

Psalm 81

Introduction: The aim of our assembling together, which we ought to have an eye toward when we meet is to give glory to the LORD GOD and to receive instruction from HIS Word. [Psalm 27:4 NASB] **4 One thing I have asked from the LORD, that I shall seek: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, To behold the beauty of the LORD And to meditate in His temple.** The Psalm begins in praise to GOD for Who HE is to HIS people in verses 1 -3, and what HE has done for us in verses 4 – 7. In verses 8 – 10, we are taught and admonished concerning what I believe is the “key” to this Psalm and that is the call to “hear” the Word of GOD – to listen to HIM. This is our purpose as believers. In verses 11 – 12 we are warned of the danger of rebelling against HIM and finally in verses 13 – 16 we see the happiness and the joy that is ours if we would but keep close to HIM by “hearing” HIM. I must also warn against the comfort that we can sometimes find in lumping ourselves together collectively, which I have done by using the pronouns us, we and ours. What I mean by that is we can use seeing ourselves as a group to escape looking at and examining our own hearts personally. The sharp edge and mercy of conviction can be dulled if we view it as part of a group and not personally. One day, each of us will stand before the LORD personally, all by ourselves, and not as a group. We should certainly understand and rejoice that “we” make up the Body of Christ, but that shouldn’t cause us to avoid personal responsibility to the commands of the LORD. “We” are certainly to stir up one another to love and good works. This is another means of grace the LORD has given us as we meet together.

Gittith pronounced git-ith or gi-teeth is used in the title of this Psalm and Psalm 8. There are two main thoughts as to what this word means. Some say that it signifies winepresses and others say it is most likely a musical term. It is worth noting that the preceding Psalm compares GOD’s Church to a vine. Some versions render the title “for the winepresses”. Many ancient Christian writers understood this to be the sufferings of Christ when HE trod the winepress of the Father’s wrath. Most think the word "gittith" is a musical instrument to which this psalm was set and sung.

Read the Psalm.

Verses 1 – 3: The Psalm begins with commands to worship and to praise the LORD GOD. (exuberant) O that we would understand and know grace! A wonderful aspect of HIS grace is that not only are we commanded to love HIM, but HE enables HIS people to do so. How best to know grace but to have it mercifully given that we are adorned by HIS righteousness – that it is imputed to us and we know it by experience – that we walk in this world as the aroma of Christ to GOD and HIS holiness is manifested among us in the sight of nations. (II Cor.

2:15). Lately, this is how I find myself praying for my wife, my children, myself, and each of us that make up the Body of Christ – that HIS grace is known to us because HE knows us – that our knowing HIS grace by experience is manifested in every area of our lives. Grace is the work of GOD in that HE can command us to love and worship HIM and HE so wonderfully and mercifully enables us to not only do so, but causes us to desire HIM and to love HIM above all. For the believer this worship that we see commanded will be a delight. I am not saying there will not be struggles, but there will certainly be an honest effort driven by grace marked by joy, delight, zeal, and compassion. We are still dealing with the flesh, but HIS mercy and for HIS glory, believers have been given the perfect righteousness of Christ. The miracle of salvation is seen in worship; the evidence of the heart of flesh that joys in the LORD and loves HIM manifests itself here. Praise will be sincere and constant.

Verses 4 – 7: Here we have set before us the wonderful Truth that the LORD GOD has ordained worship – it is a statute and an ordinance for HIS glorious grace and our good. HE has ordained that HIS people delight in HIM and in so doing the glory of HIS grace is seen by the world. We see that it is by a testimony HE established. In this portion it is made known that HE in HIS great mercy has set HIS people free and when HIS people call HE rescues. Again, we are given a reference of the deliverance of HIS people from Egypt. This was continually remembered by the OT saint and instructs you and I to do the same. We should speak often of HIS deliverance to those around us – our families, our brothers and sisters in the LORD, neighbors, co-workers, and all the LORD gives us opportunity to speak with. The Selah between verses 7 and 8 demand that we pause to consider, to wonder, meditate, to chew upon, and reflect.

