


ARAMAIC BIBLE COMPANION

PSALMS BOOK THREE 73-89

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PSALM 73

TITLE A Mizmor for Asaph (The collector)

INTRODUCTION-ON BEING "GOOD"

*When God is good to you, you will know it-but what does it really mean? The Hebrew word **brf** is used of "a pleasant fragrance"; "a good morning or evening greeting"(a wish for good); "a cheery heart" Esther 1.10; "doing something well" 1Kings 8.18; of "good" land or gold or trees; of "being kind" and a "kind or bountiful" eye Proverbs 22.9; "a happy lot" Ecc. 8.12 as when the "lines fall to me in pleasant places; of God's "loving-kindness" or covenant Psalm 65.12, Psalm 69.17 and Psalm 109.21 Nehemiah speaks of it as that which You will do for me" Nehemiah 5.19 ,13.31. When God is good to a person or nation the result will be joy and happiness but the effect is "keeping his covenant" and" doing things" for that nation or people of a specific nature-so it has to do with actions that spring from love in the heart of God. The "Leviticus" of the Psalms starts with holiness.*

1. WHEN ENVY RULES THE HEART 1-12

God is **definitely** good to Israel-to those **who are pure in heart** [*Hebrew **rrb** like our "bar of soap"-the Hebrew for "soap" is Bor. "purity" is 'being washed clean' 'being separated from chaff' being 'polished like a sword' so a pure heart produces clean thoughts words and actions; is consecrated and an effective instrument of God*] I had turned my feet away just a little. My happiness or steps seemed not to have slipped. I was jealous of the proud and those who celebrated and I saw the peace of the wicked or rebellious. For they have no deep deadly wounds; their form is strong (*or strongly*) built. *Luther puts it, "they are lusty and strong [-look at their eyes; listen to their speech; the whole earth is full of their influence";* they are free from the vexation and travail of the flesh; they are not touched by the weakness of Man. For their excellence is a necklace; they array themselves in violence for their clothing. Their well produces fatness; the thoughts of their hearts are dark; they mock and speak of evil fraud; they speak out of arrogance. Their mouths set them or appoint themselves to heaven; their tongues are awarding them inheritance on earth. **Therefore His people turn there and waters of fullness are drunk with him.** *Even God's people follow them and drink at their well and their wine!* They say, 'How can God know?' Is there a capacity of awareness in Elyon? Behold these are the rebels and they always enjoy prosperity [*Hebrew **hl v** 'ease' even 'carelessness' (of God)*] they increase their wealth.

2. WHEN HURT OBSCURES MY VISION 13-16

Definitely (the word makes a link with v.1) I have continued to cleanse my heart in vain and have bathed my hands in innocence, where I have been plagued all day and I have been chastened morning by morning. If I said, 'I will calculate this way' behold I would be faithless to a whole generation of your sons. When I gave thought to understand this (state of things) it was weariness to my eyes. *It would appear that Asaph was weary in trying to comprehend it and languid as he contemplated it. Asaph is well aware that he was becoming a cynic.*

3 WHEN THE CROSS CHANGES ME 17-22

Until I came to the holy place of God I was able to umpire about their aftermath. *Asaph was able to see that these worldly ones had no eternal wellbeing ahead. He could see what a difference there was between "their peace" and "his peace". His link word recurs, **definitely** You place them in slippery inheritances of rest or motion-where they will be stuck or go on and on. And You cause them to fall to desolate ruin. [*Hebrew **ta'vm** 'desolations'*] How at that very time it happened in a moment. They are taken away in calamity. As a dream when one awakes O Lord in terror you will despise "their shadows." *Perowne sees it as what happens in God's judgement-"men pass from Him as shadows." This is as I understand it truest to the text which is suggestive of the image of God in such men wanting all**

desirable form and continuing only as shadow. When my heart was embittered [Hebrew xmj "smarting"] and my reins [Hebrew hylk 'inmost mind] were pierced with pain and I was stupid or kindled with anger [Hebrew r[b] and did not understand I was a beast with you. Asaph is telling us he was not responding as a son to the Father to the directions of the Lord and was going his own way. Asaph reminds us that we can spend time adrift from God and vent our anger on the one who s loves us.

4 WHEN I ABIDE I LIVE FOR OTHERS 23-28

But I am always with you. You held me with your right hand.(past) By your counsel [Hebrew x[y]'your plan' 'your advice' God's great plan for us stands and his day on day counsel keep us from slipping further away-indeed bring us back again] you lead me back(present) and afterwards you will receive me to glory(future). Who belongs to me in heaven and I have no-one so precious [Hebrew xpj 'favourably disposed- 'that I desire' or 'delight in'] on earth along with You.

Who have I on earth beside you none in heaven but You
Saviour, Saviour hear my humble cry
While on others you are calling do not pass me by

My blood relations and my own heart are gone or vanished. The strength of my heart and my inheritance is God for ever. For behold those distant from you will perish. You will cut off [Hebrew tmx 'cut off' 'render extinct' 'destroy'] all those who commit whoredom against you. As for me it has been good to keep close to You continually. I have set my refuge of trust in the Lord Yahweh to recount your entire ministry. *Asaph sees the Lord as ministering and doing so by angelic like messenger in his life. He has a very personal experience that counts precious the personal ministry of the Lord to him and whereas he doubts his own fickle failing heart and desires and owns that his relatives have in large part forsaken the Lord he clings alone to the God of his salvation. This psalm is deeply encouraging for any who have scarce any relatives in Christ but are continuing in faithfulness to serve Christ*

*Sinners Jesus will receive
Sound this word of Grace to all
Who the heavenly pathway leave,
All who linger, all who fall*

PSALM 74

A PLEA FOR THE DIVINE DEFENCE OF THE JEWS

TITLE A Maschil for Asaph. This is a teaching psalm. The equivalent word in Arabic is used of "binding". The Hebrew root is "prudent" as when Isaac prudently crossed his hands in blessing Jacob (Gen 48.14) he placed his hands "prudently" The Arabs also use the word "poetry" for doctrine and Maschil could simply mean "poem" and therefore "doctrine" in a similar sense to the Arabic. I think the comment of Gesenius is apt when he compares it to the English "**look of circumspection**". *In the Greek equivalent of Gen 48.14 we have εναλλασσω which carries the notion of "change". Thus prudence "changes things" and teaching makes a difference and the sudden" change of hand position" by Isaac is described as "prudent". Each Maschil is directed at changing lives and doctrine itself is in very character a tool for change in behaviour just as poetry is a "change" from prose. The NKJ has "contemplation" which fits the idea of "giving thought" to ones actions or position.*

DESTRUCTION OF ISRAEL'S PLACES OF WORSHIP 1-7

O God why have you cast us off as polluted [Hebrew hmz as a "stench" of water is evaded Isa. 19.6 where the cause and effect are associated-as the "shallowness" of the water leads to "stagnancy."] **Why have you cast us off for ever?** [Hebrew jxn "clearly" or "completely"] *Asaph is concerned at the thorough-going nature of the divine abhorrence. He asks reason. Why does your anger smoke against the sheep of your pasturing? The idea of "smoke" is that it demonstrates the presence of fire and the danger of a renewed blaze. Remember your assembly whom you bought of old. Asaph speaks of Israel as a Reed that God set upright and a measuring reed at that. Israel is a measure of God's covenant love. Another sense has to do with a "branch of a chandelier" so that Israel is a sort of*

Menorah to the world-a "light-bearer. Why should God dispense with such a nation that He created? The tribe of your heritage which you redeemed The personal Goel redeemer interest of God like that of Boaz had a very definitive interest and affection for Ruth as God had for the nation in this case-so what explains God's apparent disaffection? This mount Zion-you have lived in it. The very home form home of Yahweh could hardly be so despised. Lift up your feet in face of the continuous destruction or tumults God is called on to speed up his pace of reaction to the wasteful destruction of His people's heritage... against all the destruction of the enemy in the sanctuary. Your enemies howl as a lion in the midst of your meeting place. They set up banners-their signs. This would seem to be alternative pagan religious symbolism. He sees himself as coming to lift up axes in a thicket of trees. And now (at this season) they will beat entirely to pieces its carved work with hammers and axes. They have shot or spread fire into your holy place. They have defiled to the earth the dwelling place of Your Name. They have said in their hearts, "Let us dispossess (them) [Hebrew hny] entirely" They have burned all the meeting places of God in the land. There may be a guide to the date of composition in this phrase which suggests a later time when the synagogue had become the local place of meeting.

NOTE ON THE "SYNAGOGUE"

Ezekiel 20.1 "Then certain of the elders of Israel came to me and sat before me" is the earliest idea of a Rabbi and a Torah and a synagogue. *This Moedh or 'meeting' appears to have been instituted following the destruction of Jerusalem and to have afforded solidarity to worshipping Jews during the exile.*

A single OT reference to "meeting places" apart from the temple in Psalm 74 has been connected to Antiochus Epiphanes (2nd century B.C.) which would seem an incredibly late time for a psalm to enter the collection. The "Collector" or Asaph is a term for a role not an individual in later time. The main "choirmaster" of David's day would have been **Chenaniah** the Master of Song (1 Chronicles 15.27)

C.L.Feinberg (Semitics don of Talbot Seminary L.A.) is impressed with the view of A Menes in his "History of the Jews in Ancient Times". Menes states, *"The synagogue became the cradle of an entirely new type of social and religious life and established a foundation for a religious community of universal scope."* R.W Moss opinions that 'the administrative and worship centres existed prior to the exile' but with the carrying away to Babylon they became exclusively houses of worship.

Legend has it that there were 394 or even 480 synagogues at Jerusalem when Titus destroyed the city. It is all but certain that *the "great synagogue" (with 120 members) was established by Nehemiah* at the time of the return from exile(circa 400 BC).The synagogue of Capernaum which I have seen dates from the days of our LORD and that in Beit Alpha in the Jordan valley from the 5th century. Another example is the Hammath Tiberias synagogue which was built in the 4th c.A.D. Unlike Beit Alpha its ark occupied a separate room not an apse. [It is of interest that Murphy O'Connor argues that the builders included the Zodiac as an architectural feature because their desire to look into the future was so strong and so they rendered its inclusion acceptable. One might also see the Zodiac as possessing a spiritual and prophetic meaning of great antiquity which was very corrupted in very early time.]

END OF THE PROPHETIC ERA 9--11

We do not see our prophetic signs; there is no longer any prophet and there is none with us who knows personally until when (Messiah). *In the days of Daniel and in the days of Isaiah and Ezekiel there were oracles concerning the dawning of world redemption.* How long O God the adversary will scorn and reproach [the use of the Hebrew *prj* is of two-fold value. (a) It speaks about the cold scorn of others and (b) it speaks about the 'autumn and winter' when that condition persists!-but spring would come at last] Will the enemy deride [Heb *xan* -used of deriding religious teaching cf *xll*] Your name into perpetuity. Why do you take back your hand, Your right hand? From the midst of Your lap destroy them continually. *It is as if the enemy had got into the very garments of God and the exhortation is that He should destroy these interlopers.*

ANCIENT FEASTS OF SALVATION 12-17

For God is my king from old time inspiring and undertaking [*the Hebrew l [p speaks of an illustrious task of saving]* the feat of salvation in the land.

