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**BIBLE STUDY**

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**"TURN US AGAIN, O GOD, AND CAUSE THY**

**FACE TO SHINE; AND WE SHALL BE SAVED."**

**Psalms 80:1-19**

**(**To the chief Musician upon Shoshannim-Eduth, A Psalm of Asaph)

This Psalm of Asaph is written the chief Musician upon Shosahannim (“Lilies,”) – Eduth (“testimony)”. It serves to provide a legal testimony regarding the just historical basis for God’s correction of His people. Psalms 78 and 79 describe God’s judgment of the apostate northern and southern tribes, casting some doubt on the possibility of the fulfillment of the Davidic covenant and the future restoration of the nation. Psalm 80 indicates that the hope of this future restoration did not hang on any of David’s past sons but Asaph reassured his readers that there would be such a restoration under the future Son of David. Seventeen verses in the New Testament describe Jesus as the “son of David.” But the question arises, how could Jesus be the son of David if David lived approximately 1,000 years before Jesus? (Matthew 22:41-46). The answer is that Christ (the Messiah) was the fulfillment of the prophecy of the seed of David (2 Samuel 7:12-16). Jesus is the promised Messiah, which means He had to be of the lineage of David. Matthew 1 gives the genealogical proof that Jesus, in His humanity, was a direct descendant of Abraham and David through Joseph, Jesus’ legal father. The genealogy in Luke 3 traces Jesus’ lineage through His mother, Mary. Jesus is a descendant of David by adoption through Joseph and by blood through Mary. “As to his earthly life [Christ Jesus] was a descendant of David” (Romans 1:3). As Jesus says in Revelation 22:16, “I am the Root and the Offspring of David.” That is, He is both the Creator of David and the Descendant of David. Only the Son of God made flesh could say that.

***Psalms 80:1 “Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock; thou that dwellest [between] the cherubims, shine forth.”***

Israel’s relationship with the Lord is immediately indicated by the description of God as the Shepherd of Israel. After all, he was their Shepherd and their King, enthroned between the cherubim above the ark of the covenant. The Great Shepherd of the Christians, of course, is Jesus. They are spiritual Israel. From a prophetic point of view, then, this is to our Lord. We, also, see in this the Presence of Almighty God who was over the mercy seat in the tabernacle and in the temple. Certainly, the physical house of Israel had been led like a flock. The presence of God led them out across the wilderness to the promised land. We, also, know that Jesus is the Light of the world. Wherever there is a presence of God, there is a Light, or Fire, or Clouds. This above, then, is a request for the Light of God to shine forth even brighter than in the past.

***Psalms 80:2 "Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh stir up thy strength, and come [and] save us."***

Some expositors believe this is speaking of the ten tribes who were headed up by Manasseh being led by the Great Shepherd. Ephraim and Manasseh were sons of Joseph. The Psalmist here realizes that there was a special anointing on Joseph. God had protected him through all his troubles, and the blessings had passed to his sons. Benjamin is mentioned, because Joseph and Benjamin were the only two sons of Rachel whom Jacob loved more than the others. Even near kinsman sometimes break up and go their separate ways. The Psalmist is crying out for help from God. The Psalmist felt if, perhaps, his name meant very little to God, he would use some names that would get God's attention. Christians are well aware, the way to get the Father to hear your prayer is to ask in the name of Jesus. There is something about that name.

***John 14:13-14***

***13 And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.***

***14 If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.***

***Psalms 80:3 "Turn us again, O God, and cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved."***

Asaph requests that God restore his battered people. He prays that God would make [his] face shine on them, that is, that he would allow his favor and blessing, which had been blocked because of their sin, to return to them. The psalmist is very well aware that the only possible hope for any one is God. The request “Turn us again, O God” indicates that God was correcting His people in their troubles. God often uses difficulties to discipline His children. Noah was saved “in the” flood, Daniel was saved “in the” lion’s den, Shadrach Meshach, and Abednego were saved “in the” fire. None of these people of God were saved “out of” their problem. They were saved “in the” problem.

