

Part 3 – The Broken Hedge

In part 2 we saw the Psalmist again (several times) plead with God to help (save) Israel out of their current troubles; and he cited how their enemies had been fighting them, and even mocking them, *so much* that they were eating and drinking (metaphorically) their own tears for all the horrible troubles befalling them. And he again asked that God would help them turn *away* from their idolatry, and *back to Him*, so His face *could* ‘shine’ on them again, which is what was (and still is) needed for God to save them out of their troubles. And then the Psalmist began to recount a bit of history, for he explained how God was the one who brought Israel out of Egypt and planted them (as a vine) into the Promise Land, after He helped them root out the heathen who lived there. We learned how this analogy (of Israel being the Lord’s vineyard and Judah being the vine within it) was used in the book of Isaiah; and it not only told us how God set up His Kingdom on earth (through Israel) but also how it became corrupted (by wild grapes, which are really *poison berries*) and also what He did to it as a result of the corruption. We also learned that Jesus Himself used this analogy (of the vine) several times in His teachings as well. And it is the analogy of Israel being God’s ‘vine’ that we pick up with in this great Psalm...

Psalm 80

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

So, the Psalmist is still speaking metaphorically of Israel as the ‘vineyard’ that God ‘planted’ in the Promise Land. While the word ‘**room**’ is *not in the Hebrew manuscripts* (#9999), the word ‘**preparedst**’ means *to turn*, by implication, *to face*, i.e. **appear, look**, etc. (#6437). So, even *before* He led Israel into the Promise Land, the Lord (YHVH) had been preparing for Israel to inherit it. As He told Moses in Ex 23:20: *Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared.* The study **Was Christ Here On Earth Before His Birth?** [<https://t.me/BibleStudyDownload/485>] clearly explains just who this ‘Angel’ was, that God sent ‘before’ Israel into the Promise Land. And, a few verses later, He explains one of the methods He used to do so...

27 I will send my fear before thee, and will destroy all the people to whom thou shalt come, and I will make all thine enemies turn their backs unto thee.

28 And I will send hornets before thee, which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite, from before thee.

29 I will not drive them out from before thee in one year; lest the land become desolate, and the beast of the field multiply against thee.

30 By little and little I will drive them out from before thee, until thou be increased, and inherit the land

31 And I will set thy bounds from the Red sea even unto the sea of the Philistines, and from the desert unto the river: for I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand; and thou shalt drive them out before thee.

32 Thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor with their gods.

*33 They shall not dwell in thy land, lest they make thee sin against me: for **if** thou serve their gods, it will surely be a snare unto thee.*

Ex 23:27-33

So, even *before* Israel invaded the Promise Land, the Lord (YHVH) was ‘preparing’ the heathen living in the Promise Land to be destroyed by Israel, by causing His ‘fear’ to be among them. In these verses, we see one of the methods He used was simply to terrorize them with hornets! It’s truly amazing how accurately, and powerfully, God can use His creation to fight with. So, little by little, God put the ‘fear of God’ into the heathen simply by terrorizing them with hornets (and perhaps other animals too) to cause the heathen to become unsettled, so that – by the time Israel was ready to invade – the heathen nations were already weakened. Yet, Israel *still had to fight* to gain possession. And God promised to make them strong enough to overcome the giants living there IF they were obedient to Him. As the book of Joshua shows, some tribes of Israel did a good job at this and some of them did not. And after Joshua died, the people of Israel had a really hard time kicking out the heathen (due to their unfaithfulness in being obedient to Him) until God finally rose David to be king. And then they *really* did a good job driving out the heathen because God gave David victory after victory *because* he was *faithful* and *obedient* to God, *and* caused the rest of Israel to do so too. As Stephen said in Acts 7:45, God drove out the heathen before Israel ‘unto to the days of David’. So, it was during the ‘days of David’ that God really caused Israel to take ‘deep root’ *because their territory grew so very much* when he was king over all of Israel. And when Solomon became king, their territory grew *even more*. And there was never a time when Israel’s territory was larger than when Solomon ruled. *This* is what the Psalmist is referring to here in this verse 9, when He said that God ‘prepared’ the Promise Land for Israel to inherit and then caused them to take ‘deep root’ *and fill* the land...

