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## Psalm 85

(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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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 85.

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### Topics.

- LORD, you restored Israel, forgave your people and all their sin.
- Show us your steadfast love, O LORD, and grant us your salvation.
- Faithfulness springs up, righteousness looks down from the sky.
- Love and faithfulness meet righteousness and kiss each other.
- Truth and faithfulness spring up from earth, righteousness looks down.
- The LORD will give what is good, and our land will yield its increase.
- Righteousness will go before him and make his footsteps a way.
- The return of the Lord Jesus Christ in glory.

**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.

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### INTRODUCTION

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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.

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### BOOK THREE (PSALM 73-89)

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#### PSALM 85:1-3

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To the Choirmaster. A Psalm of the Sons of Korah.

**LORD, you Restored Israel, Forgave Your People and all their Sin.**

- **Psalm 85:1-3:** LORD, you were favorable to your land; you restored the fortunes of Jacob. <sup>2</sup>You forgave the iniquity of your people; you covered all their sin. *Selah* <sup>3</sup>You withdrew all your wrath; you turned from your hot anger.

Korah was a Levite who descended from the Korahites who were doorkeepers and musicians of the tabernacle and the temple. They appear in (Exod. 6:24) (Num. 26:58) (1 Chron. 6:22) (1 Chron. 9:19, 31) (1 Chron. 12:26) (1 Chron. 26:1) (2 Chron. 20:19) and the sons of Korah are named in the titles of the following Psalms (Ps. 42:44-49) (Ps. 84, 85, 87, 88). The Psalmist was probably a member of the Levitical family of the sons of Korah.

It appears God has not only withdrawn His favour and blessing, from His people Israel, but also judged them with wrath because of this they are suffering hardships, grief and sorrow. It is clear the Psalmist is aware that Israel's misery is a result of their own sin and rebellion against God because he talks of Israel's past sins being forgiven and being covered.

**Sins of Israel:** to comprehend the enormity of God's forgiveness the following is a list of sins that permeated the land of Judah, Israel and Jerusalem throughout their generations. Unrestrained these sins eventually became like a contagious virus running rampant throughout the land of Judah, Israel and Jerusalem. They defiled God's Holy name and their own land by their lifestyle, deeds and actions. They committed gross idolatry and Baal altars were set up throughout their land. They worshipped the goddess of love and fertility (her worship was sexually indecent). Worse than this they worshipped Moloch and sacrificed their sons to him in the Hinnom valley. They worshipped a golden calf at a religious centre at Dan and at a religious centre at Bethel. Altars were set up in the temple court for planetary worship and the worship of the host of heaven (i.e., the sun, moon and stars) and worship of idols and altars had been built under shady trees on their hills throughout their land. Added to this innocent people were killed and cheated out of justice, leaders oppressed others for their own selfish gain and drunkenness, violence, robbery and gross sensuality was rampant. The rich cheated the innocent out of justice, and showed no sense of responsibility towards the poor and instead of relieving their economic distress they devised new means of depriving them of their property. Is it any wonder the LORD compares Israel's ways to the uncleanness of a woman in her menstrual impurity? (Ezek. 36:17) and poured out His wrath upon Judah, Israel and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

**The lesson for today:** by wicked behaviour Israel defiled the name of God which resulted in the surrounding nations mocking and despising God. This shines a light on the following truth: the behaviour of everyone who confesses the name of God and Christ His Son will determine to some extent whether outsiders are drawn to God or to despise Him. We are not witnesses to the Lord only when we are sharing our faith with another person our entire life is a witness to our faith and of God it can be a good witness or a bad witness. Some people believe they have been such gross sinners they cannot be forgiven, when that happens, we can do the following two things:

