

Questions on Ps 83

This is the last of Asaph's psalms.

1. What are the two major divisions of the psalm, and how would you summarize the content each of them?
2. The names of the enemies in the first division and their declared objective are our main clues to the historical occasion to which this psalm refers. What candidates can you identify from OT history?
3. Given the relative chronology of Asaph's life and your answer to the previous question, how is this psalm like other psalms by Asaph?
4. How would you divide each division further? (Hint: pay attention to changes in things like verb modes, proper names, or the names of God.)
5. vv. 16-18 are distinct from vv. 9-15 in two ways. One is a shift in a key vocabulary item; the other is a change in the structure of the sentences. Identify these differences, and explain how they reinforce one another in making the point of this last paragraph.
6. vv. 9-15 in turn have two parts, which take two different approaches to describing the judgment that the Psalmist is requesting. What are those parts, and the two approaches?
7. What are the historical events to which the Psalmist refers in vv. 9-12? What characteristics of God's judgment do they exemplify?
8. Use Strongs and the principle of poetic parallelism to explain the meaning of the Psalmist's request that God would "make them like a wheel" (v. 13).
9. How do vv. 16-18 provide an answer to the moral problem that some see in the imprecatory psalms?