

Psalm 79:1-13

A Psalm of Asaph

“O God, the heathen are come into thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled; thy have laid Jerusalem on heaps. The dead bodies of thy servants have they given to be meat unto the fowls of the heaven, the flesh of thy saints unto the beasts of the earth. Their blood have they shed like water round about Jerusalem; and *there was* none to bury *them*. We are become a reproach to our neighbours, a scorn and derision to them that are round about us. How long, LORD? wilt thou be angry for ever? shall thy jealousy burn like a fire? Pour out thy wrath upon the heathen that have not known thee, and upon the kingdoms that have not called upon thy name. For they have devoured Jacob, and laid waste his dwelling place. O remember not against us former iniquities: let thy tender mercies speedily prevent [*precede*] us: for we are brought very low. Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name: and deliver us, and purge away our sins, for thy name’s sake. Wherefore should the heathen say, *Where is their God?* let him be known among the heathen in our sight *by* the revenging of blood of thy servants *which is* shed. Let the sighing of the prisoner come before thee; according to the greatness of thy power preserve thou those that are appointed to die; and render unto our neighbours sevenfold into their bosom their reproach, wherewith they have reproached thee, O Lord [*Adonai*]. So we thy people and sheep of thy pasture will give thee thanks for ever: we will shew forth thy praise to all generations.”

The Fall Of Jerusalem

First Four Verses, The Lamentation

“Psalm 79, it tells us it’s a Psalm of Asaph. Now we’re told in Chronicles Asaph was a Seer, he was a prophet. Again, wrote more than most of the, go through a long list of eleven or twelve names of people, Jonah, you know, Zephaniah, ah, Zechariah, you go through Peter, James, Jude. He wrote more than a whole long list of authors that we know, 12 Psalms that are at least ascribed to him. Question is, is some of it Asaphian, his lineage wrote this, because this Psalm 79 seems to be in light of

the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians. Or is this Asaph as a Seer, prophet, looking down through the years and writing something that will happen after he's gone, through the ministry of David into the years of Solomon's dedication of the Temple, sees David bring the Ark up to Jerusalem, all the way into the early years of Rehoboam evidently, and Jeroboam. So, remarkable man. This Psalm is a picturing no doubt the destruction of the Temple, ah, that would be under Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar. Ah, this Psalm is read every Friday as Shabbat, the Sabbath begins in Israel, at the Wailing Wall, every Friday all year long, this 79th Psalm is read at the Wailing Wall Friday evening as Sabbath begins. It is a Psalm that speaks of despair, but there is hope in the despair. Verse 1 speaks of defilement, verse 2 speaks of death, verse 4 speaks of derision, verse 7 speaks of devouring, in the early part of the Psalm all things seem lost. But there's a quiet confidence throughout the Song, the writer, you know, there's a quiet confidence in the LORD. So, certainly in our lives this would be a song we'd sing when everything just seems when you say, you know, one of those days when nothing else could go wrong and it does, it goes deeper than you think it should go. This is a song that would be sung, first four verses kind of give us the lamentation, it is set forth, it says **"O God, the heathen are come into thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled; they have laid Jerusalem on heaps."** (verse 1) if you've seen pictures of the Philippines lately or of the destruction during Hurricane Sandy, he just sees Jerusalem laid waste, I like that. He says **"The dead bodies of thy servants have they given to be meat unto the fowls of the heaven, the flesh of thy saints unto the beasts of the earth."** (verse 2) He sees this terrible wasting, destruction. **"Their blood have they shed like water round about Jerusalem; and there was none to bury them."** (verse 3) and that's no doubt poetic, but Josephus tells us when Titus Vespasian surrounded and slaughtered Jerusalem when he finally broke through, the blood ran deep enough in some of the streets of Jerusalem that it came up into the front steps into the front door of houses and put some of the fires out in the fireplaces. That's how deep the blood ran in places, Josephus tells us. So, certainly this is poetic, it's a picture, but hard to tell exactly what the Psalmist is seeing in regards to reality, **"Their blood have they shed like water round about Jerusalem; and there was none to bury them."** the bodies piled high. **"We are become a reproach to our neighbours, a scorn and derision to them that are round about us."** (verse 4) *'LORD, we claimed you as our God, and now these*

surrounding nations are looking out, and we're a derision, we're a scorn, they're saying 'You must be kidding, Jehovah's their God, who wants Jehovah as their God? Look what's happening there.' ***"How long, LORD? wilt thou be angry for ever? shall thy jealousy burn like a fire?"*** (verse 5) The first four verses describing the despair, the lamentation. Verse 5, always the best way to respond, the prayer begins now, it goes now, it goes throughout the rest, verse 13 is kind of an epilog, verse 13.

The Prayer Begins, When We're Brought Very Low, The Answer Is To Look Very High

But now there's a prayer that begins to move forward, ***"How long, LORD? wilt thou be angry for ever? shall thy jealousy burn like fire?"*** (verse 5) you ever pray that? You might use different words, I'm sure you have. ***"How long, LORD? wilt thou be angry for ever? shall thy jealousy burn like fire? Pour out thy wrath upon the heathen that have not known thee, and upon the kingdoms that have not called upon thy name."*** (verses 5-6) He's facing, in what he sees the same problem Habakkuk does when the LORD said, ***'If I told you what I was going to do, and I'm bringing up the Babylonians,'*** and he says, ***'LORD, how can you do that, they're worse than we are? How can you use them to do that, they're worse than we are?'*** and the LORD has to go back and say ***'But the light that you had, you've sinned against, the nation has had greater light that has been given by God,'*** you know, priority, grace has been extended, ***'Israel has sinned more than the Babylonians have sinned.'*** Now the problem is, as often, in the Old Testament, when God uses a heathen or pagan or unbelieving nation, they worshipped idols, and their worship was terrible too. It was degrading, sacrifice of children and things. So when God used a foreign power to come and judge Israel, often their judgment was far more severe, and God had to say to them, ***'You've gone way up and beyond, you know, I've led you in here to do this, but you have extended a cruelty that betrays your very nature,'*** that God would deal with, with the nation he used to chasten Israel. The Psalmist is saying here ***'How can this be? I'm mean, don't let this, you know, they don't worship on your name, judge them,'*** ***"For they have devoured Jacob, and laid waste his dwelling."*** (verse 7) ***'LORD, they're worse than us,'*** ***"O remember not against us former iniquities: let thy tender mercies speedily prevent***

