

In I Thessalonians 5:17, which is obviously a New Testament letter written to a church, we read “pray without ceasing.” Just a couple of verses later we read “Do not quench the Spirit.” Obviously from this we may conclude that the Holy Spirit wants people and prompts people to pray.

Now that text does not say what specifically we are to pray about, so the sky is the limit. Sometimes we will pray about personal matters, business matters, family matters, health matters, spiritual matters or church matters. People being led by God’s Spirit will be led to pray and one area that faithful praying people will undoubtedly need to pray about will be the subject of enemies.

Any believer who is being led of God, who is standing for the truth of God, will have his or her share of enemies. Sometimes we will need to pray for our enemies. In fact, the Apostle Paul said that we are to pray for our enemies.

Most of the time, as I understand things, we will be praying for the repentance of our enemies. We will pray that God might intervene in their thinking so they will turn and do what is right. However, every now and then enemies of God’s people will reach such a threatening level that the Holy Spirit will prompt one to pray that God will intervene and destroy the enemies.

That must have been what Paul did when he delivered someone over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh. Paul did not pray for this all the time, but he did pray for this some of the time and that same kind of prayer is found in Psalm 83.

Psalm 83 is the final Psalm in the Asaph series. This is a very prophetic Psalm, which, more than likely, will be prayed by Israel during the Tribulation. We are not sure what the background of the Psalm actually is. We do know that this prayer is against an Arab coalition of nations that are against Israel (**83:6ff**). During the Tribulation there will be a large contingency of Arabs that will turn against Israel and this will be a time when the real need will be the prayer of Psalm 83. The point of the Psalm is this:

WHEN GOD’S PEOPLE ARE BEING SURROUNDED BY ENEMIES WHO ARE TRYING TO DESTROY THEM, THEY NEED TO PRAY TO GOD AND ASK GOD TO RESCUE THEM AND DESTROY THEIR ENEMIES.

Being a Psalm of Asaph and a song of Asaph means that this was to be taught to the people when they gathered for corporate worship and it was also a theme they were to sing about. One of the things God’s people need to realize is that we have enemies and we have a right to pray that God will destroy our enemies.

Now the truth is we are in no position to even know who all of our enemies are and we are certainly not in any position to destroy our enemies; but God does and is. We have the absolute right to go to God and pray about enemies and that is exactly what happens here.

Now there are three distinct messages that are to be communicated in this Psalm:

MESSAGE #1 – Asaph asks God to no longer be silent in the world of enemies. **83:1-5**

Verse 1 is very important. It is clear that the thing that prompts the prayer is that God seems to have remained quiet and silent for a long time. In other words, God’s people had apparently been praying about these enemies for a while and it did not appear as though God was doing anything about them. **A key point to realize is that it may be time to pray for the destruction of our enemies after we have prayed for some time for the repentance of our enemies.**

Now one of the first things we need to do if God does not appear to be answering our prayers about our enemies is to think very theologically about this. God may choose to be silent for several reasons:

- 1) God may be trying to get His people to deal with sin.
- 2) God may be testing or proving the faith of His people.
- 3) God may be actually gathering all enemies for major destruction.

In **verses 2-4**, Asaph gives four reasons why he was praying for the destruction of enemies:

Reason #1 - Because the enemies were making an uproar. **83:2a**

If you are faithful to God, you will have some enemies and those enemies will make noise; they do not just sit quietly on the sidelines. They will try to recruit others to turn against you.

Reason #2 - Because the enemies were exalting themselves. **83:2b**

Notice that the proud, arrogant enemies actually hate one faithful. They hate godly people given over to understanding the Word of God. They exalt themselves and boast and brag.

Reason #3 - Because the enemies were uniting and devising secret schemes. **83:3, 5**

God’s people, in and of themselves, don’t have a chance. They are outnumbered by enemies and they are out-schemed by enemies. Enemies of band together and have their secret meetings and God’s people don’t have a clue as to what they are doing.

Notice how God views his faithful people in **verse 3**; they are His “treasured ones.” A treasure is something that typically is kept in secret. It is secure and safe. So it is with God’s faithful people. They are like God’s hidden treasure in this world. He is keeping them secure and safe.

