

December 4, 2023

## Lord, Save Your Vineyard

[Psalm 80:1-19](#)

*O God, restore us. Smile on us. Then we will be delivered.* Psalm 80:3 (NET)

Life is a struggle. All seems well, when suddenly everything falls apart.

The car we were holding together with rubber bands and chewing gum fails, and we find ourselves hurtling backwards downhill before crashing into a grove of trees. The car is a total loss, and we have an unanticipated hospital admission with unexpected diagnoses. Then the job that had seemed secure for decades is threatened with elimination. And a legal issue that could lead to a loss of hundreds of thousands of dollars arises.

Why can't we simply enjoy life? Does God care? Asaph may have an answer.

Asaph?

Asaph was a musician during the reign of King David, one of those assigned "to offer prayers, songs of thanks, and hymns" (1 Chronicles 16:4 NET) to God. This involved writing some of the songs we call psalms. Some of his songs have been preserved as Psalms 73-83.

We read Psalm 80 hoping to find a reminder of the goodness of God and his love for us. Instead, Asaph describes Israel as resembling a vine, formerly protected by a fence. But now the fence has been destroyed, wild animals eat the unattended fruit, and the vine is damaged by fire and severe pruning. Asaph begs God to intervene and rescue his people.

That is the sense of hope in this psalm. In the middle of his despair over the status of Israel, Asaph remains confident that God is able and willing to rescue his people. And, inspired by God, he describes how God will eventually rescue Israel (and us).

Verse 17 in Hebrew refers to "the man on your right hand" and "the son of man you strengthened for yourself." (NET notes) A man on someone's "right hand?" Remember that Mark 16:19 says "Jesus . . . sat down at the right hand of God." (NET)

Even in the time of Israel's great despair, there are both hope that God will rescue the Israelites from their current situation and a veiled hope that in centuries yet to come God will rescue all believers through his promised Messiah.

**Prayer:** *Ruler of the universe, sometimes we are so busy with career, family, and even church that when parts of our lives stop functioning as we're accustomed, we become overwhelmed. Please remind us that even in the midst of chaos in our lives you are still present and in control of our lives. Keep us mindful of your love for us and of your "eternal power and divine nature" (Romans 1:20, NET). In the name of the One on your right hand, we pray, Amen.*

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