

# Psalm 85:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

I will hear what God the LORD will speak: for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints: but let them not turn again to folly.

## Analysis

**I will hear what God the LORD will speak: for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints: but let them not turn again to folly.** This verse shifts from petition (vv. 4-7) to prophetic listening—the psalmist positions himself to hear God's response. The phrase "I will hear" (eshme'ah, אֶשְׁמַע) indicates intentional, attentive listening. In prayer's dialogue, believers speak to God, but must also quiet themselves to hear His response. The psalmist models contemplative prayer—not merely making requests but waiting for divine answer.

"God the LORD" (ha-El Yahweh, הָאֵל יְהוָה) combines two divine names: El (אֵל, emphasizing God's power and might) and Yahweh (יְהוָה, His covenant name). This combination appears rarely but significantly—it emphasizes that the powerful Creator God is also the covenant-keeping relational God. He has both ability and commitment to help His people.

"He will speak peace" (yedaber shalom, יְדַבֵּר שָׁלוֹם) promises divine communication bringing shalom (שָׁלוֹם). Shalom exceeds mere absence of conflict; it encompasses wholeness, completeness, welfare, prosperity, harmony—comprehensive wellbeing in every dimension. God doesn't merely silence complaints; He speaks restoration, reconciliation, blessing. This peace comes "unto his people, and to his saints" (el-ammo ve-el-chasidav, אֶל-עַמּוֹ וְאֶל-חָסִידָיו)—covenant community and faithful followers. Chasidim (חסִידִים, "saints, faithful ones, godly") describes those who embody chesed (covenant loyalty) in response to God's chesed toward them.

"But let them not turn again to folly" (ve-al-yashuvu le-khislah, וְאֵל-נִשְׁׁוּבּוּ לְכַסְּלָה) appends urgent warning. Kesilah (כַּסְּלָה, "folly") means foolishness, stupidity—particularly spiritual foolishness of ignoring God, trusting idols, or disobeying covenant commands. The warning acknowledges human tendency: after God delivers, people forget Him and return to sin. The psalmist prays this cycle won't repeat—that restoration will produce lasting faithfulness, not temporary reform.

## Historical Context

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### Prophetic Ministry and Israel's Cyclical Apostasy

The psalmist's posture—"I will hear what God the LORD will speak"—reflects prophetic ministry. Prophets stood between God and people, listening to God's word then proclaiming it to the community. This required attentive listening before authoritative speaking. Jeremiah distinguished true prophets (who stood in God's council and heard His word, Jeremiah 23:18, 22) from false prophets (who spoke from their own imagination, Jeremiah 23:16, 26).

God's speaking "peace" fulfills prophetic promises. Isaiah proclaimed: "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace" (Isaiah 52:7). Yet peace was conditional: "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked" (Isaiah 57:21). True peace came only through repentance, covenant faithfulness, and trust in God. False prophets proclaimed "Peace, peace; when there is no peace" (Jeremiah 6:14, 8:11)—promising blessing without addressing sin. Psalm 85 avoids this error—God speaks peace to His faithful people, with warning against returning to folly.

Israel's history tragically demonstrated the cycle the psalmist feared: deliverance, followed by faithfulness, then gradual drift into apostasy, resulting in judgment, prompting repentance, leading to deliverance again. Judges explicitly describes this pattern (Judges 2:11-19): "And the children of Israel did evil... and they forsook the LORD... And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel... And the LORD raised up judges, which delivered them... and the LORD was with the judge... But it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they returned, and

corrupted themselves."

The New Testament announces ultimate fulfillment: Jesus is God's peace spoken to humanity. He "preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father" (Ephesians 2:17-18). Christ "is our peace" (Ephesians 2:14), having "made peace through the blood of his cross" (Colossians 1:20). This peace transcends circumstances: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you" (John 14:27).

## Related Passages

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

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

## Study Questions

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1. What does it mean to "hear what God the LORD will speak," and how can believers cultivate attentive listening to God's voice?
2. How is the *shalom* (peace) God speaks different from worldly peace or mere absence of conflict?
3. Why does the psalmist append a warning against returning to folly immediately after promising that God will speak peace?
4. What cyclical patterns of deliverance followed by drift into sin appear in your own spiritual life, and how can they be broken?
5. How does Jesus Christ fulfill God's promise to speak peace, and what does this peace look like in believers' experience?

## Interlinear Text

ה אָשָׁמָע מֵה	רֹא	לְבָא הַיְהָ	רֹא	לְבָא הַיְהָ	רֹא	לְבָא הַיְהָ
I will hear	H4100	for he will speak	what God	the LORD	H3588	for he will speak

אֶל־שֶׁל־וּמְעַמְּדֵנִי  
unto his people and to his saints

לְכַסְלָה: וְבָנָי  
but let them not turn again to folly

## Additional Cross-References

**Psalms 29:11** (Peace): The LORD will give strength unto his people; the LORD will bless his people with peace.

**Revelation 3:19** (Parallel theme): As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

**Zechariah 9:10** (Peace): And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off: and he shall speak peace unto the heathen: and his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth.

**Habakkuk 2:1** (Parallel theme): I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved.

**2 Timothy 2:19** (References God): Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.

**Psalms 130:4** (Parallel theme): But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.

**John 14:27** (Peace): Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

**Genesis 34:7** (Parallel theme): And the sons of Jacob came out of the field when they heard it: and the men were grieved, and they were very wroth, because he had wrought folly in Israel in lying with Jacob's daughter; which thing ought not to be done.

**Hebrews 12:25** (Parallel theme): See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven:

**Galatians 4:9** (References God): But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?