

# Psalm 85: Justice and peace will kiss



Psalm 85 (84) (Mode 3. 3....12 / 4.....27I)

The psalmist recalls God's grace poured out on his people in the past, and prays for that grace now. It is a call to hope in a situation in which there is no respite as one difficulty leads to another (perhaps the period after the return from exile in Babylon?)

Lord, you loved your land;  
you revived the fortunes of Jacob.

The land most precious of all to you'(Wisdom 12:7).

'I will restore their fortunes,  
the fortunes of Sodom and her daughters  
and the fortunes of Samaria and her daughters,  
and I will restore your own fortunes along with  
theirs'(Ezekiel 16:53).

You wiped away the guilt of your people.  
You forgave all their sins.

‘Happy are those whose transgression is forgiven,  
whose sin is covered.

Happy are those to whom the Lord imputes no iniquity,  
and in whose spirit there is no deceit.

While I kept silence, my body wasted away  
through my groaning all day long.

For day and night your hand was heavy upon me;  
my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer.

Then I acknowledged my sin to you,  
and I did not hide my iniquity.

I said, ‘I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,’  
and you forgave the guilt of my sin’(Psalm 32:1-5).

Revive us, O God our Saviour,      refrain of Psalm 80  
end your grievance against us.

Will you be angry with us forever,  
will your anger never cease?

Will you not change and give us life again,  
so that your people may rejoice in you?

Show us your kindness, O Lord,  
and grant us your salvation.

‘O God, why do you cast us off forever?’(Psalm 74:1).

‘Has his steadfast love ceased forever? Are his promises at an end for all time? Has God forgotten to be gracious? Has he in anger shut up his compassion?’ And I say, ‘It is my grief that the right hand of the Most High has changed’(Psalm 77:8-10).

‘How long, Lord? Will you be angry forever?’

(Psalm 79:5)

‘Why have you forgotten us completely?

Why have you forsaken us these many days?

Restore us to yourself, Lord, that we may be restored; renew our days as of old — unless you have utterly rejected us, and are angry with us beyond measure’(Lamentations 5:20-22).

‘You who have made me see many troubles and calamities will revive me again; from the depths of the earth you will bring me up again’(Psalm 71:20).

‘Give us life, and we will call on your name.  
Restore us, YHWH God of hosts;  
let your face shine, that we may be saved’(Psalm 80:18-19).

‘Although he causes grief, he will have compassion  
according to the abundance of his steadfast love.’

(Lamentations 3:32)



Let me hear what the Lord has to say,  
a voice that speaks of peace:  
peace to the people  
who turn to God in their hearts.

‘The effect of righteousness will be peace, and the result of righteousness will be quietness and trust forever. My people will abide in a peaceful habitation, in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places’(Isaiah 32:17-18).

## Surely God's salvation is at hand for the faithful

‘We wait for justice, but there is none; for salvation, but it is far from us ... Justice is turned back, and righteousness stands at a distance; for truth stumbles in the public square, and uprightness cannot enter. Truth is lacking, and whoever turns from evil is despoiled. The Lord saw it, and it displeased him that there was no justice’(Isaiah 59:11,14-15).

The salvation that is 'at hand' was revealed finally in Jesus:

'My eyes have seen your salvation'(Luke 2:30 - Simeon).

'Let it be known to you then that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will listen.'

(Acts 28:28 - Paul's last words in Acts)

'Having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him'(Hebrews 5:9).

and God's glory will fill our land.

In Jesus, God's glory did dwell on earth.

'To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory'(Colossians 1:27).

'The god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God'(2Corinthians 4:4).

Kindness and faithfulness have met;  
justice and peace have embraced.

‘When the goodness and loving kindness of God our Saviour appeared, he saved us, not because of any works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy, through the water of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit. This Spirit he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Saviour’(Titus 3:4-6).

‘In him you also ... were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit’(Ephesians 1:13).

‘The kingdom of God is righteousness [‘justice’] and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit’(Romans 14:17).

Faithfulness springs up from the ground,  
and justice looks down from heaven.

‘Shower, O heavens, from above, and let the skies rain down righteousness; let the earth open, that salvation may spring up, and let it cause righteousness to sprout up also. I, the Lord, have created it’(Isaiah 45:8).

‘As the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations’(Isaiah 61:11).

‘On that day I will answer, says YHWH. I will answer the heavens and they shall answer the earth; and the earth shall answer the grain, the wine, and the oil, and they shall answer Jezreel [= YHWH sows]; and I will sow him for myself in the land. And I will have pity on Lo-ruhamah [= not pitied], and I will say to Lo-ammi [=not my people], ‘You are my people’; and he shall say, ‘You are my God’(Hosea 2:21-23).

The Lord will give prosperity,  
and our land will yield its harvest.

‘May there be abundance of grain in the land;  
may it wave on the tops of the mountains;  
may its fruit be like Lebanon; and may people  
blossom in the cities like the grass of the  
field’(Psalm 72:16).



‘As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there until they have watered the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose and succeed in the thing for which I sent it’(Isaiah 55:10-11).

Justice clears a path for God.

Justice points the way to peace.

God continues to journey with us.