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1. Show them a list of Israel's sins and remind them that God forgave not just once, but everytime they humbled themselves, repented and turned from their wicked ways and worship of other gods and remind them that neither God nor Christ will ever deny someone of forgiveness who comes to them in honest heartfelt repentance.
2. Give them a brief insight into the Apostle Paul's life prior to his conversion. Show them that he aggressively ravaged the church dragging faithful men and women out of it and out of their homes and committed them to prison (Acts 8:3). Breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord (both men and women) he bound them in chains and took them to Jerusalem. (Acts 9:1-2) to be punished and even agreed to have them put to death (Acts 22:5) (Acts 26:10). Then tell them to ask themselves, "Have I broken up Christian families and put innocent and faithful men and women into prison and agreed as Paul did, to them being put to death simply because they were devoted to Christ?" And then tell them to look at what God was able to do with Paul's life. Truly no one is beyond God's forgiveness.

There is another great lesson we can learn from Paul's life which is this: it is certain Paul would have been fully conscious of the terrible hurt and harm he had caused faithful brothers and sisters in Christ prior to his conversion, but he did not allow the horrors of his past to rob his mind from the peace and love of Christ nor hinder him in any way from proclaiming the Good News of the Gospel. The following encouraging words of Paul show us all how he and by extension how we all should overcome the mental revulsions and shame of our past life, Paul wrote: -

- I do not consider that I am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own, the one thing I do is to forget what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. (Philip. 3:12-14).

At the time of this Psalm God has poured out His fierce anger upon Israel and the Psalmist is praying on behalf of the nation that God will relent, forgive and turn toward His people once again.

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## PSALM 85:4-8

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### **Show us your Love, O LORD, and Grant us Your Salvation.**

- **Psalm 85:4-8:** Restore us again, O God of our salvation, and put away your indignation toward us! <sup>5</sup>Will you be angry with us forever? Will you prolong your anger to all generations? <sup>6</sup>Will you not revive us again, that your people may rejoice in you? <sup>7</sup>Show us your steadfast love, O LORD, and grant us your salvation. <sup>8</sup>Let me hear what God the LORD will speak, for he will speak peace to his people, to his saints; but let them not turn back to folly.

Here is the great faith of the Patriarchs of old, God has withdrawn His favour and His blessing they are at this present time suffering under the LORD'S wrath, but they do not turn bitter and resentful, but long once again for His steadfast love. The heartfelt cry of this writer shines a spotlight upon the truth that even though the faithful under the Old Testament law rightly attached more importance to the Levitical ceremonial rites and Jewish external forms of religion than the faithful do today, it should not be thought that they were so bound by them that they had no spiritual communion with God apart from them. This truth is made very clear as we read the writings of the Old Testament prophets and faithful men and women who were dwelling great distances away from the temple and yet still had great faith toward God and intimate fellowship in prayer with Him. We do the faithful of the Old Testament a great injustice if we conceive their faith in God and their walk with Him as only ever being slavishly bound to external forms of ceremonial rites and outward acts of religion.

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## PSALM 85:9-13

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### **Faithfulness springs up from Earth.**

- **Psalm 85:9-13:** Surely his salvation is near to those who fear him, that glory may dwell in our land. <sup>10</sup>Steadfast love and faithfulness meet; righteousness and peace kiss each other. <sup>11</sup>Faithfulness springs up from the ground, and righteousness looks down from the sky. <sup>12</sup>Yes, the LORD will give what is good, and our land will yield its increase. <sup>13</sup>Righteousness will go before him and make his footsteps a way.

**Surely his salvation is near to those who fear him:** (v9) the fear of the LORD has the following two aspects:

- 1 An eternal aspect: wisdom teaches that mankind is separated from God because of sin and without God a person has no hope of eternal life and will be judged accordingly. The fear of the LORD in this context is wisdom because it motivates a person to seek God and eternal life.
- 2 An aspect for the present moment: the fear of the LORD in the present moment motivates mankind to obey God's Ten Commandments which are all designed to protect the innocent from harm, physically, financially, sexually, verbally, emotionally and spiritually. The fear of the LORD in this context is also wisdom because if everyone feared the LORD humanity would live in harmony with each other. Sadly, there is very little fear of the LORD in the world today and so we see rampant rebellion, violence, crime and wars in most countries.

**The fear of God and Christians:** those in Christ look to the bloodstained cross of Calvary and understand and experience Christ's great love and God's grace in their hearts and minds and no longer act from fear, but from love in the same way that a man in love with a woman does not do

things to please her from fear, but from the love dwelling in his heart. Likewise, it is with the faithful who belong to the Lords global family.

### **Steadfast Love and Faithfulness meet Righteousness and Kiss each Other.**

The English Standard Bible says:

- Steadfast love and faithfulness meet; righteousness and peace kiss each other. (Psalm 85:10).

The King James Bible says:

- Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other. (Psalm 85:10).

**Mercy:** is love that stoops down and is kind when justice and the law demand it should be otherwise.

Kissed each other: steadfast, love, mercy, faithfulness, truth, righteousness and peace are personified as meeting each other and kissing one another as friends and lovers do, when they have been separated for long periods of time and are once again united. These are all fruits of the Spirit and manifestations of God's Spirit dwelling within, they are as it were best friends who when united together perfect harmony, joy and love is seen. Kissing one another with a brotherly or family kiss was a common greeting amongst the faithful Patriarch's and the early church.

- The LORD said to Aaron, "Go into the wilderness to meet Moses." So he went and met him at the mountain of God and kissed him. (Exod. 4:27).
- Moses went out to meet his father-in-law and bowed down and kissed him. And they asked each other of their welfare and went into the tent. (Exod. 18:7).
- Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you. (Rom. 16:16).
- Greet one another with the kiss of love. Peace to all of you who are in Christ. (1 Peter 5:14).

This is a brotherly or family type of kiss not a romantic kiss, it is a kiss of overwhelming joy and excitement one gives to a best friend when they meet at an airport or train station after being separated for long periods of time. It is a kiss that shows there is an emotional bond of brotherly or family love between each other, it shows that all the fruits of the Spirit are flowing between each other and that there is no malice, resentment or bitterness in the heart.

It is common culture in some Arab and European countries even today to greet each other with such a kiss. What this type of kiss is not is obviously any type of kiss that has sensual or romantic overtones and a kiss that is simply given because it is the traditional Christian thing to do. If it is not a spontaneous response of honest excitement and joy that flows up from the heart at seeing another brother or sister in Christ then it is better to simply welcome them with a handshake or friendly greeting.

**Perfect unity in Christ:** the only time upon this earth when steadfast, love, mercy, faithfulness, truth, righteousness and peace all met together on earth in perfect unity and kissed each other is in the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ, these were all estranged on earth until that glorious day when the Son of God came into the world. In Christ they embraced each other in perfect harmony as bonded friends do. The secular world refers to these fruits of the Spirit as the higher nature of mankind the Bible refers to them as the spirit of man while such things as malice, bitterness, anger, jealousy etc., are referred to as the lower nature of man by the secular world, the Bible refers to them as the flesh. Obviously the earnest desire and goal of all Christians should be to live in the fruits of the Spirit,

the higher nature of man and put to death the things of the flesh, the lower nature of man, but only the Son of God the Lord Jesus Christ was able to live fully in the Spirit and outwardly manifest all the fruits of the Spirit without sin, should we be able to attain to such perfection Christ died for no reason.

### **Truth and Faithfulness Spring up from Earth.**

The English Standard Bible says:

- Faithfulness springs up from the ground, and righteousness looks down from the sky (Psalm 85:11).

The King James Bible says:

- Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven (Psalm 85:11).

Truth and faithfulness are personified as springing up from the earth and righteousness is personified as looking down from heaven (or the sky) upon them. This carries the idea, wherever the tiniest little bit of truth springs up upon the earth, the loving eye of God, looks down with delight. The truth and faithfulness of God may truly be spoken of as springing out of the earth in the sense that it had long been as if it were hidden and buried like a root in dry ground from where God made it to grow as signified in the following verse:

- For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him. (Isaiah 53:2).