- (i) You divided the sea by your power [Hebrew ז[of vehement heroic or divine power]-conquering Egypt
- (ii) You broke the chiefs of **Nineveh** [*Hebrew hymn*]-upon the sea recognised by the Romans and earlier by the Greeks as the "builder" of Nineveh(now Mosul) or Nimrod.-hence the ancient religion of Bel and the Dragon and the zodiacal corrupt religion of Babylon. They worshipped the fish god-but God's servant Jonah shattered the old faith and the people repented
- (iii) You broke down or crushed like a reed the chiefs or princes of Leviathan. (*Symbolic of an hostile power -the symbol being an animal with folds of power-from hml [to join]used in Isaiaha27.1 where is used of Babylon*) Thus Babylon which succeeded Nineveh was absolutely shattered by God's servant Cyrus who diverted the Euphrates channel and marched along the reed bed to take the city
- (iv) And gave him to be consumed by a people of Ships or the desert. This could present the destruction of Babylon by people of the desert wastes of the north or Medo- Persia itself by the Greeks.
- (v) You made a wide plain from fountain and stream -*exampled by the passing of Jordan as in the sea*
- (vi) You dried up perennial flowing rivers. *Examples are the drying of the Red sea and the Euphrates.*
- (vii) The day is yours by creation and the night also. You established light and darkness
- (viii) You put in place [*Heb bxn 'fixed and settled'*]all the boundaries of the earth(sea and mountain bounds)
- (ix) As a potter you formed [*Hebrew rxy]* summer and winter. **God rounded the earth so it spins like a pot under his perpetual direction what have you but summer and winter?**(*Pre-dating Kepler etc*)

REMEMBER O LORD 18-23

Remember this, 'The enemy has reproached O Yahweh' and a people of folly has rejected or spoken evil of Your Name. Do not give your dove to the wild beast. Do not be unmindful of the life of your indigent ones perpetually. Look to or 'be faithful to the covenant. For the dark places of the earth are full of the seats of or very home of iniquity and rebellion. [*Hebrew smj*] Do not return the oppressed of the earth as people finished off. *Here the prophet speaks of the returnees from exile and desires that this be not the end of their weighty and notable history. This call on God's faithfulness can apply to our modern era too so that the kibbutzed nation be not back in her land to be finally ruined whether by atomic weapons or by the ultimate war.* Let the afflicted and abysmally needy sing hallelujahs to your name. *Repatriation agencies in the United States have in these last days come across Jewish persons in Russia who are among the world's most needy and forgotten people.* Arise of God plead your own cause. Remember how the man of folly reproaches you all day long. Do not forget the voice of Your enemies. The tumult of those who arise against you increases from day to day. *This grave reality of the era just prior to the first advent of our Saviour is by parallel with the era of His second coming one where the tumult of voices against Israel rises to a new unprecedented crescendo-but God will defend His cause!*

PSALM 75

GOD SOVEREIGN IN HISTORY & JUDGMENT

Introduction 1

For the choirmaster "Do not destroy or ruin"[*cf Psalm 58 Introduction for a further explanation*](*The word can mean "corrupt" as in Psalm 16.10 & Job 17.14*)Was this the tune to which it was set? Was this a call to keep the psalm in a collection? Was this a warning against alterations? This is a Mizmor and it is described also as a "song" usually in celebration of someone.

The threefold basis of thanks 2

We give thanks to You, O God. We give thanks and your name is near. They count or recollect your miraculous deeds. *The closeness of Gods name identifies the willingness of God to abide by His people. It is on account of God's shepherd care; his strength exerted on behalf of the nation and his miraculous deeds that the poet and the nation celebrate.*

God's purposeful choice of the appointed feasts 3-4

For I (the LORD) will choose the appointed times or festival seasons. *It was the LORD who set the times of Passover harvest and ingathering and in His larger plans these and other feasts come to be connected to Christ at His advents. Passover is linked to His death; Pentecost to the Church's gathering and the later feasts to His return and judgement.* I will judge on a basis of righteousness. When the earth and all its resident settlers melt or shake in fear it is I who continually examine or proportion its structure or ponder [*Hebrew ikt*] its fixed position [*dm*] -its office, continued life, ministry, ordained purpose] Think about that!

God is sovereign among nations and men 5-8

To the boastful I say, "Do not boast!" To the wicked I say, "Do not raise up a military horn or grow powerful" "Do not lift up your horns to the heights" "Do not speak with insolence neck held high." For neither from the sunrise or sunset or the desert or pasture-plain do those come **who raise themselves**. The A.V. rendered 'raised ones' as "promotion" in this context. For the LORD who rules and decides between men-this one he lowers and this one he raises. *It is indeed the LORD who picks up a Moses or a David from the desert pastures -a Cyrus from the east and a Saul of Tarsus from the most westerly point of any biblical leader and writer. Each was divinely enabled and called. They did not raise themselves-yet each played their own part according to God's will so they can be said to have "raised themselves" but only with the help of God. The implication is that we will not see a second David or Cyrus or Paul for these arose by the divine enabling and without it they would not have exercised their role in history. Behind the "Hiphil" tense is the 'permission' and 'causation' or agency of appointment and 'declaration' and 'qualitative difference' that springs from the divine calling. John Mauchline onetime professor of Semitic language and literature in Glasgow likened the Hiphil to the Greek -ζω termination which is known to alter the Greek present to a Causative significance; for example "I bring good news" $\epsilon\upsilon\alpha\gamma\gamma\epsilon\lambda\lambda\omega$ becomes "I am appointed to bring good news" $\epsilon\upsilon\alpha\gamma\gamma\epsilon\lambda\iota\zeta\omega$. It may be argued, besides, that the Greek termination carries the significance of "speed" from $\lambda\iota\zeta\omega$ "to whizz or whistle". To carry this additional nuance over would serve also to draw attention to the sudden raising of David and Cyrus and Saul under the mighty hand of God*

Future judgement 9

For there is a cup in the hand of Yahweh and it is full of (inflamed) spiced red wine and he pours this out. *This phrase expresses a warning that God is the judge and He is angry with the wicked.* They who will find it certainly will drink it to its very sediment-all the rebellious of the earth

Christ at the centre of judgement 10-11

I will expound or declare for an age -I will sing praise to **the God of Jacob**. I will cut off or cut asunder all the horns of the rebellious; the horns of the Righteous One will have been exalted *This verb is a Pital passive which looks back on history from the point of view of the judge and assures us of a righteous outcome centring on the Righteous figure of Christ*

A Basket of Delights(Mizmor)

- 1.The Balm of Salvation is found in God's choice of the time of Passover which He invested with new meaning in the testament of Christ's saving death
- 2.The doctrine especially taught here is that "God raises up those who serve and lead.
- 3.The prayer emphasis comes in thanksgiving(v.1) a very important aspect of prayer.
4. Redemption is seen in the horns of the righteous one-the redeemed of the LORD who only is righteous
- 5.God's watch care evident from his humbling and uplifting actions in v7
- 6.The unique work of God in this psalm is His upholding of the earth's pillars or ministry in v4-we are called to meditate on this special role which is again referred to in Colossians 1.17

PSALM 76 For the collector Asaph GOD IS AWESOME-MAN STUNNED INTO SILENCE

Introduction 1

A song for the choirmaster to be set for stringed instruments- a mizmor for the collector often as in 2Chronicles 29.28 the singer sang and the trumpeters trumpeted.

1. Salvation-"You rose up to save the afflicted land"
2. Doctrine "At your low voice of rebuke O God of Jacob horse & chariot are still"
3. Prayer "Make vows to the LORD your God and fulfil them"
4. Redemption "His dwelling place shall be in Zion"
5. Watch-care or awakening "Your rising to Judgment"
6. Unique factor. "He broke the flashing arrows"-the miracle of Sennacherib's destruction

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF JERUSALEM FOR GOD'S RULE 1-2

In Judah God *has made Himself known* [Hebrew Niphal of [dy]] In Israel His name is great [Hebrew l dy "twisted like a threefold cord"] **His covered tent will be in Salem** [lit "place of peace treaty or vow or recompense"...the origins of the name appear to spring from Abraham's meeting with Melchizadek when tithes were transferred and submission given to the rule of the Greater] His Maon or high citadel **will be in Zion**. In ancient times the valley of the Cheese makers divided what is now the wider site of Jerusalem. In the time of Hezekiah it stood east of the Tyropoean valley as a North-south walled fortress. Its intermediate history after Abraham as Beth Shalem is Canaanite and the first mention of Shalem in this period is in the Tel-El-Amarna letters of 1400BC-however this dating is significantly later than Abraham's emergence in the area. Bullinger gives Abrahams call as 1944BC. Sir Isaac Newton dates Joshua's conquest at 1445BC and argues that Egypt's "Shepherd Kings" were simply Canaan's displaced monarchs who conquered Lower Egypt. J.Lempriere also dates the birth of Abraham at 1996-so the patriarch appeared before God in the locale long before its foundation. It must be remembered that Abraham was born just 2 years after Noah's death!

THE AWESOME SILENCE OF SENNACHERIB'S 185,000 SOLDIERS 3-6

Hezekiah's period was 701 or if in Tirhakah's time (2Kings 19.9) 688BC] There (in Jerusalem) He (the LORD) breaks the flaming of the arrow, the shield and the sword and the battle or devouring enemy like corn. Selah *We are to meditate on the broken stalks of corn and the tops falling to the ground and think of how ineffective the Assyrian onslaught was. Think of that great past occasion You make yourself shine gloriously beyond mountains of game to be plucked. The onslaught of the fowler is compared to that of the Assyrian-but the Bright Glory of God is not to be got at or captured like the game of the mountains. So the boast of Nebuchadnezzar, "I cooped up Israel's king as a bird in a cage!" is dismissed cursorily in this telling phrase. The stout of heart who have again and again carried off spoil slumbered and fell asleep. All the men of war found they could not use their hands. By your rebuke [With the Prefix "m" the word strengthens to "curse"] the chariot and horse sank down senseless [Hebrew mdr Gesenius suggests "deep sleep" or "snoring" which in this case was expiry]*

THE AWESOME FUTURE JUDGMENT SILENCES THE EARTH 7-9

You cause Yourself to be feared and who will stand or minister in your presence from the time You become angry. From heaven you caused judgement or justice to be heard. The earth feared and kept quiet [Hebrew fqv] in the rising of God to judgment. *When the days of judgment come it will be as if God is resurrected after being considered a bygone Actor historically but God endures and is established over all. To save all the afflicted of the earth-just think of that occasion! We are now invited to cast our minds forward to the occasion of God's coming judgment and another day of awesome silence.*

THE KINGDOM OF GOD DEVELOPS REPENTANCE AND BRINGS SUBMISSION 10-12

Because the wrath of mankind will praise you; the remnant of wrath You will gird on or gird with an apron. *The LORD would humble the wrath of man even by His own work on the cross and some He will soften as others are hardened. Make vows to the LORD God and keep them. Let all around bring presents or stream to him with a gift for His fear. He will cut off the spirit of leaders or Excellencies; He will cause Himself to be feared by the kings of the earth. He will be LORD of all*

PSALM 77

For the chief musician, for celebration or according to Jeduthun- a Mizmor belonging to the Collector or Asaph

Prayer...I cried out to the LORD for help v1

Redemption "With your right arm you were your peoples' kinsman redeemer. v15

Uniqueness "You are the God who performs miracles". v14

Watch care "You made your people rest as a flock under Moses & Aaron" v20

TEACHING ON PRAYER 1-3

I cried out with my voice to God in His strength. *This Hebrew term Q[x is the more ancient. q[z represents the era 600BC to the time of our LORD. On the strength of language development the psalm appears to be ancient. Devotionally the writer is aware of his pitifully small human voice and the great might and power of God. I cried out with my voice to God to make Him sharpen his attention. In the day of distress [Hebrew hrX often of a "rival" or a "pressured circumstance"] I chased after the Lord. At night I "stirred my hands" or "I made war"[Hebrew hrq-'caused myself to war'] and I was not cold or I was not void of passion -I was not torpid (as in sleep). My soul constantly refused [Hebrew Piel repetitive]to be comforted or to be the cause of comfort. I remembered You, O God, and I constantly moaned like a harp. I continually meditated or mused or murmured but my spirit had grown faint or wrapped itself in weakness. Seven aspects of his way of drawing divine attention are set out. He was running to God-giving Him no rest; he was fighting with God; he was passionate; he was not prepared to talk himself into a better frame of mind; he was quietly even in song stressing his sorrow; persisting and growing weak in the process. This "becoming weak" or putting one in a totally dependent state appears to be at the source of mighty prayer-hence fasting! Jesus so acted: Paul so acted as did the prophets. Here are the deep demands of prayer at its highest. Hence the writer's "Selah"*

THE THOUGHT THAT GOD HAD CHANGED 4-9

You held my eyes watchful; I had urged or beaten myself on the anvil of prayer that I did not speak or do any business. I thought about distant days of old, the years of the ages long ago. I remembered my instrumental songs in the night; with my heart I lamented and my spirit was seeking or exploring.

