
For the Chief Musician. To the tune of "The Lilies of the Covenant." A Psalm by Asaph.

PSALM 80: 1 Hear us, Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock, you who sit above the cherubim, shine out.

A prayer for the captives, Psa 80:1-3. A description of their miseries, Psa 80:4-7. Israel compared to a vineyard, Psa 80:8-14. Its desolate state, and a prayer for its restoration, Psa 80:15-19.

The title: see Psalm 45, Psa 60:1-12, and 69, where every thing material is explained. This Psalm seems to have been written on the same occasion with the former. One ancient MS. in the public library in Cambridge writes the eightieth and the seventy-ninth all as one Psalm; the subject-matter is precisely the same - was made on the same occasion, and probably by the same author.

Verse 1

O Shepherd of Israel - The subject continued from the last verse of the preceding Psalm.

Leadest Joseph - Israel and Joseph mean here the whole of the Jewish tribes; all were at this time in captivity; all had been the people of the Lord; all, no doubt, made supplication unto him now that his chastening hand was upon them; and for all the psalmist makes supplication.

That dwellest between the cherubims - It was between the cherubim, over the cover of the ark, called the propitiatory or mercy-seat, that the glory of the Lord, or symbol of the Divine Presence, appeared. It is on this account that the Lord is so often said to dwell between the cherubim. Of these symbolical beings there is a long and painful account, or system of conjectures, in Parkhurst's Hebrew Lexicon, of about twenty quarto pages, under the word כַּרְבַּב carab.

Shine forth - Restore thy worship; and give us such evidences of thy presence now, as our fathers had under the first tabernacle, and afterwards in the temple built by Solomon.

PSALM 80: 2 Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh, stir up your might! Come to save us!

Verse 2

Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh - It is supposed that these three tribes represent the whole, Benjamin being incorporated with Judah, Manasseh comprehending the country beyond Jordan, and Ephraim all the rest - Dodd.

PSALM 80: 3 Turn us again, God. Cause your face to shine, and we will be saved.

Verse 3

Turn us again - השיבנו hashibenu, convert or restore us. There are four parts in this Psalm, three of which end with the above words; see the third, seventh, and nineteenth verses; and one with words similar, Psa 80:14.

PSALM 80: 4 LORD God of Armies, How long will you be angry against the prayer of your people?

PSALM 80: 5 You have fed them with the bread of tears, and given them tears to drink in large measure.

Verse 5

Thou feedest them with the bread of tears - They have no peace, no comfort, nothing but continual sorrow.

In great measure - שליש shalish, threefold. Some think it was a certain measure used by the Chaldeans, the real capacity of which is not known. others think it signifies abundance or abundantly.

PSALM 80: 6 You make us a source of contention to our neighbours. Our enemies laugh among themselves.

Verse 6

Thou makest us a strife - The neighboring districts have a controversy about us; we are a subject of contention to them. A people so wonderfully preserved, and so wonderfully punished, is a mystery to them. They see in us both the goodness and severity of God. Or, all the neighboring nations join together to malign and execrate us. We are hated by all; derided and cursed by all.

PSALM 80: 7 Turn us again, God of Armies. Cause your face to shine, and we will be saved.

PSALM 80: 8 You brought a vine out of Egypt. You drove out the nations, and planted it.

Verse 8

Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt - This is a most elegant metaphor, and every where well supported. The same similitude is used by Isaiah, Isa 5:1, etc.; by Jeremiah, Jer 2:21; by Ezekiel, Eze 17:5, Eze 17:6; by Hosea, Hos 10:1; by Joel, Joe 1:7; by Moses, Deu 32:32, Deu 32:33; and often by our Lord himself, Mat 20:1, etc.; Mat 21:33, etc.; Mar 12:1, etc. And this was the ordinary figure to represent the Jewish Church. We may remark several analogies here: -

1. This vine was brought out of Egypt that it might be planted in a better and more favorable soil. The Israelites were brought out of their Egyptian bondage that they might be established in the land of Canaan, where they might grow and flourish, and worship the true God.
2. When the husbandman has marked out a proper place for his vineyard, he hews down and roots up all other trees; gathers out the stones, brambles, etc., that might choke the young vines, and prevent them from being fruitful, So God cast out the heathen nations from the land of Canaan, that

his pure worship might be established, and that there might not remain there any incitements to idolatry.

PSALM 80: 9 You cleared the ground for it. It took deep root, and filled the land.

Verse 9

Thou preparedst - before it -

3. When the ground is properly cleared, then it is well digged and manured, and the vines are placed in the ground at proper distances, etc. So when God had cast out the heathen, he caused the land to be divided by lot to the different tribes, and then to the several families of which these tribes were composed.

And didst cause it to take deep root -

4. By sheltering, propping up, and loosening the ground about the tender plants, they are caused to take a deep and firm rooting in the ground. Thus did God, by especial manifestations of his kind providence, support and protect the Israelites in Canaan; and by various religious ordinances, and civil institutions, he established them in the land; and, by the ministry of priests and prophets, did every thing necessary to make them morally fruitful.

It filled the land -

5. To multiply vines, the gardener cuts off a shoot from the old tree, leaving a joint or knob both at top and bottom; then plants it in proper soil; the lower knob furnishes the roots, and the upper the shoot, which should be carefully trained as it grows, in order to form another vine. By these means one tree will soon form a complete vineyard, and multiply itself to any given quantity. Thus God so carefully, tenderly, and abundantly blessed the Israelites, that they increased and multiplied; and, in process of time, filled the whole land of Canaan. Vines are propagated, not only by cuttings, but by layers, seed, grafting, and inoculation.

