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Psalm 80

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



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Bible
at Home

Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

Psalm 80.

Topics.

- Shepherd of Israel upon the cherubim, shine forth to save us.
- Lord God how long will you give your people tears to drink?
- You brought a vine out of Egypt and planted it and it filled the land.
- Let your hand be on the son of man.

FOR INFORMATION: concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: "Map Locations and People of the Bible," and the title: "Bible Dictionary" on Website Menu.

INTRODUCTION

Psalms are songs and prayers offered to God by the nation Israel, they cover the range of human emotion, expressing praise, faith, victory, sorrow, despair, depression, frustration and the troubled heart of a mourner. They contrast the righteous with the wicked, and include the wisdom and the treasure of God's word. Psalms were written at the beginning of the 15th century BC and probably collected in their final form in the 3rd century.

BOOK THREE (PSALM 73-89)

1

PSALM 80:1-3

To the Choirmaster: According to Lilies. A Testimony. Of Asaph, a Psalm.

O Shepherd of Israel, upon the Cherubim, shine forth to Save Us.

- **Psalm 80:1-3:** Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock! You who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth. ²Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh, stir up your might and come to save us! ³Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved!

You, who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth: (v1) He that dwells upon the mercy-seat between the wings of the cherubim's, is the good Shepherd of his people, but it was grossly wrong for Israel to expect the comfort of His love and grace and the protection of His arm while they were living in rebellion to Him and abusing His grace. There is only one reason God the good Shepherds anger rose up against the sheep of His flock and that was because they had rebelled against their Shepherd and turned to idols and other gods and where committing gross sins. When God's people are living in such a manner it matters not how much they pray their prayers will count for nothing before God. When God is displeased with Israel, we should not be surprised to see them in sorrow, suffering and tears and their enemies in triumph.

Before Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh stir up your might: (v2) there does not appear, from the Psalm itself, any particular reason why Asaph in his prayer mentions Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh. One of the reasons maybe because Ephraim and Manasseh were the two sons of Joseph and their names were given to two of the tribes of Israel. It is also likely Asaph mentioned them, because Joseph their father is referred to in the previous verse and therefore it was natural to mention his two

sons Ephraim and Manasseh. Should this be so then it would also be natural to include Benjamin because in the camp and the march through the wilderness these three tribes always went together and they were all descendants of the same mother (Jacob's wife Rachel):

- The sons of Rachel, Jacob's wife: Joseph and Benjamin. ²⁰And to Joseph in the land of Egypt were born Manasseh and Ephraim, whom Asenath, the daughter of Potiphara the priest of On, bore to him. (Genesis 46:19-20).

But when we look at the following design of the tribes of Israel in the camp and the pattern of them on the march a second reason for mentioning Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh together can be seen. The LORD told Moses and Aaron, the people of Israel were to camp by their own standard, with the banners of their fathers' houses and all the camps were to be facing the tent of meeting. (Num. 2:1-2).

East side: of the tabernacle toward the sunrise were:

1. Judah.
2. Issachar.
3. Zebulun.

- They set out first on the march. (Num. 2:3-9).

South side: of the tabernacle were:

1. Reuben.
2. Simeon.
3. Gad.

- They set out second on the march. (Num. 2:10-16).

Midst of the camp: the tent of meeting set out with the camp of the Levites in the midst of the tribes (Num. 2:17). Those in the east sided and south side groups went before the Levites and the ark and those in the west side and north side groups went behind the Levites and the ark so the Levites and the ark were always in the middle of the twelve tribes.

- They set out in the midst (middle) of the march. (Num. 2:10-16).

West side: of the tabernacle were:

1. Ephraim.
2. Manasseh.
3. Benjamin.

- They set out third on the march. (Num. 2:18-24).

North side: of the tabernacle were:

1. Dan.
2. Asher.
3. Naphtali.

- They set out last. (Num. 2:25-31).

From this pattern we see that the tribes of Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh: (v2) camped side by side on the west of the tabernacle and when the ark moved forward they took their places immediately behind the Levitical priesthood who carried that the ark in the midst of the procession, which meant the tribes of Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh immediately following behind the ark and the priesthood, based upon this

pattern the word, "before" in the context of verse two would carry the idea that God would arise and go before the tribes of Israel as the ark went before Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh symbolising God going before and in the midst of all the tribes of Israel. The total number of people listed in the camp was 603,550 (the Levites were not listed among the people of Israel). (Numbers 2:32-33). The Ark was a symbol of God's presence, favour, power and strength being with Israel.

- Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock! You who are enthroned between the cherubim (above the mercy seat), shine forth. ²Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh, stir up your might and come to save us! (Psalm 80:1-2).

Asash prayer is that God would arise and manifest Himself in the presence of His people and save them from their enemies.

Stir up your might and come to save us: (v2) implies that God was indifferent to their condition and is making no effort to deliver them from their enemies, their dangers or making any effort to save them. This of course was the case, because God had handed them over to their enemies because of their rebellion and gross wickedness and instead of favouring and blessing them He was judging and punishing the nation. The words, "Stir up your might and come to save us," can also be seen as a prophetic cry for God to send the Messiah the Christ to save His people from their sins and from the curse and condemnation of the law and God's wrath which was promised and all the Old Testament faithful expected. Though Christ did not appear during the Old Testament age, the faithful were still saved by faith in him, because they by faith looked:

- Toward the promised seed of the woman spoken of in Genesis. (Genesis 3:15).
- Toward the promised seed of Abraham. (Gen. 26:4) (Gal. 3:16).
- Toward the prophet Moses said was to come like him. (Deut. 18:15) (Acts 3:22) (Acts 7:37).
- Toward the Holy One to come (whose body God will not let see corruption in death) (Psalm 16:9-11).
- Toward the promised seed of David. (Psalm 89:4) (Psalm 132:11) (Jer. 23:5) (Matthew 1:1).
- Toward the Messiah the Christ all the Old Testament prophets and the Scriptures speak of such as (Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53). The Lord Jesus himself said, "I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the book (Heb. 10:7) (the scroll of the book refers to the Scriptures).

Added to this even though Old Testament Israel offered animal sacrifices to God they were not saved by them; they were a type and shadow of Christ the Lamb of God without blemish the Saviour to come and it is his blood that cleanses them. This is because the power of Christ's cleansing blood flows back to the foundation of the earth so that the faithful of the Old and New Testament are saved by the same Saviour and the same Redeemer. In the book of Revelation, it is written:

- All that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. (Rev. 13:8).

And Peter wrote:

- You were redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot foreordained before the foundation of the world and manifest in these last times for you. (1 Peter 1:18-20).

These verses shine a brilliant spotlight on the truth that Jesus was not only the central focus of God's eternal mind and of His eternal plans and

purposes for mankind's salvation and for eternity, but also the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. The cleansing power of Jesus blood shed on the cross of Calvary doesn't just cover and cleanse only those who have come to the Lord after his death and resurrection, but flows all the way back to the foundations of the earth to Adam and Eve like an invisible spiritual river cleansing all the faithful of the Old Testament from the fall of Adam onward who by faith looked to the appearing of the promised Messiah the Christ.

PSALM 80:4-6

O LORD God how Long will You Give Your People Tears to Drink?

- **Psalm 80:4-6:** O LORD God of hosts, how long will you be angry with your people's prayers? ⁵You have fed them with the bread of tears and given them tears to drink in full measure. ⁶You make us an object of contention for our neighbours, and our enemies laugh among themselves.

Asaph is deeply hurt at seeing God's chosen people in such deep grief and sorrow and seeing pagan nations not only holding them in contempt and disdain, but also mocking and scorning them he earnestly prays God would rise up and favour His people once again as He had done in better times gone by.

PSALM 80:7-13

You brought a Vine out of Egypt and Planted it in the Land.

- **Psalm 80:7-13:** Restore us, O God of hosts; let your face shine, that we may be saved! ⁸You brought a vine out of Egypt; you drove out the nations and planted it. ⁹You cleared the ground for it; it took deep root and filled the land. ¹⁰The mountains were covered with its shade, the mighty cedars with its branches. ¹¹It sent out its branches to the sea and its shoots to the River. ¹²Why then have you broken down its walls, so that all who pass along the way pluck its fruit? ¹³The boar from the forest ravages it, and all that move in the field feed on it.

It is a common practise for a farmer to uproot a plant from hard and toxic ground and transplant it into richer soil for its better and healthier growth. In Egypt God's vine was in unfriendly soil and the waters of the Nile did not water it, but brought death to its shoots and the inhabitants of the land despised it and trampled it down so the LORD by His mighty power and great wonders removed his pleasant vine from the fury of those who sought its destruction and drove out seven extremely ungodly nations of Canaan, to make room for one nation (Israel the vine of God) and plant it in their place.

