

THE PSALMS OF TWO BROTHERS

Psalm 88:1 “O LORD, God of my salvation; I cry out day and night before you. Let my prayer come before you; incline your ear to my cry!”

Psalm 89:1 “I will sing of the steadfast love of the LORD, forever; with my mouth I will make known your faithfulness to all generations.”

I. THE BROTHER’S SIMILARITIES.

- A. They were brothers: “Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman.... the sons of Mahol.” (1 Kings 4:31)
- B. They were Jews of the clan of the Ezrahites;
- C. Both believed in and prayed to Jehovah, the one true God;
- D. Both wrote a Psalm – Heman wrote Psalm 88 and Ethan wrote Psalm 89.

II. THE BROTHER’S DIFFERENCES.

A. The Differences in their PERSONS.

One’s name was “Heman” – the Hebrew means “trouble” or “tumult.”

One’s name was “Ethan” – the Hebrew means “enduring.”

B. The Differences in their PERSONALITIES.

- ✓ Heman was an introvert; Ethan was an extravert;
- ✓ Heman was overcome; Ethan was an overcomer;
- ✓ Heman was a pessimist; Ethan was an optimist;
- ✓ Heman exudes hopelessness; Ethan hope;

C. The Differences in Their PSALMS.

In these Psalms we see two different attitudes, two different responses to the difficult times in which they lived.

- ✓ Heman’s song is a funeral dirge; Ethan’s song is a victory song;
- ✓ Heman’s song expresses complaint; while Ethan’s song exudes confidence;
- ✓ Heman’s song expresses sadness; Ethan’s song expresses gladness;
- ✓ Heman’s song focused upon trouble; Ethan focused upon God;

D. The Differences in Their PERSPECTIVES.

1. Heman’s song, Psalm 88:1- “O LORD, God of my salvation; I cry out day and night before you. Let my prayer come before you; incline your ear to **my cry!** For my soul is full of troubles, and my life draws near to Sheol.”

2. Ethan’s song, Psalm 89. Seven times Ethan mentions God’s faithfulness even though times were tough:

Ps. 89:1 “**I will sing** of the steadfast love of the LORD, forever; with my mouth I will make known your **faithfulness** to all generations.”

Ps. 89:2 “I said, “Steadfast love will be built up forever; in the heavens you will establish your **faithfulness.**”

Ps. 89:5 “Let the heavens praise your wonders, O LORD, your **faithfulness** in the assembly of the holy ones!”

Ps. 89:8 “O LORD God of hosts, who is mighty as you are, O LORD, with your **faithfulness** all around you?”

Ps. 89:14 “Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; steadfast love and **faithfulness** go before you.”

Ps. 89:24 “My **faithfulness** and my steadfast love shall be with him....”

Ps. 89:33 “I will not remove from him my steadfast love or be false to my **faithfulness.**”

Although we may find it hard to reconcile the difficulties we go through from time to time, yet we must live by, at the minimum, **three truths**:

- God **REIGNS!** Ps.89:14 “Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne.”
- God will not be **MOCKED** by sinners, unchecked! Ps. 89:22,23 “The enemy shall not outwit him; the wicked shall not humble him. I will crush his foes before him and strike down those who hate him.”
- The faithfulness of God to His people **NEVER FAILS!** Ps. 89:24 “My faithfulness and my steadfast love shall be with him....”

Summation

Two brothers living in difficult times;

Two different Psalms;

Two different responses.

Who do you identify with?

How do you respond in difficult times?

III. OUR **RESPONSES.**

⇒ How we respond to difficulties reveals much about our relationship and fellowship with God.

⇒ Some responses that reveal our confidence in The Almighty God:

A. When You're Down, LOOK UP! Even though Heman was overwhelmed by troubles & down in the dumps, he refers to God as “my salvation” in 88:1 and two times he prayed to the God of his salvation saying in 88:2 “Let my prayer come before you; incline your ear to my cry!” And, in 88:13 he said, “O LORD, I cry to you; in the morning my prayer comes before you.”

(2) When Rocked, Go to THE ROCK! David, another Psalm writer, said: “When my heart is overwhelmed: Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.” (Psalm 61:2) And in his very next Psalm, Psalm 62, he says, “He only is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be greatly shaken.” (v.2)

(3) When Sad, DON'T LOSE YOUR SONG! Ethan kept on singing in captivity. In 89:1 he said, “I will sing.” What did he sing about? He said, “I will sing of the steadfast love of the LORD....”

Conclusion

The world is in a mess! Disorder, distresses, disturbances abound. Jesus said, “*And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet.*” (Matt. 24:6)

We can choose how we respond. We can respond to the difficult situations as Heman did and act the victim, or as Ethan did and be the victor. Which will it be?

Let us leave here today saying:

“I will sing of the steadfast love of the LORD, forever; with my mouth I will make known your faithfulness to all generations.” (Ps. 89:1)

Harbour Shores Church
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JdonJ, Sr.