

# *Asaph*

*The Leader of David's Choir*

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## Overview

The name Asaph means “One who gathers together”. He was a Levite son of Berechiah. He was the leader of David’s choir.

### **1 Chron. 6:39**

And his brother Asaph, who stood on his right hand, even Asaph the son of Berachiah, the son of Shimea,

We have an account of Levi in this chapter. The priests and Levites were more concerned than any other Israelites, to preserve their descent clear, and to be able to prove it; because all the honours and privileges of their office depended upon their descent.

Now, the Spirit of God calls ministers to their work, without any limit as to the families they came from; and then, as now, though believers and ministers may be very useful to the church, none but our great High Priest can make atonement for sin, nor can any be accepted but through his atonement.

With David, as with many of the churches of today, music became a very important part of worship and praise to God.

**Asaph writes and sings psalms.**

**Asaph sings songs of praise.**

In Psalms, chapters 50 and chapters 73-83 are attributed to him. He is mentioned along with David as skilled in music. He is also called a “seer”

It is not known if Asaph wrote these psalms, or if they were written for him to sing.

**Psalms 50:1-6 gives glory to God.**

This psalm is a psalm of instruction. It tells of the coming of Christ and the Day of Judgment, in which God will call men to account; and the Holy Ghost is the Spirit of judgement.

All the children of men are concerned to know the right way of worshipping the Lord, in spirit and in truth.

In the great day, our God shall come, and make those hear his judgement who would not hearken to his law.

Happy are those who come into the covenant of grace, by faith in the Redeemer's atoning sacrifice, and show the sincerity of their love by fruits of righteousness.

When God rejects the services of those who rest in outside performances, he will graciously accept those who seek him aright. It is only by sacrifice, by Christ, the great Sacrifice, from whom the sacrifices of the law derived what value they had, that we can be accepted of God. True and righteous are his judgments; even sinners' own consciences will be forced to acknowledge the righteousness of God.

**Sacrifices are to be changed for prayers Psalms 50:7-15**

To obey is better than sacrifice, and to love God and our neighbour better than all burnt-offerings. We are here warned not to rest in these performances. And let us beware of resting in any form.

God demands the heart, and how can human inventions please him, when repentance, faith, and holiness are neglected?

In the day of distress we must apply to the Lord by fervent prayer. Our troubles, though we see them coming from God's hand, must drive us to him, not drive us from him. We must acknowledge him in all our ways, depend upon his wisdom, power, and goodness, and refer ourselves wholly to him, and so give him glory.

Thus must we keep up communion with God; meeting him with prayers under trials, and with praises in deliverances.

A believing supplicant shall not only be graciously answered as to his petition, and so have cause for praising God, but shall also have grace to praise him.

### **Sincere obedience to God is required Psalms 50:16-23**

Hypocrisy is wickedness, which God will judge. And it is too common, for those who declare the Lord's statutes to others, to live in disobedience to them themselves.

This delusion arises from the abuse of God's long-suffering, and a wilful mistake of his character and the intention of his gospel. The sins of sinners will be fully proved on them in the judgment of the great day.

The day is coming when God will set their sins in order, sins of childhood and youth, of riper age and old age, to their everlasting shame and terror.

Let those hitherto forgetful of God, given up to wickedness, or in any way negligent of salvation, consider their urgent danger.

The patience of the Lord is very great. It is the more wonderful, because sinners make such ill use of it; but if they turn not, they shall be made to see their error when it is too late.

Those that forget God, forget themselves; and it will never be right with them till they consider. Man's chief end is to glorify God: whoso offers praise, glorifies him, and his spiritual sacrifices shall be accepted.

We must praise God, sacrifice praise, and put it into the hands of the Priest, our Lord Jesus, who is also the altar: we must be fervent in spirit, praising the Lord. Let us thankfully accept God's mercy, and endeavour to glorify him in word and deed.

### **2 Chron. 29:30**

Moreover Hezekiah the king and the princes commanded the Levites to sing praise unto the Lord with the words of David, and of Asaph the seer. And they sang praises with gladness, and they bowed their heads and worshipped.

#### **Hezekiah offers a sacrifice of praise.**

As soon as Hezekiah heard that the temple was ready, he lost no time. Atonement must be made for the sins of the last reign. It was not enough to lament and forsake those sins; they brought a sin-offering.

Our repentance and reformation will not obtain pardon but in and through Christ, who was made sin, that is, a sin-offering for us.

While the offerings were on the altar, the Levites sang.

Sorrow for sin must not prevent us from praising God. The king and the congregation gave their consent to all that was done.

It is not enough for us to be where God is worshipped, if we do not ourselves worship with the heart.