Psalms 80

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

Here the Psalmist is simply explaining the great expansion of territory that Israel experienced when David and Solomon ruled. The ‘**hills**’ (which means **a mountain or range of hills** #2022) were covered with the ‘**shadow**’ (**shade** #6738) of “it”, which is referring to ‘the vineyard’ that God planted, which is the nation of Israel. Now, most of Israel’s mountains are in the eastern part of the nation, specially in the southeast part of it. So, the Psalmist is likely using this to refer to how Israel spread to the *southern* border. And then the ‘**boughs**’ means **a twig** that covers the limbs (#6057), so this again is referring to how Israel ‘spread out’ in the Promise Land (like a

vine) and took over more and more territory. What's interesting though, is that the word 'goodly' is actually one of God's 'titles' – it's #410 'El' – which means **strength, mighty** and especially refers to **the Almighty God** (Yehovah) although it can be used of any 'deity'. So, the Psalmist is saying that the 'vineyard' (Israel) grew so great that the Psalmist likens it to the mighty cedars, which (in the Hebrew) is rendered as the '**cedars of 'El'**'. And the meaning of the Hebrew word for '**cedars**' tells us *why* the cedar tree is looked upon as so 'mighty' of a tree: #730 means a *cedar tree, from the tenacity of its root*, which is why it comes from a prim root that means **to be firm** #730).

And that's why, in Hos 14:8, God Himself says that: *I am like a green fir tree. From me is thy fruit found*. While the 'fir' tree here is not the same Hebrew word as 'cedar' is (it means a cypress tree #1265), the point is that God is likened to the strongest of trees because He is **so** strong – both physically *and* spiritually. As Hos 14:9 says, *for the ways of the LORD are right, and the just shall walk in them: but the transgressors shall fall therein*. And, if we follow God's ways (which are outlined in His Word, the Bible) then we too can be strong and 'unmovable', simply *because we're attached* (rooted into) to Him! As David so beautifully pointed out, in Ps 16:8: *I have set the LORD always before me: **because** he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved*. The word '**moved**' here means **to waver, slip, shake or fall** (#4131). So, when our heart (desires, emotions) and mind (thought process) is 'rooted' in the Word of God, we won't fall for deception (lies) or peer pressure to sin (rebel against God), which is what causes us to *spiritually* 'dry up', and eventually die, like a tree whose roots are not deep enough to bring nourishment to it. As Jeremiah said...

5 Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD.

6 For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited.

7 Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is.

8 For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.

Jer 17:5-8

These verses do a great job explaining the difference between those who trust in the Lord (YHVH) versus those who do not. Those who **do** trust in the Lord *diligently* study God's Word (with understanding), take it into their heart and mind (as a tree takes in waters it's planted by) and obeys God's Word sincerely (the best they truly can). As Jesus pointed out in Mth 7:24-27 (by using a different analogy to say the same thing), those who actually **do** God's will (Word) are pleasing to Him, for they will produce fruit; but those who do **not** actually do God's Word (even if they 'hear' it) are not pleasing to Him because they don't produce good fruit. As Jesus said in

another place: *Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall **do and teach them**, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven* (Matt 5:19). Those who **do** God's Commandments (which are the same as Jesus' Commandments) will be called great in the kingdom of Heaven *because* those who obey Him cannot help but to teach others to do the same, if only through their righteous actions and words. But those who break God's Commandments are least in the kingdom of Heaven (if they even make it there at all) because their hypocritical actions *do not* teach people how to obey God's Word (Commandments/Laws). They actually turn many people away from God, as Jesus pointed out in Mth 15 and Mk 7. And Jesus also said...

*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.***

6 If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.

John 15:5-6

So, we *have* to be *spiritually* connected to God (i.e. be 'in the Sanctuary'), through our faith in Jesus Christ (knowing and understanding God's Word) **if** we want to bring forth good spiritual fruit (Gal 5:22-23; Eph 5:9; Heb 12:11) instead of being 'cut off' from the vine, withering and eventually being cast into the lake of fire, which would be the end of our existence (which will only happen at the end of the Millennium, Rev 20:10-15). And so, God (Old Testament), Jeremiah and Jesus Christ (New Testament) both used a similar (if not the same) analogy as this Psalmist is using, when he's explaining how Israel grew *so much* that they covered the mountainous rejoin in the Promise Land, which were mostly in the east to southeast part of it. And then the 'cedars' here is also a reference to the Cedars of Lebanon, which were in the north of their territory. So, the Psalmist references both the *northern* and the *southern* boundaries when speaking about how Israel 'spread out' (as a vine) while in the Promise Land...