Verse 5 “I heard a language that I did not know”

Surely the context of these verses require that we understand these words as the language of the LORD. The Israelites were slaves in a foreign land in which they did not understand the language of their taskmaster. This was among the grief of the Israelites. They were continually reminded that they were strangers in a strange land.

[Psalm 114:1 NASB] **1** When Israel went forth from Egypt, The house of Jacob from a people of strange language,

[Deuteronomy 28:49 NASB] **49** "The LORD will bring a nation against you from afar, from the end of the earth, as the eagle swoops down, a nation whose language you shall not understand,

[Jeremiah 5:15 NASB] **15 "Behold, I am bringing a nation against you from afar, O house of Israel," declares the LORD. "It is an enduring nation, It is an ancient nation, A nation whose language you do not know, Nor can you understand what they say.**

So, how are we to understand this if it is speaking of the LORD GOD not understanding? We know as the Word of GOD declares that HE knows all things – HE is omniscient. There is nothing that HE does not know. HE is the Creator and Sustainer of the universe. GOD, in HIS mercy is identifying HIMSELF with HIS people that HE has chosen by declaring the language of Egypt as unknown to HIM as was HIS people. The Hebrew was the speech known in HIS sacred house. Since the LORD GOD disapproved of Egypt's wicked and idolatrous way of life; they were unknown in that sense. The language that HE then heard from them was the worship of idolaters, vows offered up "to birds and four-footed beasts, and creeping things, as we see in the first chapter of Romans. These people sought strength and mercy from every object in nature, except from the LORD GOD. Therefore, this was a language unknown to HIM - the same way in which the Lord Jesus Christ speaks of those who do not belong to HIM – HE does not know them.

[Matthew 7:21-23 NASB] **21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. 22 "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' 23 "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.'**

Verses 8 – 10: Verse 8, as I said earlier is what I believe is the key to this Psalm. The LORD commands HIS people to hear HIM. I want you to see the mercy of having ears to hear. We don't hear and understand the Word of our LORD because we are better in anyway than anyone else. We hear because HE has in HIS great mercy and love granted us the ability to do so. O how we need to be led by the Holy Spirit and the Word. That which we love and adore, wherever our affections are reposed, that will be demonstrated in what we talk about, how we spend our time, what we think of, and what we yearn for. When we don't listen, praise GOD that HE admonishes HIS people – praise GOD that HE does not give us over to the stubbornness of a wicked heart. Praise GOD for conviction, a godly sorrow, that produces the fruit of repentance.

Verses 11 – 12: We have what is the most terrible judgement of the LORD GOD that is brought on by not heeding HIS voice, which leads to not obeying HIM. This judgment is that HE gives people over to the stubbornness of their heart that they will walk in their devices. This means that HIS Hand is lifted and HIS mercy is not given. The very thought of this should cause us to tremble and to pursue HIS mercy; that we are given to: [Ephesians 5:15-17 NASB] **15 Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, 16**

making the most of your time, because the days are evil. **17** So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

Verses 13 – 16: Hearing our LORD and walking in HIS Ways is how we emanate HIS glory. None are found in the Ways of GOD, but those who have hearkened to HIS Words. As believers, we are disciplined and made sorrowful at times because we are HIS and HE loves us. [2 Corinthians 7:10-11 NASB] **10** For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation, but the sorrow of the world produces death. **11** For behold what earnestness this very thing, this godly sorrow, has produced in you: what vindication of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what avenging of wrong! In everything you demonstrated yourselves to be innocent in the matter. I will close with the last phrase of this Psalm “And with honey from the rock I would satisfy you”. The Rock designs Christ, the Rock of our salvation, which is the Satisfaction of HIS people. We are the same in this regard as the Israelites as they were delivered from Egypt - [1 Corinthians 10:4 NASB] **4** and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and **the rock was Christ.**

Amen