

## Restore us, O God

Jesus in the Psalms

*Psalm 80*

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### I. The End of the World

Currently we are in a time of widescale cultural apostasy in America. We have rejected the living God, the fountain of living waters, and hewn for ourselves cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water (cf. Jer 2:13). Hence, we are witnessing the hand of God's judgment upon us. Psalm 80 sings about such a judgment when Assyria destroyed northern Israel c. 722 BC. The author of 2 Kings explains:

*<sup>7</sup>For so it was that the children of Israel had sinned against the LORD their God, who had brought them up out of the land of Egypt, from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and they had feared other gods, <sup>8</sup>and had walked in the statutes of the nations whom the LORD had cast out from before the children of Israel, and of the kings of Israel, which they had made. <sup>9</sup>Also the children of Israel secretly did against the LORD their God things that were not right, and they built for themselves high places in all their cities, from watchtower to fortified city... <sup>13</sup>Yet the LORD testified against Israel and against Judah, by all of His prophets, every seer, saying, "Turn from your evil ways, and keep My commandments and My statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by My servants the prophets." <sup>14</sup>Nevertheless they would not hear, but stiffened their necks, like the necks of their fathers, who did not believe in the LORD their God. <sup>15</sup>And they rejected His statutes and His covenant that He had made with their fathers, and His testimonies which He had testified against them; they followed idols, became idolaters, and went after the nations who were all around them, concerning whom the LORD had charged them that they should not do like them... <sup>18</sup>Therefore the LORD was very angry with Israel, and removed them from His sight; there was none left but the tribe of Judah alone. (2 Kgs 17:7ff)*

### II. Restore us, O God!

*Psalm 80 - To the Chief Musician. Set to Testimony of Asaph. A Psalm.*

*<sup>1</sup>Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, You who lead Joseph like a flock; You who dwell between the cherubim, shine forth! <sup>2</sup>Before Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh, Stir up Your strength, And come and save us! <sup>3</sup>Restore us, O God; Cause Your face to shine, And we shall be saved!*

*<sup>4</sup>O LORD God of hosts, How long will You be angry Against the prayer of Your people? <sup>5</sup>You have fed them with the bread of tears, And given them tears to drink in great measure. <sup>6</sup>You have made us a strife to our neighbors, And our enemies laugh among themselves. <sup>7</sup>Restore us, O God of hosts; Cause Your face to shine, And we shall be saved!*

*<sup>8</sup>You have brought a vine out of Egypt; You have cast out the nations, and planted it. <sup>9</sup>You prepared room for it, And caused it to take deep root, And it filled the land. <sup>10</sup>The hills were covered with its shadow, And the mighty cedars with its boughs. <sup>11</sup>She sent out her boughs to the Sea, And her branches to the River. <sup>12</sup>Why have You broken down her hedges, So that all who pass by the way pluck her fruit? <sup>13</sup>The boar out of the woods uproots it, And the wild beast of the field devours it. <sup>14</sup>Return, we beseech You, O God of hosts; Look down from heaven and see, And visit this vine <sup>15</sup>And the vineyard which Your right hand has planted, And the branch that You made strong for Yourself.*

*<sup>16</sup>It is burned with fire, it is cut down; They perish at the rebuke of Your countenance. <sup>17</sup>Let Your hand be upon the man of Your right hand, Upon the son of man whom You made strong for Yourself. <sup>18</sup>Then we will not turn back from You; Revive us, and we will call upon Your name. <sup>19</sup>Restore us, O LORD God of hosts; Cause Your face to shine, And we shall be saved!*

A. Crying out to God in the face of calamity (1-3 cf. Num 6:24-26)

B. Lamenting the calamity (4-7)

C. Recounting God's dealings with Israel (8-15)

D. Petitioning God to have mercy on Israel and her King (16-19)

### III. Meditating on Hard Providences

Psalm 80 is a prayer for restoration in the face of judgment. Psalm 80, therefore, teaches us how to respond when the Church experiences times of judgment. Such judgments are hard providences – calamities that the Lord uses to accomplish His purposes in history.

#### A. The Providence of God (cf. Gen 50:20; Ps 74:16f; Dan 4:34f; Acts 17:25; Ro 11:36)

In Reformed theology the word “providence” is utilized frequently. So what does this word mean? The Westminster Shorter Catechism asks, “*What are God’s works of providence?*”

*“God’s works of providence are His most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing all His creatures and all their actions.”*

There are two components to God’s providence. First, God \_\_\_\_\_ all His creatures (Col 1:16f). Every creature is dependent moment by moment on the life-giving power of God (Ps 104:27-30). Second, God \_\_\_\_\_ all His creatures and all their actions. He orders all things to His appointed ends (Eph 1:11). Hence, even the evil actions of evil men serve the *holy, wise, and powerful* purposes of God (cf. Is 45:6-7; Amos 3:6).

#### B. Kind and Hard Providences (cf.

In history, acts of salvation or deliverance as well as acts of judgment or destruction come ultimately from the hand of God. We may not always know *why* they come but come from Him they do. Both \_\_\_\_\_ and calamities come ultimately from the hand of God to accomplish His *holy, wise, and powerful* purposes. “*All things work together for the good of those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose*” (Rom 8:28). Consider the many places we have seen this taught in our psalms (73:18, 23f, 27; 74:1, 11ff; 75:7; 76:6,10; 77:4, 13-15; 78:12ff, 31, 38, 43ff, 60, 67; 79:5; 80:4-6, 8ff). Both comforts and calamities, salvation and destruction, kind and hard providences, come from the hand of the Lord.

#### C. Restore us, O God!

So when we find ourselves in the midst of a hard providence, what ought we to do? How ought we to pray? We ought to pray Psalm 80: *Restore us, O God, cause your face to shine, and we shall be saved!* Jesus likens the kingdom of God to a mustard seed which starts as the smallest of seeds but gradually grows into a great tree in which the birds of the air make their nests and in whose shade the beasts of the earth take rest (Mt 13:31-32 cf. Ezek 17:22-24). So when God’s tree is suffering in history, we pray that He would \_\_\_\_\_ it.

And note carefully that the only way that salvation, historical blessing, can come upon the Church or upon a nation is through \_\_\_\_\_, God’s Anointed King and Messiah:

*<sup>14</sup>Return, we beseech You, O God of hosts; Look down from heaven and see, And visit this vine <sup>15</sup>And the vineyard which Your right hand has planted, And the [son/king] that You made strong for Yourself. <sup>16</sup>It is burned with fire, it is cut down; They perish at the rebuke of Your countenance. <sup>17</sup>Let Your hand be upon the man of Your right hand, Upon the son of man whom You made strong for Yourself. <sup>18</sup>Then we will not turn back from You; Revive us, and we will call upon Your name.*

### IV. Conclusion