

Psalm 80

Associated with the **Leviticus 16** Torah readings by **verses 7 and 19** - "turn us again" - a call to repentance for Yom Kippur.

The title in the Septuagint is "Psalm for the Assyrian" - referring to the Assyrians carrying away the Northern Tribes.

"To the chief Musician upon Shoshannimeduth, A Psalm of Asaph"

Shuwshan `Eduwth = lilies, i.e. Israel (Only used elsewhere in Psalm 60 intro) Lilies, Rashi says "roses" i.e. Israel.

Psalm 80:1 - "Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock; thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth."

This is another connection to **Leviticus 16** - the description of the ritual for Yom Kippur - centering on blood sprinkled on the mercy seat where God dwells "between the cherubim."

Psalm 80:2 - "Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh stir up thy strength, and come and save us."

Rashi - It is fitting for You and it is incumbent upon You to save, whether guilty or innocent, as it was said to Moses in Egypt (**Exodus 3:7**): "I have seen the affliction of My people." Why is the word for seeing repeated? I see that they are destined to provoke Me. Nevertheless, I have seen their affliction, because of the oath that I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Why mention Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh?

Rashi - Ephraim: in the war with Aram, when he besieged Samaria and sent emissaries to Ahab (I Kings 20:3): "Your silver and gold are mine; your beautiful wives and children are mine."

- Manasseh: in the days of Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz, as it is said (II Kings 13:4, 7): "for He saw Israel's oppression, etc., for the king of Aram had destroyed them and made them like dust to trample." And he beat him in war three times, as it is said (II Kings 13:25): "Joash overcame him three times and recovered the cities of Israel."

- Benjamin: in the time of Ahasuerus, when Mordechai and Esther were in danger, and all Israel depended on them.

Psalm 80:7 - "Turn us again (*shuwb* - to repent, turn to God), O God of hosts, and cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved."

See **Lamentations 5:21** - "Turn thou us unto thee, O LORD, and we shall be turned; renew our days as of old."

(But Rashi sees this phrase as "Return us," i.e. from exile).

Psalm 80:8 - "Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt: thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it."

The Image of the Vine - Psalm 80:8-16 depicts Israel as a vine.

Compare the Parable of the Trees by Jotham in Judges 9

- **Judges 9:8-15** - "The trees went forth to anoint a king over them. And they said to the olive tree, reign over us. But the olive tree said to them, Should I leave my fatness with which they honour God and man by me, and go to be promoted over the trees? And the trees said to the fig tree, you come and reign over us. But the fig tree said to them, Should I forsake my sweetness and my good fruit, and go to be promoted over the trees? Then the trees said to the vine, you come and reign over us. And the vine said to them, Should I leave my wine, which cheers God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees? Then all the trees said to the bramble-bush, you come and reign over us. And the bramble-bush said to the trees, if you truly anoint me king over you, come put your trust in my shadow. And if not, let fire come out of the bramble and burn up the cedars of Lebanon."

Israel neglected her duties and opportunities, and a usurper (Abimelech - the bramble, a son of Gideon through a concubine) was able to take control.

"bramble" = *atad* - thorn bush. Only used two other places: Associated with mourning (the threshing floor of Atad - **Genesis 50:10-11**), and God's wrath - **Psalm 50:9**.

Israel is compared to three trees; the 'Olive Tree', the 'Fig Tree' and the Vine.. Some scholars see these different pictures as the religious, national and spiritual privileges afforded by God to the nation of Israel.

Olive tree = oil, anointing, worship;

Fig tree = nationhood;

Vine = wine, joy, personal spiritual relationship.

See <http://www.pray4zion.org/TheThreeTreeofIsraelOliveFigVineJudge.html>

Olive Tree

"The Lord called your name... Green Olive Tree, Lovely and of Good Fruit... For the Lord of hosts has planted you..." **Jeremiah 11:16, 17** - see also **Hosea 14:5, 6**.

Some olive trees live long and some are 3000 years old. They cling to life and exist where other trees can't. Only one flower in 100 bears fruit ...the others fall off.