- When the LORD your God brings you into the land that you are entering to take possession of it, and clears away many nations before you, the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations more numerous and mightier than yourselves. (Deut. 7:1).

The old trees were torn up to provide space for the chosen vine. God prepared the way and cleansed and cleared the soil removing the weeds and thorns which would hinder the growth and fruitfulness of the vine. Meaning God rooted out the idolatrous and wicked nations that could have corrupted His vine and stopped it from taking deep root in the soil He had prepared. The vine flourished and spread itself throughout the whole land of Canaan so that its branches were so numerous in Solomon's time that Judah and Israel were as many as the sand of the sea so that the land was filled with them.

- Judah and Israel were as many as the sand by the sea. They ate and drank and were happy. ²¹Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms from the Euphrates to the land of the Philistines and to the border of Egypt. They brought tribute and served Solomon all the days of his

life --- NOW GO TO VERSE TWENTY-FIVE --- Judah and Israel lived in safety, from Dan even to Beersheba, every man under his vine and under his fig tree, all the days of Solomon. (1 Kings 4:20-25).

The vine of God was securely placed in its appointed position with divine guidance and wisdom. Small in appearance, very dependent and exceeding weak and, yet the vine of Israel was chosen of the LORD, because He knew that by His care, and abounding love and grace He could make of it a healthy fruit bearing vine.

Israel the vine: since the characteristics of a vine (or a vineyard) as a symbol of Israel is so fitting no one should be surprised that Israel being likened to a vine or vineyard is adopted as a common expression again and again throughout the Old and New Testament. The following verses are just a few that show that Israel is often compared to a vine, the following verses speak of God's Beloved Vineyard.

- Let me (Isaiah) sing for my beloved (the LORD) my love song concerning his vineyard: My beloved had a vineyard on a very fertile hill (Mount Zion). ²He dug it and cleared it of stones, and planted it with choice vines; he built a watchtower in the midst of it (Jerusalem), and hewed out a wine vat in it; and he looked for it to yield grapes, but it yielded wild grapes. ³And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge between me and my vineyard. ⁴What more was there to do for my vineyard, that I have not done in it? When I looked for it to yield grapes, why did it yield wild grapes? ⁵And now I (the LORD) will tell you what I will do to my vineyard. I will remove its hedge (the LORD'S blessing and favour), and it shall be devoured; I will break down its wall, and it shall be trampled down. ⁶I will make it a waste (Babylon did this); it shall not be pruned or hoed, and briers and thorns shall grow up; I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. ⁷For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are his pleasant planting; and he looked for justice, but behold, bloodshed; for righteousness, but behold, an outcry! (Isaiah 5:1-7).

These verses show the following eight things:

5

1. God's vineyard is Israel (v1).
2. God's planted His vineyard on Mount Zion a fertile hill (v1).
3. God dug the soil and cleared it of stones, and planted it with choice vines (faithful kings, prophets and priests) (v2).
4. God built a watchtower (Jerusalem and the temple) in the midst of His vineyard (v2).
5. God hewed out a wine vat in his vineyard to produce good wine (v2).
6. God did all he could do for His vineyard, but it yielded only wild grapes (v4) (injustice, violence and bloodshed) (v7).
7. God will remove the protective wall (the LORD'S blessing and favour) around His vineyard and it will be devoured because it produced no good grapes (v5-6).
8. Finally, the LORD'S vineyard is the house of Israel and the men of Judah are his pleasant planting (v7).

God's choice and pure vine has become a degenerate and wild vine.

- I planted you (Israel) a choice vine, wholly of pure seed. How then have you turned degenerate and become a wild vine? (By bowing down like a whore to other gods) (Jeremiah 2:20-21).

God gives up His vine as fuel for a fire.

- Son of man, how does the wood of the vine surpass any wood, the vine branch that is among the trees of the forest? --- NOW GO TO VERSE SIX --- ⁶Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: Like the wood of the vine among the trees of the forest, which I have given to the fire for fuel, so have I given up the inhabitants of Jerusalem. (Ezek. 15:6).

The wood of the vine cannot surpass the wood of a tree because the wood of a vine is so weak that it must have something to support itself up by something outside of itself. Likewise, Israel is very weak as a nation and has no hope of saving themselves or of being profitable to God unless they are upheld by His power and supported by His favour and His grace. Should they deliberately and aggressively turn rebellious against the LORD their God He will give them up as fuel for fire for the same reason an earthly farmer burns plants, shrubs and trees that clutter up good farming land and prevent profitable fruits growing.