(1) Will the Lord thrust away or eject [Hebrew jnz "cast off"] for long ages? But will He not add to show delight or favour still? [Hebrew mnr "benefits" from his conciliatory care]

(2) Has his covenant love come to a limit [Hebrew spa of the "earth's limits"] for ever?

(3) Has his promise been completed or left off for generations to come?

(4) Is the forgetting to be gracious God's?

(5) Or is it that anger has shut off his compassion? [Hebrew xpq "shut it like a trap]

Selah-think about the implications-of an utter end to relations, an end of covenant, an end of promise, and end of grace and of his sympathy for Israel or any Jew! That the writer thinks preposterous as Does Paul the apostle-"Did God reject His people?" (Romans 11.1)

YEARS UNDER GOD'S HAND SOFTEN 10-15

Then I said "This will soften me[Hebrew hlj "weaken "(my argument) or appease me] -years of the right hand (of favour) of the Most High." I will remember the deeds of Yah-for I will recall your miracles of the distant past. I will declare about all your laborious or mighty deeds and consider all the deeds you have repeated over and over again [Hebrew lyl []

(1) **Your ways of God are in holiness**

(2) Who of God is Great-wound to Himself as You?-cf The Trinity

(3) You are God who constantly does the miraculous

(4) You cause your strength [zz[for battle] to be known among the peoples.

(5) You were kinsman redeemer to your people with your right arm the sons of Jacob and Joseph
Think about this(Selah)

The writer sees the LORD making the "soul of time" his slave. He sees God as awesome in holiness; as great in His triune or strong being; as miracle working; as Lord of the battle and best of all as Israel's redeemer who comes in when she is in need or her people cast down!

THE DELUGE AND THE EXODUS-BRING MANKIND BACK TO REALITY 16-20

The waters saw you O God. They saw you and twisted away or hurled themselves in another direction. Certainly the depths were shaken or trembled. The clouds inundated waters; the heavenly firmament thundered; certainly Your arrows were flowing. The voice of Your raging was in the whirlwind; Your lightning lighted the world. The earth trembled or was perturbed like a horse and leaped like a horse [Hebrew *zgr* and *c[r]*] Your path was in the sea and Your way (or flowing train) was in great waters. Your **Jacob footprints** were not known. You conducted (back [Hebrew *hjn*]) your people by the hand of Moses and Aaron

PSALM 78 A Maschil for Asaph THE TEACHER'S GRACE AND WISDOM

"O, my people, hear my TORAH" *The Psalmist has a vide-mecum TORAH; an abbreviated PENTATEUCH; a "little book" which encompasses the divine love and judgement of Genesis, the salvation of Exodus, the holiness of Leviticus, the uplift and care of Numbers and the second chance of Deuteronomy. It fits us well to study his TORAH which demonstrates divine faithfulness and the lack of faith in His people in a series of events centring on the provision of God (cf Manna) leading to the purchase of Zion and the choice of David.*

Bow your ears to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in a similitude or comparison. *The psalmist is comparing his era and Israel's past. He is applying the rule and lessons of the past to the present.* I will cause to "bubble up" like a spring [Hebrew *[bn]*] riddles enigmas or sublime things - "portions" from past time [Hebrew *mdq ymm*] which we have heard and caused ourselves to know (well)-portions that our fathers recounted to us. We will not continue to keep them back or destroy or conceal them from our children of the next generation. *The writer is set to reverse a trend of decreasing awareness of the TORAH and of the "faith" of Israel.* We will relate the "beginnings" of the LORD and His making strong or fortifying [Hebrew *zz*] and his miracles which He has done. He "raised up" a "testimony" [Hebrew *dw*] with *hd*] in Jacob and set TORAH in Israel. *The testimony of the ark "stood" in the holy place and remained there. In a sense the whole nation was a testimony-though the reference is truly to that to which the ark points -namely Christ. TORAH is not merely the Decalogue which is hardly referred to at all in the psalm-but to the plan of God.* Which He commanded our forefathers to make known intimately for their sons or the home they built. So the next generation-the sons that should be born will know them and rise up and will recount them to their sons. *This "rising up" might refer to the future generation but more probably to the Fathers standing as Rabbis teaching at the domestic Passover and Sabbath.* And they will place their confidence [Hebrew *l sk*] or hope in God and will not forget the repeated or perpetual or unlimited deeds [The Hebrew shares the root *ml* [which means "an age"] of God and they will observe his "commands" or "last orders" in the case of a human will. So they will not be like their forefathers-a sullen perverse and embittered generation [Hebrew *hrm*] -a generation whose heart was not established or fixed and set on purpose or disposed and whose spirit was not faithful to God.

THE SONS OF EPHRAIM 9-17

The sons of Ephraim though armed with mighty bow turned back in a day of battle. *I concur with J.J.Perowne that the whole background suggests the writing comes from the period subsequent to the divided kingdom. A suggested context for this feigned courage is 1Chron 7.21 -the livestock war between Gath and Ephraim. This "show" of courage" is translated in the 'Golden chain of Cassiodorus, "The children of Ephraim taking aim and shooting with the bow"(that is, promising to keep the law - turned back when they said to Aaron "Make us gods" They did not keep the covenant of God refused to go by His TORAH.(a reference to the God of the Ark -a pointer to the Christ to come) They forgot His repeated (illustrious) deeds and the miracles which He caused them to see. The wonder which he performed in the land of Egypt, in the level cultivated field of Zoan. This was the pasture land from Tunis in the south west to Pelusium in the east-from Poole's bible research a distance of about 30 miles and it was home to the Pharaoh-like a kingdom within a kingdom. He divided the sea and they passed over He made the waters stand as a wall [Hebrew *dmm* "a hay wain" or "mound"]n He conducted them by*

a cloud in the day and all night by light of fire. He divided the rocks in the desert and gave them to drink the waters great as the seas. He brought steaming waters from the Sela rock and waters were coming down like great rivers.

THEIR UNPUNCTUATED REGRESSION INTO SIN 17-22 AND WRATH ON THOSE WHO LOST FAITH

And they were adding to sin against Him still through rebellions against the Most High in the parched desert (*The Hebrew yx may be a play on m/x*) They tested or tempted God in their hearts pleading for food **for their souls** [*despite the perfect provision of manna*] and spoke against God saying, "Is God able to lay out a table in the wilderness? [*The word for "laying out" is the Hebrew word Jr [which is used of the "table of showbread" so that this comment could be a despising of that table and a derisory comment on the LORD and His provision-ultimately a negative TORAH since the manna pointed toward Messiah*] Behold He struck the rock and waters overflowed and rivers overwhelmed or swept away as a flood but is He also able to give us bread? But can he establish a regular aliment for His people? [*The Hebrew term rāc is translated "aliment" to reflect a question akin to whether a husband could provide for his wife*] The LORD heard what this entailed and had gone beyond the limits of anger and fire kindled amid or touched Jacob and His fuming wrath rose against Israel for they did not remain faithful to God and did not trust in His salvation. *The author is well aware that the comments of Israel about "the table" were directed at the **holy table** and combined with unbelief in long term sustaining of the **manna** -the comments emerged from hearts of unbelief.*

DIVINE PROVIDENCES CONTINUE DESPITE SIN 23-33

He commanded the cloudy skies from above and opened the doors of heaven and opened the doors of heaven and rained down manna to eat upon the people and gave them **bread of heaven**. *This expression which is to be found in the Welsh hymn "Cum Rhondda" is identified with His own person by Christ in John 6.* Man ate the bread of princes or of "the soaring or mighty ones" He sent them all the provender they could eat. He plucked out the tent pegs of the east wind and moved it and by His strength he drove the chariot of the south wind and rained food upon them as dust and birds on the wing as sand on the seashore. They came down in the midst of their camp all around their dwellings. They ate and were very satisfied; what they breathed after came to them. Before they played the harlot with (the bread) they lusted after-while it was still in their mouth-the anger of God came up upon them and He slew their stoutest and caused the young men of Israel to be cut down. In all this they continued to sin and did not believe in his wonders. So he completed their days in vanity and their years in terror or rushing in haste.

JUDGEMENT BREEDS RUEFUL PENITENCE 34-39

When God slew them they would repent and seek Him diligently. [*Hebrew rjC literally "at the dawn daily*] They remembered that God was their rock and Elyon was their Redeemer. They would continue to be enticed or "open their great big mouths" and speak falsely to Him with their tongues. Their hearts were not constant with Him. They did not believe in His covenant. But He was merciful and "atoned for" or covered their sin and did not destroy them. He did not cause the recurrence of His wrath to become great nor awake all his hot anger. He remembered that they were flesh; a passing zephyr that does not return.

FORGETFUL OF EGYPT AND THE TNHE PLAGUES 40-51

How often they were embittered in the desert and grieved Him in the Jeshimon wasteland. They turned and put God to the test and set a limit on the Holy One of Israel. They did not remember His hand-the day He redeemed them from the oppressor. Who did signs there in Egypt and portents or wonders in the fertile field of Zoan.

1. He converted the streams or waterways to blood; they could not drink from their streams.
2. He sent among them the gadfly which devoured them
3. And frogs that destroyed them
4. He gave their produce to the locust.
5. And their toil or wealth to the gregarious or ambushing locust.
6. He slew their vines with hailstones
7. And their sycamore figs with frost [*Hebrew l/mj] the ant(or locust)*

8. He shut up their beast of burden to hail
9. And their purchased livestock to lightning or burning disease.
10. He sent among them his ardent zeal or anger $\text{pa } \text{nrj}$, His overflowing rage rb , His indignation $\text{m}[z]$ and His adversarial distress hrx ; a commission of angels of calamity; He made smooth a path for His anger. He did not preserve their lives from death. He gave them to word that caused shutting up. He smote all the first-born of Egypt-the first fruits of the vigorous in the tents of Ham.

HE BROUGHT ISRAEL OUT AND BROUGHT THEM IN 52-57

He moved His people as a flock and as an ordered army in the desert. He led them back with confidence so they were not afraid and the sea covered their enemies. And He brought them to the *highland* border of **His holy land**-to this hill His hand had acquired. He drove out nations before them; He caused the allotment of their heritage to be measured out and settled the tribes of Israel in their tents. But they tested and rebelled against God most high. They did not keep His statutes. Like their fathers they turned back and acted with treachery.

