

Psalm 85

Introduction: One of the difficulties of studying the Psalms is that there are things which we can't be certain. There are terms like "gittith" that is in the title to a few Psalms that we can't be certain of. There are varying opinions from trusted and reliable sources as to the specific time and instance that is spoken of in this Psalm. Just because we can't be certain who wrote every Psalm or we can't be certain about terms in the title, or exactly which point in history they were written does not detract the Truth of GOD's Word.

The most common view of the context of this Psalm is that it was written after the return of the Jews out of their captivity in Babylon and yet were in some distress from neighboring countries; perhaps in the times of Ezra and Nehemiah, or in the times of cruel tyranny of Antiochus.

Another view is that this Psalm was written by King David when the land was oppressed by the Philistines indicated by the first several verses, and in the spirit of prophecy he foretold the peaceful years of his reign as well as the peacefulness during the time of King Solomon, which can be seen in the latter verses.

Whether or not this Psalm refers to a period before or after the Babylonian captivity is unsettled. However, that which we can be sure of is this Psalm teaches about, points to, prays for, and delights in GOD and His Salvation. This Psalm speaks of Christ, our Great High Priest and His Salvation – His deliverance. The remembrance of the accounts of the LORD GOD's deliverance is effectual in encouraging His people to come before the Throne of Grace. The believer's faith is bolstered and our hope is strengthened when we recount by the Word and reflect upon by experience His faithfulness. The believer is steadied by the mercy of GOD in Christ. The proclamation of the LORD GOD's merciful Hand to deliver, His sovereign power over all creation, and His Provision for His people should remind us:

[Hebrews 4:13-16 NASB] **13 And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. 14 Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. 15 For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize**

with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. **16 Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.**

Read Psalm 85 Verses 1 - 8

Verses 1 - 3: A confession of the mercy and might of the LORD GOD is seen in verses 1 – 3. As believers, as those whom GOD has caused to be born again, we are sons of Jacob and we have been restored from captivity. I dare not neglect the fact this Psalm was written for a particular time, people, and circumstance. Also, I dare not neglect the opportunity for the saints today to draw application from this Psalm and to be strengthened. We live in the day in which the Truth has been fulfilled. We, in this day, have been given GOD's final Word and we are given the fulfillment of the prophecies of the Old Testament. [Hebrews 1:1-2 NASB] **1 God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, 2 in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.**

We are born under the bondage of sin. We are sinners because when Adam sinned – all sinned. This is a plain Truth set forth in the Scriptures. **(Romans 5:12)**. In Romans chapter 3, the truth of who man is in the flesh, that is apart from having the Righteousness of Christ mercifully granted to cover us, is laid before us. [Romans 3:9-18 NASB] **9 What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin; 10 as it is written, "THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE; 11 THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS, THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD; 12 ALL HAVE TURNED ASIDE, TOGETHER THEY HAVE BECOME USELESS; THERE IS NONE WHO DOES GOOD, THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE." 13 "THEIR THROAT IS AN OPEN GRAVE, WITH THEIR TONGUES THEY KEEP DECEIVING," "THE POISON OF ASPES IS UNDER THEIR LIPS"; 14 "WHOSE MOUTH IS FULL OF CURSING AND BITTERNESS"; 15 "THEIR FEET ARE SWIFT**

TO SHED BLOOD, 16 DESTRUCTION AND MISERY ARE IN THEIR PATHS, 17 AND THE PATH OF PEACE THEY HAVE NOT KNOWN." 18 "THERE IS NO FEAR OF GOD BEFORE THEIR EYES." This being who we are raises the question – Why would the LORD GOD save anyone? Why would He reach down to anyone in His mercy to rescue? There is much more in these questions than the answer I bring to you this morning. So, what I am about to say is by no means exhaustive. My intent, prayer, and hope is that each one of us will love and value our Savior all the more as a result of meeting with Him in His Word and understanding better the miracle of His mercy and grace. The Bible tells us that His people are saved to the praise of His glorious grace. [Ephesians 1:5-6 NASB] **5 He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, 6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.** Even though this Psalm was written to be sung by the Israelite, it has meaning and application for you and me. We as believers are the sons of Jacob and children of Abraham that have been restored from captivity - regardless of ethnicity or any other barrier man has built. [Romans 9:6-8 NASB] **6 But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel; 7 nor are they all children because they are Abraham's descendants, but: "THROUGH ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS WILL BE NAMED." 8 That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants.**

