

PSALMS 85

INTRODUCTION:

PSALM 85, can best be described as a picture of, “GOD RESTORING US TO OUR FORMER PLACE OF PEACE.” There were in the Jewish history, as there have been in the Christian church, numerous occasions to which the sentiments of the psalm would be appropriate. It was evidently composed in view of the fact that God had, on some former occasion, interposed when his people were in trouble, but that now for similar causes he was again angry with them, and they were suffering similar calamities. The psalm contains a fervent prayer that God would again appear for them, and it implies a confident expectation that he would do this, so that the calamities which had come upon them would be removed—even as by a miraculous intervention. There is nothing to make it absolutely certain but it could pertain to the Babylonian captivity, but the language is so general that it might refer to any captivity.

The psalm consists essentially of three parts:

- I. **A reminder** of God’s gracious interposition in former times, as the ground of the present appeal to him, [Ps. 85:1-3](#) . In those times, when his people had been conquered, he had restored to them the possession of their own land; he had forgiven their iniquity; he had turned himself from the fierceness of his anger. These acts of mercy were now remembered; and this was the ground of confident hope in the present trouble.
- II. **A description** of the state of the people at the time when the psalm was composed, as demanding help from God, [Ps. 85:4-7](#) . It is clear that the nation was suffering from some calamity; that the anger of God seemed to be upon them; that it appeared as if his wrath would never be turned away; and that unless he should interpose the nation must perish.
- III. **An expression** of a confident hope that God would deliver his people, [Ps. 85:8-13](#) .

(a) The psalmist represents himself as willing to hear what God would say, with the hope that he would speak peace to his people; [Ps. 85:8](#) .

(b) He declares his belief that God is near to them who fear him [Ps. 85:9](#) , and that in the present case—in the manner in which he would meet the present emergency—there would be a mingling of mercy and truth—of righteousness and peace: that each of these, in proper proportions, and without collision, would meet and mingle in the divine dealings; that is, it would be seen, in his dealings with his people, that God was merciful and just—righteous and disposed to peace [Ps. 85:10](#) .

(c) He expresses his assurance that, dark as things now appeared, there would be a divine interposition as if truth (or, a just solution of these difficulties) should spring out of the very earth—as if it would come from some unknown quarter and in some unexpected manner, as mysterious, and as incomprehensible, and as far removed from human agency as if it came up suddenly from the ground—or as if the heavens opened themselves, and it looked down from the sky [Ps. 85:11](#) ; and

(d) he, in conclusion, expresses his confident belief that the Lord would give that which was truly good; that the land would again yield its increase; that righteousness would attend his march through the land, going as it were before him, and causing all the people to walk in his steps, [Ps. 85:12-13](#) .

There does not appear to have been in this psalm any original reference to the Messiah, or to his work: that is, all that there is in the psalm can be explained on the supposition that it has no such reference. But it must be obvious to every one that the language is such as is suited most beautifully and appropriately to describe many things in the plan of redemption, and especially to express the fact that in that work the attributes of God, some of which seem not easy to be reconciled, have been most perfectly and beautifully manifested and blended.

SOME KEY PASSAGES

VERSES 1-3

We are reminded of the things that God is capable of doing for us at any point in time.

- [1] Have been favorable (or well pleased)
- [2] Have brought back (a reference to His redemptive ability)
- [3] Have forgiven (God is in the business of forgiving)
- [4] Have covered (we would use the word propitiation)
- [5] Have taken away (a simple reminder that God is just as merciful and He is judgmental)
- [6] Have turned from fierceness (God can change His approach toward us)

VERSES 4-7

Remembering the past does not always provide victory in the present. However the Psalmist moves toward a direct petition, or prayer on the peoples behalf.

- [1] “Restore us again,” this is the idea of God turning back toward His people whom He has rejected because of un-repentant sin. V.4

“So I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten, The crawling locust, The consuming locust, And the chewing locust, My great army which I sent among you. Joel 2:26 You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, And praise the name of the Lord your God, Who has dealt wondrously with you; And My people shall never be put to shame.” (Joel 2:25–26 NKJV)

- [2] “Revive us again” The second prayer is that God would revive the people. Revive meaning to resurrect or to make alive. V.6

Historically revivals have followed three simple stages:

STAGE ONE: There is an awakening as the result of faithful and Un-compromising preaching of the Word of God.

STAGE TWO: There is the revival itself. Those who thought they were Christians become aware of un-confessed sin and that they are spiritually dead and are revived through the power of God’s Word.

[3]

STAGE THREE: Is when true Christians have truly been converted begin to live for Christ so openly and consistently, with notable changes of conduct, that the world outside takes notice and presses into the church to see what has happened. This is real revival.

Ps 143:11 **Revive** me, O LORD, for Your name’s sake! For Your righteousness’ sake bring my soul out of trouble.

Isa 57:15 For thus says the High and Lofty One Who inhabits eternity, whose name *is* Holy: “I dwell in the high and holy *place*, With him *who* has a contrite and humble spirit, To **revive** the spirit of the humble, And to **revive** the heart of the contrite ones.

Ho 6:2 After two days He will **revive** us; On the third day He will raise us up, That we may live in His sight.

Hab 3:2 O LORD, I have heard your speech *and* was afraid; O LORD, **revive** Your work in the midst of the years! In the midst of the years make *it* known; In wrath remember mercy.

VERSES 8-9

The Psalmist reminds us of the importance of waiting on God. He reminds us of God’s past mercies and prays for a true revival and a renewal of the mercies God has previously shown. Now he waits for an answer from the Lord. The text says, **“I will hear what God the Lord will speak.”**

Habakkuk was one of the minor prophets who lived when Israel was far from God, and he asked God to send revival. God told him that he was going to send judgment by allowing the Babylonians to invade Judah, and take the people away in captivity. He asked a number of questions of the Lord, and then was patient to wait for an answer from God.

“I will stand my watch And set myself on the rampart, And watch to see what He will say to me, And what I will answer when I am corrected. Habakkuk 2:2 Then the Lord answered me and said: “Write the vision And make it plain on tablets, That he may run who reads it. Habakkuk 2:3 For the vision is yet for an appointed time; But at the end it will speak, and it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it; Because it will surely come, It will not tarry. Habakkuk 2:4 “Behold the proud, His soul is not upright in him; But the just shall live by his faith.” (Habakkuk 2:1–4 NKJV)

[4]

VERSES 10-13

These verse remind us that there is always a hopeful look to God's promises. I think the psalmist remembered that God had promised peace (shalom) to His people. He was reminded that the Lord's salvation is always near at hand to anyone who is willing to accept and receive it. These last few verses speak of something that is necessary in our ongoing relationship with God, harmony.

- [1] The harmony in God:
- [2] The harmony between heaven and earth
- [3] A harmony in man