And partly, because Christ who is the way, and the truth, and the life (John 14:6) and a minister of the Jews for the truth of God to confirm the promises made to the fathers and the promises made for the Gentile nations was born on the earth of a woman of the earth.

**Truth and faithfulness shall spring out of the earth:** also carries the following five ideas:

1. The blessings of truth and faithfulness would be like the grass, the shrubs, the flowers, which spring up from the ground and like the rain and the sunbeams which come down from heaven.
2. Truth and faithfulness would spring up amongst the populations of the world in contrast to Israel only and abound in all lands as plants and shrubs and grass spring up all over the earth. The idea is that truth and righteousness would come in a manner that might be compared with the way in which God's other abundant blessings are bestowed, as springing, on the one hand from the fertility of the earth and on the other from the rain, the dew, and the sunbeam above.
3. Truth and faithfulness would spring up amongst the populations of the earth by the word of God and the Gospel which immediately sprung up in the earth in the land of Judea and came out from Zion and Jerusalem into the Gentile world.
4. Truth and faithfulness that God desires will spring up in the inward parts like plants in cultivated earth or good soil being made possible by God's Spirit, love and grace which spring up in the heart of the faithful in Christ.
5. Christ himself is the truth and faithfulness that shall spring up out of the earth in that he is the way, the truth and the life that came from a woman of earth and may be said with respect to spring out of the earth.

**Righteousness shall look down from heaven:** carries the following ideas:

- When God looks down from heaven upon sinners saved by Christ, He will look upon them with a smiling countenance since His justice is satisfied when He sees the blood of Christ.
- Righteousness shall look down from heaven not in its judgmental manner, but as the perfect purity that belongs to the divine nature of God, which stoops down with a loving eye upon those beneath to lift them up to heavenly glory.
- God shall look down from heaven on Christ with pleasure beholding his obedience, righteousness, sufferings, sacrifice and death and smile when he sees those clothed with Christ's righteousness, washed in his blood, and their sins covered by his sacrifice.
- Righteousness looked at the necessities of mankind and came to earth to meet the human need as the rain and the sunbeams bestow their blessings upon the earth and those who dwell upon it so likewise God bestows on man the blessings of salvation.
- God in heaven will respond from his righteousness and a smiling countenance to those on earth who respond to His truth and trust in Christ's righteousness and not their own.

When the following eight fruits of love (1 Corinthians 13:1-13) and of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23):

1. Steadfast love.
2. Justice.
3. Truth.
4. Mercy.
5. Righteousness.
6. Faithfulness.
7. Patience.
8. Peace.

Join together in perfect accord, love is no longer impulsive, whimsical and short-lived, but lifted up above such fleeting things when these eight met together. Love can be trusted and relied upon. This is the steadfast love God has toward us, justice and righteousness, with mercy and truth stooping down to forgive and love with unshakable faithfulness these all blending together to bring about our salvation. The great work of redemption and salvation Christ obtained for even the lowest child of Adam clearly manifest steadfast, love, justice, mercy, faithfulness, truth, righteousness and peace all blending together in perfect accord with God's love.

**The LORD will give what is good, and our land will yield its increase** (v12) literally this means if the people of Israel do on earth what is right before God in heaven He will bless all that they put their hand to do and prosper their land, their livestock, their offspring as He promised in the covenant He made with them at Mount Sinai. Figuratively it carries the idea if those in Christ faithfully follow him God will crown them with His love, mercy and grace and freely and with joy give them everything they need to be saved to eternal life and everlasting happiness

**Righteousness will Go before Him and make His Footsteps a Way.**

The English Standard Bible says:

- Righteousness will go before him (the LORD) and make his footsteps a way. (Psalm 85:13).

The King James Bible says:

- Righteousness shall go before him (the LORD) and shall set *us* in the way of his steps. (Psalm 85:13).