SLACKNESS IN THE LAND OF ISRAEL 58-59

They changed (in time) like a bow that slackens. They caused Him to be vexed with their high places; they caused Him to be jealous with their idols. When God heard them he was passing angry. He rejected [*Hebrew sam*] in [*Hebrew b*] Israel exceedingly. [*Hebrew dam*] *This is a far-reaching but not entire rejection of the people-God had always a remnant.*

THE ARK IS LOST IN BATTLE IN SAUL'S TIME 60-64

He abandoned or left along the dwelling of Shiloh-the **tent of (His) dwelling in Adam**. *Some would argue that this nearby location of Adam which was within fifteen miles was the original seat of Adam's life in the paradise of God. This time God Himself voluntarily left off fellowship with man whereas in paradise originally God expelled man from His garden.*

He gave the ark of His strength as a prisoner and His glory to the hand of the adversary. He shut up His people to the sword and became livid with His heritage. Fire consumed their youth and their maidens had no wedding music. Their priest fell by the sword. *This is an exact representation of what happened to Hophi and Phineas and their widows were not weeping.*

THE LORD AWOKE IN DAVID'S DAY 65-68

Then the LORD woke up as a man from sleep; as a strong man from the stupor of wine. He knocked his enemies backwards; He put them to shame for a long age. He rejected in the tents of Joseph and in the dwellings of Ephraim He made no choice (of ruler). But he chose the tribe of Judah and the hill of Zion which He loves.

DAVID'S LEADERSHIP 69-72

He built his sanctuary like the heights; like the earth that He founded for a long age. He chose David his servant and took him from the folds of the sheep. From after the carrying of (lambs) he brought him to be a Shepherd over His people Jacob and in Israel His inheritance. And David was Shepherd to them with unity or integrity of heart and in the house of understanding he led them. *The long history closes with a "man after God's own heart at the helm. This king had learned to "carry" the sheep" and was well equipped to support the people. His heart was one -he was a man fully integrated in his worship and following of the LORD. This is the pivotal crescendo of the psalm-and the settled contentment of Israel with the house of David-despite the warts and wrinkles-is a foretaste of our satisfaction with Great David's greater son-our precious LORD JESUS CHRIST. The glory of the house of Judah in the latter day far eclipses the glory of the house of Ephraim in the sequel to the Exodus and early years in Canaan. The Integrity of David matches well the integrity of Joseph but its single serious flaw-the matter of Bathsheba-leads us to hope for a better model. However in things pastoral Israel never had a more praiseful king whose worship of the LORD has thrilled all ages.*

PSALM 79 ISRAEL

A Mizmor for Asaph

WHOLESALE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM –OF ITS TEMPLE AND PEOPLE 1-3

O God the nations are come into Your inheritance. They have profaned your holy temple. They have set Jerusalem in "heaps" [*Literally 'Ai's'-because Ai. We read in Joshua 8.28 Joshua burned Ai and made it a permanent heap of ruins, a desolate place to this day.*] Now ironically the psalmist complains that the same fate has taken hold of Jerusalem. Certainly the prophetic word has its full fulfilment not in the era of the Assyrian but the Roman when at the heart of *Palestrina Deserta* was Jerusalem itself with not one stone against another. However in those later days when Christianity emerged with our LORD'S ministry the Gentiles entered the spiritual inheritance by the divine will and favour. They have given the dead bodies of Your servants to the birds of heaven; the flesh of your saints to the wild beasts of the earth. *The action of Darius in respect of Daniel certainly warrants this analysis of Gentile or Medo-Persian Cruelty* They have poured out their blood around Jerusalem and there was none to bury them.

THE AGE-LONG QUESTION OF ISRAEL 4-5

We are become '**a reproach**' [*Literally "stammerers" -who speak a foreign language-'barbarians'*] and '**a scorn**' [*akin to a harlot crying out "have you not gained a despised wife for a rather low price"*] How long O LORD? Will you show your anger to perpetuity? Will your jealous anger burn on like a continual fire? *This question of the covenant people as to when suffering ends and the kingdom of Messiah comes has been asked through the millennia. It stands tall in this psalm as a perpetual reminder of the expectation of the Jews which shall not be disappointed in the final analysis-when the LORD restores the fortunes of His people Israel in millennial glory.*

EIGHT REQUESTS 6-12

- 1. Pour out your hot wrath on the nations "who are not desirous in getting to know You" or "will not desire a personal relationship with you"** *The Hebrew "to know" is an imperfect. It speaks of a lack of love or desire for relationship and love. It speaks of a settled will in that connection. Thus the wrath of God upon the prediluvians, Sodom and Pharaoh was well deserved as indeed it will be in the latter day. Upon the kingdoms that have not called upon Your name. This "calling" is as "calling for a meal"-it is an invitation which never comes. For they have swallowed Jacob and rest in His dwelling place. The text describes the nations as resting in Israel's inheritance as if it were their own. Of the many words for "destroy" *הָרַס* in v.7 is not one. The nations then and now exult in capturing the inheritance God gave to Jacob.*
- 2. Do not remember our earlier iniquities which cling to us.**
- 3. Let Your tender mercies rush in tomorrow or in the future** [*Hebrew *רָחַם**] *The "rush" of God's mercy occurs also in Psalm 59.10 "God will go before or meet me" and in Job 3.12 where Job asks "Why were there knees ready to receive me kindly at birth and breasts ready to nurture me?" for we are hanging down very low like willow branches [Hebrew *לָד*]*
- 4. Help us O God of our Jehoshua Salvation because of the oracle or proposed plan with Your name on it. Cause us to flow away from our adversity and atone for our sins for Your name's sake. Why should the nations say, 'Where is their God.'**
- 5. Let the self-avenging of the blood of your servants whose blood is shed be known in experience before the eyes of the nations.** *The psalmist is calling for divine vengeance but such as is enacted by the agency offended.*
- 6. Let the anguish or strangling of the prisoner come before Your face according to the greatness of your arm; cause those to remain who are appointed to die** *The Psalmist calls for the maintenance of a "remnant" in accordance with God's mercy. The word "remainder" is also associated with the notion of "excellence"-even "abundance"*
- 7. Cause the feelings or "lap"** [*the experience as happened to us*] *to return to those who dwell alongside us sevenfold- the reproach with which they reproached You O God. Those who counted the Jew "of little worth" also counted God of little worth. They insult God as they would an aged man or vulnerable widow.*

CONTINUOUS PRAISE FROM A NATION WHO KNOWS GOD 13

So we Your people and the flock of Your pasturing will give You age-long thanks. From generation to generation we will add to Your praise

PSALM 80

GOD'S VINEYARD TAKEN-HIS VINE BROKEN

Title: For the chief musician-to "the lilies of the covenant"

A Mizmor belonging to Asaph

George Henslow has a quite unsurpassed note in his "Plants of the Bible" wherein brief he tells us that the SHUSH or "Royal Lily" (Hence 'lily of the Covenant' with connections to David and to Solomon in his Art Novo lilies at the head of the temple columns) depicts both that natural simple humble and pure character that we associate with Christ and also that manufactured dress that commands respect by artificial appearance. He quotes 1 John 3.9 with effect showing that "whosoever is begotten of God does not sin" is to be understood in the sense that "the begotten one have been so trained (and graced by imparted righteousness) that sin no longer attracts but is repulsive and Christian love has become "second nature"-a natural trait of character just as the white petals of the lily are natural to it.

THE CASE OF JOSEPH AND THE GLORY OF THE LORD 1-3

Hear us O Shepherd of Israel, who led Joseph as a flock. *The classic story of Joseph is one so nearly resembling the "life of Christ" in its utter attractiveness that it was a primary quest of the soul of the ancient writer to be like Joseph and that the nation should be akin to the people of Israel, then known as the "flock of Joseph". Joseph was "sold by his brethren" "forgotten in gaol" "repulsed by the advances of Potiphar's wife". He was "a man of vision" "in whom was the Spirit of God" and the one who lead him through his pilgrimage held a higher throne and shone in a more beautiful loveliness-the Shepherd of Israel. The LORD is the "guiding one" and He is also the "shining" or "beautiful one"-literally the "One who must be shining among the Cherubim who were represented above the ark as reflecting the utmost glory of the throne of God-a presentation of things in heaven. O "Sitting One" of the Cherubim You must be the cause of beauty and glory for the faces of Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh -**You must awaken your warrior strength-you will have to come and save us.** These imperatives show that the LORD is the one and only source of beauty as he lustre's heaven; He is the only ultimate knight of all purity and the means of salvation single and alone. **O God cause us to turn around; cause Your face to brighten us and we shall be saved.** [There is a most interesting point to be made about the Hebrew Niphal verb in this instance. The expression could be a simple reflexive, "We shall save ourselves" but its use in this manner is only insofar as they "work out their salvation "with fear and trembling" as the LORD works within. The other three uses are impressive.(a)The "reciprocal" in which instance the Jews seek to enable other Jews to be saved by trusting the LORD; (b) the Tolerative where the Jews let themselves come under the LORD'S saving power and (c) the Passive sense where the Jews can confess God has applied His salvation to them.*

THE SORROW & UNRELENTING CONTENTION OF ISRAEL & HER NEIGHBOURS 4-7

O LORD God of hosts how long will You smoke in anger in the house of the prayers of your people? *We may think here of the long series of offerings for sin and the unending stream of things that displease God. The urge is for a higher way-and an end to the long run of sin sacrifice and unremedied spiritual aberrance. You have feed them tears; You have caused them to drink tears to the third of an Ephah or the "third time" The significance is "profuse sorrow" since tear bottles are so small or also the "third time" when one cannot pray again for a change. You set us as a contention [Hebrew ndm from nd "strife"-the Hebrews historically have been a root of contention because of God's plantation of them in Canaan but in this instance it is on account of the divine wrath] and our enemies deride us. **O God of hosts cause us to turn around, cause your face to shine on us and let us be saved.** The second prayer for restoration pleads with God to renew the nation in righteousness*

GOD'S VINE SPREADS UNDER HIS FAVOUR 8-11

You plucked up (the tent pegs) of your "vine" from Egypt and expelled nations and planted it. You continually turned your face to see how it looked. It continually kept putting down its root and filled the land. The mountains were covered with its shadow and the Cedars of God with its branches. It sent its

shoots to the Mediterranean Sea and its suckers to the River Jordan. *The picture is of Israel everywhere flourishing when the LORD'S face smiled upon them and He watched over them as a Gardener would a precious vine.*

THE VINEYARD WALLS BROKEN-A CALL FOR THE OWNER TO RETURN! 12-15

Why have You broken down its (garden) walls so that all who pass pluck (its grapes) So that it is continually devoured by boars of the forest or rugged terrain [*The word "forest" contains a murmuring AYIN or is onomatopoeic of the beasts of the woods grumbling against Israel*] and "meddling creatures of the field pasture on it.[*Hebrew zyz meaning meddling or searching species-like wasps or foxes*] O Strong God of hosts return I pray [*Hebrew an "Now"(tentative) or "Please"(gentle entreaty)*] Look from heaven and see (as a prophet sees) and visit this vine *The effect is that the author wishes the LORD to come even for his nation only and "visit" or "look after" or "muster" this vine. He is ranging over a number of beneficial consequences that would follow in using the term "visit". As with Israel in Egypt the Almighty would show care, take charge and lead the nation against its foes besides working within a revolution of spiritual change. Visit he plant which "stood up" or was "constituted" with your right hand and the son whom you have made strong for Yourself. It is cut down and burned in the fire. From the rebuke of your face they are perishing. Let Your hand be upon the man of your right hand-upon the son of Adam you have "made strong" or made swift-footed" for Yourself. Then we will not draw back-[Hebrew qsn "take away a landmark"-so Israel would not be a lost landmark] Make us live (the life of God) and we will call on your name. LORD God of Hosts cause us to return or restore us and cause the light of your face to shine on us and we shall be saved *The Niphal of the word "saved in Hebrew is associated with a personal interest in salvation. The effect would be something like, "We shall be glad or wish to be saved". This significant prayer for the "coming" of the LORD to lead his people though tentative is clothed in the prophetic and was literally answered in the first advent of Christ and will be fully answered when the LORD returns again as King in the latter day-and as the apostle says, "then Israel shall be saved"**