The Kingdom of God symbolised as a vine: in the New Testament the Kingdom of God is represented as a vine planted in a vineyard. The root of the vine is Christ the branches are believers who make up the global Kingdom of Christ which is likened to a fruitful vine needing support as it spreads out amongst all nations worldwide and flourishes as a fruitful and pleasant plant upon the earth. Every believer is planted in a well-cultivated garden of God's love and grace, but in the same way that a natural vine is rooted up that does not produce healthy fruit those planted in the vineyard of God will be counted worthless and cast out if they do not by faith abide in the love and grace of the Lord Jesus Christ the root of the vine. In the same way that the Canaanites were left in the land and became pricks and thorns in the hearts, minds and eyes of the Israelites, so the unbelieving world remains as thorns and pricks in the hearts, minds and eyes of all who belong to the global body of Christ until that glorious day when Jesus will return in glory as King of kings and Lord of lords to gather his people to himself and establish God's Kingdom of righteousness, justice, joy and peace on earth. The following verses show that Christ is the true vine and that the Kingdom of God is often compared to a vineyard:

- Jesus said "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. ²Every branch of mine that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. ³Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. ⁴Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me." (John 15:1-4).
- Jesus said, "For the kingdom of heaven is like a master (symbolising Christ) of a house who went out early in the morning to hire labourers for his vineyard," (symbolising the Kingdom of the Lord). (Matt. 20:1).
- Jesus said, "What do you think? A man (symbolising Christ) had two sons and he went to the first and said, "Son, go and work in the vineyard today" (symbolising the Kingdom of God). ²⁹And he answered, "I will not," but afterward he changed his mind and went. ³⁰And he went to the other son and said the same and he answered, "I go, sir," but did not go. ³¹Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Truly, I say to you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes go into the kingdom of God before you." (Matt. 21:28-31)
- Jesus said, "Hear another parable. There was a master (symbolising Christ) of a house who planted a vineyard (symbolising the Kingdom of God) and put a fence around it and dug a winepress in it and built a tower and leased it to tenants, and went into another country." (Matt. 21:33).
- Jesus told this parable: "A man (symbolising God) had a fig tree (symbolising Israel, especially the religious leaders at Jerusalem) planted in his vineyard (symbolising God's Kingdom), and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. ⁷And he said to the vinedresser, (symbolising Christ) "Look, for three years now I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and I find none cut it down why should it use up the ground?" (Luke 13:6-7).

The prophet Ezekiel wrote:

- Son of man, how does the wood of the vine surpass any wood, the vine branch that is among the trees of the forest? --- NOW GO TO VERSE SIX --- ⁶Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: Like the wood of the vine among the trees of the forest, which I have given to the fire for fuel, so have I given up the inhabitants of Jerusalem. (Ezek. 15:2-6).

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PSALM 80:14-19

Let your Hand be on the Son of Man.

- **Psalm 80:14-19:** Turn again, O God of hosts! Look down from heaven, and see; have regard for this vine, ¹⁵the stock that your right hand planted, and for the son whom you made strong for yourself. ¹⁶They have burned it with fire; they have cut it down; may they perish at the rebuke of your face! ¹⁷But let your hand be on the man of your right hand, the son of man whom you have made strong for yourself! ¹⁸Then we shall not turn back from you; give us life, and we will call upon your name! ¹⁹Restore us, O LORD God of hosts! let your face shine, that we may be saved!

The following verses show that the son who God made strong refers to the nation of Israel, in the book of Hosea and Isaiah God said:

- Israel was his son who he called out of Egypt and he loved them when they were a child (Hosea 11:1).
- He gave birth to Israel and carried them from the womb even to their old age. (Isaiah 46:3-4).

God made Israel strong especially during the golden years of David and Solomon, but now God has brought their kingdom to ruin. Asaph prays God would place His favour once again on the man of His right hand, the son of man who He had made strong for Himself which in the context of this Psalm refers to Israel so that they would again call upon His name and His face would shine upon them so that they would be saved from their enemies and again be accepted as the loved son who God gave birth to and called out of Egypt.

Echo of Christ's return: since Egypt (called the house of bondage) is sometimes in Scripture used as a symbol of the world the words, "Let your hand be on the man of your right hand, the son of man whom you have made strong for yourself! (v17) can be seen as a prophetic echo of Christ coming into this dark and fallen world and saving even the lowest child of Adam and exalting them to the highest places in heaven.

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.