Reason #4 - Because the enemies will destroy God’s people. **83:4**

This is important to realize. Enemies of God’s people are out to destroy them and if given a chance that is exactly what they will do.

Israel’s enemies were out to destroy her so that the world would not even remember Israel’s name. But as Spurgeon said, even though that is the goal of the enemies, it is much easier said than it is done.

MESSAGE #2 – Asaph identifies the enemies. 83:6-8

Asaph is not praying about some generic group of enemies. He specifically knows who they are. Asaph identifies the enemies and specifically points out who they are. He names them. The enemies were real people who lived in real places and they had real names.

Now the coalition of nations mentioned here is a coalition of Arab nations. We cannot find in history any record of when all of these Arabs united to try to exterminate Israel. So we must assume that there will be a point of time in the future when there will be a massive uniting of Arab nations against Israel. That is exactly what will happen in the Tribulation.

In fact, at the end of **verse 8** Asaph specifically said “selah” stop and think about this.

When we pray for God to destroy our enemies, there is nothing wrong with naming the enemy. Our enemies are real people who live in real houses. They have real names and real faces. Satan will use these people to turn against us and arrogantly speak out and attack us. When we know who they are, we have a right to pray about them.

MESSAGE #3 – Asaph asks God to do specific negative things to the enemies. 83:9-18

There are six negative things that Asaph asks God to do to his enemies:

Negative #1 - Asaph asks God to make enemies like dung . 83:9-12

Now it is quite apparent from the people who are named in these verses that Asaph had been reading the book of Judges. The thing that prompted him to pray this prayer was his memory of the Word of God.

The Midianites completely outnumbered Gideon by 400 to 1 and God destroyed the Midianites (Judges 7).

Sisera and Jabin were Canaanite leaders who had impressive iron chariots in the days of Deborah, but God killed them (Judges 4).

Oreb and Zeeb were two Midianite leaders who were killed and beheaded (Judges 7:23-25).

Zebah and Zalmunna were two Midianite kings who tried to run and get away and were captured and punished (Judges 8:10-17).

Asaph is simply remembering the Word of God and asking God to do what He had done in the past against Israel’s enemies. Wipe them out and destroy them.

The fact that he asks God to make them like dung is interesting because dung is repulsive. That is what Asaph wants God to do to the enemies; make them a stench and repulsive.

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Negative #2 - Asaph asks God to make enemies blow away and burn up. **83:13-14**

When wind blows chaff or a fire burns in the mountains, it has its place of origin and quickly moves away from its place of origin. That is what Asaph is asking God to do—move the enemies quickly away from their place of origin and scatter them.

Within this request is the realization that God does control nature. God can literally send a whirling wind or start a fire and let that wind take it wherever He decides. God can use wind and fire as a means of destroying enemies.

Negative #3 - Asaph asks God to make enemies terrified. **83:15**

Asaph continues to ask God to use His cosmological power to terrify their enemies. Storms and winds are controlled by the God of the Bible. When God sends some storm or wind against the enemy of one godly, it is terrifying because God may use that storm to specifically destroy one who is antagonistic to Him and His people.

Negative #4 - Asaph asks God to make enemies dishonored. **83:16**

If God totally brings an enemy to dishonor, this may be the one thing that will cause that person to seek God's Word and will. Calamity and tragedy should drive one to God.

Negative #5 - Asaph asks God to make enemies ashamed and humiliated. **83:17**

Notice the prayer—Asaph wants God to cause these people to be ashamed forever. I truly believe that those who have turned against the godly will be ashamed of what they did forever and ever. They will forever remember the evil.

Negative #6 - Asaph asks God to make enemies know God. **83:18**

Those who reject God and His Word need to know they are an enemy of God. They need to know that God is the Most High God over all the earth.

The problem with enemies of God is that they don't know this so Asaph is asking God to force them to know this.

During the Tribulation, God will target the whole world and the whole world will be terrified of God. God will do some incredible cosmological things that will scare all people of the world.

PARTING THOUGHTS:

- 1) We will have our share of enemies if we belong to God.**
- 2) It is certainly very right to pray about our enemies.**
- 3) It is legitimate to pray for their destruction based on what God has revealed in His Word.**
- 4) It is certainly right to pray that God will make Himself known to our enemies.**