PSALM 80: 10 The mountains were covered with its shadow. Its boughs were like God's cedars.

Verse 10

The hills were covered -

6. The vine, carefully cultivated in a suitable soil, may be spread to any extent. In the land of Judea it formed shades under which the people not only sheltered and refreshed themselves in times of sultry heats; but it is said they even ate, drank, and dwelt under the shelter of their vines. See 1Kgs 4:25; Mic 4:4; 1 Maccabees 14:12. God so blessed the Jews, particularly in the days of David and Solomon, that all the neighboring nations were subdued - the Syrians, Idumeans, Philistines, Moabites, and Ammonites.

PSALM 80: 11 It sent out its branches to the sea, Its shoots to the River.

Verse 11

She sent out her boughs unto the sea and her branches unto the river - The Israelitish empire extended from the River Euphrates on the east to the Mediterranean Sea on the west, and from the same Euphrates on the north of the promised land to its farthest extent on the south; Syria bounding the north, and Arabia and Egypt the south. And this was according to the promises which God had made to the fathers, Exo 23:31; Deu 11:24.

PSALM 80: 12 Why have you broken down its walls, so that all those who pass by the way pluck it?

Verse 12

Why hast thou broken down -

7. When a vineyard is planted, it is properly fenced to preserve it from being trodden down, or otherwise injured by beasts, and to protect the fruit from being taken by the unprincipled passenger. So God protected Jerusalem and his temple by his own almighty arm; and none of their enemies could molest them as long as they had that protection. As it was now spoiled, it was a proof that that protection had been withdrawn; therefore the psalmist addresses the Lord with, "Why hast thou broken down her hedges?" Had God continued his protection, Jerusalem would not have been destroyed.

PSALM 80: 13 The boar out of the wood ravages it. The wild animals of the field feed on it.

Verse 13

The boar out of the wood - Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, who was a fierce and cruel sovereign. The allusion is plain. The wild hops and buffaloes make sad havoc in the fields of the Hindoos, and in their orchards: to keep them out, men are placed at night on covered stages in the fields.

PSALM 80: 14 Turn again, we beg you, God of Armies. Look down from heaven, and see, and visit this vine,

Verse 14

Return - O God of hosts - Thou hast abandoned us, and therefore our enemies have us in captivity. Come back to us, and we shall again be restored.

Behold, and visit this vine - Consider the state of thy own people, thy own worship, thy own temple. Look down! Let thine eye affect thy heart.

PSALM 80: 15 the stock which your right hand planted, the branch that you made strong for yourself.

Verse 15

The vineyard which thy right hand hath planted - Thy holy and pure worship which thy Almighty power had established in this city.

And the branch - thou madest strong for thy self - The original **בן ועל** veal ben, "and upon the Son whom thou hast strengthened for thyself." Many have thought that the Lord Jesus is meant. And so the Chaldee understood it, as it translates the passage thus: **ועל מלכא משיחא** veal Malca Meshicha, And upon the King Messiah, whom thou hast strengthened for thyself." The Syriac, Vulgate, Septuagint, Ethiopic, and Arabic, have, "the Son of man," as in the seventeenth verse. Eighteen of Kennicott's and De Rossi's MSS. have **בן אדם** ben Adam, "Son of man," and as the Versions have all the same reading, it was probably that of the original copies. As Christ seems here to be intended, this is the first place in the Old Testament where the title Son of man is applied to him. The old Psalter understands this of setting Christ at the right hand of God.

PSALM 80: 16 It's burned with fire. It's cut down. They perish at your rebuke.

PSALM 80: 17 Let your hand be on the man of your right hand, on the son of man whom you made strong for yourself.

Verse 17

The man of thy right hand - The only person who can be said to be at the right hand of God as intercessor, is Jesus the Messiah. Let him become our Deliverer: appoint him for this purpose, and let his strength be manifested In our weakness! By whom are the Jews to be restored, if indeed they ever be restored to their own land, but by Jesus Christ? By Him alone can they find mercy; through Him alone can they ever be reconciled to God.

PSALM 80: 18 So we will not turn away from you. Revive us, and we will call on your name.

Verse 18

So wilt not we go back from thee - We shall no more become idolaters: and it is allowed on all hands that the Jews were never guilty of idolatry after their return from the Babylonish captivity.

Quicken us - Make us alive, for we are nearly as good as dead.

We will call upon they name - We will invoke thee. Thou shalt be for ever the object of our adoration, and the center of all our hopes.

PSALM 80: 19 Turn us again, LORD God of Armies. Cause your face to shine, and we will be saved.

Verse 19

Turn as again - Redeem us from this captivity.

O Lord God of hosts - Thou who hast all power in heaven and earth, the innumerable hosts of both worlds being at thy command.

Cause thy face to shine - Let us know that thou art reconciled to us. Let us once more enjoy thy approbation. Smile upon thy poor rebels, weary of their sins, and prostrate at thy feet, imploring mercy.

And we shall be saved - From the power and oppression of the Chaldeans, from the guilt and condemnation of our sins, and from thy wrath and everlasting displeasure. Thus, O God, save Us!