

ISRAEL'S RESTORATION

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Psalm 81 Explains All (almost)!



By Asher Intrater

לו עמי שמע לי ישראל
בדרכי יהלכו
במעט אויביהם אכניע
ועל צריהם אשיב ידי

Here is a short Bible passage, relatively unknown, that provides answers to a surprisingly large number of problematic theological and philosophical questions:

*"I am YHVH your God, who brought you up from the land of Egypt. Open wide your mouth, and I will fill it. But My people did not listen to My voice; and Israel did not want Me. So I let them go in the stubbornness of their heart, to walk in their own counsels. If only My people would listen to Me; if only Israel would walk in My ways! **In a little time I would subdue their enemies and turn My hand against their foes.**" (Psalm 81:10-14)*

Let's look at some of the spiritual principles:

- If we will not listen to His instructions to receive blessing, we will have to learn from the results of our own counsel and decisions.
- Our rejection of God's wisdom and the stubbornness of going our own way have produced disastrous results.
- If we could see that our wrong attitude and actions have caused these disasters, we might be willing to turn back to a loving relationship with our heavenly Father.
- If we would only come back to God and listen to Him, everything would change.
- Due to God's grace, it usually takes a long time of disobedience for the horrible results to come upon us.
- Due to His grace, the turn to victory and positive results usually happens very quickly, in just a "little time."
- He will "subdue" the evil factors (enemies) ruining our lives, if we "submit" to Him. We submit; He subdues.
- This is more than just blessing; it is victory over evil.
- God wants to bless us, and He has the ability. But He demands our free-will cooperation with His will.
- All the good things that God has planned for us are dependent on our willingness.
- God has a long and documented history showing His benevolence and omnipotence, as demonstrated in the Exodus from Egypt.
- God desires to fill us with every kind of provision and prosperity – whatever we ask; so He says, "open your mouth wide, and I will fill it."
- So why has this not happened? Why are we not experiencing all the goodness and blessings of God?
- The answer is that we have not listened to or obeyed His voice. Our lack of listening and lack of obedience have stopped God's blessings from coming into our lives.
- It is not just our "lack" of obedience, but that we did not want Him, His instructions or His involvement in our lives.
- Not only that, but we stubbornly rejected Him.
- God would have just kept blessing and persuading us. But since we continually and consistently refused every attempt to gain access to our hearts, He had no choice but to let us go in our stubbornness, sinfulness, and selfishness.
- We thought we knew better than God, so we followed "our own counsels."
- God's will is to bless us. Our human will rebelled and rejected – again and again. It was our will against His will.

Yeshua exemplified this in His own prayers: "May Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10) and "Not my will be done but Yours" (Matthew 26:39, 42).

If we change our stubborn heart against God to a submissive heart toward Him, everything else will change around us.



Passover Gifts of Hope



By Tents of Mercy

The Passover season is a time of New Beginnings. Spring brings out the birds to sing through the morning air. Showers of rain wet the earth. Dormant plants send flowers aloft toward soft rays of sunlight.

During Passover week we also celebrate Resurrection Day. In this beautiful and miraculous season, **God orchestrated the Exodus from Egypt, the passage from slavery to freedom, from death to life, from hopelessness to eternal hope!**

It is thanks to you that we were able to bring a physical token of hope this holiday to 900 needy families – distributing bags filled with food items to help commemorate the Passover meal of God's deliverance.

This year, on the first day of packing, 24 volunteers showed up to help! They were mostly from our congregation, with a few additional guests. With so many helping hands, we finished filling 900 bags in one record-breaking day – in spite of the pouring rain.

Then came the joy of giving the bags to their recipients. Most come to our ministry center to receive the parcels. They are from all ages and all walks of life. Some have only been in Israel for a short time and others are long time residents. They arrive on foot with their shopping carts in tow, or with their children and a stroller. Sometimes they get a ride from a friend or family member. What a blessing to look each person in the eye, wish them a happy Passover and hand them a tangible gift symbolizing hope for better days and the blessing of the God of Israel.

The rest of the bags are delivered to our local municipalities to be distributed by city staff. We have been blessed over the years to develop a strong and respectful working partnership with Kiryat Yam, and with other neighboring towns. They know that they can turn to us when there is a need and we will do our best to be of assistance.

Thank you again for making all this possible! We are eternally grateful for your love and partnership.



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The Sword of His Mouth



By **Guy Cohen**

The Israel of today, seems to be on the brink of civil war. Different sectors of the nation treat each other openly as if they were enemies, disagreeing almost violently over the orthodox or libertarian nature of the nation, over who should lead the nation, etc.

I have recently observed how even more than usual, various Israeli leaders are allowing themselves to slide into caustic verbal warfare with each other – *using their tongues as swords, using their words for destruction and not for building up Israel.*

Speaking of war, Paul gave us, the followers of Yeshua, instructions on how to handle spiritual warfare in Ephesians 6:10-19. First we need to remember that our fight is not against flesh and blood. Even though the attacks which come against us are through men (flesh and blood) we must remember that the enemy is the one manipulating the situation.

