

## Psalms 80

This evening - we're continuing our overview of the Old Testament book titled Psalms.

With this as our focus - let's open our Bibles to Psalms chapter 80 - and as we make our way to the 80th Psalm...

...I should take a moment to point out that - this is the 8th - of 11 consecutive songs - written by a seer named Asaph.

Not only that - but - this is also the final - of four Psalms which was set to the Lilies.

I'll remind you that the 45th Psalm - was the first song set to the lilies - which was written by the sons of Korah.

Then - in Psalms 60 and 69 - we find King David encouraging the Chief Musician - to set both songs to the lilies.

And now - here in the 80th Psalm - we find Asaph - encouraging the Chief Musician...

...to set this song to the lilies - as he poetically presented his testimony - to the children of Israel.

Now - I should remind you that Bible scholars aren't completely certain what what it means - to set a song to the lilies.

Some believe that this may've been the title of an instrumental tune - or maybe a specific melody - which was used for these songs.

Others think that this may've been a lily-shaped straight trumpet or possibly a six-stringed instrument.

And then there are those who think that this was simply a was of describing the beauty of the poem itself.

Well - regardless of what Asaph meant - when he set this Psalm to the Lilies...

...what we can say for sure is that Asaph wrote the lyrics of this song - with a focus on the future restoration of Israel.

And as we consider the lyrical content of this song - it seems to me that...

...this Psalm was written - after Asaph the seer - received a prophetic vision...

...of the Assyrian captivity - which took place during the 8th century BC.

Now - it should be noted that Asaph the seer lived during the days of David - - which was more that two centuries before the Assyrian captivity.

It's for this reason that many scholars insist that this Psalm was written by another Asaph...

...who was probably a great great great great great great grandson of Asaph the seer.

And while this is certainly a possibility - I personally believe that this Psalm was written by Asaph the seer...

...who seems to've been given a prophetic vision of the Assyrian captivity.

With this as our focus - let's turn our attention to the lyrics that we find here in the 80th Psalm.

Look with me - beginning there at verse 1 - where Asaph writes...

Psa 80:1 To the Chief Musician. Set to "The Lilies." A Testimony of Asaph. A Psalm.

Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel,

You who lead Joseph like a flock;

You who dwell between the cherubim, shine forth!

Here in the first verse of this Psalm - Asaph seems to've been picking up where he left off in the last song.

Remember - it was in the final verse of the 79th Psalm - were Asaph declared...

Psa 79:13 So we, Your people and sheep of Your pasture,  
Will give You thanks forever;  
We will show forth Your praise to all generations.

Asaph ended the last Psalm - with a focus on the people of God - being the sheep of His pasture.

And now - here in the first verse of the 80th Psalm - we find Asaph referring to the Lord - as the Shepherd of Israel.

From this - it seems to me that Asaph was creating a clear connection between these two Psalms.

We should also notice that Asaph not only referred to the Lord - as the Shepherd of Israel...

...but - it's there in the middle of verse 1 - where he described the way that the Shepherd of Israel was leading Joseph - like a flock.

Just to be clear - Joseph was Jacob's 11th son - and the first son that he had with Rachael.

It's for this reason that Joseph was the favored son of Jacob.

I should also remind you that - his brothers were so jealous of Joseph - that they decided to sell him into slavery.

And while they intended for this evil scheme to remove Joseph from their lives...

...the Lord used their perverted plan - to bring about the salvation of Israel...

...by raising Joseph up to the highest level of leadership -  
under the Pharaoh of Egypt.

Then - after saving his family from starvation - - Joseph received a double  
portion of their father's inheritance.

And so - rather than receive one portion of the promised land...

...Jacob gave one portion to Joseph's son - Ephraim - and then  
a second portion to Joseph's son - Manasseh.

And it was after the Exodus from Egypt - when the tribes  
of Ephraim and Manasseh...

...became the dominant tribes within the Northern  
Kingdom of Israel.

It's for this reason that the Northern Kingdom of Israel - which was  
composed of 10 tribes...

...was frequently referred to as the "House of Joseph" or simply  
"Joseph"

And so - when Asaph described the way that the Shepherd of  
Israel was leading Joseph like a flock...

...he was directing our attention - to the northern tribes of  
Israel.

And at the same time - Asaph also sang the praises -  
of the One who dwells between the cherubim.

Look with me again - there at verse 1 - where he declared...

