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Walter E. Keller

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Psalm 83
A Song. A Psalm of Asaph.
(NRSV)

- ¹ O God, do not keep silence;
do not hold your peace or be still, O God!**
- ² Even now your enemies are in tumult;
those who hate you have raised their heads.**
- ³ They lay crafty plans against your people;
they consult together against those you protect.**
- ⁴ They say, "Come, let us wipe them out as a nation;
let the name of Israel be remembered no more."**
- ⁵ They conspire with one accord;
against you they make a covenant—**
- ⁶ the tents of Edom and the Ishmaelites,
Moab and the Hagrites,**
- ⁷ Gebal and Ammon and Amalek,
Philistia with the inhabitants of Tyre;**
- ⁸ Assyria also has joined them;
they are the strong arm of the children of Lot. *Selah***
- ⁹ Do to them as you did to Midian,
as to Sisera and Jabin at the Wadi Kishon,**
- ¹⁰ who were destroyed at En-dor,
who became dung for the ground.**
- ¹¹ Make their nobles like Oreb and Zeeb,
all their princes like Zebah and Zalmunna,**
- ¹² who said, "Let us take the pastures of God
for our own possession."**
- ¹³ O my God, make them like whirling dust,^(a)
like chaff before the wind.**
- ¹⁴ As fire consumes the forest,
as the flame sets the mountains ablaze,**
- ¹⁵ so pursue them with your tempest
and terrify them with your hurricane.**
- ¹⁶ Fill their faces with shame,
so that they may seek your name, O LORD.**
- ¹⁷ Let them be put to shame and dismayed forever;
let them perish in disgrace.**
- ¹⁸ Let them know that you alone,
whose name is the LORD,
are the Most High over all the earth.**

Footnotes:

- a. (v.13) Or *a tumbleweed*

Psalm 83 is a prayer for judgment on Israel's foes. It offers the surprising revelation that God so closely identifies with his People, that any attack upon the People is by that fact also an attack upon God. Notice how the Psalmist appeals to God for help against those "who hate you," (verse 2), who are then the very ones who lay plans "against your People" (verse 3). While the Psalmist directed his prayer against enemies who plot against the People of God, as we Christians pray this Psalm, we should think of those Christian brothers and sisters who suffer hostility directed at Christ. And in place of the hostile surrounding nations specifically listed by the Psalmist in verses 6-8, we may think just as specifically of those nations who are arrayed against Christ and his Church.

When Christians pray this Psalm they can pray in the confidence that as the Body of Christ they are just as closely related to God; they are just as closely related as the Body and the Head are to each other. You may remember that when Saul the persecutor of the Christians had his Damascus Road experience, he heard the voice of Jesus asking, "Saul, why are you persecuting **Me**?"

In verses 9-12, the Psalmist recalls the days of old when God rescued Israel by destroying her foes. He prays vehemently against the enemies, though once he prays that they may seek the face of the LORD (verse 16). Christians may pray for the victory of God over all His enemies; but the Christian must also pray **for** the enemies, bless them, and learn to forgive them.

The deepest intent of the Psalm is reached in the final verse. There is but one God, and His name is Yahweh, the God of Abraham and Moses, of David and the prophets, and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. This God is the Most High God over all the earth. And we pray to God that he will (in his own way and time) make that known to all the nations.

Prayer to accompany Psalm 83:

Lord our heavenly Father, for the sake of your Son, our Savior Jesus Christ, dispel from us the error of pride and illusions of greatness, and by your Spirit help us to abandon every vice and stand in awe of you, for you alone are the Most High over all the world now and forever. Amen.