Questions on Psalm 76

First, some general questions to situate the Psalm historically.

1. This Psalm has in view some notable military victory in which God defeated Israel's enemy. Here are some characteristics of this victory:

   - 2-3, Where did it take place?

   - 5-6, What were the vanquished doing when God smote them?

   - 10, Was the adversary able to fulfill his plans?

2. The only engagement in the OT that fits these characteristics is Sennacherib's foray against Jerusalem in the time of Hezekiah (726-697 BC), recorded in 2 Kings 18-19. Review this story and see if you can find the specific things that the Psalmist is describing.

3. How does the time of these events compare to the time when Asaph lived?

4. How could Asaph have written of these events? (2 Chr 29:30)

5. How does the time at which 2 Chr 29:30 was written compare to the time of these events? (cf. 2 Chr 36:22-23).

6. Can you suggest why the author of 2 Chr 29:30 might have given this title to Asaph?

Now let's consider some specific verses:

v.4, What does it mean that God is compared with "the mountains of prey"?

v.5, What mechanism does God use to defeat his enemies? Compare Gen 1, and contrast Deut 4:34; 5:15.

v.9, How did Hezekiah's response to Rabshakeh's threats illustrate the character of those whom God saves?

v.10, What kind of genitive is active in the phrase, "wrath of man"--subjective (the wrath that men feel and display), or objective (God's wrath against men, cf. NIV, NET)? *Method*: See what kind of genitive "wrath" takes elsewhere in the OT. Consider not only the phrase "wrath of," but also "wrath" with possessive pronouns, e.g., "my wrath," "his wrath," "their wrath," which are also genitive constructions.

v.10, Whose wrath, then, is being restrained at the end of the verse? See if you can find something in the history of this event that corresponds with this restraint.

v.11 draws an exhortation concerning vows and payment from this episode. In the historical context, who would have needed this exhortation? Did he abide by it?