us: for we are brought very low.” (verse 8) now we’ve all prayed that, haven’t we? Remember not. God can’t forget, or he wouldn’t be God. But he can choose not to remember, that’s completely different. He tells us **‘your sins and your iniquities will I remember no more,’** that’s a choice. He can’t forget, but he can choose not to remember. **“O remember not against us former iniquities:”** because Israel [Judah here, Israel was gone by this time, historically] had plunged themselves into idolatry, that’s why God brings the Babylonians to judge them, after warning, and warning and warning for centuries. He finally says **‘You want idols? I’m going to take you to the land of idols, you’re going to be sick of idols.’** He says to the nation in Ezekiel, **‘Alright, you want to be in spiritual adultery? You’re cheating on me, you know, another nation, I’m going to bind you over to your adulteresses, and you’re going to be bound there until you’re sick of it.’** This is the idea, God is handing them to that, and they’re praying now, realizing you know, the point that they’re at, as we often do when we end up in a mess, and realize we’ve got ourselves involved in something that we shouldn’t have. **“O remember not against us former iniquities: let thy tender mercies speedily prevent us” “meet us” “for we are brought very low.” (verse 8)** the idea is, **‘Let us, instead of encountering your judgment, don’t remember our former iniquities,’** “let thy tender mercies” literally in the Hebrew says **“meet us”** and encounter, **‘let your tender mercies meet us,’** “for we are brought very low.” And the Psalmist now setting the example that when we’re brought very low, you know, the answer is to look very high. And that’s what he’s doing, he’s lifted his head as he’s crying. Look at in **verse 9, “Help us, O God of our salvation,”** though it doesn’t seem like that, with everything falling down around us, **“Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name: and deliver us, and purge away our sins, for thy name’s sake.” ‘LORD, not for us, things have gotten so bad, we’ve been dealt with, this is your reputation that’s at stake now.’ “deliver us, and purge away our sins”** look, **“for thy name’s sake.” (verse 9)** So I love this, **‘Remember not our former iniquities, let your tender mercies meet us, LORD, in this pilgrimage, let us encounter your tender mercies, let us, let that be the crux of this. You’re glory is at stake, LORD, so purge away our sins,’** it’s a word of atonement, and I’m so thankful he’s done that for us, by the way, he’s purged away our sins.

Why Should The Heathen Be Saying 'Where Is Your God?'

“Wherefore should the heathen say, Where *is* their God? let him be known among the heathen in our sight *by* the revenging of the blood of thy servants *which is shed.*” (verse 10) ‘Where *is* their God?’ that’s what they were doing, during the Babylonian invasion, what they did is they perceived that Jehovah had been defeated. And when you were in these ancient battles, another nation, if they came in and defeated you, they believed that their god then was stronger than your God, that’s why you were defeated, you know, that’s why the Philistines would take the Ark of the Covenant and put it in the temple of Dagon, because they perceived that Dagon was more powerful than Jehovah, and if that wasn’t true, they couldn’t have defeated the Israelites. And here the Babylonians felt the same thing, took all the treasures from the Temple and took them back to Babylon up in Nebuchadnezzar’s treasure house. Remember, because Daniel was called in to the party, and they were bringing out the goblets and so forth from the Temple, and the handwriting came on the wall at Belshazzar’s feast. He says **‘why should the heathen, the unbelievers say Where is their God? that’s what they’re saying LORD, they’re perceiving this wrong.’ **“let him be known among the heathen in our sight *by* the revenging of the blood of they servants *which is shed.*” (verse 10b)** you know, and again, as a, I think as a Seer, looking down, there is something that never ends relative to that idea. At the end of the Age, in Revelation chapter 16, describing as it comes to the Battle of Armageddon, the vials of God’s wrath being poured out, it says the angels say **‘Thou art righteous, which art and wast, that shall be, because thou hast judged, for they have shed the blood of the saints and the prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink, for they are worthy.’** the heaven is saying **‘You are righteous to do this.’** His cry here is, **‘LORD,’** **“let it be known among the heathen in our sight *by* the revenging of the blood of thy servants *which is shed.*”** There’s something steady about this in every age. **“Let the sighing”** the Hebrew word is **“groaning of the prisoner come before thee;”** I think of our friend in Iran that we constantly pray for there, in the prison, **“Let the groaning of the prisoner come before thee; according to the greatness of thy power preserve thou those that are appointed to die; and render unto our neighbours sevenfold into their bosom their reproach, wherewith they have reproached thee, O Lord.”****

(verses 11-12) the idea is the enemy, the heathen nations that are around them. ***'It wasn't just us they destroyed, they laid your Temple waste, they've torn down the holy things in the sanctuary, they've mocked you, they've perceived that you're defeated and they're stronger than you are, LORD, they've reproached you, O Lord.'*** So, he asks for God to act. [Pastor Saeed was just set free, by the way, Pastor Joe's and Calvary Chapel Philadelphia's prayers were answered!]

