

Who was the Asaph mentioned in the Book of Psalms?

There were a number of Levites that King David assigned as worship leaders in the tabernacle choir, according to 1 Chronicles 6:31-32. Asaph was one of these men (1 Chronicles 6:39). Asaph's duties are described in detail in 1 Chronicles 16. According to 2 Chronicles 29:30, both Asaph and David were skilled musicians. Asaph is also mentioned as a "seer" or prophet. The "sons of Asaph" are mentioned in 1 Chronicles 25:1, 2 Chronicles 20:14, and Ezra 2:41. The sons of Asaph were likely a guild of skilled poets and singers, modeling themselves musically after Asaph, their master. The church musicians of our day can be considered spiritual "children of Asaph."

Psalms 50 and 73–83 are called the "Psalms of Asaph" because his name appears in the superscription at the head of those psalms. Regarding Asaph's role as a prophet, of particular interest is the imprecatory Psalm 83, which deals with God's judgment of Israel's enemies: Edom, the Ishmaelites, Moab, the Hagarites, Gebal, Ammon, the Amalekites, Philistia, Tyre, and Assyria. If we examine the psalms written by Asaph, we can see that all of them have to do with the judgment of God, and many involve the prayers of the people at the prospect or moment of a particular event.

Asaph was a gifted individual. He understood where the gift came from, and he used his music to praise the Lord and communicate His Word to a needy world.