Cultivated olive tree branches can be grafted into wild olive trees to improve the wild olive tree ...But rarely are the branches of the wild olive grafted into a cultivated olive tree! While it was rare for a wild olive branch to be grafted into a cultivated olive tree,

the apostle Paul in Romans 11 uses just this illustration to demonstrate that God was bringing Gentiles (wild branches) into His cultivated olive tree (Israel's religious privilege and favor) through the Messiah. The result is we, with them, became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree (we became a partner in the religious privileges of Israel). See **Romans 11, and 9:24**.

Fig Tree

The fig tree, symbolizing Israel's national privilege, bears two crops annually... winter figs and summer figs. The fruit of the fig tree appears first ...before the flower. The fig is symbolic of the Jewish people and the flower illustrates the land of Israel. God acknowledged them as a nation before He gave them a land in which to live (**Exodus 4:22**).

- **Matthew 24:32-33** - "Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled."

Typically, a fig tree will not fruit until it reaches two years old, but it can take some trees as long as six years to reach the right maturity.

- **Luke 13:5-9** - "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. He spake also this parable; A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground? And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down."

Jesus Curses the Fig Tree

Mark 11:12-14, 20-21 - 'The time of the fig is not yet,' says Mark, for it was just before Passover, about six weeks before the fully-formed fig appears. The fact that Mark adds these words shows that he knew what he was talking about. When the fig leaves appear about the end of March, they are accompanied by a crop of small knobs, called *taqsh* by the Arabs, a sort of fore-runner of the real figs. These *taqsh* are eaten by peasants and others when hungry. They drop off before the real fig is formed. But if the leaves appear unaccompanied by *taqsh*, there will be no figs that year. So it was evident to our Lord, when He turned aside to see if there were any of these *taqsh* on the fig-tree to assuage His hunger for the time being, that the absence of the *taqsh* meant that there would be no figs when the time of figs came. For all its fair foliage, it was a fruitless and a hopeless tree."

- F.F. Bruce

- **Proverbs 27:18** - "He who tends a fig tree will eat his fruit, and he who serves his master will be honored"

God came looking for spiritual fruitfulness among his covenant people but saw none. The cursing of the fig tree was a parable warning Israel of impending judgment.

The Vine

The fruit of the vine produces wine, which is spiritually symbolic of joy and Israel's spiritual privilege with God. The wood of the vine is generally useless to the world except to burn (**Ezekiel 15:1-6**). It is weak and needs for the husbandman to prop it up away from the earth. It must be carefully tended to produce grapes that make good wine.

Isaiah 5:1 - "Now will I sing to my wellbeloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard..."

- See also Jesus' parable **Mark 12:1-9** based on this allegory.

- **Isaiah 5:7** - "For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry."

"cry" = *tsa`aqah* - an outcry for justice by the oppressed - the word used to describe the injustice of Sodom that brought God's judgment on the wicked city.

Jeremiah 2:21 - "Yet I had planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed: how then art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me?"

"Israel is a luxuriant vine" - **Hosea 10:1**

John 15:4, 5 - "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing."

When Jesus says "I am the true Vine," He informs us that all the vines of earth are 'pictures' and 'emblems' of Himself. Moreover He's saying Israel too was only a picture of Himself. The vine is the source of life for the branches, and there is no separation. They are one.

Psalm 80:13 - "The boar out of the wood doth waste it, and the wild beast of the field doth devour it."

Rashi - The boar of the forest is Esau, as is written (Daniel 7:7): "It devoured and broke in pieces and the rest it trampled with its feet." And it (the swine) has some signs of purity. Esau, too, has the merit of his fathers. (Esau is a type of the flesh).

Psalm 80:17 - "Let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand, upon the son (*ben*) of man whom thou madest strong for thyself."

NET - "May you give support to the one you have chosen, to the one whom you raised up for yourself!"

The Jewish translation has "the Branch that you made strong for yourself"

Targum: "and for the King Messiah, whom thou hast strengthened for thyself"

Psalm 80:19 - "Turn us again, O LORD God of hosts, cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved."

Again compare **Lamentations 5:21** - "Turn thou us unto thee, O LORD, and we shall be turned; renew our days as of old."

God gives us the ability to repent.

Philippians 2:13 - "For it is God who works in you to will and to act on behalf of His good pleasure."