Epilogue: In Spite Of All That's Happened, We're Your Sheep, We'll Give You Praise, This Is Not How It Ends

So even when all things seem lost, there's this quiet confidence, ***'no, this can't be the end, this isn't the way it ends, it can't end this way.'*** So, epilogue, **verse 13**, ***"So we thy people and sheep of thy pasture will give thee thanks for ever: we will shew forth thy praise to all generations."*** Two things, ***"we will give thee thanks for ever"***, so he knows it can't continue this way, ***"and we will shew forth thy praise"*** notice, ***"to all generations."*** So the epilogue said, ***'This is bad, Lord, everything's falling apart, it's come down on our heads, and Lord we're crying out to you. It can't end this way, that you look mocked, that you look like you're not really God, that the pagan nations around us are mocking you, tearing down everything holy about you. Yea, Lord, we've deserved this, we got way off track, we got worldly, we got carnal, we were involved. So Lord, don't remember our iniquities, let us meet on the road here with your tender mercies, Lord, let that happen, and purge away our sins. And then Lord, deal with the nations that are mocking you, that are defying you, that are saying 'Where's your God? He's not a real God,' Lord, deal with that. Because in the final analysis it's your glory, and your name's at stake. And we believe, in the end, we're your people, we're the sheep of your pasture, and we're going to give you thanks forever, and we're going to show forth your praise to all generations.'*** Great end to the Psalm. The next one, this last verse of Psalm 79, it kind of leads into the next one, because the next Psalm, Psalm 80, is a prayer for restoration, it's a prayer for recovery.

Psalm 80:1-19

To the chief Musician upon Shoshannim-eduth, A Psalm of Asaph

“Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock; thou that dwellest *between* the cherubims, shine forth. Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh stir up thy strength, and come *and* save us. Turn us again, O God, and cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved. O LORD God of hosts, how long wilt thou be angry against the prayer of thy people? Thou feedest them with the bread of tears; and givest them tears to drink in great measure. Thou makest us a strife unto our neighbours: and our enemies laugh among themselves. Turn us again, O God of hosts, and cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved. Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt: thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it. Thou preparest *room* before it, and didst cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land. The hills were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof *were like* the goodly cedars. She sent out her boughs unto the sea, and her branches unto the river. Why hast thou *then* broken down her hedges, so that all they which pass by the way do pluck her? The boar out of the wood doth waste it, and the wild beast of the field doth devour it. Return, we beseech thee, O God of hosts: look down from heaven, and behold, visit this vine; and the vineyard which thy right hand hath planted, and the branch *that* thou madest strong for thyself. *It is* burned with fire, *it is* cut down: they perish at the rebuke of thy countenance. Let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand, upon the son of man *whom* thou madest strong for thyself. So will not we go back from thee: quicken us, and we will call upon thy name. Turn us again, O LORD God of hosts, cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.”

Introduction: ‘Restore Us, O Shepherd Lead Us’

You know, whatever you’re in, you’re in recovery, a restoration process, this is a great song, asking God to restore his favor. The last verse in the Psalm before, it says **“we are the sheep of your pasture”**, it begins Psalm 80 by saying **“Give ear, O Shepherd”** crying out. It’s sung it says, it’s “A Psalm of Asaph, To the chief Musician” which meant it was sung publicly, at the Temple. And “upon Shoshannim” which is “lilies,” which means it’s a Passover, it’s a Spring song, part of the Spring festivals when it was sung, when there’s hope, the earth is coming back to life again. And it’s broken down by three pauses. If you look at verse 3, after there is a cry **‘LORD, restore your favour,’** **verse 3** says **“Turns us again, O God, and cause thy face to**

shine; and we shall be saved.” Then in **verse 7**, he comes into the next point, look, he says **“Turn us again, O God of hosts, and cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.”** And then **verse 19**, the last refrain, **“Turn us again, O LORD God of hosts, cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.”** That’s the way the Psalm is broken down, through those three requests, **‘God, turn us again.’** The Hebrew is **“restore us O LORD.”** And in their mind, that is an act of God. For them to be restored, he’s the one that has to do the turning, he has to turn them back again. He is described throughout the Psalm as a Shepherd, and I love that description of the LORD, personally, because I know the shepherd is never dependant on the IQ of the sheep. If you ever watch a shepherd with his flock, this is a dead give-away. The Shepherd is not dependant on the IQ of the sheep, which takes tremendous pressure off of me and off of you. If the heart is willing to follow, he leads, the Shepherd will lead. If the sheep will follow, they will be led. So the ball is in his court. You know, whenever I say *‘Lord, where do I go from here? I don’t know what’s happening, I don’t know how to get there.’* If our heart is willing to follow, he leads. So he’s portrayed as a shepherd and as a husbandman, one whose keeping the vineyard in this Psalm, and certainly the Husbandman is not dependent on the IQ of the vine, that goes without saying. So, restoration depends on the LORD turning his people or restoring them back to himself. And the cry here acknowledges that. So, the first three verses say **‘LORD, restore your favour to us, you know,’** in light of the Psalm before this, **‘we’ve gotten off track, LORD, we’re praying that you recover us, we’ve gone into sin, don’t you remember that? We were trapped in all of this stuff, LORD, you’re the one who can take us out of this.’** Remarkable, and our friend Asaph here really sees some beautiful things.

The One Who Dwells Between The Cherubims, Our Shepherd Leads Us

It says, **“Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock; thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth.”** (verse 1) **‘Let your glory come forth,’** the One who dwells between the cherubims, you know, from the Garden of Eden, the cherubim there is set forth to guard the way to the Tree of Life with a flaming sword. Until the encampment of the tribes around Israel, the main tribes that camped around Israel, on their banner was the face of a man, the face of an ox, the face of a lion, and the face of an

eagle, the four faces of the cherubim. Inside the Holy of holies, the Veil in the Tabernacle and the Temple, to find your way into the Holy of holies of the Holy Place, there was the veil with the cherubim embroidered on it. Over the top of the Mercy Seat was the cherubim touching wings. So all through their history, all the way into the scene in the Book of Revelation, where the cherubim are around the throne of God, crying **'Holy! Holy! Holy! Lord God Almighty, who was, who is and who is to come!'** and then they all fall down, and everybody does. There's complete order. You know, it's funny, when you watch the worship in heaven, again, there's order. In heaven, there's not, everybody worshipping, and one person goes *'Hey! Hey! Hey!'* that's not going on there, and everybody would turn around and look at that person in heaven. You know, there's not like one cherubim falls down, and the rest of them all stand up. There's not one person dancing. And some people when they do that in church, they draw more attention to themselves than others, because they can't dance and they're dancing. And it becomes, instead of worshipping...and some people can dance, and you like to watch them, for a different reason, but the idea is, sometimes when you talk to a person like that, they say back to you *'You're grieving the Spirit.'* Well in heaven, if you read Revelation 4 and 5, where everything is perfectly in order, and perfectly spiritual, and Jesus is there, and the sevenfold spirit is there, and everything is there in its fullness, worship is ordered, there's a beautiful order. Because everybody at the same time wants to say **'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain and has redeemed us by his blood, from every nation, kindred and tongue,'** and so forth. You listen to what's happening there, and all of the voices are saying the same thing at the same time, everybody falls down at the same time, everybody says the same thing, it's wonderful, the spirituality of it is off the charts. You can do whatever you want with that, it's just for your information, about the One who dwells between the cherubim. **"shine forth. Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh stir up thy strength, and come and save us." (verse 2)** Now the picture here is, Israel in the wilderness journey, as they followed the Tabernacle, the pillar of cloud would move and the camp would move, and the tribes that were behind the Tabernacle were Manasseh, Benjamin, and then Ephraim on the outside. So, they were the ones who followed. You know, Judah was in the front and moved forward, you know it was interesting, the way the camp was, but these were always the tribes directly behind the Tabernacles as it moved. And there's a picture here of God, they call him, they say he's a Shepherd here, leading his people like a flock, and then he gives you a

picture of the tribes that followed the Tabernacle as it moved in its journeys. And the idea is **'LORD, you're before, you're going ahead of Ephraim, Benjamin, Manasseh,'** **"stir up thy strength, and come and save us [margin: come for salvation to us]."** (verse 2) Wonderfully, crying for salvation. And he ends the first refrain saying, **"Turn us again, O God, and cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved."** (verse 3) literally **"Restore us, O God, cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved."** **'LORD, this is your work, do this,'** crying out to the LORD, understanding after the sin of the nation, what has to take place in regards to restoration.

Israel Was God's Vine In God's Vineyard

Verse 4 now, he says **"O LORD God of hosts, how long wilt thou be angry against the prayer of thy people? Thou feedest them with the bread of tears; and givest them tears to drink in great measure."** (verses 4-5) We know the answer to this, how long, 70-years, we know that, from the time Nebuchadnezzar carried them away. Because for 490 years, Israel had not celebrated the Land-Sabbath, had not kept the Sabbath of the land [that's what he means by not celebrating the Sabbath], every seven years the land was supposed to rest for a year. And they had not kept the Sabbatical year, so by the time God brings Nebuchadnezzar, Israel owes the land 70 years of rest. So God, **"how long wilt thou be angry against the prayer of thy people?"** he's not angry, he's settling up, he's setting accounts here, he carries away the people of God for 70 years, that's how long. **"Thou feedest them with the bread of tears; and givest them tears to drink in great measure. Thou makest us a strife unto our neighbours: and our enemies laugh among themselves."** (verses 5-6) the cry again, **"Turn us again, O God of hosts, and cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved."** (verse 7) I mean, it's God's favour, when his face shines upon you, **"and cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved."** **'LORD, let your blessing be bestowed upon us,'** and now he begins to talk about what prosperity, what that blessing looks like. He says, **"Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt: thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it."** (verse 8) he's rehearsing the history of Israel, **"thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it."** **'LORD, your choice vine.'** **"Thou preparedst room before it, and didst cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land."** (verse 9) it took deep root, it spread out, **"The hills were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof were**

like the goodly cedars. She sent out her boughs unto the sea, and her branches unto the river.” (verses 10-11) the picture is of Israel coming into the land, prospering, spreading out, but the inability to handle prosperity, that God has to deal with them again. Now look, interestingly prophetically as we look at God, the Husbandman, and Jesus says his Father’s the Husbandman, **John 15, ‘You are the true vine,’** that’s because in the Old Testament of old, Israel is “the choice vine.” You find Israel in three figures, the vine, the fig tree, the olive tree. We’ve been grafted into the olive tree, it says in Romans 11. In the Old Testament, under the Hebrew economy, Israel is God’s choice vine, God’s vineyard, that he labours over, labours over, labours over, until finally she’s set aside. Presently Israel is the cursed fig tree, that has withered. During the Millennium [the period of the Millennial Kingdom of God on earth] she is the flourishing Olive Tree, you’ll find those pictures. So, as a husbandman, and looking at the history of Israel, the history of Israel in regards to the husbandman is portrayed in the choice vine, the cursed fig tree, and the flourishing olive tree. Those pictures come to life prophetically. But here, **‘You know, you’ve spread out your boughs, look, restore us LORD, be gracious unto us, you brought us out of Egypt, you did this, we spread out our branches, out to the nations, sent our boughs unto the sea and so forth,’**

‘Why Have You Broken Down Her Hedges? Return Please’

and **“Why hast thou then broken down her hedges, so that all they which pass by the way do pluck her?” (verse 12)** picture of adversity, the hedges were the stone walls around the vineyard, **“Why hast thou then broken down her hedges, so that all they which pass by the way do pluck at her?”** you know, picking at her, Israel’s protection gone [this would be Judah, the southern kingdom of Judah, Israel, the ten northern tribes having already been taken permanently out of the land to the north of Judah]. **“The boar out of the wood doth waste it, and the wild beast of the field doth devour it.” (verse 13)** picturing Israel’s enemy as the wild boar, as the wild beast. And now, again, this prayer for recovery. When all seems lost, ultimately, this prayer now, **“Return, we beseech thee, O God of hosts: look down from heaven, and behold, and visit this vine;” (verse 14)** now here’s the interesting thing, now the word is applied to God, it’s literally, King James says **“Return”**, the Hebrew says **“Turn, please,”** it’s very interesting, **“turn,**

