hebrews refers to Him,

9 ...the Father of spirits... (Heb 12.9).

Exhortation:

I. God knows that the church has many enemies, and

A. He knows that it distresses us, but

B. He also wants us to place the matter in His hands.

II. Therefore, do as Asaph did in verse 1,

A. speak to God

1. that He not keep silent,

2. that He not hold His peace,

3. that He not be still, but

B. that He look at what the enemy does to the church,

1. making a problem for us,
2. hating our God,
3. lifting up their heads against Him,
4. taking crafty counsel against us, and
5. desiring to cut us off from the earth, especially in the United States.

III. Plead with Him to defeat our enemies,

- A. even as He has defeated His enemies in the past
- B. for both natural Israel and spiritual Israel, which is the church.

IV. However, be sure that ultimately in your prayers for

- A. your enemies,
- B. the Lord's enemies, and
- C. the church's enemies,
 1. that you seek first their repentance,
 2. that, as Asaph said in verse 16,
 - a) they may seek the Lord's face, but
 - b) if they do not,
 - (1) we want them silenced and defeated, and
 - (2) that the church hold up the truth to shine brightly.

D. Consider this modern adaptation of Psalm 83.

V. When someone persecutes you for what you believe,

- A. seek the prayers of your brethren, and
- B. let us with you seek the God of heaven.