And we should offer up our spiritual sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving, and devote ourselves and all we have, as sacrifices, acceptable to the Father only through the Redeemer.

## **Psalms 73 -83 are attributed to Asaph**

### **Asaph faces temptation**

The psalmist was strongly tempted to envy the prosperity of the wicked; a common temptation, which has tried the graces of many saints.

But he lays down the great principle by which he resolved to abide. It is the goodness of God. This is a truth which cannot be shaken.

Good thoughts of God will fortify against Satan's temptations. The faith even of strong believers may be sorely shaken, and ready to fail. There are storms that will try the firmest anchors.

Foolish and wicked people have sometimes a great share of outward prosperity. They seem to have the least share of the troubles of this life; and they seem to have the greatest share of its comforts.

They live without the fear of God, yet they prosper, and get on in the world.

Wicked men often spend their lives without much sickness, and end them without great pain; while many godly persons scarcely know what health is, and die with great sufferings. Often the wicked are not frightened, either by the remembrance of their sins, or the prospect of their misery, but they die without terror.

### **Asaph gains victory over temptation.**

Having shown the progress of his temptation, shows how faith and grace prevailed. He kept up respect for God's people, and with that he restrained himself from speaking what he had thought amiss.

It is a sign that we repent of the evil thoughts of the heart, if we suppress them.

Nothing gives more offence to God's children, than to say it is vain to serve God; for there is nothing more contrary to their universal experience. He prayed to God to make this matter plain to him; and he understood the wretched end of wicked people; even in the height of their prosperity they were but ripening for ruin.

God would not allow his people to be tempted, if his grace were not sufficient, not only to save them from harm, but to make them gainers by it. This temptation, the working of envy and discontent, is very painful.

In reflecting upon it, the psalmist owns it was his folly and ignorance thus to vex himself.

If good men, at any time, through the surprise and strength of temptation, think, or speak, or act amiss, they will reflect upon it with sorrow and shame. We must ascribe our safety in temptation, and our victory, not to our own wisdom, but to the gracious presence of God with us, and Christ's intercession for us. All who commit themselves to God, shall be guided with the counsel both of his word and of his Spirit, the best counsellors here, and shall be received to his glory in another world; the believing hopes and prospects of which will reconcile us to all dark providences. And the psalmist was hereby quickened to cleave the closer to God.

### **The sons of Asaph**

#### **1 Chron. 25:1**

Moreover David and the captains of the host separated to the service of the sons of Asaph, and of Heman, and of Jeduthun, who should prophesy with harps, with psalteries, and with cymbals: and the number of the workmen according to their service was:

**Asaph's sons became a part of those praising God with music.**

David put those in order who were appointed to be singers and musicians in the temple.

To prophesy, in this place, means praising God with great earnestness and devout affections, under the influences of the Holy Spirit.

In raising these affections, poetry and music were employed. If the Spirit of God does not put life and fervor into our devotions, they will, however ordered, be a lifeless, worthless form.

### **The spirit of God came during worship.**

#### **2 Chron. 20:14**

Then upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, came the Spirit of the Lord in the midst of the congregation;

The Spirit of prophecy came upon a Levite in the midst of the congregation. The Spirit, like the wind, blows where and on whom He listeth.

He encouraged them to trust in God. Let the Christian soldier go out against his spiritual enemies, and the God of peace will make him more than a conqueror.

Our trials will prove our gain. The advantage will be all our own, but the whole glory must be given to God.

### **Asaph's descendants were poets or singers**

#### **who recognized God as master.**

#### **Ezra 2:41**

The singers: the children of Asaph, an hundred twenty and eight.

Those who undervalue their relation to the Lord in times of reproach, persecution, or distress, will have no benefit from it when it becomes honourable or profitable.

Those who have no evidence that they are, by the new birth, spiritual priests unto God, through Jesus Christ, have no right to the comforts and privileges of Christians.

There are others mentioned in the Bible by the name of Asaph, but in this study we are dealing with Asaph, the leader of David's choir and a writer of some of the Psalms.

### **Life applications.**

As we look at the life of Asaph and his descendants, we become aware of how important a part that music plays in our worship and praise to God.

If you feel depressed or discouraged, sing unto the Lord. Asaph's example gives us encouragement to sing unto the Lord.

### **To ask Jesus to come into your heart please pray this Prayer:**

Dear Lord Jesus, I believe you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God. I ask you to forgive me of my sins and coming into my heart. I accept you as savior and will follow you as Lord. Amen.

### **References:**

Verse Concept: Matthew Henry's Concept Bible Commentary.

Illustrated Bible Dictionary: And Treasury of Biblical History, Biography, Geography, Doctrine, and Literature.