please, we beseech thee, O God of hosts:” *“Return, we beseech thee”* is one phrase in the Hebrew. *“Turn, please, God of hosts”* when you want to be recovered, when you want to get your feet back on solid ground, *‘Why are the walls broken down, why all of this? You saved us, you brought us out of Egypt, now it just seems like everything, LORD, everything, I want restoration.’* Three times he’s going to say, *‘Turn us, LORD, restore us, you need to do that in us,’* and he says here, *‘LORD, please turn,’* *“O God of hosts: look down from heaven, and behold, and visit this vine;”* (verse 14) you know, the nation, anybody whose praying that has got things in the right perspective, *‘I’m a sheep, I’m a vine, LORD, you turn, we can’t turn unless you turn, LORD, please turn, O God of armies, of hosts.’* *“look down from heaven, and behold, and visit this vine;”* and the idea is, *‘visit with benefit, to do good.’* *“And the vineyard which thy right hand hath planted, and the branch that thou madest strong for thyself. It is burned with fire, it is cut down: they perish at the rebuke of thy countenance.”* (verses 15-16)

‘LORD, Send Your Messiah, The Son of Man, Revive Us’

Listen, wonderfully, before Asaph the Seer now, the prophet, *“Let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand, upon the son of man whom thou madest strong for thyself.”* (verse 17) isn’t that interesting? *“Let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand, upon the son of man whom thou madest strong for thyself.”* The Psalm is now saying *‘LORD, send the Messiah, for us to recover, you know, we’ll know you’re turned unto us when you send the Messiah, LORD, please do this.’* wonderfully it reminds me of, Solomon picks up on this, in the Book of Proverbs, it says *“Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended, who hath gathered the wind in his fists, who hath bound the waters in a garment, who hath established all the ends of the earth? What is his name, and what is his Son’s name, if thou canst tell?”* *Proverbs chapter 30.* Here it says *“Let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand, upon the son of man whom thou madest strong for thyself.”* (verse 17) Jesus referred to himself as “the son of man,” *“whom thou madest strong for thyself.”* Grammar in verse 18 is important, King James says *“So will not we go back from thee:”* I know that’s King James, isn’t it. Your translation probably says *“Then we will not go back from thee”* like the responsibility is on us, *‘If you do this, then we...’* that’s not what it says. It says *“Let thy hand be*

upon the man of thy right hand, and upon the son of man whom thou madest strong for thyself.” Hebrew reads, “**That we will not go back from thee:**” i.e. *‘the very thing that will cause us not to go back from thee, is you laying your hand on the man of your right hand, bringing forth the son of man, that we will not go back from thee:’* “**quicken us, and we will call upon thy name.**” (verse 18b) Hebrew reads clearly “**Revive us, and we will call on thy name.**” It’s a Divine work, and the Psalmist is realizing, ‘**LORD, this is something you have to do, LORD, you know, you’re the one, turn us,**’ and then again, ‘**turn us, restore us, restore us,**’ and then ‘**Don’t just turn us, you turn to us, this has to happen, LORD, you have to revive us, you have to send the man of your right hand, the son of man, and you need to do that, that we will not turn back from you, that’s what will cause us to ultimately remain faithful.**’ “**Revive us, and we will call upon thy name. Turn us again, O LORD God of hosts, cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved.**” (verses 18b-19) Listen, take note of this, **verse 3** there, the first cry, and this is recovery, begging God to recover, to restore. And often we come to a place in our lives where we need to ask him to do that. Look what it says in **verse 3**, it says, “**Turn us again, O God, and cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.**” **Verse 7**, notice he expands it, he says there “**Turn us again, O God of hosts,**” first it was “**O God**” then it’s “**O God of hosts, and cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.**” In **verse 19**, it’s “**Turn us again,**” and look, “**O LORD God of hosts,**” and every time the appeal is made, the picture, the title of God is more grand and is broader. And the idea is, look, in our pilgrimage, in our failures, in our struggles, has the God you know, become more or becoming less? When the God you walk with is becoming less, you end up under the Babylonians, you end up in a mess. When the God you walk with, even in your failings, is becoming more to you, each time you cry out to him, you’re in the process of restoration, you’re in a process of receiving his grace, you’re in the process receiving all that he’s done through the son of his right hand, the son of man, you know, whose come that we might walk with him. And that should be true, you know the further we go on with the Lord, the more we should know of him. We should be growing in grace, and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, we’re told. And that’s, look, it’s a process, because it says in the ages to come, in Ephesians 2, he’s still going to be revealing, his love and his grace and his mercy will always be infinite, we will always be finite. We will ever be approaching and never arriving. Yet we are being conformed into his image and

likeness, in that process we will always be approaching and never arriving. Because he will always be infinite, we will always be finite. So our journey is not just to a place, it's to an image. And that's why even in the ages to come, you look at the cherubim, and what do they do? When they look up and they see him, they fall down on all four faces, because he blows all four of their minds, mind of a man, mind of the ox, mind of the lion, mind of the eagle, all of their minds get blown, they all fall down, and they say **'Holy! Holy! Holy! Lord God Almighty, who is, who was, and is to come, all things were created for thy...'** they don't say *'do we have to sing the same song again? We've been singing this song forever. Isn't there a new song up here?'* they don't do any of that. If you saw a cherubim, you would fall down. If you saw a cherubim with the six wings and the four faces, if you saw that, Ezekiel goes down when he sees that. If you saw that, you'd probably die of a coronary. When the cherubim look at him, they fall down. Imagine that. When they look at him in his glory, they go down. And they sing the same song, and they don't get tired of singing it. Because every time they look at him they see something they've never seen, because they also are finite, they are created beings, he's uncreated, he's eternal. Heaven, that's why it tells us, it doesn't wear out, it doesn't grow old, you know, inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, that fadeth not away, never wears out, never gets old, we never get tired of it, because it is constantly new, it's unending in his person. His faithfulness is unending, his grace is unending, his love is unending, his forgiveness is unending, what we discover of him is unending. We're just getting started. Wednesday nights, they're going to go on forever. We're just getting started. And then you're going to have the real Bible Teacher, and the real worship leaders, the angels and everything, you know, I'm probably gonna get to play guitar again in heaven [the Kingdom of heaven, which will end up on earth, cf. Revelation 21] and they won't need pastors. But we're just getting started here, and he's saved, you know, you enjoy Communion service worship [or the early New Testament Passover service]? He's saved the best wine till last, until we step into the Kingdom, that's who he is.