PSALM 81 WORSHIP

Title: To the chief musician, upon Gittith, belonging to Asaph. *Gittith is the plural of Gittite-which word is linked to the press-treaders and contexted in celebrations of wine extraction. It may be a warning against idolatry and Bacchus(cf (v,1,2 "our feast", the Meribah "test of faith" in Yahweh v.7along with "No foreign god"v.9, and "Open your mouth and I will fill it" v.10.) Recounting the story of the nation at her first exigency when Israel was thrust on the LORD for water in the desert this psalm seeks to inspire "faith" in the one who provides our "daily bread". Gittith has been surmised to be a musical instrument as the Spanish guitar (presumably of the Gittites and presumably used at harvest celebrations) but we cannot deal in surmise.*

ENTHUSIASTIC WORSHIP 1-3

Sing to Elohim our strength with **strident** voice. **Shout** (or sound the trumpet) to the God of Jacob (the one who "takes hold" and persists) **Raise high** the music or song or plucked music (here compared to pruning instruments) **strike** the tambourine; the harp of sweetnesses with the Nabal or psaltery of Gath, **Blast** the ram's horn at New Moon *Five times no less the writer calls for maximum volume or full voice in praise of Elohim*

NB SOMETHING FOR TRANSLATORS AND INTERPRETERS TO CONSIDER WORSHIP WITHOUT COMPROMISE OR IDOLATROUS FEATURES 3

Blast the ram's horn in the day of our feast when the moon is covered. I do not follow the NIV "Moon is full" interpretation-because that is contrary to the meaning of the original. *Gesenius argues that the Hebrew hsk never means "covered with light" and I would not disagree-but on the day of the feast the light of the moon is hidden by the brightness of the sun. This is no sophism because the Passover was held **between the lights** when the moon was as yet hidden by remaining light. Nor was the sun in evidence because it was on the point of setting. Thus the time of Passover is the most effective illustration that God alone not the planets of the heaven is worthy of our worship because this is the decree for Israel, the ordinance of the Strong Ones of Jacob.*

WORSHIP CHARACTERISED BY AWE AND OBEDIENCE 5

He set precepts under Joseph when he went out (as prime minister) over the land of Egypt where we heard speech we did not understand. *In Genesis 42.23 the sons of Jacob had to obey Joseph as he spoke in what was to them an unknown tongue. In very much the same way Israel are called to unquestioning obedience to the LORD whose Person and ways are mysterious to them.*

ACTS OF GOD

He says, "**I removed** the burden from their shoulders [*Hebrew lbs "heavy burden"*] Tregelles comments, "*It must not be forgotten that when the vicarious sufferings of Christ are spoken of, every figure falls very short of the full truth*". *In Genesis 49.15 it is used of a "heavy donkey load."* It is used of the heavy punishment of Babylonian captivity by Jeremiah in Lam 5.7. This is a **Prophetic intimation** of God's future purpose and earlier kindness-"*I caused myself to bear the burden of his shoulder*" It suitably signifies "*the cross*"

Their hands were caused to "pass by" or "drop" the pot they loved [*did speaks of favourite food*] On account of your adversary you called and **I freed you** literally like a shoe pulled off a foot. **I began to answer you** through the veiling of a thunder or roaring sea. *The only difference here is Hebrew pointing; the word m[r with rts suggests "veil of thunder" i.e. cloud or veil of tumultuous sea i.e. "sea spray".* **I tested you as silver** at the waters of Meribah-think of this.

THE PROBLEM DISOBEDIENCE LEADING TO IDOLATRY

Hear O my people and I will solemnly chide or repeatedly go over things [*Hebrew dw[]*] with you O Israel if you would listen to me. There shall be no foreign god for you; and you shall not worship a strange god. I am the LORD your God who brought you up from the land of Egypt. Cause your mouth to be wide open and I will fill it. But my people would not listen to my voice and Israel had no desire for me. I sent (as one fires arrows)-twisting or toughening of heart to follow their own counsels.

THE PROMISE OF THE BEST THROUGH HONOURING THE LORD

O that my people would listen to me. O that Israel would go in my ways. In a little space I would cause their enemies to submit or bow the knee and turn my hand against their adversaries. Those who hate the LORD would "pretend obedience to Him [*Hebrew vjk*] and their "burning up" would be perpetual. And you would be caused to eat the most excellent (wheat)[*cf Deut 32.14*] or fruit and with honey from the rock I would cause you to be satisfied.

A BRIEF QUOTE FROM WATTS' PSALM

Yet O that all my saints would hearken to my voice
Soon I would ease their sore complaints and bid their hearts rejoice.

PSALM 82: A MIZMOR FOR ASAPH THE DEATH OF CHRIST FORESHADOWED

THE PSALM AS A BASKET OF SPIRITUAL FRUIT

Salvation: rescue the weak v.4 Trinity is implicit and the doctrine of judgment is explicit

Prayer-The Psalmist implores, "How Long O LORD?"

Redemption- the Son came to suffer "death"-cf v.7

Watch Care-the readiness of God is at the heart of this upbeat psalm

Uniqueness John 10.34 Christ applies this to Himself as the Beloved Son

THE DIVINE PRESIDENT 1-4

The strong ones is placed, fixed or settled and **at the ready** [*Hebrew bxn*] in the congregation or family meeting of EL or God. In the midst of "gods" He will give judgment. How long will you (plural) make unjust or distorted judgment? How long will you give hope to rebels? Give right judgment to the weak and the fatherless enable justice to be done for the poor and those who suffer want. Rescue the powerless and abysmally poor. Enable their liberation from the hand of the noisy fraudulent ones.

PREVAILING IGNORANCE 5

They have no personal grasp or awareness nor do they understand through help of others. They have been walking around in darkness. All the foundations of the earth are slipping. *This statement whilst undoubtedly true of the period of the psalmist is also prophetically accurate. Today both literally and metaphorically the foundations are slipping. The giant plates of the earth are sliding whilst fraud is widely perpetrated to the hurt of the world's poorest people.*

THE STANDING OF GOD'S FAMILY 6

I said, "You are Strong Ones"(Gods).and all sons of Elyon. *As Christ Himself showed in John 10.34-36 the psalm has a double reference. It bears upon the family of the Triune God and it bears on the wider family who hear the word of God-both men and angels. The latter by creation and adoption respectively are members of the household of God.*

THE ORACLE OF DEATH 7

Prepare to die like men. [*The Hebrew ׀ka is at base a word derived from ׀k "to prepare"*] This is a radical statement from the throne of God. **It gives notice of "death" within the Trinity**, death among the angels and death among men. It is a statement heralding the "atoning death" of Christ who as Son of God in the first instance would die to put all wrongs right; it heralds death amongst the angels who sinned and experienced spiritual death being held in chains awaiting judgment and the lake of fire. It also warns that men who take no cognizance of divine judgment and righteousness will fare no better but will also have their part in the lake of fire. The specifics of the message entail the fall of man whose fall is here compared to the "angels" or "Princes" to whom God gave "command" and station" and power to wage "spiritual warfare"[*Hebrew rv*] *Those whom the psalmist sees defrauding the poor and needy fell in their time as the latter day peers are doomed to fall before the emergence of Messiah's rule.*

THE KINGDOM OF GOD 8

Arise O strong Ones, judge the earth in righteousness for You will have your inheritance in the house or family of all the nations. *The family aspect of God's great kingdom in its ultimate worldwide array is the peaceful and harmonious prospect into which state the long expected rule of Christ shall resolve the affairs of the earth.*

ISAAC WATTS' RENDITION

Arise O LORD and let Thy Son

Possess His universal (better "international" in the context) throne

And rule the nations with His rod

He is our Judge and He our God

PSALM 83 A SONG A MIZMOR FOR ASAPH.

A CALL FOR GOD TO BREAK HIS SILENCE

A PRAYER THAT GOD WILL ACT

O God -not your silence[*Hebrew md "quiet" "closed off"*]; do not be cut off or dull in hearing [*Hebrew vrj*]; O God do not do nothing or become inactive [*Hebrew fqv*] *The Psalmist perceived three ways in which it appears God is nowhere to be seen;*

- 1. The LORD appears to have shut His mouth and not to be communicating*
- 2. The LORD appears to be isolated as one who is deaf*
- 3. The LORD appears to do nothing-a sign of unawareness or disinterest.*

For behold how your enemies are routing (your people) or driving forward.[*Hebrew mmj "to send arrows and so put to flight"*] –behold how those who hate You have raised their head. They are being cunning in consultation against Your people. *In 1 Samuel 23.22 Saul "cunningly" sets out to discover by consultation and spying where David hides.* They have been taking counsel or laying plans against your "hidden treasures" or the ones precious as hidden treasure to You. "Come" they say, "let us smite them (or) break them in pieces from being a nation so that the name of Israel will not still be remembered.

TEN NATIONS UNITE AGAINST ISRAEL 5-8

For they take counsel with one mind or united desire. They are in covenant agreement against You-the tents of Edom and Ishmaelites Moab and Hagrites; the Phoenicians of Tripoli (Geba) Ammon and Amalek, the Philistines with the inhabitants of Tyre. The Assyrians hold strongly with the peoples-they are a strong arm to the sons of Lot. Think of that. *It is no joy to the writer that the offspring of Lot has conspired against the offspring of Abraham. It is stunning to think that "ten" new foes have arisen against Israel to counterbalance the wiping out of ten earlier foes. It is astounding to think that from the sailors of the West to the Arabs of the east-from the inveterate assailants of the north to the rump of Amalek could affiliate against Israel. In the latter day "all nations" will come against this covenant people.*

THE CALL FOR ACTS OF GOD AGAINST SUCH FOES 9-16

"The stars in their courses fought against Sisera". The LORD is able to bring all nature against His enemies. It was so when Napoleon faced the Russian winter and the prayers of Czar Alexander. It was so when the Third Reich faced the uncommonly calm and misty weather at the time of the Dunkirk episode and Normandy landings-again in response to the prayers of the nation of England led by a fine Christian King who sought God.

Do to them as to Sisera and Jabin at the river Kishon. They destroyed themselves at the fountain of Endor. *This is not only location-it speaks about the Satanic witchcraft that lay behind the move of these assailants. Here is at once the craft of their scheme and its weakness.* They became as manure on the ground. Position their nobility as Oreb and Zeeb; their molten images or princes as Zebah and Zalmunna(who slew Gideon's brothers but were slain alike without mercy at Succoth) who said, "Let us take hold of the desirable lands of God.

