

Psalms 85:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

LORD, thou hast been favourable unto thy land: thou hast brought back the captivity of Jacob.

Analysis

The psalm celebrates restoration: "LORD, thou hast been favourable unto thy land: thou hast brought back the captivity of Jacob" (Hebrew *ratzita YHWH artzekha shavta sh-vut Ya-aqov*). "Favourable" (Hebrew *ratzah*) indicates acceptance, pleasure—God's face shining again. "Brought back captivity" describes return from exile. The possessive "thy land" reminds that Canaan is God's gift. The verse celebrates when God turns from judgment to mercy, ending discipline and restoring relationship.

Historical Context

This psalm likely celebrates return from Babylonian exile (538 BC under Cyrus's decree, Ezra 1-2). The "captivity of Jacob" is covenant language—God remains faithful to patriarchal promises despite Israel's unfaithfulness. Jeremiah 29:10-14 prophesied this: after seventy years, God would restore. The return wasn't merely political but theological—God's favor returning after judgment. Christ's work accomplishes ultimate return from sin's exile.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How have you experienced God "bringing back captivity"—restoring what sin or consequences destroyed?
2. What does God being "favourable" after discipline teach about His character and covenant love?
3. How does Christ accomplish the ultimate return from exile, bringing believers from sin's captivity to God's favor?

Interlinear Text

רַצָּ יְהוָה	יְהוָה ה	אֶרֶץ בְּ	שָׁ בָּתָּ
thou hast been favourable	LORD	unto thy land	thou hast brought back
H7521	H3068	H776	H7725
יִשְׂרָאֵל יָשׁוּבָה וְתָ	יִשְׂרָאֵל יָשׁוּבָה וְתָ		
the captivity	of Jacob		
H7622	H3290		

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 14:7 (References Lord): Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion! when the LORD bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad.

Jeremiah 30:18 (References Lord): Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will bring again the captivity of Jacob's tents, and have mercy on his dwellingplaces; and the city shall be builded upon her own heap, and the palace shall remain after the manner thereof.

Psalms 77:7 (References Lord): Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will he be favourable no more?

Ezekiel 39:25 (References Lord): Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Now will I bring again the captivity of Jacob, and have mercy upon the whole house of Israel, and will be jealous for my holy name;

Psalms 42:1 (Parallel theme): As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.

Zechariah 1:16 (References Lord): Therefore thus saith the LORD; I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies: my house shall be built in it, saith the LORD of hosts, and a line shall be stretched forth upon Jerusalem.

Joel 2:18 (References Lord): Then will the LORD be jealous for his land, and pity his people.

Leviticus 26:42 (Parallel theme): Then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember; and I will remember the land.

Joel 3:1 (Parallel theme): For, behold, in those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem,

Jeremiah 31:23 (References Lord): Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; As yet they shall use this speech in the land of Judah and in the cities thereof, when I shall bring again their captivity; The LORD bless thee, O habitation of justice, and mountain of holiness.