Psa 80:1 Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel,  
You who lead Joseph like a flock;  
You who dwell between the cherubim, shine forth!

In other words - Asaph was singing the praises of the God - Who's  
glory was manifest in the Holy of Holies...

...as His presence manifest between the images of the cherubim...

...that adorned the mercy seat of the Ark of the covenant.

And listen - this is one reason for why I believe that this Psalm was written by Asaph the seer...

...and not by a descendant of Asaph - who lived two centuries later.

In order to make my case - I should remind you that the Ark of the covenant...

...which included the mercy seat - where the glory of God was manifest between the cherubim...

...it vanished from history - around the time of the Babylonian conquest of Jerusalem.

Some believe that King Josiah hid the ark - in a secret - underground chamber beneath the Temple Mount....

...while others insist that the prophet Jeremiah hid the Ark in a cave on Mount Nebo before the Babylonian invasion.

Some believe that the Babylonians took the ark back to Babylon after they destroyed Solomon's temple...

...while others are certain that King Solomon hid the ark in Ethiopia - during the 10th century BC.

We can't say for certain what happened to the Ark - but what I do know is that...

...the author of this Psalm was writing at a time - when the Ark of the covenant was still in the Holy of Holies.

And what this means is that - this song was written - before the destruction of the temple - in 586BC.

Therefore - we can be sure that the author of this Psalm - wasn't a post-exilic descendant of Asaph.

I should also point out that - this Psalm seems to've been written - before the nation of Israel was divided into two separate kingdoms.

In order to make my case - let's pick up our study of the 80th Psalm - look with me - beginning there at verse 2 - where Asaph declared...

Psa 80:2      Before Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh,  
Stir up Your strength,  
And come and save us!  
Psa 80:3      Restore us, O God;  
Cause Your face to shine,  
And we shall be saved!

Here in these verses - we find Asaph - expanded upon the flock of Joseph - by referring to Joseph's sons - Ephraim and Manasseh.

At the same time - he also inserted the tribe of Benjamin - in between Ephraim and Judah.

And that's interesting - especially as we consider how the little tribe of Benjamin...

...was relocated - and absorbed into the southern tribe of Judah...

...after the Lord divided the nation of Israel - into two separate kingdoms.

Just to be clear - the Lord divided the land into the Northern Kingdom of Israel - and the Southern Kingdom of Judah...

...and the reason why was because - King Solomon had defiled the land with the idols of his foreign wives.

And while the tribe of Benjamin was initially located just north of Judah - and south of Ephraim and Manasseh....

...it was 931 BC - when the tribe of Benjamin was absorbed into the southern Kingdom of Judah...

...after the nation of Israel was divided into two kingdoms.

What this means is that - the Asaph who wrote the lyrics of this Psalm...

...clearly wrote this song - before the Lord divided the nation of Israel - into two separate kingdoms.

And the proof of my point can be found there in verse 2 - where Asaph cried out...

Psa 80:2        Before Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh,  
Stir up Your strength,  
And come and save us!

Asaph was clearly writing this song - before the tribe of Benjamin was absorbed into the Kingdom of Judah.

At the same time - he was asking the Lord to restore these tribes - so that they might be saved.

Look with me again - there at verse 3 - where Asaph cried out...

Psa 80:3    Restore us, O God;  
Cause Your face to shine,  
And we shall be saved!

Here in this verse - we find Asaph - asking the Lord to restore the nation of Israel.

And seeing how we find the same request in verses 7 - 14 - and 19...

...there should be no doubt that the restoration of Israel is the theme of this Psalm.

Just to be clear - the word - Restore - found in all four verses - was translated from a Hebrew word...

...which in this context - was used of those who reestablish a relational connection.

And it's here in this Psalm - where we find Asaph...

....asking the Lord restore the nation of Israel - by reestablishing His relational connection with them.

I like the way that the scholars who created the New Living Translation rendered verse 3 - they put it like this...

Psa 80:3 Turn us again to yourself, O God.  
Make your face shine down upon us.  
Only then will we be saved.

When Asaph asked the Lord to restore them - he was giving God the permission to turn the Children of Israel back to Him.

And as we consider this request - - it seems to me that - the best thing that we can do with our free will...

...is to give it back to God - so that we might learn to be led by the Lord.

I like the way that King David explained it - in the 32nd Psalm - it's verses 8 thru 10 - where he declared...