Psalm 80

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

And now the Psalmist references the *eastern* and *western* boundaries of Israel, while they were in the Promise Land. The word '**boughs**' means (in the context of this verse) **a limb of a tree** (#7105) and the word '**sea**' means **a sea, large body of water** and specifically refers to the **Mediterranean Sea** (#3220), which was the *western* border of Israel. And then the word '**branches**' means **a sprout** (#3127) which is a **twig**. And the word '**river**' here means **a stream** but is also used specifically for the *Nile River* or **the Euphrates** (#5104); and the latter is what's being referred to here, for it's the *eastern* border of Israel. So, the Psalmist has pointed out that God transplanted Israel (as a vine) to the Promise Land where they 'took root' and 'spread out'

(as a vine) to the north, south, east and west... which is *exactly* what God promised Jacob in Gen 28:13-14!

Psalms 80

12 Why hast thou then broken down her hedges, so that all they which pass by the way do pluck her?

13 The boar out of the wood doth waste it, and the wild beast of the field doth devour it.

So, after speaking of how God ‘transplanted’ Israel (the ‘vine’) into the Promise Land, caused her to take deep root and spread out, he’s now asking why God broke down the hedges (protection) so that she (Israel – the ‘vine’) is ‘plucked’ by those who pass by her and destroyed by ‘wild beasts’. Again, this question is a figure of speech (*Erotosis*, apx 6), just as the questions back the last chapter (Ps 79:5 and 10) were. It’s when a question(s) is asked, *not for information* or *even an answer*, but *to make a point*; and the reasons for doing so can vary greatly. But here, as in the last chapter, the reason is likely due to *lamentation*, for the Psalmist has been seeing the ‘vine’ (Israel) ‘plucked’ because the ‘hedge’ was taken down. The word ‘**hedge**’ means a **circumvallation** (which means to surround by or as if by a protective barrier) and, by implication, an **enclosure** (#1447). But, as we learned in our last study, the answer to this question is quite obvious: *because* the vine (Israel) brought forth wild grapes, which are *poison* berries (Isa 5:2).

In other words, when Israel became *corrupted* God *stopped protecting her*. As Deut 28 and Lev 26 clearly stipulate, God promised to protect Israel only when they were obeying Him. And He sternly warned of all the ‘cursings’ that would happen to them if they refused to obey Him. And in Isa 5:4, God even asked what more He could have done for His vineyard: He planted it so carefully, put a good vine in it and protected it diligently with a watch tower... but it *still* brought forth ‘wild grapes’ (poison berries). God not only brought Israel out of Egypt (freeing them from slavery), showed them *many* amazing, and mighty, miracles and *then* brought them into a wonderful land (the Promised Land) *and* He *also* gave Israel His perfect system of laws. If they had simply *tried* to obey Him (sincerely) He would not have allowed His protection to leave them **but their rebellion is what** ‘broke down’ that ‘hedge’ of protection. So, they truly *did it to themselves* (Isa 4:5-7). And truly, God did clearly explain this to Israel (Judg 2:1-3) even using the same analogy at times (Jer 2:21-29, Jer 12:6-11, Ezek 15:6-8, Hos 10:1-2, Nah 2:2). And the Psalmist *knew* this, which is why his question is simply a figure of speech to lament for what he saw going on.

And, in the next study, we’ll see the Psalmist again implore God for help out of this situation. But, until then, let’s remember that we, who believe in Jesus Christ, can have a *personal* ‘hedge’ of protection upon us (just like Job did, Job 1:10) when we keep our faith *firm* in Jesus Christ. While most all others may go whoring after false gods and idols – and suffer the cursings

because of it – we can still be protected (and blessed) by God **if** we continue to study His Word, *trust in it* and strive *sincerely* to obey it. And, when we learn to use the gift(s) God has given us, we can do ‘our part’ to help God’s wayward children to return to Him, if only one heart at a time...

8 For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye **light in the Lord**: walk as children of light:

9(For the fruit of the Spirit is in all **goodness and righteousness and truth**;))

10 Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.

11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.

12 For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.

13 But all things that are reproved are made manifest by the light: for **whatsoever doth make manifest is light**.

14 Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

15 See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,

16 Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

17 Wherefore **be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is**.

Eph 5:8-17

We’ll pick this up in part 4...

AMEN.