

Psalms 80:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Turn us again, O LORD God of hosts, cause thy face to shine;
and we shall be saved.

Analysis

Turn us again, O LORD God of hosts, cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved. The final refrain brings the psalm to its climactic conclusion, now using the fullest divine title: "LORD God of hosts" (Yahweh Elohim Tseva'ot, יהוה אֱלֹהִים תְּשֻׁבָּה). The progression from "God" (verse 3) to "God of hosts" (verse 7) to "LORD God of hosts" (verse 19) represents intensifying appeal.

"LORD" (Yahweh) is God's covenant name, the personal name revealed to Moses at the burning bush. By concluding with this name, the psalm appeals to covenant relationship and faithfulness. The God who said "I AM THAT I AM" (Exodus 3:14) and who delivered Israel from Egypt is being called upon.

"God of hosts" (Elohim Tseva'ot) means God of armies—heavenly armies of angels, cosmic forces under divine command. The title emphasizes God's warrior nature and military power. Against the enemies devastating Israel (symbolized in the destroyed vine), the psalm invokes the Commander of heaven's armies.

The combination "LORD God of hosts" brings together covenant intimacy (Yahweh), sovereign power (Elohim), and military might (Tseva'ot). The people need all these aspects of God's character: faithfulness to promises, creative power over all creation, and warrior strength to defeat enemies. The refrain's content remains constant—turn us, shine forth, save us—but the increasingly full divine name intensifies the urgency and hope.

Historical Context

The title "LORD of hosts" appears nearly 250 times in the Old Testament, frequently in the prophets (especially Isaiah, Jeremiah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi). It emphasizes God's command over all powers—angelic hosts, stars, and all creation. The title was particularly appropriate in military contexts: when Israel faced overwhelming enemies, they needed the Commander of heaven's armies.

The threefold refrain structure gave the congregation repeated opportunity to voice their central plea. Liturgically, this may have been sung or chanted antiphonally, with different groups or leaders performing different sections. The final refrain, with its fullest divine name, represented the culminating cry of the assembled people.

This psalm's use in later Jewish and Christian worship continued its function as communal lament seeking divine intervention. The Church has applied it to Christ's coming (advent) and second coming (eschatology)—the ultimate shining forth of God's face in salvation.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. Why does the divine title intensify with each repetition of the refrain?
2. What aspects of God's character does 'LORD God of hosts' encompass?
3. How does the psalm model persistent, repeated prayer for the same request?
4. What does this psalm teach about communal lament and the movement from distress to hope?

Interlinear Text

יְהוָה	אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל	צִבְאָה	הַשִּׁיבֵנו	הָאֵל	פָּנֶיךָ
O LORD	God	of hosts	Turn us again	to shine	cause thy face
H3068	H430	H6635	H7725	H215	H6440

וְנִשְׁעָה:

and we shall be saved
H3467

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 80:1 (Parallel theme): Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock; thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth.

Psalms 80:3 (Salvation): Turn us again, O God, and cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.

Psalms 27:4 (References Lord): One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his temple.