THE ETERNAL DESTRUCTION OF THE WICKED -A CONSCIOUS SHAME 17

My God, make them like whirling seed, like chaff before the wind. As fire will feed on the forest and as a flame sets the mountains ablaze. So pursue them with your violent storm that disturbs and **make them shake with Your destruction or snatching away. Fill their faces with shame and they will seek your name O LORD** May they be ashamed and terrified during the passing's of still" [*Hebrew [d yd]* *This is a rare expression which endeavours to express continuity of terror and shame such as only eternity might fulfil*] Let them know by experience **that You whose name is Yahweh are alone God over all the earth.**

WATT'S POETIC COMMENT

**And will the God of grace perpetual silence keep
The God of justice hold His peace and let his vengeance sleep
Then shall the nations know that glorious dreadful word
Yahweh is Thy name alone and Thou the sovereign LORD.**

PSALM 84

THE BLESSINGS OF KNOWING THE LORD

THE TITLE 1

For the superintendent musician- on Gittith A composition of the sons of Korah- A Mizmor

This psalm is a "presentation basket" of spiritual truth and may have been produced at vintage harvest or sung to the accompaniment of a type of guitar called "Gittith"

(1)THE BLESSING OF RELATIONSHIP OR DWELLING AND LOVING 2

How beautiful are your dwellings O LORD of hosts. The "places" are spoken of as "beloved"-with exactly the affection we would use of a "close relative." My soul is pale -shining like silver and is weak as an old person-as we might say "well through" in attachment to the enclosing walls of the LORD. *This reference enables us to date the psalm to the post Solomon period.* My heart and my flesh shout with strident voice to the God of life.

(2-3) THE SPARROW AND THE SWALLOW

DIRECTION TO THE NARROW WAY AND BLESSED IN FEASTING 3-4

Also the sparrow [*Hebrew rpx "chirper"*] has found a house and the swallow [*Hebrew rwrđ "the wheeler"*] a nest for herself. *These birds are not being commended for the building of their nests nor even their "discovery". It is the fact that they "arrived" and obtained favour. In the case of the sparrow it might well have escaped sacrifice to the sanctuary of the Holy Place in the high eaves of which it built its nest. The swallow came from a distant land like the Queen of Ethiopia and built in the heights of the temple. There was something deeply providential in the homes of these fledglings. Consider that the first may have been an escapee from the ceremony for a leper and a beautiful picture of judgment passing over through mercy and that one comes to God by the divine hand of guidance from being far distant from His holy presence. The Hebrew text has a big "qoph" or "Q" for Qen-the Hebrew word for nest-the meaning is to emphasise a "hole". God had allowed there to be a space just enough for these birds to be admitted-a little door so to speak. God provided in our LORD Jesus Christ a wonderful door that we might enter into His home and know His blessing Where she may "banquet" or "feast" her young-even Your altars-my king an my God. There is just so much food available from the altar with meal offerings and grain offerings and meat offerings that the bird is flush with ornithological caviar.*

(4)THE BLESSING OF SITTING WITH THE LORD 5

O the blessings of those who "abide" or "remain near" or "sit" in Your house. "They shall return to praise you" or "again and again" they shall give your praise or glorify You. *There was no place to "sit" in the house of God. The only ones who sat were the "birds". The concept of sitting seemed foreign to the temple and yet it seemed almost coy to the psalmist. It can only be interpreted as "returning often" or as the priests would do "repeatedly" standing to serve. There is more potentially in this blessing. The prophetic significance of "resting" and "sitting" with the LORD is within the scope of meditation and becomes real for the NT worshipper and certainly will be even truer in millennial and heavenly terms.*

(5)THE BLESSINGS OF GOING HIGHER WITH GOD 6

O the blessings of a Man whose "refuge" is in You. *The Hebrew זל is not personal robust power but strength that protects or refuge that secures. We have not moved far from the rafters where the birds are symbolic of those who find their strength in the house and presence of God. The great roads are in their hearts-the "high roads"-even "ladders"-they are going high-like the birds. They are in the company of Jacob at Bethel. The house of God leads up the heavenly staircase to Glory.*

(6)THE POSITIVE BALM OF DIVINE REFRESHMENT THROUGH THE WORD 7

Passers through the deep unsearchable (valley) of the weeping Balsam turn it into fountains or turn their eyes to fountains or compare it to fountains or appoint fountains over or in place of their tears. *This is a stimulating thought. Those who pass this way are among Balsam trees which weep in sympathy-but balsam is a healing balm. Those who lament for very dear friends or deep hurts do well to set the fountains of refreshment available from God's word in this dark valley above their sorrows.*

(7)THE BLESSING OF ATONEMENT 8

Also the early rain covers or fills the pools or early teaching covers with blessing. *The season of travel is September October and the feast in mind is Atonement followed by Tabernacles when the traveller would abide close to the House of God. It is a time of "rain" and reflects a time of youthful teaching which delivers blessing to the one who seeks the LORD. As the blood of atonement covers the pilgrim so the waters cover the pools.*

(8)THE BLESSING OF GOD'S PRESENCE 9

They go from military valour to greater valour. They will let themselves be seen close to God in Zion. *Such persons have no difficulty appearing before the LORD for they have increased uprightness virtue and integrity of character as life has gone on. Theirs is truly a spiritual pilgrimage and the presence of God is part of their bread and butter.*

(9)THE BLESSING OF THE ATONING MESSIAH 10

Hear my prayer, O LORD God of Hosts. Give ear O God of Jacob Meditate on that. O God look prophetically on our shield. Cause your face to regard your anointed one with expectation. *This prophetic scripture is calling on God not even to consider the suppliant in himself but grant him the*

cover of his great "shield" and armour bearer. Further he requests that the LORD look towards the work of the Anointed one whose warfare would save the suppliant. The Spirit of God intended the Christ of God as the atonement and hope of the psalmist then and of the Christian now.

(10-11)THE CHIEF BLESSINGS-GIFTS OF GRACE AND GLORY EXCEED ALL ELSE 12

For better is a day within your walls than a thousand. I would choose to continually spread myself out over the house of my God or as a doorkeeper than be in the circle or circle round the tents of the wicked. For the LORD God is a sun and shield. The LORD gives Grace and Glory. He keeps back no good thing from those who walk in uprightness or walk straight.

(12) THE BLESSING OF FAITH-A PAEON OF PRAISE 13

O LORD of hosts O the blessings of the man who trust in You. *This pilgrim can be imagined looking up like faithful Abraham at the stars and fancying himself so utterly blessed because he has been given SIMPLE FAITH [Hebrew hfb] in the God who created the starry hosts of the heavens. The psalmist is as confident as the birds in the belfry-as the sparrow and swallow in the courts of the LORD'S house.*

PSALM 85 For the sons of Korah REVIVAL

INTRODUCTION

This psalm features the desired "joy of revival". I am convinced that "joy" demonstrates the heightened and desired lifestyle of the Christian-what C.S.Lewis in company with the apostle Paul considered "normal" Christianity. Moses in Deuteronomy 12 11-19 cites "joy" as the characteristic the LORD desires in His people who are walking with Him. Paul writing to Philippi emphasises exactly this truth saying, "'Rejoice' and I say again 'rejoice' ." (cf Philippians 1.18, 2.17-18, 3.1 and 4.4) Besides- this life of revival is everywhere characteristic of David. The prayer of this psalm is everywhere needful today, viz "Wilt Thou not revive us again?" It is not "Preaching revival" but "Entering in before God to implore and begin again in revival" that is the great need. The content of this psalm reaches far beyond "revival" to the return of the Shekinah and the glory of the Kingdom of God on earth.

TITLE

The title reads, "For the chief musician, a composition of the house of Korah-a Mizmor."

DOCTRINE OF GOD AND OF ATONEMENT

O LORD You "delighted in the association of "-You "satisfied" You "gave benefits to" Your land. You turned again the turnings away of Jacob. *There is nothing that parallels the delight of God in men and nations; there is nothing that can replace the work of giving repentance so that men turn personally or in some numbers to the living God.* You lifted up by Yourself the iniquity of your people, You continued to cover (with righteousness)or pardon all their sin as a father clothes his family. *The scriptures universally teach that atonement has two aspects-the taking upon Himself of His people's guilt and the covering of their lives by the garments of salvation. This is the "lamb like" work of Christ.* You harvested or drew back to yourself all your overwhelming anger or anger that passed all limits and caused Yourself to turn from the heat zeal or ardent burning fury of your anger. *There are two more aspects of atonement that need to be understood. Divine punishment exceeds the limits of human discipline-it has an eternal aspect which can be disposed of by gathering it to God's eternal bosom through the long foreseen and eternally effectual work of the cross.; and second, God can change from His fury and bestow compassion through the application of the benefits of atonement.*

THE CALL FOR COVENANT AND FOR CHRIST 5-7

Will You be angry with us age-long? [Hebrew ml#l]*This in context might mean over a lifetime or an era or for all future time* Will You draw out or spread along Your anger from generation to generation? *This clarifies that it is not a single lifetime but a multi-generational ruminative anger that the psalmist fears.* Will You not turn -will You not continually give us the life of God. And your people will rejoice and shine because of You. Cause us to see your covenant prophetically or Your prophetic covenant and give us Your Yeshua. *At the heart of the nation's hope was the future plan of God to bring his covenant love*

to bear through Jesus Christ. The coming of Christ answered this prayer in part-but only a remnant of the people bought into it. The need is for the people to become "seers" and to recognise the source of their salvation.

THE DESIRE FOR GODS SHEKINAH TO RETURN 8-9

I will listen to what the LORD God will promise. For He promises peace to His people and to His saints but let them not turn back to great folly. Definitely His Yeshua salvation is near those who fear Him-that the Shekinah glory may dwell in our land where it belongs.

THE FIRST ADVENT OF CHRIST 10-12

Covenant love and truth or faithfulness strike an agreement; Righteousness and peace have met in affection or loving kiss. *At the cross the covenant of God and the truth of Christ-the love of God in the gift of His Son which featured the bringing of "peace with God" and the imputation of righteousness set the scene for "new life" and centuries of "revival" which must issue in a worldwide garnering of saints and ultimately the return of the Shekinah.*

THE SECOND ADVENT IN VIEW 11-12

Truth grows as fruit from the earth and righteousness hangs over the balustrade or windows of heaven [*Hebrew pqv*] as if from the upper floor window watching the time to harvest. In addition the LORD will give The Good One. *The phrase may mean "good things" or "the good one"(There being none good but God this reference is to Messiah) or "happiness". I have chosen Messiah as the interpretation and fulfilment of this prophecy comes not through prosperity or happiness in themselves but in the Kingdom of Christ-but for the specific reason that the One who hangs out heavens window is the One who is coming soon and who will reap the harvest He has sown. And the earth will give its harvest produce.*

LONG CENTURIES OF PREACHING OF GOSPEL RIGHTEOUSNESS EVENT IN CHRIST'S GLORIOUS RETURN-THE SHEKINAH DWELLS AGAIN AMONG MEN!

Righteousness goes before Him and sets the stages or times his footfall [*Hebrew m[p "the thump" or time*]] belongs to the road. *The clear prophecy of Christ's first and second advents is most obviously in this context. The proclamation of the gospel since Christ's first advent enables His righteousness to be proclaimed and to take hold worldwide so that He can enter into His harvest.*

PSALM 86

LORD-FILL THE SPACE IN MY HEART

TITLE

A prayer of David

A PRAYER FOR PRESERVATION 1-5

Lower your ear O LORD Hear me for I am needy and abysmally poor. Be watchman of my soul **for I am a worshipper** who cares for the young [*Hebrew dysj The Hasidim are the "religious" today. Anciently the word attracts to itself the "Stork-like" characteristic of affection for others -especially those like the young who need support*] Save your servant for he trusts or confides in You. Show me grace **for to You I call** all day long. Rejoice the soul of your servant **for to you my soul is lifted in its burdens for** You O LORD are good and "pardoning" *This is a word of single use in Psalm 86.5 The Hebrew word j | s means "light" or "lifting up" and it has links to Selah-the word for Meditation. The connection is theologically of great interest for all the SELAH'S may be tintured with the notion of "pardon" and being "lightened of one's burden"*

There is a correspondence between the petitions and the attitude in each case

- (1) Listen-for I care for I want to be like You and care for others*
- (2) Save me for I confide in You*
- (3) Show me grace for I call all day to You*
- (4) Give me joy for I lay my burdens down beside You*

PRAYER IN ADVERSITY 6-7

O LORD (come close)let me speak my prayer into your ears and cause your ears to be sharp to the voice of my cry for grace [*Hebrew ytmmj t based on mj the Hebrew for "grace"*]

*He giveth more grace when the burdens grow greater
He addeth more strength when the labours increase
To added affliction He addeth His mercy
To multiplied trials His multiplied peace.*

In the day of adversity I will call on You **for You will answer** me. As in the early stanzas David gives reason for his desire to appraise the LORD of his situation-it is because the LORD answers!