***Romans 5:3-5***

***3 And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;***

***4 And patience, experience; and experience, hope:***

***5 And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.***

These people the psalmist is begging for here, may be in captivity, but God can deal with them in captivity, possibly even better than He could when they were having no problems. It is not so important the circumstance you find yourself in, as it is how you handle the circumstance. God is never unaware of our problem. In fact, He is in it with us, like there was the fourth figure in the fire, one like unto the Son of God. We know that God will turn, again, and shine His face upon anyone who loves and follows God. To cause Your face to shine upon us is requesting God to bless them and is drawn from the Aaronic benediction.

***Numbers 6:24-26***

***24 The Lord bless thee, and keep thee:***

***25 The Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee:***

***26 The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.***

***Psalms 80:4 "O LORD God of hosts, how long wilt thou be angry against the prayer of thy people?"***

Addressing God as LORD God of Hosts further indicates His majesty. Asaph wants to know how long the Lord’s anger would continue. Sin causes separation from God. This was not just a sin that they had committed, but a grievous sin. This is still speaking of the mixing of false gods in with their real God. God's anger had been kindled hotter, because of what they had done. It seemed their prayers were getting nowhere. The Israelites had been an openly rebellious people. God had forgiven them over and over. There is a limit to how many times He will forgive them. This seems, it could be that time. They are not only praying, but they are crying with the prayers. But as long as we have breath, we should pray that God will hear and forgive.

***2 Chronicles 7:13-14***

***13 If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people;***

***14 If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.***

***Psalms 80:5-7***

***5 "Thou feedest them with the bread of tears; and givest them tears to drink in great measure."***

***6 "Thou makest us a strife unto our neighbours: and our enemies laugh among themselves."***

***7 "Turn us again, O God of hosts, and cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved."***

Israel’s tears are in everything because they do not cease to pray and cry to God. Can't you just hear the taunts of the ungodly neighbors, saying, I thought you said you had a God that cared for you, where is He now? If you are His, why is He not answering your prayer? Asaph recognizes that God was the one responsible for their tears. And, he had put [them] at odds with [their] neighbors. In verse 7, he repeats the request of 80:3 that God would return his favor upon them and end their despair. We see the psalmist actually trying to put the responsibility for change on the Lord. Isn't that really what happened when Jesus came and became our substitute on the cross? We were not worthy to be saved, but He saved us anyway. God of hosts could mean God of your armies.

***Psalms 80:8 "Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt: thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it."***

This section of the psalm is in the form of a parable. The vine metaphor was frequently used of Israel. Here the vine describes Israel in terms of the exodus from Egypt and settling in Israel. We know that God Himself brought Israel {vine} out of Egypt with the mighty Right Hand of God. Canaan was occupied by heathen people, and the Lord drove them out and planted Israel instead. Israel is the vine that God planted in the promised land. In Egypt the vine could not prosper, because it was denied the necessary things to produce fruit. The law was given to these Israelites on the way to the promised land, and they had the opportunity to produce much fruit for God. They failed. This vine was the same as the natural branch on the tree. They had the opportunity to produce for God, but they failed. Jesus is the true vine, as we see in the following verse. The trouble with the physical house of Israel is they did not abide with God.

***John 15:5 "I am the vine, ye [are] the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing."***

***Psalms 80:9-11***

***9 "Thou preparedst [room] before it, and didst cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land."***

***10 "The hills were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof [were like] the goodly cedars."***

***11 "She sent out her boughs unto the sea, and her branches unto the river."***

This, also, is speaking of Joshua defeating and removing the heathen from the land. Soon the inheritance was divided, and the children of Israel began to live in the land. This was, indeed, a land of milk and honey. It was fertile land and grew giant trees. The family of God moved in, and the land prospered. This land is on the edge of the Mediterranean Sea, and there were many boats and shipping. It seemed nature had cooperated with God, and they now had a warm water port for their shipping.