Psalm 81:1-16

To the chief Musician upon Gittith, *A Psalm* of Asaph

“Sing aloud unto God our strength: make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob. Take a psalm, and bring hither the

timbrel, the pleasant harp with the psaltery. Blow up the trumpet in the new moon, in the time appointed, on our solemn feast day. [comment: the Feast of Trumpets occurred on the new moon, the only Holy Day to do so, so this is a direct reference to Rosh Hashanah] **For this was a statute for Israel, and a law of the God of Jacob.** [cf. Leviticus 23:24-25, the Holy Days are statutes contained within the Law of God] **This he ordained in Joseph for a testimony, when he went out through the land of Egypt: where I heard a language that I understood not. I removed his shoulder from the burden: his hands were delivered from the pots. Thou calledst in trouble, and I delivered thee; I answered thee in the secret place of thunder: I proved thee at the waters of Meribah. Selah. Hear, O my people, and I will testify unto thee: O Israel, if thou wilt hearken unto me; there shall no strange god be in thee; neither shalt thou worship any strange god. I am the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt: open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it. But my people would not hearken to my voice; and Israel would none of me. So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust: and they walked in their own counsels. Oh that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways! I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned my hand against their adversaries. The haters of the LORD should have submitted themselves unto him: but their time should have endured for ever. He should have fed them also with the finest of the wheat: and with honey out of the rock should I have satisfied thee."**

Introduction: Sung On The Feast Of Trumpets

Psalm 81, we can do this. This is a Psalm again of Asaph, it's written again "to the chief Musician," which means it was sung publicly, it was meant for public worship. It says "upon Gittith," which is the wine press, so there's a lesson here, there's something being ground out, something being squeezed, this is one of what's called the historical Psalms. Historical Psalms all claim lessons. You know, if you don't learn from history, you're doomed to repeat it. God always appeals to his history with his people and says there are lessons in this. Sadly, this is a place like Gethsemane, it's a wine press or an olive press, where things are crushed, because look at the very end. This tells us the sadness of it, because it's missed opportunity, it's a Psalm of what could have been. Look at the last two verses, **"The haters of the LORD should have**

submitted themselves unto him: but their time should have endured for ever. He should have fed them also with the finest of the wheat: and with honey out of the rock should I have satisfied thee." (verses 15-16) So there were haters back then too, not just now. Look, "should have, should have, should have, should have," we're going to read it three times through here, four times. What's God's motive? God had given them the Law, had given them his ordinances, he's given us his Word. It tells us the commandments of the LORD are not grievous, they are safeguards, it's a journey for us, and it's a roadmap, and it tells us how we should walk, and it's an open-book test, a six-grader could take it and pass. A first-grader could take it and pass, a kindergarten kid can read his Bible and pass, it's an open-book test. And it says the reason that God lays out a path for us, is so, he says ***'I want to satisfy you, you don't know what's going to satisfy you, you think 'If I have a little more drugs I'll be satisfied, a little more alcohol I'll be satisfied, one more woman I'll be satisfied, one more man, you know.'*** the woman at the well, Jesus said ***'Go get your husband,'*** she said, ***'I don't have a husband,'*** he said, ***'Yea, your right, you've had five, and the guy you're living with now, he ain't your husband.'*** Because he said, ***'If you'll come to me and drink, I'll give you water where you'll never thirst again.'*** The idea is, the well she was drinking from was the man-well, and she already drank there five times, so she was just hanging out the sixth time, not even married, and Jesus is saying to her, ***'There's something inside of you that no human man can ever satisfy.'*** Wives, let me tell it to you tonight, be easy on your husbands. If they work, and they bring home the bacon, and they bring the family to church, they got a pulse, take it easy on them, because there is no man on earth that is made to satisfy you, there's a man in heaven that has to satisfy you. Because you can go from man to man to man to man to man to man, and end up living with a man, and you're still gonna be thirsty. But what's supposed to satisfy the deepest place in your being, and it isn't a human. The Lord says here, ***'I'd have done this for you, I'd have done this for you, I'd have done this for you, I'd have done this, I would have satisfied you.'*** He knows what's vacant in a human life, he knows the vacuum of the soul, he knows the empty place within us, and he knows what it takes to satisfy us, and it isn't all the things we think if we had, we'd be happy. He knows how to do it. He knows how to make us whole, he created us whole, man turned away, man sinned, he knows how to restore. The lesson, verses 1 to 5, here in a context of a feast, we don't know if it's Passover, Tabernacles [but I do,

because I keep the feasts. It says in verse 3, “Blow the trumpet in the new moon, in the time appointed, on our solemn feast day. For this *was* a statute for Israel, *and* a law of the God of Jacob.” Clue # 1, it’s a feast of **blowing of trumpets**, so it’s the feast of Trumpets. Clue #2, it occurs on **“the new moon.”** Only one feast occurred on a new moon, the Feast of Trumpets, Rosh Hashanah. Clue #3, **it is a statute, a law of God.** The Feast days in Leviticus 23 are statutes in God’s Law, the Feast of Trumpets is one of them. **Leviticus 23:24-25, “Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, In the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall ye have a sabbath, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, an holy convocation. Ye shall do no servile work therein: but ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD.”** so there you have it, it’s the Feast of Trumpets being spoken of in verses 3-4 of Psalm 81.] There is a call to celebrate God’s ordained feasts, God has ordained celebration for us. [Comment: Calvary Chapels understand the prophetic/symbolic meaning of God’s Holy Days given in Leviticus 23, and even here Pastor Joe says they’re commanded, and Calvary Chapels honestly believe the Church Jesus establishes in the Millennial Kingdom of God at his return will be observing both the 7th Day Sabbath and these Holy Days. But for some strange reason they don’t observe them now during the Church Age. I’ve wrestled with this strange dichotomy myself, somewhat explored and explained in some of the links contained in the “About the Author” section of this website (see <http://www.unityinchrist.com/author.htm>).]

