

# (How to Understand the KJV Bible) 44 Psalm 85

by Keith Simons

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*Keith Simons explores Psalm 85, emphasizing the need for revival and God's past kindness towards His people amidst their sin.*

**Duration:** 24:38

**Scripture:** Psalm 85:1-7, Psalm 85:10-13

**Topics:** "KJV Bible", "God's Mercy", "Revival"

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## Description

Keith Simons emphasizes the urgent prayer for revival found in Psalm 85, where God's people plead for restoration and new life after turning away from Him. He reflects on God's past kindness and forgiveness towards Israel, reminding listeners that despite their sins, God has the power to restore their relationship with Him. The psalmist's heartfelt cry for revival highlights the need for a change of heart and a return to obedience to God. Simons illustrates how God's mercy and truth coexist, ultimately fulfilled in Jesus Christ, who embodies both justice and grace. The sermon calls for a collective return to God, urging believers to seek His mercy and rejoice in His salvation.

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## Transcript

Revive us again. That is the desperate prayer of God's people whenever their nation has turned away from God, that God would revive or bring new life to them, that he would restore their nation's relationship with God. And that prayer appears in the book of Psalms.

It's in Psalm 85 and verse 6 and that Psalm is our study for today. Welcome, my name is Keith Symons, I'm a Bible teacher from England and each week I present a talk on how to understand one of the Psalms. Today, as I've said, it's Psalm 85.

That Psalm begins with the heading, to the chief musician, a psalm for the sons of Korah. Whenever we see that heading, to the chief musician, and we see it very often in the book of Psalms, it's a reminder that these songs were written for the worship of God in his temple, his house in Jerusalem, where the chief musician would lead the Levites in singing praise to God. And amongst those who sang praise to God in this situation were the sons of Korah.

They were the family that had descended from a man who'd lived at the time of Moses by the name of Korah. And Korah rebelled against God and he opposed Moses and Aaron and he died as God's punishment for his crime. Yet his sons lived and they served God in later generations and so we see at the

time of David and afterwards that they joined with the temple musicians and it was for them that this psalm was written.

Verse one, Lord thou hast been favourable unto thy land, thou hast brought back the captivity of Jacob. Okay, you'll see the word hast there, thou hast, and it appears again in verse two and in verse three and we see from that that that's what we call the perfect tense, it's describing something that God has done in the past. So the first three verses are calling to remembrance, reminding ourselves of what God has done in the past and how wonderful his kindness has been to Israel's people in the past.

And the reason, as we're going to find out through remembering the past, is that the author of the psalm is going to pray for this now because the situation, the troubles of Israel's people in the past were again the troubles of him now and just as God had acted to save them from those troubles and to rescue them in the past, so he was praying for God to rescue them now. Lord thou hast been favourable unto thy land. Being favourable is showing his kindness, his kindness to the land because to that land God gave people.

Those people were Israel's people. To Israel's people he gave the land but to the land he gave people because the land should not be unoccupied or left under the control of evil people. So God gave to the land of Israel the people of Israel and the way he did it was, second half, first one, thou hast brought back the captivity of Jacob.

Captivity reminds us of the word captives. So Jacob's people were captives, they lived in a foreign land. Jacob is the ancestor of the Jewish people, Israel's people.

He's also called Israel and so therefore what this is saying is when Israel's people had to live in a foreign land, when they were captives there, prisoners there, they could not leave that freely, that place freely. God brought them back to the land which he had given to them. God provided that land for them and he brought them back to it.

Not that they deserved to return to that land, no, the reason they were captives was because of their sin. Verse two, thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people, thou hast covered all their sin. Iniquity and sin both mean about the same thing.

It describes people who've not been faithful to God, they've turned away from God, they've not followed his laws and his rules for their lives, but God forgave them. God in his kindness covered all their sin as if the judge would no longer look at the record of the prisoner's crimes. So he covers it over in order to forgive it, in order to restore them, in order to bring them back, Israel's people, into the land he'd given them.

Oh God had been so kind to Israel's people in the past. We remember how they were slaves in Egypt, yet God brought them through the desert into the Promised Land. And we remember later in history how they were in Babylon, captives there.

For 70 years they were away from the Promised Land, but God brought them back unto Nehemiah and unto Ezra. God forgave the nation their sins, God allowed them to return. And with that thought, the author of our psalm permits himself with a little pause the word cellar, and it's a good point to think about the words of a psalm.