THE LORD IS WITHOUT PEER-HIS WORKS UNIQUE AND MIRACULOUS 8-10

There are none among the gods like You O LORD and no works like Your works. All the nations which You have made will come and worship before Your face O LORD and give GLORY to your name for You are GREAT and do miraculous things. You alone are God of strength.

UNITE MY HEART AND FILL ITS HOLLOW EMPTINESS 11-13

"Help us aim" or "point us in the direction" of your way O LORD. I will walk in the protection or house of your faithfulness. Unite or join my heart all together to be a heart that will be a fearing heart. *David has many hollow or unfilled areas in his life-lacking wisdom understanding compassion maybe and many other attributes he sought. The "hollowness" of his heart [Hebrew bbl "hollow"] concerned him. He desired that it be "one" in reverence or admiration-even trembling and certainly wholly gripped by thoughts of the LORD and not divided on other objects of greater interest.* I will praise You O Lord my God with all my heart and glorify your name all my life for your covenant love is great "from above" or "close to" or "rushing down upon" me and You have caused my soul to be delivered from the depths or lower part of Sheol *What we might call the lowest hell as this is rendered in the A.V. The concept is of the departed separated into the Bosom of Abraham in Sheol felicitatis and the depraved ungodly in the lower reaches of Sheol profundus.*

THE QUEST FOR A SIGN 14-17

O God those who seethe in passion or arrogance [*Hebrew dhw "boil over"*] have risen against me. A group of terrorists [*Hebrew xyr*] have continually sought my soul and Your name is not before them. But You O Lord are **God of tender mercy and grace**. Prolong **a double portion of your anger** and the **greatness of your covenant love and faithfulness**. *David seeks God's continual anger with the men of violence and terror and His extended faithfulness towards himself.* Look upon me and be gracious to me; give **Your strength** to your servant and your **Yeshua salvation** to the son of Your handmaid. Create with me a sign of well-being and they will see it and be ashamed for You O LORD have helped and comforted me. *David seeks for evidence as he prays that the LORD will save him. This might be a "portent" but it can also be a "military sign". Although Jesus rebuked the Pharisees for observing signs and not knowing him the quest of a sign as in the case of Gideon and David is a matter of increased intimacy and bolstered faith.*

PSALM 87

HOLINESS & NEW BIRTH

TITLE For the sons of Korah-a Mizmor -a Song

THE CITY OF HOLINESS AND GLORY

His foundation is in the mountains of Holiness. The LORD loves the gates of Zion above all the dwellings of Jacob. Things or acts spoken about you are glorious in themselves O city of our God...meditate on that "lifting up" or "forgiving"

THE CITY

I will remember Rahab and Babylon **for those who know me intimately**. Behold Phistinia and Tyre with Ethiopia-this man was born there (in Zion) *The psalmist like David was proud of how Rahab turned to God and became part of the royal line. The Psalmist was aware that ancient Babel was great-but nothing to Zion [in future time God would give many tongues to his apostles at Jerusalem]He may also have been referring to the relief of Babylonian Jews and the fondness for the city of God in bringing about a decree through Esther's son Artaxerxes II for the rebuilding of Jerusalem. The nation of Phistinia which David conquered and the nation that supplied timber for the temple at Jerusalem and the Ethiopian nation whose queen came to see the glory of Zion afford us three great stories:-*
(1) *The Conquest under Joshua 1300BC*

(2) *The victory over Goliath 1100BC*

(2) *The Building of the temple 950BC*

"I was born in this great city. The psalmist was a city man and maybe of the royal household.

BORN AGAIN

And it will be said of Zion that "This man and that man has been born again there" *The Pual suggests that those born in Zion have continual renewal of life or "more than one birth. To be "born again" NT style need be but once but this OT phrase comes close to its significance-it means that God yields such a one life which goes on being renewed. It is scarcely just an awkward way of saying "This man was born-this other man was born there- and that man too"* The most high Himself will make her an institution *Such an institution as is connected principally with "life-giving"* And the LORD will add in writing the peoples "This man was *born again there*"-**study the lifting up (of sins)**

THE KORATHITE PSALMIST CALLS ON THE CHOIRS TO EMPHASIE HIS MESSAGE BY VOICE AND "blowing life" into hollow pipes

Both singers and those who play wind instruments or flutes..."All my fountains are in You" They Psalmist is speaking of His sorrows-and here is a veritable prophetic TORAH of Christ whose tears were for Jerusalem. His tears at Lazarus grave and his tears on Olivet and his tears as he looked over Jerusalem amounted to tears for the lack of faith and understanding of those around Jerusalem. Had the city been responsive it would have been established as a centre for new birth -which office passed to the church through many millennia -though on the LORD'S return this age-long vision of one man who was "born again" in Zion will be fulfilled

PSALM 88

COMFORT FOR AFFLICTION IN EZRA'S TIME

Title

A Mizmor Song for the Sons of Korah For the chief musician on Mahaloth Leanoth [*Hebrew for "soothing (harp)"for "the cry of affliction" or "the afflicted"*] *The NIV bible has a note "Possibly the tune-"suffering of Affliction. We cannot be faulted for believing that this is a psalm of comfort. A Maschil or teaching psalm of Heman the Ezrahite This Levite is celebrated along with Ethan in 1 Kings 4.31 as amongst the 5 wisest men known to the kings and people of the Jews in or before the time of King Solomon*

HEMAN'S ARROWS OF PRAYER AMID A VERTIABLE FEAST OF TROUBLES

"O LORD God of my Yeshua salvation" by day or daily *was my cry for help, in the night You were there helping me! My prayer will come before your face or will "belong" to your face Heman is wise in that he communed with God in his affliction. Lower your ear or "stretch it out" as in coming closer to listen with care to my rattle or quivering cry. The allusion is to "arrows flying in sequence in the air". Heman is quivering and praying with great quietness and brokenness and yet great power! This man was a man of prayer! My soul and life is abounds or is satiated with trouble (cp. Job 14.1) and my life has been caused to touch death.*

HEMAN IS THINKING OF HIMSELF AS A WARRIOR IN A BATTLE FIELD HEAP OR IN A LIVING GRAVE 4-7

I think of myself as one with those who are going down swiftly to the pit or grave. *He has damasked himself into the story of the dying. I am as a warrior without force or power. I am stretched out (on a couch) My soul is near or like as or within the walls and limits of the dying or dead. Heman is in that nether world where those who formerly lived seem nearer than the living. Like the battle slain who lie in a heap* whom you remember no more for these have cut themselves off *like a felled tree or "separated sheep"(as a victim)* from your hand or power to help . You have placed me in the prison of those underneath-or the lower ones, within the dark shadows. Your hot wrath leans upon me and you keep humbling me [*Hebrew חנ*] "*making meek" or "submitting me to "*] with all your breakers or waves, *Selah Think how "heavy" that is.*

HEMAN'S UNENVIABLE ISOLATION AND UNCEASING PRAYER 8-13(Hebrew) 8-12(Eng)

You have caused those who know me intimately to become distant or to be removed from me and have placed abhorrent things or people for me to relate to. I am separated as a prisoner and I will not escape or be led out. My eyes languish or age from my affliction. I call out to You O LORD throughout all the day or each day. I keep spreading out my hands [*Hebrew jfv - "to spread as if over the world"*] **Do you do miracles for the dead or corpses?** *Although this seems sarcastic humour it is truth stranger than fiction. The LORD does raise the dead and call things that are not as if they were...When the shady one of Hades or the weak rise up and are caused to praise You? Selah- think on that burdensome idea!*

Is there any counting of Your covenant love in the burial mound or sepulchre? Is there any reckoning of your faithfulness in the abyss of Sheol? *We can answer one of these questions-the one about reckoning God's love in the sepulchre in the positive-since the resurrection of Lazarus and more particularly that of Christ. Countless pilgrims have spoken of God's love and covenant purpose in those sepulchres. The story of Jesus about Dives and Lazarus in Hades enable us to give positive answer to the second besides. To these deep probes of the human spirit only Christ has the answer. The OT gave no answers. Does your wonder make itself known in darkness? Do your righteous deeds make themselves known in a land of forgetfulness?*

HEMAN INCESSANTLY PRAYS THOUGH DEEP SPIRITUAL MATTERS HAVE NO EASY ANSWER Hebrew 14-19 Eng 13-18

But I keep crying to you O LORD for help! And in the morning my prayer will be before You! Why O LORD do you thrust away my soul and hide Your face from me? I am afflicted and expiring from my youth. *Heman speaks of a condition which appears to have been lung orientated-not unlike the disease of emphysema. I have borne Your terrors over and over (through the years. [Hebrew "hmp" "the wheel"] Your burning anger or ardours or earnestness have passed over me. Your terrors have brought me to the extremity of extinction encircling me as deep waters all the day. Together they have beaten me. [Hebrew pqn "to beat every olive off an olive tree] You have caused to remove far from me my beloved and a companion. Darkness knows me best. Heman is oppressed by an acute personal physical malady, the unceasing difficulties of many years and the terrors of God which have brought him to the position where the light of hope is all but extinguished. Besides this his beloved companion has been taken away. Amid all this Heman in his wisdom is a model for us -he keeps on praying amid the trials. He writes a song and sings it to instruct and teach others to bring their troubles to the LORD daily-always-unceasingly.*

PSALM 89

ON VERGE OF CAPTIVITY ETHAN GIVES US THE STATE OF THE NATION & FORESEES CHRIST BEARING THE BURDEN

Title 1

This maschil of Ethan the Ezrahite must not confuse the reader to believe its setting was post-captivity. Its setting was clearly pre-captivity. However the writer could have been a young man when he became a captive and could well have joined the ranks of those taught by Ezra in Babylon-hence he became known as an important member of the school of Ezra.

This is a "teaching psalm"[Hebrew MASCHIL literally "or prudence of the sort shown by Isaac in crossing his hands that which causes or prompts teaching". The verbal stem means "to look". The word is also used of "pleating the hair" since that action means is "deft" and involves "an exchange of hands"] Such MASCHIL are taken as didactic or doctrinal poems. This psalm comes from the pen of one of the five wisest men of the east-Ethan-whose name means "constancy". His name mirrors the divine constancy of promise. Since 1Kings 4.31 refers to Ethan as pre-dating Solomon he may well have been a contemporary of Saul and also of David and the references of vv38-45 would fit reasonably with Saul. There were later Ethan's in the Gershonite and Merari lines of Levi but the earliest is thought to be Jeduthan which name has a variant Jedithan [Hebrew YEDETHAN]! To take Israel's later history one better candidate as a youthful king overthrown by enemies as the monarch is referred to in vv38-45 would be Ahaziah who reigned one year in Jerusalem and died at 23 by the hand of Jehu during a period of warfare.. That would date Ethan circa 843. A kindred youthful and fateful reign was that of Amon who came to the throne at 22 and reigned from 641-

639B.C.being murdered in a court conspiracy-but he does not seem to have engaged in war. A third random candidate from much later is Jehoiachin who at 18 ascended the throne and capitulated to Nebuchadnezzar after just 3 months. This would put Ethan's poem on the eve of captivity in 597B.C.

