

‘WHEN I REMEMBER GOD—THEN I AM DISTURBED’

PSALM 77

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INTRODUCTION

We are surely in a bad condition when we cannot think of God without being disturbed! (3)

But such was the state of this psalmist.

We cannot be sure of the time period, but a good suggestion is near the end of Josiah’s reign when Babylon was rising and on the move and Judah’s condition was extremely precarious. One clue is the relation of this psalm—esp. vv. 16-20—with Habakkuk 3:10-15. It is likely that Habakkuk was influenced by our psalm.

The psalmist had been praying—fervently, but apparently to no avail (1-2). He had spent many a sleepless night (4). Remembering the past greatness and glory did not seem to help (5), and thinking of his former joyous “song in the night” just made his current circumstances seem more miserable (6). All his soul searching led to a dead end (6b).

It appeared that the Lord had ultimately rejected them and would never be favorable again (7).

God’s covenant faithfulness seems to have ceased forever, and His promise had apparently come to an end (8).

He knew that God was a gracious God, but had he forgotten how to display His grace? (9a)

In His anger with His people had He totally withdrawn His compassion (9b)

His grief and sickness (emotionally, spiritually) is what he realizes that he must endure (10a)

The right hand of God—the hand of His great power and blessing for His people, has apparently changed. He is no longer dealing with them as He had done in days gone by (10b).

What is he to do?

He will focus on the God of his people; the God who has truly done amazing deeds. He will stop focusing on his current problems and comparing them with the past (11-12). He uses numerous words for God’s mighty actions:

- 1) “Deeds” of Yah
- 2) “Wonders” from of old (11—this is what he “remembers”)
- 3) “Work”
- 4) “Deeds” (12—this is what he “meditates” on and “muses” on)
- 5) “His way”—is in **holiness** (13a)
- 6) There is no one to compare—not even so called gods (13b)
- 7) He is the God who “works wonders” (14--verb root of two of the nouns above; “wonders” same as #2)
- 8) His “strength” by which He does all of the above—made known among the “peoples” (14b).
- 9) His “arm”—of strength—by which He has redeemed (as a **kinsman redeemer**) His people (15); the people who are the sons of **Jacob** and of **Joseph**.

Finally, he will focus on the mightiest act God had ever performed for Israel—the Exodus out of Egypt and crossing of the Red Sea (16-20).

- 1) The waters saw Him, they saw Him and went into labor like a mother in childbirth! (16a)
- 2) The depths (same word as Gen. 1:2) of the waters “trembled” (16b)
- 3) The clouds could not hold onto their contents—they poured them out (17a)
- 4) The skies gave forth a rumbling sound (17b).
- 5) God’s arrows “flashed here and there” (17c).
- 6) The sound of God’s thunder was in the whirlwind or in the wheels of His chariot (18a)
- 7) His lightnings “lit up the world” (18b).
- 8) The earth itself trembled and shook (18c).
- 9) God’s **way** was in the sea; His **paths** were in the mighty waters (19a).
- 10) God’s footprints may not be known (19b); Perowne summarizes that *we do not know “what precise track through the gulf the passage was effected”; we do not know “by what precise means the deliverance was wrought.” In fact, “we know not, and we need not know; the obscurity, the mystery here, as elsewhere, was part*

of the lesson....All that we see distinctly is, that through this dark and terrible night, with the enemy pressing close behind, and the driving sea on either side, He led His people like sheep by the hand of Moses and Aaron."

11) God led His people like a flock; he led them by the hand of Moses and Aaron (20).

CONCLUSION

And so our psalm comes to an end. Possibly not the end which we would like.

Why not come to a full resolution? Maybe, because it is like real life; we don't always come to a full resolution!

But, we know that God is in control. God who has worked so powerfully in the past.

We can put our hands into His hands and trust Him with our very souls.

We can trust him forever; we can trust Him even when we cannot see through the darkness of our lives and problems.

"His way is in the sea; His paths are in the mighty waters. **What are all those to Him?**

He will guide His people like a flock—He is the great Shepherd.

YOU MUST TRUST THE GOD WHOSE WAY WAS IN THE SEA!