

## **442 As the stubble before the wind**

We know from Scripture that God's people are no strangers to hostility and opposition, as we in Christ are experiencing today in different ways and levels, in whichever country we live.

In Psalm 83 things were bad for Israel, (just as they still are today). "Keep not thy silence, O God: hold not thy peace, and be not still, O God" is the plea in verse 1 (KJV), setting the theme for the rest of the psalm. "For, lo ...", and we then read words that could be straight out of today's newspapers: God's enemies "make a tumult", the God-haters "have lifted up the head ... taken crafty counsel ... consulted against thy hidden (Literal: protected) ones ... They have said, 'Let us cut them off from [being] a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance' ... they have consulted together with one consent ... they are confederate against thee ... 'Let us take to ourselves the houses of God in possession'" (from vv. 2-5, 12). For the likes of Edom, Moab, Ammon and Assur mentioned in Asaph's psalm (vv.6-8) today we can very simply switch the names to the likes of Iran, Syria, Hamas and Hizbollah.

In the Psalm the hostility is directed towards the Jews, as it still is today with "antisemitism" looming large once more. These days Christians also are targetted whenever their presence or words get in the way of God's enemies. We are well aware that Christians suffer harassment and death in many parts of the world, all too often, let it be said, at Muslim or Communist hands.

In the West anti-Christian behaviour is not often so blatantly violent at present, but concentrates instead on silencing Christian voices quickly and effectively, be that in politics, the media or academia for instance. Ponder the audience reaction on a TV programme like "Question Time", if or when a Bible-based truth is expressed, over abortion or homosexuality for example - hisses, jeers, sneers! But why?

In Psalm 83 vv.9-17 Asaph talks straight with the Lord God, a habit Christians would do well to re-kindle where necessary! He asks God to get rid of His, and Israel's, enemies, as had happened earlier on with the Midianites (Judges Chapters 6-8) and with Sisera (Judges Chapter 4). Asaph prays, "O God make them like a wheel (Literal: swirling dust"); as the stubble before the wind" (v.13). As with fire in the woods and on the mountains, "So persecute them with thy tempest, and make them afraid with thy storm. Fill their faces with shame ... Let them be confounded

and troubled for ever; yea, let them be put to shame, and perish ...” (from vv.14-17). This is a heartfelt cry from a man well aware of the opposition, who longs for God’s victory over them.

Now such “hit-them-hard-Lord” prayers are rare in Christian circles these days, being seen by some as “only Old Testament” with no place in the New Testament covenant of grace. But that view is clearly mistaken, for we have numerous scriptural examples of the Lord Jesus, Peter, John, Paul and others, standing firm on the spiritual battlefield, in their prayers, conversations and deeds, against the “wiles of the devil” and the wiles of his witting or unwitting followers. Just so for us still today, whether that suits us or not! – for the battle is still the Lord’s, with the likes of us as still His foot-soldiers (egs., I Samuel 17.47 / II Chronicles 20.15 / Haggai 2.5 / Zechariah 4.6 / John 16.33 / Revelation 19.11-21; 20.11-15).

With courtesy but seriousness we challenge wrongdoers and their deeds in the light of God’s Word; we pray both for their salvation in Christ, and for God’s defeat of His unrepentant enemies in His own time and manner. We serve as constant, godly irritants, messing up Satan’s activities with our Christian prayers, presence and proclamations, and taking the blows when they come (eg., Luke 10.17-20 / Acts 16.16-24 / II Thessalonians 1.3-12). For an all-too-topical example, see the Coalition for Marriage website regarding Stonewall’s recommendations for schools – quite an eye-opener, deserving robust Christian opposition.

The purpose of such strong Christian conduct and prayers against God’s enemies, on the part of Christians like us and lifted these days in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, is right there in Asaph’s Psalm – “... that they may seek thy name, O Lord ... That [men] may know that thou, whose name alone [is] JEHOVAH, [art] most high over all the earth” (Psalm 83 vv.17b-18).

There it is. That day really will come when Jehovah’s Name is known by all, and “at the name of Jesus” every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess the Lordship of Jesus Christ – “to the glory of God the Father” (from Philippians 2.10-11).

We long for that day, when Almighty God, as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, is fully vindicated, and when all those who have chosen to remain as His arrogant enemies will be “as the stubble before the wind”.

Until then our part in “the good fight” continues, in the Name of Christ, and for the glory of Almighty God.

© June 2021 Faithful Sheep Ministries – [www.fsmins.org](http://www.fsmins.org)