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A song. A Psalm by Asaph.

PSALM 83: 1 God, don't keep silent. Don't keep silent, and don't be still, God.

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The psalmist calls upon God for immediate help against a multitude of confederate enemies who had risen up against Judah, Psa 83:1-5. He mentions them by name, Psa 83:6-8; shows how they were to be punished, Psa 83:9-17; and that this was to be done for the glory of God, Psa 83:18.

The title, A Song or Psalms of Asaph, contains nothing particular. Among a multitude of conjectures relative to the title and occasion of this Psalm, that which refers it to the confederacy against Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, mentioned 2 Chronicles 20, is the most likely. The following reasons make it probable: 1. The children of Ammon, that is, the Ammonites and Moabites, were the principal movers in the war. 2. The Idumeans came to their assistance, 2Chr 20:22; with certain Ammonites or Meonians, referred to here in Psa 83:8, and in 2Chr 20:1. 3. There were also in this confederacy many strangers of Syria, and from beyond the sea, most likely the Dead Sea, which seems to indicate the Assyrians, Hagaranes, and Ishmaelites, designed expressly here, Psa 83:7, Psa 83:8. 4. In that transaction there was a prophet of the race of Asaph, named Jahaziel, who foretold to Jehoshaphat their total overthrow, 2Chr 20:14, etc., and probably this Jahaziel is the same with Asaph, the author of this Psalm. In the course of the notes we shall see other circumstances relative to the war of the Moabites and Ammonites against Jehoshaphat, which illustrates several particulars in this Psalm. See Calmet.

Verse 1

Keep not thou silence - A strong appeal to God just as the confederacy was discovered. Do not be inactive, do not be neuter. Thy honor and our existence are both at stake.

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PSALM 83: 2 For, behold, your enemies are stirred up. Those who hate you have lifted up their heads.

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Verse 2

Thine enemies make a tumult - They are not merely the enemies of thy people, but they are the enemies of thyself, thy worship, ordinances, and laws: "They make a tumult," they throng together.

They - have lifted up the head - They have made an irruption into the land of Judea, and encamped at En-ge-di, by the Dead Sea, 2Chr 20:1, 2Chr 20:2.

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PSALM 83: 3 They conspire with cunning against your people. They plot against your cherished ones.

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Verse 3

Consulted against thy hidden ones - צִפּוּנֵיךָ tsephuneycha, Thy hidden things; places; persons. "The hidden things in thy treasures." - Chaldee. "Thy holy ones." - Syriac. "Thy saints." - Vulgate and

Septuagint; and so the Ethiopic and Arabic. The people of Israel are probably meant. Or perhaps the temple, the ark, and the treasures of the temple, are intended.

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PSALM 83: 4 "Come," they say, "let's destroy them as a nation, that the name of Israel may be remembered no more."

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Verse 4

Let us cut them off - Let us exterminate the whole race, that there may not be a record of them on the face of the earth. And their scheme was well laid: eight or ten different nations united themselves in a firm bond to do this; and they had kept their purpose so secret that the king of Judah does not appear to have heard of it till his territories were actually invaded, and the different bodies of this coalition had assembled at En-gedi. Never was Judah before in greater danger.

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PSALM 83: 5 For they have conspired together with one mind. They form an alliance against you.

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Verse 5

They have consulted together with one consent - With a united heart, לב יחדו leb yachdav, Their heart and soul are in the work.

They are confederate against thee - "They have made a covenant," ברית יכריתו berith yachrithu, "they have cut the covenant sacrifice." They have slain an animal, divided him in twain, and passed between the pieces of the victim; and have thus bound themselves to accomplish their purpose.

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PSALM 83: 6 The tents of Edom and the Ishmaelites; Moab, and the Hagrites;

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Verse 6

The tabernacles of Edom - The tents of these different people are seen in the grand encampment. Tents are probably mentioned because it was the custom of some of these people, particularly the Ishmaelites, to live a migratory or wandering life; having no fixed habitation, but always abiding in tents. Their posterity remain to the present day, and act and live in the same manner.

Hagarenes - These people dwelt on the east of Gilead; and were nearly destroyed in the days of Saul, being totally expelled from their country, 1Chr 5:10, but afterwards recovered some strength and consequence; but where they dwelt after their expulsion by the Israelites is not known.

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PSALM 83: 7 Gebal, Ammon, and Amalek; Philistia with the inhabitants of Tyre;

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Verse 7

Gebal - The Giblites, who were probably the persons here designed, were a tribe of the ancient inhabitants of the land of Canaan, and are mentioned as unconquered at the death of Joshua, Jos 13:5. They are called stone-squarers or Giblites, 1Kgs 5:18, and were of considerable assistance to Hiram king of Tyre, in preparing timber and stones for the building of the temple. They appear to have been eminent in the days of Ezekiel, who terms them the "ancients of Gebal, and the wise men - thereof," who were ship-builders, Eze 27:3. What is now called Gibyle, a place on the Mediterranean Sea, between Tripoli and Sidon, is supposed to be the remains of the city of the Giblites.

Ammon and Moab were then descendants of the children of Lot. Their bad origin is sufficiently known. See Gen 19:30, etc. Calmet supposes that Ammon is put here for Men or Maon, the Meonians, a people who lived in the neighborhood of the Amalekites and Idumeans. See the notes on 2Chr 20:1; 2Chr 26:7.