**The English Standard Bible:** implies that righteousness will go before the Lord and be the ways of his footsteps meaning the way of the Lord's life.

**The King James Bible:** implies that righteousness will go before the Lord and that it is his righteousness that will set those who follow him in their ways, meaning guide them in their lifestyle.

Obviously both the English Standard Bible and the King James Bible are correct since righteousness was certainly the way of the Lord's life and it is his righteous lifestyle that is the example for all who belong to his Kingdom to follow and it is his righteousness that they are saved by and not their own. In the Old Testament righteousness and peace are regarded as harmonious and inseparable they cannot be separated. The secret of tranquillity is twofold, firstly to set the King of righteousness who is also the King of Salem which means the King of peace as the King of our heart and mind and as our supreme desire and best thought. Secondly to do what is good and right, when these two come together the effect is peace. It should be understood that righteousness and peace only come in the measure in which the love, mercy and grace of God are received into our hearts with thankfulness and gratitude.

In this Psalm God had shown His righteousness and His justice not only to the people of Israel, but to all the surrounding nations by removing his hand of blessing and favour from His people and bringing calamities, suffering, and sorrows upon them because of their gross sins. The Psalmist recognises the right hand of God's blessing has been removed from his beloved people and is praying that God would remove his hand of judgment and wrath and return His right hand of favour toward them. When the affections are pure and the life is worthy and goodness is loved in the heart, and followed even imperfectly in daily practice their peace is found. The one secret of tranquillity is first to trust in the Lord and then to do-good when we do this righteousness and peace kiss each other.

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**The return of Christ:** steadfast love, faithfulness righteousness, peace will kiss each other and the land will yield its increase (v10-13) will be ultimately fulfilled when Christ returns in glory as, King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:11-16) to rule and reign from God's Holy City Jerusalem (on Mount Zion God's Holy Mountain) to destroy the antichrist and his kingdom and establish God's Kingdom on earth during his glorious millennial reign.

The dead in Christ (Old and New Testament) and the faithful, who are alive, will be gathered together in the first resurrection (Rev. 20:4-6) to rule and reign as kings and priests with the Lord over those nations who are left outside the Holy City of God. Christ the King united with his people will not only bring peace to the Middle East, but establish God's Kingdom of steadfast love, faithfulness, righteousness, joy and peace throughout the world and the glory of God will cover the earth.

Jesus will do justice to the poor and oppressed, he will be a faithful and compassionate King forever. He will not allow anyone to strike terror in the earth or use lies and deception to enlarge their own wealth and power. The land will abundantly produce and even the deserts will flourish. The animals will not feed on each other and even the lamb will be able to lie down with the wolf and everyone will eat of their own hands because all that they plant will produce. All nations the LORD has made will come and worship before the Lord Jesus Christ. They will glorify God's Name, proclaiming the LORD is great and does wondrous things and that He alone is God.

The book of Revelation states:



- Jesus Christ, the faithful witness who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father is coming in glory and every eye shall see him, and they also who pierced him and all kindreds of the earth (Revelation 1:5-7).

In Revelation chapter five we are told that:

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he redeemed a people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation and made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Revelation 5:9-10).

The great prophet Isaiah wrote:

- They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. (Isaiah 11:9).

At the end of this glorious Kingdom age God descends to earth on a Great White Throne the sea, death and hades (the grave) give up the dead. They stand before God and are judged according to what is written in certain heavenly books according to what they have done. Death and those counted unworthy are cast into the Lake of Fire a symbol of eternal destruction (i.e., total extinction) (also called the, Second Death) (Rev. 20:11-15). Christ hands the Kingdom over to his heavenly Father and God is ALL in ALL and ETERNITY begins in all its fullness and majestic royal glory. For further information see titles:

- Kingdom of God (ON WEBSITE MENU).
- The Second Resurrection or Great White Throne Judgment.

In, Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).

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*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.*

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