As Yeshua's disciples, what should we do? Paul instructed us to stand; to put on the belt of truth and the breastplate of righteousness; to direct our feet to the gospel of peace. We must remember that the enemy's arrows are always directed toward us, and the shield of faith is our defense against those fiery darts. We also have the helmet of salvation to cover our thoughts, and we should remind ourselves that we are saved by grace.



Now to our main point, we must take the sword of the Spirit. However, the sword is not in our hand, but rather it is the Word of God which comes out of our mouth. In Revelation 19, we read about Yeshua riding on the white horse, and in verse 15, from His mouth comes forth a sharp sword.

*"I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and wages war. His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. **Coming out of his mouth is a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations.** He will rule them with an iron scepter.' He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty."* (Revelation 19:11-15 NIV)

Until that day, let us use the power of our words for the purpose of edification, prayer, intercession and claiming His Kingdom.

"Let no corrupt speech proceed out of your mouth, but such as is good for edifying as the need may be, that it may give grace to them that hear." (Ephesians 4:29 ASV)

"Death and life are in the power of the tongue." (Proverbs 18:21)

The spoken word can tear down or build up. As the darkness of this world grows darker, we are all called to speak life, light, truth and grace.

And now a personal request for my homeland; please pray for His shalom in Jerusalem and throughout Israel.



Redemption Celebration with Youth and Newcomers



By Leon Mazin

Leading up to Passover, it has become a tradition in our congregation to start the celebrations with an evening for new immigrants. This year it was especially poignant as many of the newcomers were those who had fled the war in Ukraine.

During the program, young students from our school of the arts "Rainbow of Sounds" presented their music. Volunteers from the congregation told the guests the account of the Exodus from Egypt and the way God's mighty deeds have been celebrated and memorialized in Israelite heritage ever since. Delicious Passover treats were served.

We were glad to be able to share Hebraic biblical traditions and an in-depth Messianic worldview with the new immigrants who are returning in these days to the Land of Promise, just as their forefathers came from Egyptian slavery thousands of years ago.



How to Use Your Limitations



By Eitan Shishkoff

People who need hearing aids are old geezers, right? Well, I now find myself among them. In order to follow what's going on I'm dependent on devices that attach to my natural ears. They have to be charged up every night. These new-fangled ones are even adjustable on my smart phone.

The inescapable bottom line is that my own body is **not functioning adequately without outside aid**. It's humbling to be confronted with one's limitations. Yet I've begun to see this as a timely personal message. The Lord seems to be telling me *"There's no getting around it. You're not self-sufficient. Now, I want to supply what you are lacking. Trust in me!"*

Jacob's Limitation

Our ancestor Jacob experienced this truth with such force that it redefined him through his limitation and its consequences. On the way to a "showdown" with his brother Esau, who'd sworn to kill him, Jacob was "afraid and distressed" (Genesis 32:7). He was freaked out. Crying out to the God of his father Isaac and grandfather Abraham, Jacob declares that he is unworthy of the Lord's mercies, though God has promised to "deal well with" him.

Agonizing through the night, trying to figure out a way to save his family even if Esau attacks, Jacob finds himself alone wrestling with "a man." Perhaps you can relate to the patriarch at this point. I can. Life's dilemmas often elude my solutions. I find myself out of options.

Struggling with His Maker

Oddly enough, the stranger (whom Jacob soon identifies as God Himself – *"I have seen God face to face"*) is not winning the wrestling match. His strategy? He touches Jacob's hip, puts it out of joint. Game over, the man/angel wins. But Jacob is determined and will not let him go before being blessed. This indicates our "hero's" comprehension that he's been wrestling with His Maker.

At this point the issue turns to identity. God says, "you've been Yaakov (variously meaning 'going around the issue/bypassing/or heel – since he grabbed his brother's heel while still in the womb'), but now you're going to be Yisrael" (you have persevered/prevailed/have power as a prince with God).

Father of a Different People

As a physical reminder of this profound identity change, Jacob limped from then on. Embracing that mark of weakness, however, he became Israel, the father of the Jewish people. What a telling commentary on the type of people God's partners are to be. Not those who strive to take first place for the sake of beating everyone else, but those who have entered a covenant of trust with God and are **relying on Him to fulfill** our chosen destiny.

From that encounter, Jacob was able to face his deeply resentful brother and the two were dramatically reconciled. His fear was transformed to faith. His anxiety became security that God was with him.

The limp? It became God's entry point. I'm beginning to see my hearing aids the same way. What are *your* limitations, and how does the One who made you want to **use your limitations as a constant** reminder of His **all-sufficiency and superb destiny** for your life?

Do you feel inadequate? You're in good company. Moses protested *"I can't talk"* Jeremiah felt *"I'm too young."* Paul confessed *"I'm weak."* I've never felt adequate for a single day of my 30 years in Israel, arriving as a new non-Hebrew speaking immigrant in 1992. Yet the Lord used Moses, Jeremiah and Paul. Hey, He's even used me. And He is well able to bring His kingdom through you too.