“Sing aloud unto God our strength: make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob. Take a psalm, and bring hither the timbrel, the pleasant harp with the psaltery.” (verses 1-2) Listen, things haven’t changed all that much, we’re told in the New Testament, in Ephesians, computer notes here, in the Book of Ephesians it says *‘That we should be speaking to ourselves in psalms and in hymns and in spiritual songs, singing, making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things unto God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.’* Here, he commands them **“Sing aloud unto God our strength: make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob. Take a psalm, and bring hither the timbrel, the pleasant harp with the psaltery. Blow upon the trumpet in the new moon, in the time appointed, on our solemn feast day. For this *was* a statute for Israel, *and* a law of the God of Jacob.” (verses 1-4)** Passover, Tabernacles, we’re not sure [he’s not sure, but those in the Sabbath-keeping Churches of God, and the Messianic Jews, as well as Orthodox Jews are sure. We all know only one

Holy Day of all of them was observed on a new moon, and that was the Feast of Trumpets. See <http://www.unityinchrist.com/calendar/HebrewCalendar.htm>]

The End Of A Nation, A Nation First Dies Spiritually

That's not the point, because God has said, ***'Look, I've set aside time to worship, time to sing, time to sing my praises, time to rejoice, this is what I want for you,'*** ***"For this was a statute for Israel, and a law of the God of Jacob. This he ordained in Joseph for a testimony, when he went out through the land of Egypt: where I heard a language that I understood not."*** (verses 4-5) where it seems the Psalmist is saying ***'where I heard a language I understood not.'*** It's an obscure passage, it seems to be saying ***'When we were in the land of Egypt, there in bondage, we heard a language that we understood not.'*** And then God begins to speak in verse 6 down to verse 10, saying how he relieved them in Egypt. ***"I removed his shoulder from the burden: his hands were delivered from the pots."*** (verse 6) remember under the taskmaster in Egypt? ***"his hands were delivered from the pots. Thou calledst in trouble, and I delivered thee; I answered thee in the secret place of thunder: I proved thee at the waters of Meribah. Selah."*** (verses 6b-7) as they came out, there was power that shook, the mountains shook, ***"I proved thee at the waters of Meribah. Selah."*** (verse 7b) ***'I brought you out of Egypt, I brought out of all that, I brought you into the wilderness, and what did you do, when I took you to a place where you said, 'Wait, there's no water here, we're in the desert.' You began to whine and cry and say 'You brought us out here so that we would die of thirst.'*** And there Moses stood on the rock, and struck the rock, and the water came forth, rivers of water, you're talking about millions of people, rivers of water came forth in the desert, and it was at Meribah, Exodus 17. And God said ***'I proved you there.'*** It wasn't a mistaken, ***'Oh ya, I forgot to bring enough canteens along when I brought you out of Egypt.'*** He said, ***'No, no, this was part of the lessons you were learning, and I proved you there. You cried, you wanted to turn back, I proved you, I tested you there at the waters of Meribah. Selah, think about that,'*** he's saying. ***'In the difficult circumstances in your life, you weren't there and just cast away. I didn't betray you or leave you there or***

abandon you, there was a lesson there. And there was something you learned of me there and my ability to provide in the desert. And even in the worst of circumstances you learn something of me there. Selah, think about that,' he says. **"Hear, O my people, and I will testify unto thee:"** the Hebrew is beautiful, it says **"so let me admonished you"** he's asking something of them. He says **'Think about what I just said, think about the fact, I want you to rejoice in the Feasts and all, and in the journey, when I delivered you, you know, when you were in bondage, I brought you out, and I took you through the ropes, I took you to school, I put you in a place because I wanted to teach you things, Selah.'** So he says, **"Hear, O my people, and I will testify unto thee:"** the Hebrew reads, **"so let me"** he's requesting, **"so let me admonish you, O Israel, if thou wilt hearken unto me;"** **'let me admonish you,'** God says, **'I want to admonish you, I want to challenge you, I did there at Meribah, I have lessons for you, I know what will satisfy the deepest place in your soul, let me admonish you, let me correct you, let me speak to you,'** God's asking like a father, and he says, **"if"** there's the word you should circle in your Bible, **"if thou wilt hearken unto me;"** then, he says, **"there shall no strange god be in thee; neither shalt thou worship any strange god."** (verses 8-9) **'If you'll listen to me, let me admonish you, let me teach you, no strange gods are going to be in the picture.'** **"I am the LORD thy God which brought thee out of the land of Egypt: open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it."** (verse 10) then you'll have something to say. **"But my people would not hearken to my voice; and Israel would none of me."** (verse 11) it's hard to imagine. And look, people say *'Hey man, if I could see a miracle, if an angel would appear in my bedroom that would strengthen my faith, if just you'd let a feather fall down in my bedroom that would be enough. No, if I could have seen the pillar of fire, if I could have seen the Red Sea part, if I could have seen darkness over the land of Egypt, if I could have seen, if I could have seen, if I could have seen,'* they saw all of that, and as soon as they get out in the wilderness they make a golden calf and turn away from the LORD. **The Lesson: A change has to come from the inside through the written Word of God and the Holy Spirit. It doesn't come from outward experience.** Because they had outward experience beyond what any of us could ever imagine. He said, **"But my people would not hearken to my voice; and Israel would none of me."** (verse 11) Look what he says, **"So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust: and they walked in**