And then he continues, verse three, and he's still describing what God did in the past. Thou hast taken away all thy wrath, thou hast turned thyself from the fierceness of thine anger. Again anger and wrath

have a similar meaning.

Why was God angry? Why did he express wrath against them? Because of their sins, because of their iniquities. Verse two, they were away from the Promised Land because of God's judgment against their evil deeds. And like a judge is angry with a prisoner when he's found him guilty of a crime and he sentences him to whatever punishment he must do.

So God is described as being angry with his people when he acts against them because of their sins, their evil deeds. But the author of our psalm is not remembering that anger, he's not remembering those sins, he's describing the wonder of the kindness, the grace, the love of God. Because what did God do with these guilty people? He took away his wrath, he turned himself away from his fierce anger, he covered their sin, he forgave their iniquity.

This is our God, the God who forgives, the God who cleanses, the God who takes guilty people and gives them a right relationship with him. And so with all this remembering of God's goodness, verse four comes as a shock. In verse four something has happened and we're not expecting it.

The author of the psalm prays, turn us O God of our salvation and cause thine anger toward us to cease. Yes we are the people who God forgave, we are the people who God restored to the land, we are the people from whom God took away his anger. But once again God is angry with us because we have turned to sin.

Once again God is angry with our nation because we have turned away from him, we've not obeyed his laws, we've not followed his instructions for our lives. And so we need God to turn us, we need God to change our attitudes, to change us from being people who are in rebellion against him to being people who want to serve him. He needs to change our hearts and that is the prayer of the author of this psalm.

Turn us O God of salvation, change our heart attitude, give us hearts that want to obey you, that want to live for you because you are the God of our salvation. Salvation means rescue and safety. God is the God who saves us, there is no other God who can save us.

Yes people in the other nations worshipped false gods, they could not save God's people. No, we need the God of our salvation, the God who so often has rescued Israel's people in the past to rescue us again. And the way he will do it, the only way for him to do it, is if his anger against us comes to an end and this punishment, this suffering that we have because of our sins comes to an end, that we can return to God.

Verse 5. Wilt thou be angry with us forever? Wilt thou draw out thine anger to all generations? And verse 6. Wilt thou not revive us again that thy people may rejoice in thee? He expresses his prayer as questions, he's saying you're angry with us now God, we know that we're facing the punishment for our sins, we know that our nation justly deserves to be facing your anger but will this last forever? And all generations, in future families, will that anger continue for future generations or will you show your mercy? Will you enable future generations to turn back to you and to live for you in the land that you've given to them? And he continues, verse 6. Wilt thou not revive us again? You've given life to us in the past, well we know that you can do it and we know that you chose to do it in the past and we know your promises to Israel's nation, so will you not revive us again? Will you not give new life to our nation, the sort of life which is going to enable us to turn to you, to live for you, to serve you, to rejoice before you? Because we, your people, need to rejoice before you, there is no rejoicing in our sins, there is no rejoicing when we are under God's anger. No, we need to rejoice in the goodness of our God, we need to rejoice in his favour,

verse 1, when God can show us his kindness and for that you need to change your hearts, you need to bring us back to you. Oh, verse 7, show us your mercy, show us your mercy, show us thy mercy, O Lord and grant us thy salvation.

Lord, we're praying for you to show your mercy, your great kindness, your love towards us, that we might receive from you your salvation, your rescue from our situation. Well that's a prayer, so now I suppose we need to listen and hear what God, what the Lord will speak and that's exactly what the psalmist does, he listens to hear what God's declaration is for his people, will he show kindness to them again, will he revive them, return them to himself? I will hear what God the Lord will speak, for he will speak peace unto his people, unto his saints, but let them not turn again to folly. Yes, that is what God will do, God will answer this prayer, God will declare peace, a right relationship with his people, he will declare that he will forgive them when they turn back to him and to his saints, to the people that he's separated for himself, that probably means nation, Israel, God wants to speak peace to them, but God only asks for one thing, which is that they should not turn again and to folly, that they shouldn't turn again to their foolish ways, that they should in their hearts choose to accept the grace that he freely offers to them, he offers them that grace, he offers them that forgiveness, they only need to accept it and to choose to turn to him and to choose to turn away totally from their folly, from the foolish behaviour, from the evil behaviour that they followed, they need to turn to him, to respect him as God, to remember his covenant, his promises, to remember how they must serve him, because first nine, surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him, oh yes, when they respect God, when they fear God, then God's salvation, God's rescue comes close, it's nigh them, because God wants that glory may dwell in our land, now that word glory, it could mean honour or respect, that people should honour God, but it could mean God himself, the great and glorious God, the only one who deserves glory and honour and praise, and he is going to dwell in our land, he's going to dwell amongst his people, he's going to live with them, and when he lives with them, then they know his salvation, then they are rescued and kept safe by his hand, oh how wonderful that is.

