

As we have been going through these Psalms, it becomes very clear that if we are a child of God, there will be low moments when we will hit bottom. Some of the humiliating moments will be brought on by an enemy and other humiliating moments will be brought on by us.

We have seen that, as a believer, we will perhaps anger God. There is no sense trying to deny this reality because this is reality. There will be times when we will do or say things that will make God mad to the point that He allows us to go through some severe hardships.

In these kind of moments, the child of God always has an option. He can always go to God in prayer and ask God to completely restore and bless. The child of God, no matter how low he or she may be, can always go to God in prayer. That is something this book of Psalms communicates time and time again.

Now from the superscription it is clear that this was written by Asaph for the choir director. It was a Psalm set to “El Shoshannim,” which means it was to be presented in a fanfare way that exalts God. It is classified as “Eduth,” which means it is a revelatory precept. This is to be presented with full authority of God as if this is a law of God.

Now as we glance through Psalm 80, we cannot help but see that there is a repetition of a request for God to cause His “face to shine” on His people again (**80:3, 7, 19**). This idea of God shining His face has at least two applications:

- 1) It is a concept of God manifesting His glory (Deut. 33:2).
- 2) It is a concept of God demonstrating His favor.

In those same verses we may also observe that there is a repeated theme of asking God to “restore” His people (**80:3, 7, 19**).

When this Psalm was written, the people of God felt they had been abandoned and forsaken by God. God’s people were broken down and beaten up. They needed the favor of God, they needed revival and restoration. This is what this Psalm is all about.

The primary point of the Psalm is this:

WHEN GOD’S PEOPLE SENSE THEY HAVE BEEN ABANDONED BY GOD, THEY NEED TO PRAY TO GOD AND ASK HIM TO GLORIFY HIMSELF BY FAVORING, REVIVING AND RESTORING HIS PEOPLE.

Perhaps you are in a real low right now. God seems to be far removed from your life and your world. Go to Him in prayer. Ask Him to demonstrate His glory in your world. Ask Him to revive you and restore you and ask Him to shine is face of favor on you. That is exactly what this Psalm is all about.

Now there are five key parts to this Psalm:

PART #1 – God’s people make their requests to God. **80:1-4**

Now it is very clear as the Psalm opens that Asaph has a very high and holy concept of God. In the first four verses, God is identified in the following ways:

- 1) God is identified as the Shepherd of Israel. **1:1a**
- 2) God is identified as one who is “enthroned above the cherubim.” **1:1c**
- 3) God is identified as God. **1:3a**
- 4) God is identified as “LORD God of hosts.” **1:4**

If we combine these three titles, we see that God is described as One who has all sovereign power who is over all forces in existence. God is capable of doing whatever He wants to do because He is the Sovereign God.

By referring to Israel, Joseph, Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh, Asaph is pointing out that much of Israel was hurting and needed God’s help. From **verse 4** we learn that God had been angry at His people and it is possible that these named were part of the group that either did or did not make Him angry.

Regardless of this Asaph knew that this Sovereign God was the “Shepherd of Israel.” God can lead His people as the all-powerful God. He has all forces under His authority. He can stir up His power and He can save His people from anything. He can cause His face of favor to shine on His people and that is what Asaph asks God to do.

Part of the responsibility of leaders is to pray in behalf of hurting people and ask God to intervene. That is what this Psalm is all about.

PART #2 – Asaph states the reasons for the request. **80:5-7**

There are three reasons Asaph made this request:

Reason #1 - Because God had allowed things to happen to His people that made them cry.
80:5

Notice the emphasis on the fact that there were lots of tears. God caused a lot of things to happen that caused His people to cry. Now the reason why God did this is because of His people’s sin. This is what sin will do. It will cause you to cry; not be happy.

Reason #2 - Because God had made relationships with others that were contentious. **80:6a**

If ever there has been a group of people who have had trouble with their neighbors, it is Israel. She is always at odds with some neighbor. She has never really got along well with the Gentile world. When God gets angry with His people, He can make life miserable.

Reason #3 - Because God had made His people the object of laughter of enemies. **80:6b**

God's people were not respected because they were right with God. They were a joke to the world.

This is why Asaph prayed. One thing that is interesting here about his theology is that he truly believed God was sovereign in permitting all of this and He believed God could deliver from this.

At the end of **verse 7**, Asaph asks God to restore them, shine His face on them and to save them.

PART #3 – Asaph reminds God what He did for His people in the past. **80:8-11**

Asaph reminds God how He blessed Israel in the past. There are three main historical episodes of which He reminded God:

Episode #1 - God took her from Egypt. **80:8a**

Asaph takes Israel back to where it all began. He wanted God's people to remember what God had done in the past.

Episode #2 - God drove out her enemies. **80:8b**

This takes us to the days of Joshua. God went before His people and drove out her enemies.

Episode #3 - God picked her and planted her in her land. **80:9-11**

Once God brought Israel to her land, He blessed it. He saw to it that the land was clear; roots of crops went deep; the land was filled with blessings; the mountains were covered with a shadow, which means things were not baking in the sun like a desert. God caused the trees to grow.

In **verse 11** we learn that the land stretched from the sea to the river. God did not just give them a few inches of land; He gave them a massive amount. This is a reference to the Promised Land that will one day stretch from the Euphrates to the Mediterranean to the Nile.

During the days of David and Solomon, God's people enjoyed life in a prosperous land. God had done that for them and Asaph is reminding them of that.

PART #4 – Asaph reminded God what He was doing in the present. **80:12-13**

At the time Asaph was writing this Psalm, God was not blessing Israel; in fact, He was causing negative things to happen to His own people:

Negative #1 - God had broken Israel. **8:12a**

Sometimes you will hear people say God will not do anything negative to His people. He will always love His people just the way they are. Well, there is partial truth to this. God does love His people but God can also get angry with His people and He can break them down.

Negative #2 - God used boars to devour Israel. **80:13a**

The noun “boar” is a metaphor for unclean Gentile nations.

Negative #3 - God uses beasts to feed on Israel. **80:13b**

Everything was feeding on Israel. Beasts are untamable things. God uses beastly animals and beastly people to devour His people. During the Tribulation, God will literally use predatory beasts to carry out His judgment (Revelation 6:8). Beasts will literally kill and eat people when God pours out His wrath.

When your world caves in and you are boxed in, and when you are dry and beaten and devoured, the thing you can do, if you are a child of God, is cry out to Him.

PART #5 – What Asaph asks God to do in the future. **80:14-19**

There are seven specific requests that Asaph asked of God:

Request #1 - He asked God to turn His attention to His people. **80:14a**

Request #2 - He asks God to take care of His people. **80:14b**

Request #3 - He asks God to remember His people exist because of His hand. **80:15**

Request #4 - He asks God to remember His people hurt because of God’s rebuke. **80:16**

Request #5 - He asks God to put His right hand of blessing on His people. **80:17**

Request #6 - He asks God to restore His people. **80:19a**

Request #7 - He asks God to favor His people. **80:19b**

If God would do these things for His people, who were so low, then His people would respond in two ways:

(Response #1) - They would not turn away from Him again. **80:18a**

When we have done things to anger God and God turns His anger to blessing, we need to learn a lesson and the lesson is—don't do it again. Don't do again what made God angry.

(Response #2) - They would always call on Him and trust Him. **80:18b**

Sometimes it takes miserable things to bring us to the point where we will call on God and rely on God.

Perhaps it has been a long time since you have sensed God's blessings on your life. Perhaps you have done things that you know are causing this. Go to God and pour it all out to Him. Once again His blessings will shine in your life.