

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Psalms: God's Nurture Of The Inner Man In The Life Of Faith LXXX: Responding Well To The Shock Of Nearby Severe Divine Discipline (Psalm 80:1-19)

I. Introduction

- A. When God administers His severe discipline on a party who is near us, the event sends emotional shock waves our way as we identify with the trauma the other party experiences, so we need to respond to it productively.
- B. Psalm 80:1-19 was written by shocked believers in the Southern Kingdom of Judah when their sister Northern Kingdom of Israel had been invaded and captured by Assyria, and it is very instructive for us (as follows):

II. Responding Well To The Shock Of Nearby Severe Divine Discipline, Psalm 80:1-19.

- A. The introductory remarks of this psalm comprise the first verse in the Hebrew text (Kittel, Biblia Hebraica, p. 1046), so we stay with the numbering system of the English Bible.
- B. We thus translate Psalm 80:1-19 as follows:
 - 1. "O Shepherd of Israel, give ear (to us), (You) Who lead Joseph like a flock; You who sit enthroned between the cherubim, shine forth . . ." Psalm 80:1.
 - 2. ". . . to the face of Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh. Awaken Your might; come and save us," v. 2.
 - 3. **"Restore us, O Elohim; make Your face shine upon us that we may be saved,"** Psalm 80:3.
 - 4. "O Jahweh Elohim of hosts, armies (*seba'ot*, plural of *saba'*, "host, army," Ibid.; B. D. B., A Heb. and Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 838f), how long will Your anger smolder against the prayers of Your people?" v. 4.
 - 5. "You have fed them with the bread of tears; You have made them drink tears by the bowlful," Psalm 80:5.
 - 6. "You have made us a source of contention to our neighbors and our enemies mock us," Psalm 80:6.
 - 7. "Restore us, O Elohim of hosts, armies (*seba'ot* again, cf. v. 4); make Your face shine upon us, that we may be saved," v. 7.
 - 8. "You brought a vine out of Egypt; You drove out the nations and planted it," Psalm 80:8.
 - 9. "You cleared the ground for it, and it took root and filled the land," Psalm 80:9.
 - 10. "The mountains were covered with its shade, the mighty cedars with its branches," Psalm 80:10.
 - 11. "It sent out its boughs to the (Mediterranean) Sea, its shoots as far as the River (Euphrates)," Psalm 80:11.
 - 12. "Why have You broken down its walls so that all who pass by pick its grapes?" (Psalm 80:12)
 - 13. "Boars from the forest ravage it and the creatures of the field feed on it," Psalm 80:13.
 - 14. **"Return** to us, O Elohim of hosts, armies (*seba'ot* again, cf. v. 4, 7)! **Look down from heaven and see and watch over this vine,**" Psalm 80:14.
 - 15. "the root Your right hand has planted, the son You have raised up for Yourself," Psalm 80:15.
 - 16. "Your vine is cut down, it is burned with fire; at Your rebuke Your people perish," Psalm 80:16.
 - 17. "Let Your hand rest on the man at Your right hand, the son of man You raised up for Yourself," v. 17.
 - 18. "Then we will not turn away from You; revive us and we will call on Your Name," Psalm 80:18.
 - 19. "Restore us, O **Jahweh** Elohim of hosts, armies (*seba'ot* again, cf. v. 4, 7, 14); make Your face shine upon us that we may be saved," Psalm 80:19.
- C. We note significant observations and applications of this psalm (as follows):
 - 1. This psalm was written by Asaph (a guild?) in Judah expressing shock at the Northern Kingdom of Israel's fall to Assyria, Ryrie St. Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to Psalm 80. The depth of the shock is seen in the mention of Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh (v. 2) that recalls how these tribes, Ephraim and Manasseh from the Northern Kingdom and Benjamin from the Southern Kingdom, had once all marched **together** to Canaan, with their peoples likely intermarrying, intensifying the bonds between them, B. K. C., O. T., p. 852.
 - 2. The depth of expression grows through the psalm, reflecting the ventilation of emotional shock at Israel's fate as seen particularly in the refrains (v. 3, v. 7, v. 14 and v. 19) as noted by our bold lettering.
 - 3. Amid all the expressions of woe and shock, at verse 18, the psalm takes on an instructive tone, asserting that upon God's restoration, they would not turn away from Him (as Israel had done, implied). This of course was the objective of divine discipline as seen in God's 2 Chronicles 7:14 admonition.

Lesson: *Shocked at the fall of sister nation Israel to Assyria, Judah's men appealed to God to restore Israel while vowing to watch that they themselves would keep following the Lord that they might avoid similar discipline.*

Application: *May we use our shock at God's severe discipline of another to pray for him and watch our own walk.*