

Psalm 80:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand, upon the son of man whom thou madest strong for thyself.

Analysis

Let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand, upon the son of man whom thou madest strong for thyself. This verse introduces a figure who has intrigued interpreters throughout history. After the vine metaphor (verses 8-16) describing Israel's planting, growth, and devastation, the psalmist now prays for a specific individual to be strengthened for deliverance.

"The man of thy right hand" (ish yeminekha, איש ימינך) designates someone in the position of honor and power. The right hand symbolized strength and favor throughout Scripture. To be at God's right hand meant to receive His active support and to act with His authority. This "man" is closely associated with God's powerful working.

"The son of man" (ben-adam, בֶן-אָדָם) parallels "man of thy right hand." The phrase can simply mean "human being" (as in Psalm 8:4), but in this context it refers to the specific individual mentioned. "Whom thou madest strong for thyself" (immatzta lakh, אַמְצָתָה לְךָ) indicates divine empowerment for divine purposes.

Various interpretations have been offered:

1. a collective reference to Israel or Benjamin (whose name means "son of my right hand")
2. the reigning king of David's line
3. a future messianic figure.

The later application to Christ in the New Testament finds support in the right-hand imagery applied to Jesus after His resurrection (Acts 2:33, Romans 8:34, Hebrews 1:3).

Historical Context

The phrase "son of man" would later gain rich significance. Ezekiel is repeatedly addressed as "son of man" (over 90 times). Daniel 7:13-14 describes "one like the Son of man" coming with clouds of heaven to receive an everlasting kingdom. Jesus consistently used "Son of Man" as His preferred self-designation, combining Daniel's heavenly figure with Isaiah's suffering servant.

In its original context, Psalm 80:17 likely referred to the Davidic king as God's designated agent for Israel's deliverance. The king was God's "son" (Psalm 2:7) and sat at His right hand (Psalm 110:1). Praying for God's hand to be upon him meant asking for divine empowerment for the national leader.

Early Christians recognized messianic implications. If the vine represents Israel and the "man of thy right hand" is the one through whom restoration comes, then Christ fulfills this role. He is the true vine (John 15:1), and He sits at the Father's right hand. The psalm's prayer finds ultimate answer in Christ's work of redemption.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. Who might the 'man of thy right hand' have meant to the original audience?
2. How does Jesus fulfill the role of the 'son of man' whom God made strong?
3. What is the significance of the right-hand position in biblical symbolism?

4. How does this verse transition from lamenting the vine's destruction to hoping for restoration?

Interlinear Text

תְּהִי יְדֵךְ עַל יְשָׁאָת אֶמְיָגֶן עַל בֶּן עַל
H1961 **Let thy hand** H5921 **be upon the man** H376 **of thy right hand** H3225 H5921 **upon the son**
H3027 H3225 H1121

אֶת אָמַת כַּלְבֵּן:
H120 **of man** H553 **whom thou madest strong** H0

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 89:21 (Parallel theme): With whom my hand shall be established: mine arm also shall strengthen him.

Psalms 80:15 (Creation): And the vineyard which thy right hand hath planted, and the branch that thou madest strong for thyself.

Psalms 110:1 (Parallel theme): The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org