ETHAN'S ARGUMENT

This wise man of the east stated his view on the divine promise in an argument not unlike that of later Greek thought in 89.4,37,45 & 48

Taking the four "Selah" Weighty grounds for thought or pause in the psalm we find

(A) The thesis *I have sworn to David, "I will establish your line for perpetuity"*

(b) The alternative thesis *"I have sworn & will not lie to David, his line will be established as the moon"*

(c) The antithesis, *"You have cut short the days of his youth, covered him with a mantle of shame?"*

(d) The synthesis, *"What man can live & not see death? Or save himself from the power of the grave"*

Ethan rejoiced in the promise to David's house but was downcast at the thought of a king of Judah cut off. His heart was comforted in a measure by the thought that death accounts for the apparent reversal of God's promise-nevertheless he urges that an alternative understanding -one higher than he can comprehend will mean the endurance of David's line.

ETHAN'S TWIN TOPICS-LOVE AND FAITHFULNESS 2-3

I will sing of the covenant love of the LORD perpetually. From generation to generation I will cause your faithfulness or credibility to be known intimately by my mouth. For I suppose or promise [*a teacher's use of the Hebrew A'MAR "to say"-much as we would use the word "maintain" or "state the thesis"*] that covenant love will be built up perpetually. I will "say" [with the same sense] that you have established your faithfulness as an institution in these heavens. *Ethan derives a classic illustration of faithfulness from the ordered circuits of the heavenly planets.*

THE DAVIDIC COVENANT & THE SEED (CHRIST) 4

"I have cut a covenant with my chosen. I have sworn by myself to David my Servant." **To the age or age-long** your "SEED" will be established or constituted and I will build up your throne from generation to generation. Think of the elevation or profound significance [*Hebrew SELAH-"the weighty thought"*]

GOD HELD IN AWE APART FROM ALL ABOUT HIM 5-9

The heaven sing your miracles O LORD. *Ethan thinks of the heavens as an ode to the LORD God of the miraculous.* Definitely your faithfulness is in the congregation of saints. For who in the darkness above is arrayed in order as the LORD? Who is like the LORD among the sons of the Mighty? (Angels) God is dreadful in the great sitting. [*Hebrew SOD "consultative and cushioned assembly"*] *The fancied sitting is suggestive of an Arabian style of assembly or government.* And He is feared above all about Him. O LORD God of hosts who is like You Mighty Living One? [*Hebrew HASAN-"possessor" or "he who binds together"*] and Your faithfulness encircles You. You are Ruler over the proud swelling sea. In the midst of the lifting up of its rollers You constantly soothe or quieten them. *One of the evidences of Christ's deity was his "quietening of the waves" on two separate occasions.(Mark 4.39 & Matthew 14.32)* You crushed Rahab as one slain in battle; with the arm of your strength you scattered your enemies. *"Rahab" in Isaiah 30.7 is called RAHAB HEM SHEBETH or "Rahab the do-nothing" (NIV)-a term for "Egypt" "Rahab" is also a term for "sea monsters of very ancient origin"*

THE THIRD SOUND-THAT OF VICTORY 10-17A

The heaven belong to you and certainly the earth. You founded established on foundations the world and its fullness. You created from nothing the north and the south. *The idea of anchorage or basic security of the globe is God devised and the concept of North and South derived from His construction of the polarities of the earth and its tilt vis-a-vis the sun.* Tabor and Hermon keep singing for joy through your name. *The constant tremulous sound of birdsong and trees on Israel's outstanding mountains accompanies the song of the spheres registered in v.5* Your arm has warrior might; your arm is strong; your right hand uplifted. Righteousness and judgment are the foundation of your throne; love

and faithfulness go before your face. Blessed are the people who know the joyful sound or the battle cry [Hebrew TERUHAH meaning "the acclaim of a people for her king "] who walk O LORD in the light of your presence. In Your name they rejoice all the day and they rise up in Your righteousness for You are the ornament [Hebrew PA'hAR "adornment" or "beauty"] of their strength and in Your pleasure.

ISRAEL'S KING AND ISRAEL'S MESSIAH 17B-29

THE GREAT PROPHETIC VISION -ETHAN'S COMMENTARY ON 2 SAMUEL 7

By your favour You cause our horn to be lifted.-for our shield is of the LORD and **our king** belongs to the holy one of Israel. **2 Samuel 7 5-17 Then** or formerly [Hebrew AhAZ is a most frustrating temporal adverb-and is adaptable to "past present or future time] you spoke **in a vision** to **Your beloved** and You said, *This night vision of Nathan was given for David and had AD AOLAM moment for his throne-in other words it provided for an end time kingdom before the face of David(v16) to which David adds the prayer that it might continue perpetually "in God's sight"(v.29)i.e. eternally.*

(1)"I have placed help [Hebrew hAZER [girding or "conquest" "**victory**"] upon my warrior; I have found David my servant; with my sacred oil I have anointed him;

The One whom my hand will establish with Him. My right arm will definitely strengthen Him. No enemy will carry Him away nor son of evil afflict Him. I will cut down His adversaries before His face and smite down [Hebrew NAGAPH "defeat in battle "] those who hate Him.

(2) My faithfulness and my love will be with Him and **by my name** [Yeshua-Jesus] His horn shall be exalted. *I have stressed by capital letters the Messianic orientation here-although there could be a reference to David. Ethan's teaching appears to migrate from Israel's king to Israel's Messiah in these verses.*

(3) I will place His hand over the sea and His arm over the rivers. *Mark 4.39*

(5) He will call out to me, "YOU ARE MY FATHER" *John 8.16-19 & 27-29 with 10.36; 17.1,5,17,21 & 20.17,*

(6)"MY GOD" -*John 20.17 Matthew 27.46*

(7) AND "THE ROCK OF MY YESHUA SALVATION." *expressions David used Messiah used Lk19.9 & Matthew 16.18*

(8) I will definitely give Him as **My Firstborn** *John 3.16; Heb1.6; 1John 4.9; Rev.1.5*

(9) **Elyon** for the kings of the earth *John 18.37; 1Tim 1.17; 6.15; Rev 17.14; 19.16*

(10) I will maintain my covenant love belonging to Him for perpetuity and my covenant of faithfulness belonging to Him *Mat.3.17;John 3.16; 2Peter1.17.*

(11) I will establish His seed for "still" or "eternity" [Hebrew AhD] cf Isaiah "He shall see his seed"-*the church of the Redeemed*

(12) And His throne as the heavens of my presence *Christ is given eternal heavenly rule Col3.1; Rev5.13*

DIVINE DISCIPLINE IN THE LINE OF DAVID BUT CONSISTENT COVENANT LOVE 30-37

If his sons forsake my Torah and do not go in the path of my judgments, if they profane my decrees and do not keep my commandments I will punish their sins with a rod and their iniquity with floggings but I will not annul [Hebrew PARAR "to break off" or end from" or void"] my covenant from continuing with him and I will not default [Hebrew SHAQAR "to deceive" or "violate" or "lie"] on my faithfulness. I will not profane or break my covenant; I will not change what has gone forth from my lips. I have sworn by myself in my holiness that I will not lie to David. His Seed will continue for perpetuity and his throne as the sun **before me.** *The discontinuity of the present heavens which bow out before a system where there is no need of the sun or moon or stars terminates the terms of that oath. As the moon it will be established to perpetuity-that faithful witness in the dark night sky-Selah mull over that weighty thought*

THE BREACH OF CONDITIONS BY JUDAH 38-45

But you have rejected as abominable or cast off [Hebrew ZANAH-"to reject as abominable-applicable to Saul in view of the witch of Endor incident]and lightly esteemed -you "have passed by" [Hebrew hABAR-Saul was by-passed and the comment applies precisely]Your anointed. You have continued to

reject [*Hebrew NIAER "to resist" or "oppose"*] the covenant with your servant and profaned his crown that belonged to earth. *It may even be that Saul's crown rolled in dust as he fell to the earth in Gilboa.* You have broken through all his fortified walls or sheepfolds [*The Hebrew GARAD "walls" has links with the slavic GOROD-"fortified city" demonstrating again the linguistic antiquity of Hebrew -also links with the Greek χορτος "walled garden" and the Italian "Catarata" (fences)*] You have set his strongholds in battered ruins. All who pass by on the way have divided his spoil. He has become the scorn of those who live with him. *By his madness Saul earned this scorn* You have exalted the right hand of his foes. *The Philistines grew too strong for him.* All his enemies have been caused to rejoice. *In 2 Samuel 1.20 David recognises this exultation of the Philistines.* You have definitely turned back the edge of his sword-Saul died by being run through *1 Samuel 31.4* You have not caused him to rise up in battle. You have brought a cessation to his splendour and you have kept precipitating his throne to the ground [*Hebrew MIGARETHA-"to cast down" a exact word for "precipice"*] You have QATZAR-"caused to be passionate" or "impatient" or "short of spirit" the days of his unmarried years. You caused faintness [*Hebrew hATAH "languour"-a suitable word for "depression"*] of shame to come upon him. Meditate on that weighty thought.

THE THOUGHT OF SUSTAINING LIFE BEYOND THE GRAVE 48-9 Hebrew-English 46-48

How long O LORD will you hide completely? How long will your hot wrath burn like fire? Remember me-how fleeting I am [*Hebrew HALAD "quickly slipping away"*] For what waste [*Hebrew SHAWEAh-"crash"*] have you made the sons of Adam? What courageous warrior will live and not see death? *Death bestrews the battle field of life.* What warrior can cause himself to slip away from the hand of Sheol? Meditate on that weighty thought.

ETHAN TRANSFERS THE BURDEN OF DAVID TO CHRIST WHO CARRIES THE WOES OF NATIONS AND WHOSE STEPS TO CALVARY WERE DOGGED BY REPROACH 50-53 (HEB)

Where is your covenant love of earlier times, O Lord? You caused yourself to swear to David in your faithfulness. Remember O Lord the reproach of your servant! How I have to bear in my bosom all the big burdens [*Hebrew hAMAM "secrets" or "weighty loads" or even "great nations"*] with which Your enemies O LORD have reproached (me)-with which **they have reproached the steps of your Messiah.** Blessed be the LORD for ever. Amen and Amen.

YEDETHAN (JEDUTHAN) YIELDS INSIGHT INTO THE ROYAL MUSIC OF DAVID

The tacit references to Saul and these explicit references to David within this psalm give us insight on just how psalms from the hands of the skilled Levite community of the early monarchy were put together. They show the true faith and deep devotion of Levites of that time and their emphatically joyful tenor of living. In Psalms 52 & 77 it has been conjectured that AL JEDUTHAN suggests that a guild of musicians was called after this gifted Levite. In 1 Chronicles 25.1-6 he is one of three musicians appointed by David. Asaph and his four sons wrote **as the king requested.** Jeduthan and his six sons were harpists who, it would seem, **wrote independently...** Heman had 14 sons and 3 daughters and is distinctly named "the King's seer" or poet laureate, leader of wind instruments and **conductor of cymbal psaltery and harp music**-so he best qualifies as choirmaster. *With this great psalm of the Ethan whom Perowne links with the monarch of Jehoiachin the third book of praise ends. The nation had come under the discipline of God and the psalm sets out the historical background with excellence.*

THE END OF BOOK THREE

**Bob Coffey L'shuvkha Marya
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Aramaic Bible Companion**