

Psalm 80:1-19
The Hope of a Future Restoration

Introduction: 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. But Asaph reassured his readers that there would be such a restoration under the supreme Son of David (called “son of man” in v. 17). (MBC) This seems to be a lament by the southern tribes over the destruction of the northern tribes in 722 BC. The Greek OT title of this psalm mentions “concerning the Assyrian.”

Superscription: *For the choir director. El Shoshannim.* (“Lillies”; cf. Ps. 45, 60, and 69) *Eduth.* (“a testimony”) *Of Asaph. A Psalm.*

1) The northern tribes AS AN ENDANGERED FLOCK—80:1-3

- a) God is the glorious shepherd—80:1
 - i) Pay attention!: ¹ *O Shepherd of Israel* (cf. Gen. 48:15; Ps. 77:20; 78:52), **give ear**, *You who guide Joseph like a flock;*
 - ii) Display your splendor!: *You who are enthroned above the cherubim* (the ark of the covenant in the true temple in Jerusalem or perhaps heaven), **shine forth!**
 - iii) Circumstances do not change the Truth. God **IS** their shepherd.
- b) God is a powerful shepherd—80:2
 - i) ² *Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh*, **stir up** *Your might and* **come** *to save us!*
(1) These are the “Rachel tribes” (Gen. 46:19f)
- c) **First summary—80:3** ³ *O God*, **restore us** and **cause** *Your face* **to shine** *upon us, that we would be saved.*
 - i) Cf. Num. 6:25; smile with favor and blessing

2) The northern tribes AS A SUFFERING PEOPLE by God’s design—80:4-7

- a) Yahweh’s invincible anger—80:4
 - i) ⁴ *O Yahweh God of hosts, how long will You smolder against the prayer of Your people?* (cf. Ps. 79:5; 2 Kings 17:17-18)
- b) Israel’s overwhelming sorrow—80:5
 - i) A steady diet: ⁵ *You have fed them with the bread of tears,*
 - ii) A carefully planned diet: *and You have made them to drink tears in large measure.*
- c) Israel’s humiliating suffering—80:6
 - i) Strife: ⁶ *You set us as an object of strife to our neighbors,*

- (1) Apparently arguing over the spoils found in Israel.
- ii) Ridicule: *and our enemies mock us among themselves.*
- d) **Second summary, name of God expanded:** ⁷ *O God of hosts, restore us and cause Your face to shine upon us, that we might be saved.*

3) The northern tribes AS A DAMAGED, DEFENSELESS VINE by God's design—80:8-19

- a) God's **past** work on their behalf—80:8-13
 - i) The initial work in history—80:8-9
 - (1) The exodus: ⁸ *You removed a vine from Egypt; You drove out the nations and then You planted it.*
 - (a) A familiar illustration: Gen. 49:22; Is. 5:1-7; 27:2-6; Jer. 2:21; 12:10; Ezek. 15:1-8; 19:10-14; Hos. 10:1
 - (2) The settlement: ⁹ *You cleared the ground before it, and it took deep root and filled the land.*
 - ii) The dominance under David and Solomon—80:10-11
 - (1) Benefit to others: ¹⁰ *The mountains were covered with its shadow, and the cedars of God with its boughs.*
 - (2) Expansion and dominance: ¹¹ *It sent out its branches to the (Mediterranean) sea and its shoots to the (Euphrates) River.*
- b) God's **present** work—80:12-13 (God appears to have withdrawn His protection, they seem defenseless)
 - i) ¹² *Why have You broken down its hedges, so that all who pass that way pick its fruit?*
 - ii) ¹³ *A (unclean) boar from the forest devours it and whatever moves (insects?) in the field feeds on it.*
- c) God's desired **future** work—80:14-18
 - i) God's sovereignty—80:14-15
 - (1) ¹⁴ *O God of hosts, return now, we beseech You; look down from heaven and see, and visit this vine,*
 - (2) ¹⁵ *Even the sapling which Your right hand has planted, and on the son whom You have strengthened for Yourself.*
 - ii) The present condition of the northern tribes—80:16
 - (1) ¹⁶ *It is burned with fire, it is cut down; they perish at the rebuke of Your face.*
 - iii) The King and the return—80:17-18
 - (1) The Messiah: ¹⁷ *Let Your hand be upon the man of Your right hand, upon the son of man (Son of Man?, cf. Dan. 7:13) whom You made strong for Yourself.*
 - (a) Cf. Ps. 110:1; Heb. 1:3; 8:1; 10:12
 - (b) "Right hand"; an echo of Benjamin ("son of my right hand")?

- (2) National salvation: ¹⁸ *Then we shall not turn back from You; revive us, and we will call upon Your name.*
- (3) Arnold Fruchtenbaum states: This is none other than Jesus the Messiah who has been sitting at the right hand of God the Father ever since the ascension from the Mount of Olives after He was rejected by Israel. Only by faith in the Son of Man can Israel be regenerated. Only by calling upon the name of the Lord can Israel be saved spiritually (vv. 18–19). Only by the return of the Son of Man can Israel be saved physically.
- iv) Later prophets build on Asaph's use of the vine imagery, interpreting his writing in a straightforward/literal manner:
- (1) 755-710 BC: Hosea 10:1
 - (2) 740-680 BC: Isaiah 5:1-7
 - (3) 627-570 BC: Jeremiah 2:21
 - (4) 593-570 BC: Ezekiel 15:1-8; 17:8; 19:10
- v) Jesus teaches on the vine of Israel in Matt. 21:33-46.
- vi) The Apostle Paul builds on this message of hope
- (1) Asaph's prayer for restoration and salvation aligns with God's teaching through Paul in Romans 9-11.
- d) **Third summary, name of God expanded further:** ¹⁹ *O Yahweh God of hosts (cf. v. 4), **restore us**; **cause** Your face **to shine** upon us, that we might be saved.*

4) Things to remember:

- a) This gives us **guidance**: it shows us that we can certainly read the OT literally/normally/in a straightforward manner, just like the prophets.
- b) This gives us **hope**: if God will do this for the nation of Israel, we can be certain He will fulfill His promises for us as well.