Verses 4 - 6: A supplication is made for the furthering of His sanctification due to the mercy that we see in the first three verses. The plea to be restored and revived mixed with the asking of His indignation to cease is like the petition we saw repeated in the 80th Psalm – **“Restore us, O GOD; let Your face shine, that we may be saved.”** Verse 4 reminds us the greater need is not that GOD needs turning from His anger so much as we need to be turned from our sin, and that it is only Him Who can turn us. A heart being turned to the LORD GOD is a miracle – a miracle of the magnitude that the earth that GOD created is revolving on its axis as it orbits around the sun at precisely the right distance and speed. May we marvel at and rejoice in Him.

Verse 7: An earnest appeal is made for the Father's lovingkindness or mercy. It is only by the divine Work of the Holy Spirit that our once blinded eyes are able to see His mercy. It is one thing to read of it; for His mercy to touch the intellect or to see His mercy made plain to others, but another to have it displayed to us personally. I pray that each of us would have eyes to see – that we you and I would know by experience His mercy; that we would know His Mighty Arm to save and keep us.

- It is by His mercy that we are not consumed. [Malachi 3:6 NASB] **6 "For I, the LORD, do not change; therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed.**
- It is by His mercy that our sins are washed away for His glory. [The Revelation 1:5 NASB] **5 and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood—**
- It is by His power, mercy, and lovingkindness that we are covered with His righteousness. [Isaiah 61:10 NASB] **10 I will rejoice greatly in the LORD, My soul will exult in my God; For He has clothed me with garments of salvation, He has wrapped me with a robe of righteousness, As a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, And as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.**
- It is by His mercy that He leads us and guides us. [Psalm 23:3 NASB] **3 He restores my soul; He guides me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake.**
- It is by His mercy that the believer will persevere. [John 10:28-29 NASB] **28 and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. 29 "My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.**

As the Psalmist expresses the desire to see GOD's salvation, what can this be other than a plea for the coming of the Messiah?

Verse 8: Believing that our Father hears us, it is natural for us to be eager to hear from Him.

Verse 8 begins by **“I will hear what GOD the LORD will say”**. Only from Him can come the Word which can speak peace into troubled souls. To be a listener is the demeanor of the saint in need of mercy and forgiveness. It is a dreadful thing to be a “doer” before going before the Throne of Grace and taking the position of a “hearer”. [James 1:23-24 NASB] **23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; 24 for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was.** We see that Adam first tried this when man fell. Adam and Eve made for themselves loin coverings out of fig leaves after their eyes were opened. Their eyes were not opened so that they would be given a greater understanding of things pleasant and profitable as they thought was promised. No, their eyes were opened to know they had sinned against GOD and that they had been deceived by the enemy. Their eyes were opened to see the ruin in which they had brought upon themselves in that communion with GOD was broken. Their eyes were opened to see the misery of GOD’s divine wrath, to know the curse of the Law and eternal death. The sound they once delighted in, hearing the LORD GOD walking in the garden, was now a terror to them. Their response or remedy was to “make up” for the sin by covering themselves. The remedy, as is supposed by all men under the curse of the Fall, is to ignorantly, sinfully, and arrogantly act upon the foolish thought that we can atone by our own accord, sin committed against Him – that we can somehow cover up treason against our Creator and that will satisfy Him. Our eyes have to be divinely and mercifully opened that we see that as folly. His Salvation will humble man that he cannot boast. Our covering that satisfies our Father can only be that of the Perfect Righteousness of the Lamb of GOD, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen