

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Psalms: God's Nurture Of The Inner Man In The Life Of Faith LXXXV: A Lesson On Revering The Lord Due To His Discipline (Psalm 85:1-13)

I. Introduction

- A. Discipline by Almighty God is never a happy experience for the believer who faces it, but afterwards, the event provides a wonderfully edifying lesson **providing** we *learn* it! (cf. Hebrews 12:11)
- B. Psalm 85:1-13 gives us an edifying lesson on revering the Lord because of His discipline (as follows):

II. A Lesson On Revering The Lord Due To His Discipline, Psalm 85:1-13.

- A. The introductory remarks of this psalm comprise the first verse in the Hebrew text (Kittel, Biblia Hebraica, p. 1050), so we stay with the numbering system of the English Bible for clarity with this lesson.
- B. We thus translate Psalm 85:1-13 as follows:
 - 1. "O Jahweh, You showed favor to Your land; You **returned** (*shub*, B. D. B., A Heb. and Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 996-1000) the captivity (*shebut*, Ibid., p. 986) of Jacob," Psalm 85:1.
 - 2. "You forgave the iniquity of Your people and covered (*kasah*, Ibid., p. 491-492; a synonymn, *kaphar*, means to make propitiation; pacify [God's wrath], Ibid., p. 497-498) all of their sins. Selah," Psalm 85:2.
 - 3. "You set aside all of Your wrath and **turned** (*shub* again, cf. v. 1, different meaning, Ibid., p. 996-1000) from Your fierce anger," Psalm 85:3.
 - 4. "**Restore** (*shub* again, cf. v. 1, 3, different meaning, Ibid.) us, O Elohim, our Savior, and put away Your displeasure toward us," Psalm 85:4.
 - 5. "Will You be angry with us forever? Will You prolong Your anger through all generations?" (Psalm 85:5)
 - 6. "Will You (emphat. pron.) not **revive** (*shub* again, cf. v. 1, 3, 4, yet another meaning, Ibid., p. 996-1000) us again that Your people may rejoice in You?" (Psalm 85:6)
 - 7. "Show us, O Jahweh, Your loyal love, and grant to us Your salvation," Psalm 85:7.
 - 8. "I will listen to what the Elohim Jahweh will say, because He speaks peace unto His people, unto His saints -- but let them no **return** (*shub* again, cf. v. 1, 3, 4, 6) unto folly!" (Psalm 85:8)
 - 9. "Surely His salvation is near to them who revere Him, that His glory may dwell in our land," Psalm 85:9.
 - 10. "Loyal love and faithfulness meet together, righteousness and peace kiss each other," Psalm 85:10.
 - 11. "Faithfulness springs forth from the earth, and righteousness looks down from heaven," Psalm 85:11.
 - 12. "Indeed, Jahweh (emphatic position) will give what is good, and our land will give its harvest," Psa. 85:12.
 - 13. "Righteousness goes before Him and prepares the way for His steps," Psalm 85:13.
- C. We note significant observations and applications regarding this psalm (as follows):
 - 1. The darkened verbs above (returned, turned, restore, revive, return) all come from the same Hebrew root, *shub* where the psalmist uses a play on the word's various meanings for effect: God **restored** the captivity of Jacob in **turning** from His fierce anger at His people's sins. He is thus called upon to **restore** the people from current calamities and **revive** them again. The condition for expecting such current blessings is for the people not to **return** to their sins that got them into God's realm of discipline in the first place!
 - 2. There is also a play on the word "give" (*natan*, Ibid., Kittel; Ibid., B. D. B., p. 678-681) in verse 12 where the land's yield ("give") is directly related to Jahweh's granting ("give") what is good, wholesome.
 - 3. The lesson of this psalm is that one who was living under the Mosaic Covenant (Deut. 28) had to **revere** the Lord so as to stay obedient to His precepts that he not lose God's blessings and need to be severely disciplined by captivity in a foreign nation. This truth is emphasized in verse 11's phrase "faithfulness springs forth from the earth": the very sprouting of Israel's crops was a direct result of God's blessing, and the people would do well to consider this fact to avoid going astray from God into apostasy again!

Lesson: Using an extensive play on the Hebrew word "*shub*," the psalmist noted that revering the Lord so as to **AVOID turning from following Him to follow after false idols or "false crutches of fulfillment"** leads to sure blessings versus dreadfully awful divine discipline for sin, and that repenting from such apostasy due to divine discipline to return to the Lord out of reverence for Him leads to sure restoration and renewed divine blessing.

Application: The more vulnerable we see that our every welfare in life is to the sovereign will of Almighty God, the more clearly we will sense our accountability to Him so as to revere Him and so depart from evil. May we then **BELIEVE** this psalm's revelation that we are totally vulnerable to the Lord that we truly revere and heed Him!