Verse 10, mercy and truth are met together, mercy and truth met together, we bring together mercy, kindness and truth, but isn't there a contradiction there, there is to us, to people, because the truth is that his people, God's people are guilty, the truth is that God's people deserve punishment, so how can that meet with mercy, God's kindness, the desire of God to forgive his people, well where do they meet together, they meet together in God, in God himself, because God is the God of mercy and God is the God of truth, and doesn't the Bible tell us that when Jesus died on the cross, that he stood for God's truth and God's mercy, yes that he took upon himself the punishment for sins, and in doing so, he was showing God's truth, that God punishes sin, and yet he was showing God's mercy,

that God has kindness to the people and will forgive their sins when they turn to him, so there in Jesus, mercy and truth met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other, again we see a contradiction there don't we, peace, success, well when there's success, then often righteousness, doing what's right and proper, gets pushed under the carpet, people can be much more successful in business if they're dishonest, oh but here, righteousness and peace kiss each other, where does righteousness meet peace, only with the God of righteousness, who is the God of peace, in God, righteousness meets with peace, because his peace, his success, his health, is perfect righteousness, there's nothing wrong with it, totally good, totally right, and in the word picture, in the psalm, they kiss

each other, as two brothers maybe, greeting each other with a kiss on the cheek, as was the custom, and still is in some parts of the world around the Mediterranean, they kiss each other, they greet each other warmly, yes for so long mercy has been separate from truth in our land, for so long righteousness has

been separate from peace, but if God's glory is truly dwelling in our land, verse 9, if God's salvation is near them that fear him, then mercy and truth can join together, and righteousness and peace, in the joy of knowing that God is living with us, and that is when our land starts to yield what God wants, verse 11, truth shall spring out of the earth, here truth probably is used in its meaning of faithfulness, the faithfulness of God's people who are obeying his law, not

grudgingly, but with great joy, and from their hearts, this is coming from the earth, from the land, from God's promised land, because God's people, now back in the land, are living for God, under the rule of their King Messiah, and righteousness shall look down from heaven, righteousness that which is right and good, God's justice is shining down like the sun in the skies, and looking down and lighting up every corner of our world, as the world turns to what is right and good, and as the people obey God faithfully, verse 12, yea, yes the Lord shall give that which is good, and our land shall yield her increase, now we start to realise that just as truth was springing out of the earth, beginning to grow in verse 11, now our land is yielding her increase, the fruit of the earth, the

harvest, the harvest that is coming from the earth is that which is good, as God pours out his goodness upon it from heaven, verse 13, righteousness shall go before him, and shall set us in the way of his steps, the hymn there is God, righteousness shall go before God, and shall set us in the way of God's steps, yes when God is in our world, when King Messiah rules, then that which is right and good will prepare the way for him, and preparing the way for him, it will put us to walk in that same way, we will be going and living in the same way that God lives, we will be living in the way that pleases our heavenly Father, because we are following in the way of righteousness, the way of goodness, the way that is right and proper, the way that God approves of, and we will live in the way that

God lives.

Please write to me, my email address is 333kjb at gmail.com. Let me know where in the world you're listening to this podcast from, 333kjb at gmail.com. Now here's the whole of Psalm 85. To the chief musician, a psalm for the sons of Korah.

Lord thou hast been favourable unto thy land, thou hast brought back the captivity of Jacob, thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people, thou hast covered all their sin. Selah. Thou hast taken away all thy wrath, thou hast turned thyself from the fierceness of thine anger.

Turn us, O God of our salvation, and cause thine anger toward us to cease. Wilt thou be angry with us forever? Wilt thou draw out thine anger to all generations? Wilt thou not revive us again, that thy people may rejoice in thee? Show us thy mercy, O Lord, and grant us thy salvation. I will hear what God the Lord will speak, for he will speak peace unto his people and to his saints, but let them not turn again to folly.

Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him, that glory may dwell in our land. Mercy and truth are met together. Righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

Truth shall spring out of the earth, and righteousness shall look down from heaven. Yea, the Lord shall give that which is good, and our land shall yield her increase. Righteousness shall go before him, and shall set us in the way of his steps.

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