

# Psalms 80:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh stir up thy strength, and come and save us.

## Analysis

**Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh stir up thy strength, and come and save us.** This urgent plea invokes God's presence associated with the wilderness tabernacle's marching order. The tribal sequence—Ephraim, Benjamin, Manasseh—deliberately recalls Numbers 2:18-24, where these tribes camped on the tabernacle's west side behind the ark. When Israel marched, these tribes followed the ark, positioned to witness God's visible glory leading them (Numbers 10:22-24).

"Stir up thy strength" (orerah et-gevuratekha, עורֶרָה אֶת־גְּבוּרָתְךָ) uses ur (עור), meaning to awake, rouse, stir up—not implying God sleeps but employing anthropomorphic language expressing urgency. The phrase parallels Psalm 44:23: "Awake, why sleepest thou, O Lord?" The theology is bold: God appears inactive while His people suffer; therefore, awaken Your power, demonstrate Your strength on our behalf. Gevurah (גְּבוּרָה) emphasizes God's mighty acts, especially deliverance and warfare on Israel's behalf.

"Come and save us" (lekha lishu'atah lanu, לֵךְ לִישׁוּעָתָה לָנוּ) directly requests divine intervention—not distant sympathy but coming in person to rescue. The verb yasha (יָשַׁע, save) is root of Yeshua (Jesus), emphasizing deliverance, salvation, spacious relief from distress. The plural "us" indicates corporate lament: the entire community faces crisis requiring God's manifest presence and power. The verse asserts: as You led our fathers victoriously through wilderness, come lead us now to deliverance.

## Historical Context

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Psalm 80 is attributed to Asaph, a Levitical worship leader under David (1 Chronicles 25:1-2). The psalm likely originates from the Northern Kingdom crisis—either the Assyrian conquest of 722 BC (when Ephraim and Manasseh's tribal territories were destroyed) or earlier Aramean oppression under kings like Hazael. The specific mention of northern tribes (Ephraim, Manasseh) alongside Benjamin suggests concerns about Israel's northern territories. The vineyard imagery throughout Psalm 80 reflects Isaiah 5's vineyard parable, both addressing national judgment and hope for restoration.

## Related Passages

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**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

**Romans 2:1** — Judging others

**Revelation 20:12** — Judgment according to deeds

## Study Questions

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1. What does it mean practically to ask God to 'stir up' His strength when He never actually sleeps or loses power?
2. How does recalling God's past mighty acts (wilderness journey, ark leading Israel) strengthen faith when facing present crises?
3. Why might the psalmist invoke these specific tribes, and how does corporate identity shape communal lament?

## Interlinear Text

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לְפָנַי י	אֶפְרַיִם	וּבִנְיָמִן	וּמְנַשֶּׁה	עוֹרֹךְ	אֶת	גְּבוּרַתְךָ
<b>Before</b>	<b>Ephraim</b>	<b>and Benjamin</b>	<b>and Manasseh</b>	<b>stir up</b>	H853	<b>thy strength</b>
H6440	H669	H1144	H4519	H5782		H1369
וְלִי	לִישָׁעָה	לְבוֹ:				
H1980	<b>and save</b>	H0				
	H3444					

## Additional Cross-References

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**Psalms 35:23** (Parallel theme): Stir up thyself, and awake to my judgment, even unto my cause, my God and my Lord.