their own counsels.” (verse 12) This is a picture, sadly, of the course of the end of a nation. God says, you know, it gets to the point where they don't want anything to do with me. I feel deeply concerned about my children and my grandchildren [ditto with me, both adoptive and real children, and their children, ranging in age from 1 to 9 years old], because in our nation, we've come to the point where many are raising that voice, *'I don't want anything to do with him, I don't want to hear about that morality, I don't want to hear about Creation, I don't want no Nativity scenes, I don't want to hear nothing about that, I don't want to hear anything about it,'* **“Israel would have none of me.”** God says, **“So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust: and they walked in their own counsels.” (verse 12)** Look at what's going on in the country, look at statistics of morality and broken families and divorce and alcoholism and drugs, and now of course, now we have legalized marijuana for leisure, recreational marijuana, imagine that. **“I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust: and they walked in their own counsels.”** A nation dies first spiritually. When a nation begins to die spiritually, then a nation begins to die morally. And when a nation begins to die morally, a nation dies physically, physically. 84 million abortions since Roe vs. Wade. It means if you're under 20 years old, half your generation never made it out of the womb. You're one of two that survived. The most dangerous place in America, for an American, is not Afghanistan, it's not Iraq, the most dangerous place for an American is in his mother's womb. Half of Americans gone by the time they get out. Can you imagine that? And look, if you're here this evening and you've had an abortion, there is forgiveness in Christ. If you come to Jesus, he cleanses you, he forgives you, and you have a little one waiting for you in eternity. OK? this is not about condemnation. It's just about the course of our nation, you know it's about where we're going. You know, we want to save the Spotted Owl, we want to save the Blue Whale, we want to save the trees, but we're still aborting a million babies a year. **“I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust: and they walked in their own counsels.”** a nation dies spiritually, it dies morally, it dies physically.

*'O That My People Had Harkened Unto Me'---Look
What He Would Have Done For Them*

“Oh that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways!” (verse 13) hard for us to imagine the passion in that verse from the heart of God. **“Oh that my**

people had hearkened unto me, *and Israel had walked in my ways! I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned my hand against their adversaries.*” isn’t it interesting how he refers to them, **“The haters of the LORD should have submitted themselves unto him: but [so that] their time should have endured for ever.”** (verses 13-15) He calls them haters here, back here he says, *‘my people would not hearken unto my voice, Israel would have none of me, they don’t want to have anything to do with me.’* Here he says *‘they’re the haters of the LORD, they should have submitted themselves unto me, and their time, they should have endured forever, you know, generation to generation.’* **“He should have fed them also with the finest of the wheat: and with honey out of the rock should I have satisfied thee.”** (verse 16) God had, in his intentions for them, to subdue their enemies, to give them the best, he says, and he says *‘and I should have satisfied thee.’* That’s what God says, in the final analysis. *‘What I wanted, I wanted to satisfy you.’*

In Closing

Now look, here’s the wonderful thing, you know, this evening, wherever we are personally. We can say *‘Lord, restore me, Lord, I need recovery, Lord, turn my heart back to you,’* three times, *‘Turn my heart back to you, turn my heart back to you, turn my heart back to you.’* And each time the Psalmist asks that, it’s **“Turn my heart back to you, O my God, Turn my heart back to you O God of hosts, Turn my heart back to you O LORD God of hosts.”** God is getting bigger and bigger and bigger. And he says, *‘You know, I noticed then, that when you turned to us, LORD, it’s going to be in the context of sending, put your hand on the man of your right hand, the Son of man, that we will no longer turn away, revive us LORD.’* it’s in the context of Christ. And the Lord says, *‘You know what? I wanted you to rejoice, I wanted you to worship, I’ve given you Feasts, this was something that was to be a normal part of your life, it’s what I had for you. I took you out of the land of Egypt, and I set you free. I took the burden off your shoulder, I took you out of bondage, I did all of these things for you,’* and he said, *‘it just came to the place where you don’t want anything to do with me, you don’t want to hear my voice. If you would have hearkened,’* he said, *‘I would have blessed you,’* he said, *‘I begged you and said, ‘Let, please, let me admonish you, and you don’t want anything to do with it.’* and he says, *‘So I gave them over to the lust of*

their own heart, which was their own counsel, and it was the end of them.' and he said, ***'Because my hearts' desire was to subdue every enemy you have, every enemy you have, I paid for you in the blood of my Son. No weapon that's formed against you should prosper. I want to subdue every destructive force in your life. I want to bless you, I want to give you the choice, this is the way it should work, this is what I want for you.'*** And it does in our lives, we're under the new covenant not the old covenant. But he says ***'My final goal in all of this is to satisfy you, the deepest part of you, come unto me and drink, and I'll give you water so you'll never thirst again,'*** Jesus said. ***'I know what it takes to satisfy a human being and a human heart, and it isn't the things that are at the top of your list. And as long as you make those things the things that drive your life, you're living in a idolatry. But if you let me admonish you, if you hearken to my Word, if you let me lead you in worship, praise, walking through this world, I know what you need to satisfy the deepest place in your life.'*** Isn't that amazing how God, in his main concern, is not an egotistical thing ***'Well, boy, I feel insecure because none of you will give me the praise I deserve,'*** there's none of that going on. He says ***'I sit in my glory, and in my power, and in my place. And my longing is to satisfy that empty hole in every one of you, that's been there since Adam's sin in the Garden of Eden. I know what I created you to be, you're not that, you're a mess now. I know how to fix that, and I know how to satisfy the deepest place in your being,'*** such a loving Father, we have such a wonderful God. Not wanting to restrict us, that's what everybody thinks, you know, that he's the *Thou Shalt Not* God, no, no, that's not who he is at all, is he? Let's stand, let's pray, we'll have the musicians come...[transcript of a connective expository sermon on Psalm 79:1-13; Psalm 80:1-19 and Psalm 81:1-16, given by Pastor Joe Focht, Calvary Chapel of Philadelphia, 13500 Philmont Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19116]