Psa 32:8 I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go;  
I will guide you with My eye.

Psa 32:9 Do not be like the horse or like the mule,  
Which have no understanding,  
Which must be harnessed with bit and bridle,  
Else they will not come near you.

Psa 32:10 Many sorrows shall be to the wicked;  
But he who trusts in the LORD, mercy shall surround him.

Here in these verses - we find King David - helping his audience to understand that...

...the people of God can either be led like an obedient child - according to the loving instructions of divine guidance...

...or - we can be like the stubborn mule - who must be controlled with a harness.

That being the case - King David encouraged us to trust in the Lord - with childlike faith.

And those who won't - will end up being led like a horse - with bit and bridle.

In order to grasp my point - let's continue to consider the lyrics that Asaph wrote - here in the 80th Psalm.

Look with me - beginning there at verse 4 - where he declared...

Psa 80:4      O LORD God of hosts,  
How long will You be angry  
Against the prayer of Your people?

Psa 80:5      You have fed them with the bread of tears,  
And given them tears to drink in great measure.

Psa 80:6      You have made us a strife to our neighbors,  
And our enemies laugh among themselves.

Psa 80:7      Restore us, O God of hosts;  
Cause Your face to shine,  
And we shall be saved!

Here in these verses - we find Asaph - once again asking the LORD God of hosts - to restore the nation of Israel - so that they might be saved.

And with this prayer request - Asaph asked the Lord how long He was going to hold on to His anger?

And while we aren't given the reason for the God of hosts was angry with the nation of Israel...

...what we do know is that - the Lord was the One Who made them the scorn of their neighbors.

And it's for this reason that their enemies were mocking them.

In other words - the God Who controls the Armies of Heaven - refused to protect His chosen people - from the attacks of the enemy.

And instead - He allowed the northern kingdom of Israel suffer the attacks of their enemies.

Not only that - but - He also allowed them to become the laughingstock of those...

...who despised the inhabitants of the promised land.

And in order to understand why - I'll remind you that...

...those who trust in the Lord can either walk in obedience...

...or we can be led by the loving correction of the Lord.

I like the way that King Solomon explained it - in Proverbs chapter 3 - it's verses 11 thru 14 - where he declared...

Pro 3:11 My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD,  
Nor detest His correction;

Pro 3:12 For whom the LORD loves He corrects,  
Just as a father the son in whom he delights.

Pro 3:13 Happy is the man who finds wisdom,  
And the man who gains understanding;

Pro 3:14 For her proceeds are better than the profits of silver,  
And her gain than fine gold.

Christian - listen - there are times when the Lord chooses to chasten the believer who is living in sin...

...and the reason why is because - He loves us too much - to let us continue on that carnal course.

And if you're a Christian who is currently receiving the loving correction of the Lord...

...then - I encourage you to ask the Lord to restore you...

...by helping you to turn back from your sinful ways.

Let's consider the way that Asaph put it - here in our text tonight - look with me again - there at verse 7 - where he cried out...

Psa 80:7    Restore us, O God of hosts;  
Cause Your face to shine,  
And we shall be saved!

Here again - we find Asaph - asking the God of hosts to restore the nation of Israel.

You see - - Asaph was a man who knew that the only way for Israel to be saved from their enemies...

...was if the God of Heaven's Armies decided to make his face shine down upon them.

Remember - it was the God of hosts - Who raised up the Assyrians to punish them.

Therefore - it was the God of hosts - Who alone could save them from the attacks of the enemy.

In similar fashion - those who are suffering the loving correction of the Lord must realize that...

...the Lord is the only One - Who can relieve us - from the punishment that He is pouring out.

In order to further make my point - let's continue to consider the lyrics that Asaph wrote - here in the 80th Psalm.

Look with me - beginning there at verse 8 - where he declared....

Psa 80:8     You have brought a vine out of Egypt;  
You have cast out the nations, and planted it.

Psa 80:9     You prepared room for it,  
And caused it to take deep root,  
And it filled the land.

Psa 80:10    The hills were covered with its shadow,  
And the mighty cedars with its boughs.

Psa 80:11    She sent out her boughs to the Sea,  
And her branches to the River.

Psa 80:12    Why have You broken down her hedges,  
So that all who pass by the way pluck her fruit?

Psa 80:13    The boar out of the woods uproots it,  
And the wild beast of the field devours it.