Amalek - The Amalekites are well known as the ancient and inveterate enemies of the Israelites. They were neighbors to the Idumeans.

The Philistines - These were tributaries to Jehoshaphat, 2Chr 17:11; but it seems they took advantage of the present times, to join in the great confederacy against him.

The inhabitants of Tyre - These probably joined the confederacy in hopes of making conquests, and extending their territory on the main land.

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PSALM 83: 8 Assyria also is joined with them. They have helped the children of Lot. Selah.

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#### Verse 8

Asser also is joined - The Ammonites might have got those auxiliaries from beyond the Euphrates, against Jehoshaphat, as formerly they were brought against David. See 2Sam 10:16.

They have holpen the children of Lot - The Ammonites, who appear to have been the chief instigators in this war.

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PSALM 83: 9 Do to them as you did to Midian, as to Sisera, as to Jabin, at the river Kishon;

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#### Verse 9

Do unto them as unto the Midianites - Who were utterly defeated by Gideon, Jdg 7:21, Jdg 7:22.

As to Sisera - Captain of the army of Jabin, king of Canaan, who was totally defeated by Deborah and Barak, near Mount Tabor, by the river Kishon; and himself, after having fled from the battle, slain by Jael, the wife of Heber, the Kenite. See Jdg 4:15, etc.

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PSALM 83: 10 who perished at Endor, who became as dung for the earth.

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## Verse 10

Perished at En-dor - This refers to the defeat of the Midianites by Gideon, who were encamped in the valley of Jezreel, at the foot of Mount Gilboa, and near to Tabor, Jdg 6:33; Jdg 7:1, and consequently in the environs of En-dor. There Gideon attacked and defeated them; and, in various places during their flight, they were destroyed, and left to rot upon the earth. Jdg 7:22-25.

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PSALM 83: 11 Make their nobles like Oreb and Zeeb; yes, all their princes like Zebah and Zalmunna;

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## Verse 11

Lake their nobles like Oreb, and like Zeeb - They were two of the chiefs, or generals, of the Midianites; and were slain in the pursuit of the Midianites, by the men of Ephraim; and their heads brought to Gideon on the other side of JorDaniel Jdg 7:24, Jdg 7:25.

Yea, all their princes as Zebah, and as Zalmunna - These were kings of Midian, who were encamped at Karkor with fifteen thousand men, whom Gideon attacked there, and defeated, and took the kings prisoners; and finding that they had killed his own brothers slew them both. See Jdg 8:10-21. Of the Midianites there fell at this time one hundred and twenty thousand men.

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PSALM 83: 12 who said, "Let us take possession of God's pasture lands."

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## Verse 12

Let us take to ourselves the houses of God in possession - Nearly the words spoken by the confederates when they came to attack Jehoshaphat. They come (says the king in address to God) to cast us out of thy possession which thou hast given us to inherit. See 2Chr 20:11.

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PSALM 83: 13 My God, make them like tumbleweed; like chaff before the wind.

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## Verse 13

O may God, make them like a wheel - Alluding to the manner of threshing corn in the east. A large broad wheel was rolled over the grain on a threshing-floor, which was generally in the open air; and the grain being thrown up by a shovel against the wind the chaff was thus separated from it, in the place where it was threshed.

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PSALM 83: 14 As the fire that burns the forest, as the flame that sets the mountains on fire,

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## Verse 14

The flame setteth the mountains on fire - This may refer to the burning of the straw and chaff, after the grain was threshed and winnowed. And as their threshing-floors were situated often on the hills or mountains, to take the advantage of the wind, the setting the mountains on fire may refer to the burning of the chaff, etc., in those places. Let them be like stubble driven away by the wind, and burnt by the fire.

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PSALM 83: 15 so pursue them with your tempest, and terrify them with your storm.

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#### Verse 15

So persecute them - In this and the two following verses we find several awful execrations; and all this seems to be done in reference to that ancient custom, "pouring execrations on an enemy previously to battle." Of this I have already given specimens in this work; and the reader is particularly requested to refer to the case of Balaam being hired by the king of Moab to curse Israel previously to his intended attack: see the note on Num 22:6, where the subject is treated at large.

This custom prevailed much among the Romans, and the ancient Druids of Britain. In all cases the priests were employed to utter the execrations, as they were supposed to have the greatest influence with the gods, in whose name the curses were uttered.

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PSALM 83: 16 Fill their faces with confusion, that they may seek your name, LORD.

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#### Verse 16

That they may seek thy name - Let them be confounded in all their attempts on Israel; and see, so manifestly, that thou hast done it, that they may invoke thy name, and be converted to thee.

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PSALM 83: 17 Let them be disappointed and dismayed forever. Yes, let them be confounded and perish;

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#### Verse 17

Let them - perish - That is, in their present attempts. Some have objected to the execrations in this Psalm, without due consideration. None of these execrations refer either to their souls or to their eternal state; but merely to their discomfiture on their present attempts. Suppose the continental powers should join together to subjugate Britain, and destroy the Protestant religion; is there a Christian in the land that would not be justified in meeting them with the same or similar execrations? On the knees of my soul would I offer every one of them to God against such invaders. Selah - A. C.

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PSALM 83: 18 that they may know that you alone, whose name is the LORD, are the Most High over all the earth.

Verse 18

That men may know - That they may acknowledge, and be converted to thee. Here is no malice; all is self-defense.