

## PSALM 77

*Comfort in Trouble from Recalling God's Mighty Deeds.*

### INTRODUCTION.

- A. To the Chief Musician. To Jeduthun. A Psalm of Asaph. "The Problem of Handling Doubt in Difficult Times."
- B. This psalm is similar to Psalms 74 as it describes almost despair and a lack of understanding of the hardships and tragedy that has come upon God's people. Some have placed this psalm at the time of the exile in Babylon like Psa. 74. The national distress causes many to wonder if God has forsaken them forever (77:7-10). It is easier to see the fault of others than to see how sinful our own behavior is. Therefore, this psalm seems to have been written about the same time and of the same situation as Psa. 74.
- C. Coffman quotes Dummelow's analysis of the psalmist's personal perplexity in contemplating Judah's national distress:
  - I. Trouble when prayer brings no comfort (77:1-3).
  - II. Remembrance of a brighter past suggests God has now cast off His people for ever (77:4-9).
  - III. Comfort from the story of God's wondrous works of old:
    - a. The deliverance of Israel from Egypt (77:15).
    - b. The miraculous passage through the Red Sea (77:16-19).
    - c. God's guidance of Israel through the wilderness (77:20).

### THE TEXT.

- 77:1** My voice *rises* to God, and I will cry aloud;  
My voice *rises* to God, and He will hear me.
- 2** In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord;  
In the night my hand was stretched out without weariness;  
My soul refused to be comforted.
- 3** *When* I remember God, then I am disturbed;  
*When* I sigh, then my spirit grows faint. Selah.
- 4** You have held my eyelids *open*;  
I am so troubled that I cannot speak.
- 5** I have considered the days of old,  
The years of long ago.
- 6** I will remember my song in the night;  
I will meditate with my heart,  
And my spirit ponders:
- 7** Will the Lord reject forever?  
And will He never be favorable again?
- 8** Has His lovingkindness ceased forever?  
Has *His* promise come to an end forever?
- 9** Has God forgotten to be gracious,  
Or has He in anger withdrawn His compassion? Selah.
- 10** Then I said, "It is my grief,  
That the right hand of the Most High has changed."
- 11** I shall remember the deeds of the LORD;  
Surely I will remember Your wonders of old.
- 12** I will meditate on all Your work  
And muse on Your 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 strength among the peoples.
- 15** You have by Your power redeemed Your people,  
The sons of Jacob and Joseph. Selah.
- 16** The waters saw You, O God;

- The waters saw You, they were in anguish;  
The deeps also trembled.
- 17 The clouds poured out water;  
The skies gave forth a sound;  
Your arrows flashed here and there.
- 18 The sound of Your thunder was in the whirlwind;  
The lightnings lit up the world;  
The earth trembled and shook.
- 19 Your way was in the sea  
And Your paths in the mighty waters,  
And Your footprints may not be known.
- 20 You led Your people like a flock  
By the hand of Moses and Aaron.

## COMMENTS.

- A. Trouble when Prayer Brings no Comfort (77:1-3).  
**[v1-3]** “I cried out to God...” (77:2) “...I sought the Lord...without ceasing...” (77:2). “I remembered God...was troubled; I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed.” (77:3). The psalmist expresses the frustration and despair of a nation that still does not realize how terrible their sins are, and that God would tolerate it no longer. We still suffer many disappointments because we underestimate the consequences of our sins.
- B. Compared to the Past, God Seems to have Cast off His People Forever (77:4-10).  
**[v4-6]** “...I am so troubled that I cannot speak...I have considered the days of old, the years of ancient times.” The past is helpful in building faith in God, but we must also have a realistic evaluation of the present. It is a common mistake to expect the same blessings as someone else w/out doing what they did.  
**[v7-9]** “Will the Lord cast off forever?...” These three verses continue to express this thought in six synonymous phrases. The repetitions reinforce and emphasizes the despair.
- C. There is Comfort in God’s Wondrous Works of Old.
1. *The History of God’s Love of Israel Is Encouraging.*  
**[v10]** “...This is MY ANGUISH; but I will remember...” The psalmist admits that his questioning whether God has cast off His people forever is his weakness, and not God’s. As this was true with fleshly Israel, so it is w/spiritual Israel, the church. This verse is the turning point of the psalm when the psalmist recognizes that the problem is with himself and begins to focus on what God had done for His people to increase his faith and courage.  
**[v11-13]** “I will remember...I will meditate...and talk of all Your deeds.” He now begins a constructive, faith-building, meditation about God’s wonderful works.  
**[v14]** “You are the God who does wonders...You have declared Your strength among the peoples.” When he begins to reflect on the power and nature of God, and the purpose of His wonderful works, he has a better perspective from which to evaluate the present state of exile.  
**[v15]** “You have...redeemed Your people, the sons of Jacob and Joseph.” This seems to be a direct reference to the deliverance from Egypt.
  2. *The Marvelous Miracle at the Red Sea.*  
**[v16-18]** “The clouds poured out water... Your thunder... whirlwind... the lightnings... the earth trembled...” These descriptions are not given in the Exodus account of crossing the Red Sea, and some have questioned whether this is the event referred to, but that seems to be the best identity of this description. Inspired writers often give additional details that are not in the inspired accounts referred to. But if we believe in inspiration, it does not mean that every inspired account must have the same details.  
**[v19]** “Your way was in the sea, your path in the great waters...” This seems to clearly refer to the crossing of the Red Sea by Israel.

3. *God's Guidance of Israel in the Wilderness.*

**[v20]** This reference to the people being led like a flock by Moses and Aaron seems to clearly refer to the 40 years wandering in the wilderness. This follows the above description of God's "way in the sea" would seem to clearly establish the crossing the Red Sea as the previous verses. This psalm is a good illustration of how to recover from doubt when facing difficult circumstances.