

Wherever we turn, the voice of the LORD speaks mightily through the Old Testament prophets. For example, we learn in Exodus how God prepared Moses to be the mighty prophet who would confront Pharaoh. This week we turn to another inspired servant of God, who, under David's leadership, led the worship of God's people. May our studies of David's choir director Asaph give us real encouragement as we study selected Psalms written by David's gifted musicians.

**Monday: Read Psalm 72:18-73:1**

**Generous Spirit**

Members of David's choir not only sang the Psalms which David gave them, but apparently wrote some themselves, as is the case in last week's study of Psalm 42, attributed to the Sons of Korah. Significantly, Psalm 42 begins Book Two of the Psalter, just as Psalm 73, written by Asaph, begins Book Three. Throughout the first 72 Psalms, David's authorship predominates, so that the whole collection is called, "the prayers of David son of Jesse" which end in Psalm 72:20. But it is also encouraging to hear the songs of these other musicians in Israel and to see their compositions introduce new sections of this mighty hymn book we call the Psalms. Truly God's Spirit is very generous, gifting many among His people for the high calling of worship – even giving their compositions places of honor at the beginning of different sections of the Psalms.

**Meditate and Pray:** Ask the Lord to encourage even new-comers in your church family to wholeheartedly give themselves to the worship of God. Just as God shared the Spirit that was on Moses with the elders of Israel in Numbers 11:16-17, so David shared of that same Spirit with his choir-directors and those who engaged in worship along with their king. May our King Jesus likewise abundantly pour out a fresh spirit of praise on all our worship as a church body, encouraging all of us as the Spirit of Christ leads.

**Tuesday: Read Psalm 73:1 and 1 Chronicles 16:4-6**

**Praying for a Right Memory**

The author of Psalm 73, Asaph, is our focus this week. 1 Chronicles 16:4-5 identifies him as a chief choir director who led Israel in "petition, giving thanks, and praising the Lord God of Israel." What a mandate! Praise was to be central to his calling, as the verbs to "give thanks" and "praise" make clear. But what about *making petition*? How would that fit into Asaph's calling? Well, alongside the NIV's *to make petition* there are many other translations of this verb, e.g.: *to record*, (KJV); *to invoke*, (ESV); *to celebrate*, (ASV), or *to have in mind the works of the Lord*, (Wycliffe). The basic root is *to remember*, but with a special emphasis in the Psalms on recounting *from history* the praise-worthy deeds of the LORD.

**Meditate and Pray:** Ask God to give you a good memory of all His mighty deeds of salvation in the history of His people, and in your life as well, using the words of Hymn # 99, verses 1 & 2:

*My song forever shall record  
The tender mercies of the Lord;  
Thy faithfulness will I proclaim,  
And every age shall know Thy Name.*

*I sing of mercies that endure,  
Forever builded firm and sure,  
Of faithfulness that never dies,  
Established changeless in the skies*

**.Wednesday: Read Psalm 77:7-12**

**Memory a Servant of Faith**

Asaph was a great leader of corporate worship and must have been used to leading huge Levitical choirs. Remember, under David there were no less than 4,000 Levites who were to "praise the Lord with musical instruments" 1 Chronicles 23:5. Here in Psalm 77:7-9 we see Asaph write honestly of his own struggles. He even goes so far as to question if God's unfailing love and faithful promises have disappeared! Yet, what is it that brings Asaph back to the place of renewed faith? It is the word found in Psalm 77:11 two times: the word

we translated yesterday as, *to record, to invoke, or to have in mind the works of the Lord*. In short, Asaph commits himself to remembering! No wonder one scholar has said that the basic worldview of the Old Testament is approximately the same as a “row-boat,” i.e., pointing our little “life-boat of faith” confidently into an unknown future, as we use the oars of faith, looking *ever backwards* to the great deeds of God in redemptive history!

**Meditate and Pray:** Charles Spurgeon said it best, commenting on Psalm 77:11: *Whatever else may glide into oblivion, the marvelous works of the Lord in the ancient days must not be suffered to be forgotten. Memory is a fit handmaid for faith. When faith has its 7 years of famine, memory like Joseph in Egypt opens her granaries.*

Lord Jesus, revive our faith by reviving our memories! Amen!

#### Thursday: Read Psalm 73:1-3

#### Holy Complaints

One would think that Asaph, as the director of what Dr. Sinclair Ferguson calls “The Jerusalem National Choir” would be consistently full of God-centered, triumphant praise. But many of his Psalms contain complaints and laments; for example, he admits in Ps. 73:2 that “his feet had almost slipped.” Asaph shows us a struggling believer experiencing something much more akin to our trial-fraught Christian lives.

We naturally think of upbeat, extrovert, optimistic, energetic Christians as the most likely candidates to lead our church choirs; understandably so! Asaph seems to have been the opposite; downbeat, introspective, melancholic, struggling. Hardly promising material for a music director in a city-center congregation!

Sinclair Ferguson, *Deserted by God*

**Meditate and Pray:** Thank God that the Psalms speak to our varied discouragements – even when we, like Asaph, are tempted to envy the wicked. Most of all, may the LORD make our worship together as His people to be a sweet corrective to all our spiritual distempers... just as Asaph was corrected in his complaining song when he “entered the sanctuary of God” (Psalm 73:17).

#### Friday: Read Psalm 77:7-9

#### Minor Chords

Psalm 77 is yet another song of Asaph which is full of laments. Indeed, out of the twelve Psalms attributed to Asaph (Ps. 50; 73-83) at least five are classified by scholars as Laments. It is a great comfort to us to see how this great musician is moved by the Holy Spirit to write in a way that so identifies with the people of God in all their trials. How honest and comforting the Scriptures are!

**Meditate and Pray:** Thank God for His humility and willingness to help his own – even helping his complaining saints to write songs full of the minor chords of bitter complaint, songs that are true to life for believers of every age. What a God we have, to compose such songs for us... Surely God must indeed be One who, “collects our tears in a bottle” (Psalm 56:8, KJV). Let us therefore sing to Him honestly - *not just* when we feel good or happy, but *even when* our souls are consumed with doubt. even as Hymn # 430, verses 4 & 5 express so well:

*Rough paths my feet have trod,  
since first their course began;  
feed me, thou Bread of God;  
help me, thou Son of Man.*

*For still the desert lies  
my thirsting soul before;  
O living waters, rise  
within me evermore.*

Hymn # 430, verses 4 & 5