

Psalm Chapter 80 – Review

In part 1 we learned that this is another Psalm of Asaph and its subject/title is *God in Sanctuary*. And the Psalmist began this Psalm by calling upon God to ‘shine His face’ upon Israel, which means he was asking for God to save them from their current troubles (which were a result of their idolatry and *disobeying* Him). He also used several different names for our Heavenly Father when calling upon Him to ‘give ear’ to his pleas for help. Thus, the Lord (YHVH) was likened to Israel’s Shepherd. And this was because He led, cared for and protected them just as a shepherd does for his sheep; and it takes great skill, love and devotion to be a good Shepherd, which our Heavenly Father (Jesus Christ) definitely is. And He not only was a Shepherd for Jacob, when he had to go through the wilderness to find a wife, but also for Jacob’s descendants (the 12 tribes of Israel) when He led them out of Egypt *and* through the wilderness. And He *also* did this for the ‘scattered tribes of Israel’ when He led, guided, cared for and protected the ‘lost sheep of Israel’ *out of their captivity* (to the Assyrians and Babylonians) and *into the new* ‘Promise Land’ of Europe and America. But the Psalmist also called our Heavenly Father ‘the one that dwelt between the cherubims’ and that’s simply a reference to God being ‘*in* the Sanctuary’ as the subject/title of this great Psalm denotes. For, it was from ‘between the cherubims’ that God sat on His throne, which is the mercy seat (above the Ark of the Covenant, which had the Law in it). And He not only communicated with Israel (Moses) from there (at times) but He also judged from ‘between the cherubims’. Thus, the Ark of the Covenant (which was *between* the cherubims) became symbolic for God’s glory and strength (as Ps 78:61 says) because *that’s* where He resided, at times.

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 and vineyard) several times in His teachings as well.

In part 3 we learned how, after God planted His people Israel in the Promise Land, He caused them to ‘take root’ and grow *greatly*, especially during the years that David and Solomon reigned. For, at that time, Israel spread to the north, south, east and west, just as God promised

Jacob/Israel in Gen 28:14. But then, He broke down the protective ‘hedge’ that surrounded His vineyard (Israel) and allowed her to be ‘plucked’ by those who ‘passed by’ as well as by wild beasts of the earth (i.e. invading armies of the heathen). And, while the Psalmist asked God *why* He took down the protective hedge, he well *knew* that it was *because* of Israel’s sins. For, when they forsook God’s Laws, they forsook the covenant their forefathers had made with Him; and thus, they themselves *broke* the very thing that caused God’s ‘face to shine’ upon them, which was their *obedience*. So, the ‘broken hedge’ was actually broken by *their own disobedience* to His Laws!

In part 4 we saw the Psalmist again (twice) call upon the Lord God of Hosts to turn Israel back to Him so His face could ‘shine’ upon them yet again. So essentially, he was calling on God to come and save them. But, he did so by calling for the Lord God of Hosts to send the Messiah (the Branch, who God made strong, verses 15 and 17) to save them! This Psalmist was clearly not Biblically illiterate. And that’s why he also knew that, the *only* way they would be saved out of their troubles was *if* they (as a nation) turned their hearts and minds back to the *one true* God and *stopped* worshiping false gods and idols (i.e. apostatizing). That’s why he pleads with God to quicken them (make them come back to life, spiritually, by *learning the truth*) so that God *would* save them. Therefore, this latter part of the Psalm was truly prophetic of the coming Messiah, Jesus Christ. And while the Messiah did not come during the days of this Psalmist, He did come when the Scriptures declared He would. And so, Jesus Christ perfectly fulfilled all Scriptures pertaining to His *First* Advent, just as He will do so for His *Second* Advent. And that’s actually what the subscription (to the chief Musician, upon Gittith) reminds us of, for it spoke of the winepress (Gittith) which alludes, not only to the vineyard this Psalm spoke of, but also to the Feast of Tabernacles, which is the feast symbolic of Jesus Christ’s return. And indeed, when Jesus Christ returns, He will be ‘trodding down’ the wicked grapes (poison berries) who have corrupted our vineyard (and the hearts of God’s children) for far to long.

So, this great Psalm not only teaches us how to *humbly* ask God for help, but also teaches us what *we must do* to obtain His help (repent and turn our heart and mind sincerely back to Him insomuch that we kick off our sins, learn truth and sincerely strive to obey it). And it also teaches us what, and who, our *only* true salvation is: *the* Branch who grew into *the* Vine, Jesus Christ! As Jesus Himself said...

4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

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 15:4-6

So, it is our choice. We can accept Jesus Christ and become a fruitful branch of the Vine, *or* we can *cut ourselves off* from the Vine (the truth, Jesus Christ) and wither away spiritually...

24 Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father. [John 8:31]

*25 And **this** is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life.*

26 These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you.

*27 But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, **and is truth**, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.*

*28 And now, little children, abide in him; that, **when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming**.*

29 If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.

1 John 2:24-29

AMEN.