***Psalms 80:12 "Why hast thou [then] broken down her hedges, so that all they which pass by the way do pluck her?"***

When Israel began on this journey from Egypt to the promised land, God had been the hedge around them and helped them against their enemies. He had stood between the Red Sea and the Israelites, while the Israelites crossed unharmed. He had been with them in battle and the enemy had run away, knowing that Israel was protected by their God. Now it appears that the protection of God is gone. Their enemy can have free run on them. Now that Israel's God is not protecting her, all of the people around her are taking whatever they want from her.

***Psalms 80:13 "The boar out of the wood doth waste it, and the wild beast of the field doth devour it."***

This is just saying, the supernatural protection from wild beasts that they had before is, also, gone. God is angry with them and has removed His protection. When God delivered his people from Egypt, he transplanted them to the land he had promised. For a time, Israel flourished. But then, God removed their protection so that they were oppressed by enemies; they became like an untended vine whose fruit could be devoured by animals. The basis of God’s correction was His unconditional, sovereign election of Israel, grounded in His covenant with and promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

***Psalms 80:14-16***

***14 "Return, we beseech thee, O God of hosts: look down from heaven, and behold, and visit this vine;"***

***15 "And the vineyard which thy right hand hath planted, and the branch [that] thou madest strong for thyself."***

***16 "[It is] burned with fire, [it is] cut down: they perish at the rebuke of thy countenance***.”

Again, the prayer, directed to the God of hosts, was for Him to take care of this vine … which Your right hand has planted. Asaph pleads with God to care for this vine of his, which was a reference to his people Israel. Israel was called the son “branch” whom You have strengthened for Yourself. This is just another plea to God to not forget His people even though the vine had been cut down and burned as a result of the Lord’s discipline. Thankfully, it is really no need to ask God to look, because His eye is always on His people. Let us look at this prophetically and see the church which the Right Hand of God {Jesus} planted. This could even be saying, Father look down and save the church, because of Your Son's great establishment of it. Do not see our sin, see your precious Son's blood. Jesus established the church for us, we did not do it. We see the destruction of God's people. They will perish, unless God intervenes. Unless God looks down from heaven and has mercy, they are gone.

***Psalms 80:17-19***

***17 "Let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand, upon the son of man [whom] thou madest strong for thyself."***

***18 "So will not we go back from thee: quicken us, and we will call upon thy name."***

***19 "Turn us again, O LORD God of hosts, cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved."***

Asaph asks that God rescue his people through the man at [his] right hand, the son of man. This is prophetically speaking of the Messiah, the Christ. The Right Hand is strong because He is the Son of God. We know that man alone could not save himself, or anyone else. God sent the Saviour, Jesus Christ to redeem us. Jesus Christ, their Messiah, is the quickening spirit they and we need to help us. In Him is Life, and the Life is the Light of men. Asaph then concludes with the refrain of 80:3 and 7. Restore us, Lord, God of Armies; make your face shine on us, so that we may be saved. In times when God is correcting us, let us return to him quickly so that his favor can return quickly to us. The Lord is the only hope of salvation. This is said, again, to give impact to the statement. Man is his own worst enemy. We cannot save ourselves. God had to send a Saviour to save us from sin and death, but also, to save us from our own blundering mistakes.

***Romans 10:13 "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."***

***Romans 8:11 "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you."***

***II Corinthians 4:6 "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to [give] the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."***

**QUESTIONS**

1. What special name is God called in verse 1?
2. How had He led Joseph?
3. Thou that dwellest between the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
4. Who is the Great Shepherd of the Christians?
5. What presence was over the mercy seat?
6. Who really led the children of Israel across the wilderness?
7. What are three things that depict God in our presence?
8. How can a Christian get God's attention to his prayer?
9. The only possible hope for anyone is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
10. Who were the three men saved in the fire?
11. Who was saved in the flood?
12. Who was saved in the lions' den?
13. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ causes separation from God.
14. In verse 6, who is laughing at their calamity?
15. Who is the vine in verse 8?
16. Why could the vine not prosper in Egypt?
17. The promised land is on the edge of what great sea?
18. What had been the hedge around Israel?
19. Who planted the vineyard in verse 15?
20. Who is the quickening Spirit?