Here in these verses - we find Asaph - comparing Israel to a vine that the Lord brought out of Egypt.

And not only that - but - he also sang the praises of the One Who prepared the land of their inheritance...

...by driving out the 7 Canaanite nations - who were dwelling there before them.

And according to Asaph - the vine of Israel spread throughout the land - from the River to the Sea.

Just to be clear - we're talking about the Jordan River - and the Mediterranean Sea.

What this means is that - Asaph was writing the lyrics of this Psalm - after king David conquered the 7 nations of Canaan...

...but - before the Lord divided the Nation into two separate Kingdoms.

With that being the case - it seems to me that Asaph was prophetically describing the days...

...when the Lord broke down their defensive walls - and allowed the enemies of Israel - to invade.

And as we consider all of the details found in this Psalm...

...Asaph's song seems to've been a prophetic vision about the Assyrian invasion..

...when the Lord allowed the 10 tribes of the northern Kingdom...

...to be carried away into captivity.

It's also possible that Asaph was referring to another campaign - which resulted in a similar punishment.

Let's consider how commentator - Albert Barnes summed it up in his commentary of this Psalm - in which he writes...

It has been generally supposed to have reference to the time of the Babylonian captivity. Some have referred it, however, to the time of Antiochus Epiphanes; and others regard it as a prayer of the ten tribes which had been carried away to Assyria. Doederlein supposes that it refers to the wars of Jehoshaphat with the Ammonites, and others suppose that it refers to the troubles caused by the Philistines. It is impossible now to determine with certainty the time or the occasion of its composition.

Well - regardless of the specific situation that Asaph was describing...

...it seems clear to me that - the God of Israel was presenting Asaph with a prophetic vision...

...of the days when the enemies of Israel would rise up against them - for the purpose of punishment.

And the reason why was because - the people of God had turned away....

...from the One Who planted them there in the land of promise.

With that being the case - Asaph pleaded with the Lord - so that He might help them to return - and be restored.

Let's consider how he put it - here in the 80th Psalm - look with me beginning there at verse 14 - where Asaph declared...

Psa 80:14 Return, we beseech You, O God of hosts;  
Look down from heaven and see,  
And visit this vine

Psa 80:15 And the vineyard which Your right hand has planted,  
And the branch that You made strong for Yourself.

Psa 80:16 It is burned with fire, it is cut down;  
They perish at the rebuke of Your countenance.

Here in these verses - we find Asaph - using the Hebrew word - which was rendered - restore - back in verses 3 - and 7.

Now - here in verse 14 - we find the scholars who created the New King James Version of the Bible...

...rendering the same Hebrew word - return.

In verses 3 and 7 - Asaph was asking for the Lord - to turn the Children of Israel back to Him.

And now - here in verse 14 - Asaph was asking the Lord to return to them.

I like the way that the scholars who created the New Living Translation rendered this verse - they put it like this....

Psa 80:14 Come back, we beg you, O God of Heaven's Armies.

Look down from heaven and see our plight.  
Take care of this grapevine

Asaph not only saw the Lord as the good Shepherd - Who was leading the sheep of His pasture...

...but - he also saw the Lord as a vinedresser - Who was responsible for pruning the vines.

It's for this reason that he pleaded with the Vinedresser to return...

...and prune the vine of Israel - in a way that would produce more fruit.

In similar fashion - God the Father is also the vinedresser - who prunes the vines of the church.

Let's consider how the Lord Jesus explained it - in John chapter 15 - it's beginning at verse 1 - where He declared...

Jhn 15:1 "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser.

Jhn 15:2 "Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.

Jhn 15:3 "You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.

Jhn 15:4 "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.

Jhn 15:5 "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.

Jhn 15:6 "If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.

Jhn 15:7 "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.

Jhn 15:8 "By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.

According to the Lord Jesus - God the Father is the vinedresser -  
Who prunes the branches of every believer.

And listen - there are times when the Father will prune  
branches from our lives...

...and the reason why is because - these branches are  
keeping us from producing good fruit.

Please trust me when I tell you that - it's always a  
good thing...

...when God the Father prunes our lives - of  
those dead vines.

Not only that - but God the Father will also prune the church - by  
removing the dead vines that are here within our fellowship of faith.

And while I realize that it's easy to be concerned about those  
who are no longer here...