Tel Aviv Outreach to Street People



By Moti Cohen

All are welcome and the food is even kosher

At our Feed Tel Aviv outreach center in south Tel Aviv, our doors are open to all. We routinely serve people from all walks of life: Arabs, Jews, African migrants and more. For those who aren't familiar, observant Jews and Muslims have specific dietary restrictions. Muslim dietary laws restrict pork, alcohol and inhumane slaughter practices. For observant Jews, the requirements are much stricter, and those who keep kosher are very careful about where they eat. **The observant Jews and Muslims who come to our outreach center know us well and know that we keep a kosher kitchen, adhering to both Jewish and Muslim requirements.**

For me, it is beautiful to see Muslims, observant Jews and refugees from the nations sitting together at the same table, receiving food, hospitality and the love of God. **In the Middle East, hospitality is an essential part of our culture, both for Arabs and Jews, and God has called us to offer His hospitality to the neediest of the needy in our city.** When I see society's outcasts from all different backgrounds gathered together there, I am reminded how the Messiah shared a table with society's "undesirables" and was sharply criticized by the religious authorities for it:

"The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Look at this glutton and drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!'" (Matthew 11:18-19)



Tiferet Yeshua Congregation in Tel Aviv

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A little love goes a long way

Here are just a couple stories of people who have shared our table and whose lives have been touched by this outreach:

Haled is an Arab man from a Muslim village in Samaria who ran away from his village years ago and eventually landed on the streets of Tel Aviv. A few years ago, we witnessed to Haled, and he ended up praying with us to receive Yeshua as Lord. Haled makes his living by collecting glass and plastic bottles for recycling. He says our outreach saves him from going hungry. Whenever Haled comes to the outreach for a hot meal, he brings along a bag so he can take away a few more portions to help him get through the week. Haled also comes to the outreach center to discuss his faith and to get more discipleship and prayer.

Sasha, a man in his thirties, ended up on the streets just recently. He told us, like many others we have met, that with the increase in food prices and a sudden rise in his rent, he was unable to make ends meet. When Sasha first came to us, he was so happy to receive food and clothes. He told us that we are doing a great *"mitzva"* (good deed). Because he has so little money and is trying to cut back wherever he can, Sasha said that he has lost more than 10 kilos (22 pounds) since he's been on the streets.

I shared with Sasha about our faith. He was deeply moved, and he asked me to pass on his thanks to all who support this ministry. Sasha told me that recently he had been in a dark place and was deeply depressed, but meeting us gave him hope that there is still light in the world.

We want to thank all of you who support this outreach! You are out there with us touching the lives of these precious people with the love of God!



Hemmed in on All Sides



By **Tal Haroni**

Finally it had happened. The Israelites were out of Egypt, free at last, standing at the door to a new future and a new land. The plagues had passed. They were released from slavery, and the air was heavy with excitement.

But quickly they discovered that the war was not over. Pharaoh was about to chase them down. Even though he had suffered greatly from the plagues, and even though his crown prince was killed because of his disobedience, Pharaoh would not give up. When he heard that the Israelites were in the middle of the desert, he determined to find and destroy them completely.

“As Pharaoh approached, the Israelites looked up and saw the Egyptians marching after them, and they were terrified and cried out to the LORD.” (Exodus 14:10)

It seemed as though God had brought the Israelites to a dead end. They were trapped between Pharaoh’s army and the sea, frightened, starting to doubt God’s and Moses’ intentions. They complained to Moses, saying they would have been better off in Egypt, enslaved to Pharaoh.

Their reaction reminds me of myself, when God is asking me to release to Him something that enslaves me; yet I don’t want to go through the freedom process. It seems much easier to stay enslaved to my own habits and temptations.



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“But Moses told the people, Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the LORD’s salvation, which He will accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians you see today, you will never see again. The LORD will fight for you; you need only to be still.” (Exodus 14:13-14)

Moses encouraged the children of Israel, stood in faith for them. It wasn’t easy. The situation looked dire in the extreme. He likely thought to himself, *“How in the world is God going to save us now?”* Yet Moses believed and God came through. I don’t think Moses even considered the possibility of God parting the Sea, but a miracle, by definition, can only happen in extraordinary circumstances; after all human attempts have failed.

God loves to save us and manifest His glory in our lives. He’s not scared of impossibly difficult situations, on the contrary, *“No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it” (1 Corinthians 10:13).*

Lately I’ve been facing my own Red-Sea-type situation. I need to move out of my apartment by the end of the month. Another place fell through last week. I was very disappointed, but kept hope. Then I started to look for new options. Every single one closed before me. I am still waiting and can only believe that God has something better for me.

Do you have a spiritual or physical need with no human solution? Maybe you are daily more desperate for God’s intervention. If you feel trapped, with no solution in sight, don’t be discouraged! It might be that God wants to go above and beyond your thoughts and dreams, better than what you could envision for yourself. Hold on. Don’t lose hope. God is faithful! He will always have a greater strategy than we do. He loves you and has a wonderful plan in store for you.

