

PSALM 88 – A SOUL FULL OF TROUBLES

Introduction

- 1) The majority of the Psalms fall into one of three categories:
 - a) **Wisdom** (*ethical, instructional*)
 - b) **Praise** (*hallelujah, historical, royal, pilgrimage, thanksgiving*)
 - c) **Lament** (*imprecatory, penitential, despondency*)
- 2) The despondent lament may be one that many can identify with the most, and Psalm 88 may be the best example – a psalm with **no** positive, uplifting declarations (Psa. 22:25; 51:12; 146-150)
- 3) Final psalm of the sons of Korah, and a contemplation of Heman the Ezrahite (1 Kgs. 4:31)
- 4) A despondent cry from a soul “full of troubles” – what can we learn? What should we learn?

I) **A Dark Psalm**

- A) The most plaintive of the Psalms – no ending note of hope, joy, or praise, only “darkness”
- B) Outline of sorrow:
 - 1) Imploring God to hear because his life is very troubled and soon ending (vv. 1-9a)
 - 2) Pleading for God’s help while there is still time (vv. 9b-12)
 - 3) Beseeching God to help with understanding as life’s troubles continue (vv. 13-18)
- C) Involves God within his afflictions and distresses – Why this way? Will You hear or help?
 - 1) “Dark providence” of God – unrelieved sufferings, afflictions, troubles, trials, etc. (Psa. 119:67, 71; Job 2:10; Jas. 1:2-4; 1 Pet. 1:6-7; 4:12-13; 2 Cor. 12:7-9)
 - a) God does not always shield His innocent children from the afflictions and sufferings that are rampant in this world filled with sin and darkness (groaning – Rom. 8:22-23)
 - 2) Many great Bible figures suffered severe troubles and trials – Noah, Job, Lot, David, Elijah, Jeremiah, John the Baptist, Jesus, Paul, John, etc. (cf. Jas. 5:10-11)

II) **The Danger of the Power of Darkness**

- A) All who have lived any amount of time on this earth have wrestled with the “darkness”
 - 1) This is the power of evil and its degenerative effects – loved by many (Jn. 3:19), their lives given over to it (Lk. 22:53), and their thoughts and actions affected for the worse by it (Eph. 4:17-19; 6:12; 2 Thess. 2:9-12; 2 Tim. 3:1-4, 12-13)
- B) If one does not resist the power of darkness, he will surely be devoured by it (1 Pet. 5:8-9)
 - 1) Effects of living in darkness – despondency, depression, faithlessness, apostasy, deception, hardening, anger, bitterness, avoidance, resignation, hopelessness
 - a) Affects others, dragging them down or pushing them away
 - 2) Will cease seeking God, constantly praying, faithfully worshiping, selflessly serving

III) **The Faith That Will Endure**

- A) How can we endure the trouble and darkness around us and not lose faith in our God?
 - 1) *2 Corinthians 6:10* – “as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing” (cf. Eccl. 3:4)
- B) Psalm 88 is written by someone of great faith in the midst of trouble urgently seeking God
 - 1) **Praying** persistently (“day and night, daily, in the morning” vv.1,9,13) (Lk. 18:1; 1 Thess. 5:17)
 - a) Prayer is surrendering – bringing our will in subjection to God’s will (lay all at His feet)
 - b) Faith will trust God even if things do not turn out the way we think they should (Job 12:13)
 - 2) **Trusting** in God’s salvation, lovingkindness, faithfulness, wonders, righteousness (vv. 1, 11-12)
 - 3) **Bringing** all our cares and troubles to a caring and loving God (cf. 1 Pet. 5:6-7)

Conclusion

Let us wrestle against the darkness of evil, resisting it lest we are swallowed up by it. Put your complete faith and hope in God. Cry out to him day and night and trust in His loving care!