...please trust me when I tell you that - this is all part of  
the pruning process...

...which is ultimately intended for the health of the  
church.

As for those who left - because they're backsliding - well - we should follow in the  
footsteps of Asaph - by praying for their restoration.

Let's consider how he put it - here in the final stanza of this song - look with  
me there at verse 17 - where Asaph declared....

Psa 80:17 Let Your hand be upon the man of Your right hand,  
Upon the son of man whom You made strong for Yourself.

Psa 80:18 Then we will not turn back from You;  
Revive us, and we will call upon Your name.

Psa 80:19 Restore us, O LORD God of hosts;  
Cause Your face to shine,  
And we shall be saved!

Here in the final verses of this Psalm - we find Asaph - once again praying for the restoration of those who were carried away into captivity.

And as we consider the way that Asaph prayed for the Lord to revive those who call upon His name...

...we must not fail to notice that - Asaph was asking the Lord God of hosts...

...to accomplish this revival - and restoration - by raising up the man of His right hand.

Notice again - there in verse 17 - where Asaph cried out....

Psa 80:17 Let Your hand be upon the man of Your right hand,  
Upon the son of man whom You made strong for Yourself.

Who is this Man of God's right hand - - and who is the strong Son of Man - Who would bring about this revival?

With this question in mind - let's take a moment to consider how the Lord Jesus is the One...

...Who is seated at the right hand of God the Father.

It's in Mark chapter 16 - verse 19 - where we learn that...

Mar 16:19b (Jesus) was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God.

Now - it should be noticed that - God the Father doesn't literally have a right hand.

No - instead - the right hand is an idiom for supreme power and almighty authority.

Therefore - Asaph asked the God of hosts to place His hand upon the man of His right hand...

...He was asking the Father - to send the King of kings - to restore the nation of Israel.

Further evidence that Jesus is the man of God's right hand can be found in Colossians chapter 3 verse 1 - - where Paul declared...

Col 3:1 If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.

Jesus Christ is seated at the right hand of God the Father - and the reason why is because...

...Christ Jesus is the One with supreme power and almighty authority.

It's in Romans 8 - verse 34 - where Paul also assured us that...

Rom 8:34b It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.

That's right - Christ is making intercession for us each and every day...

...as He sits there at the right hand of God the Father.

And at the same time - Jesus is also the Son of Man - Whom the Father made strong for His purposes.

With this as our focus - let's take another look - there at verse 17 - where Asaph cried out...

Psa 80:17 Let Your hand be upon the man of Your right hand, Upon the son of man whom You made strong for Yourself.

Now - that title - Son of Man - is actually a Messianic title - that the Lord Jesus used in reference to Himself - at least 30 times.

When we add up all of these references - found in all four gospels...

...we find the Lord Jesus referring to Himself as the Son of Man  
- at least 80 times.

For example - it's in Luke chapter 12 - verses 8 thru 10 - where Jesus declared...

Luk 12:8 "I say to you, whoever confesses Me before men, him the Son of Man also will confess before the angels of God.

Luk 12:9 "But he who denies Me before men will be denied before the angels of God.

Luk 12:10 "And anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but to him who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven."

Clearly - Christ Jesus was referring to Himself as the Son of Man.

And with that being the case -it'll help you to know that - this title - the Son of Man...

...is a Messianic title - that the prophet Daniel used - during his days in Babylon.

It's in Daniel chapter 7 - beginning at verse 13 - where the prophet Daniel declared...

Dan 7:13 "I was watching in the night visions,

And behold, One like the Son of Man,

Coming with the clouds of heaven!

He came to the Ancient of Days,

And they brought Him near before Him.

Dan 7:14 Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom,

That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him.

His dominion is an everlasting dominion,

Which shall not pass away,

And His kingdom the one

Which shall not be destroyed.

Here in these verses - we find Daniel - describing the way that God the Father gave the Kingdom to One Who was like the Son of Man.

And listen - I have no doubt that this is the same Son of Man that Asaph the Seer was seeking - here in the 80th Psalm.

And we can also be certain that Jesus is the Son of Man - Who alone can restore all things...

...according to the predetermined plan of God the Father.

And with that being the case - we can rejoice in knowing that Jesus is the Savior...

...Who can revive those who will simply call upon His name.

And so - let's call upon the name above names...

...as we wait for Him to restore us - according to His perfect will.

## **COMMUNION**