

Psalm 81

"A FESTIVE ¹ ENCOURAGEMENT OF ISRAEL TO OBEY GOD"

For the choir director; on the Gittith.² *A Psalm* of Asaph.

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A1 A CALL TO PRAISE 81:1-5

B1 The Imperative of the Call 81:1-3

C1 With Voice 81:1

D1 {1} Sing for joy to God our strength;

D2 Shout joyfully to the God of Jacob.

C2 With Festive Instrumentation 81:2-3

D1 {2} Raise a song,

D2 strike the timbrel,

D3 The sweet sounding lyre with the harp. 81:2

D4 {3} Blow the trumpet 81:3

E1 at the new moon,

E2 At the full moon, on our feast day.

B2 The Scriptural Basis for the Call 81:4-5

C1 The Terminology 81:4-5a

D1 {4} For it is a statute for Israel,

D2 An ordinance of the God of Jacob. 81:4

D3 {5} He established it for a testimony in Joseph 81:5b

¹ Title - Festive: Traditionally thought to be a psalm used in connection with the Feast of Tabernacles.

² Superscription - Gittith: Used only in Psalms 8, 81, and 84, Gittith is a feminine adjective derived from the noun Gath, and means "wine-press." It is also one of the five principal cities of the Philistines. The three main conjectures are therefore that this is a term connected with the vintage (which coincided with the Feast of Tabernacles), or with the Ark's journey from the Gittite's house to Jerusalem (2 Sam. 6:11), or with an instrument (or tune?) which took its name from Gath" (Derek Kidner, *Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries*, Psalms 1-72, Introduction, p. 56.)

C2 The Occasion 81:5b

D1 The activity of Elohim: When he went throughout the land of Egypt.

D2 The new relationship-name of Elohim: I heard a language that I did not know:³

A2 GOD'S REDEMPTION OF ISRAEL IN EGYPT 81:6-7

B1 His Freeing Israel from Slavery in Egypt 81:6

C1 {6} "I relieved his shoulder of the burden,

C2 His hands were freed from the basket.

B2 His Protecting Israel on the Shores of the Red Sea 81:7a

C1 {7} "You called in trouble and I rescued you;

C2 I answered you in the hiding place of thunder;

B3 His Provision of Water from the Rock at Rephidim: I proved you at the waters of Meribah. Selah. 81:7b (Ex. 17:1-7)

A3 GOD'S WARNING ACCOMPANIED BY PROMISE 81:8-10

B1 God's Admonition 81:8

C1 {8} "Hear, O My people, and I will admonish you;

C2 O Israel, if you would listen to Me! Selah.

B2 God's Command of Allegiance 81:9

C1 {9} "Let there be no strange god among you;

C2 Nor shall you worship any foreign god.

B3 Yahweh's promise of Satisfaction Based on Past Performance

C1 {10} "I, the LORD, am your God,

C2 Who brought you up from the land of Egypt;

C3 Open your mouth wide and I will fill it.

³ 81:5 - I heard a language that I did not know: This difficult text evidently refers to Israel's beginning to know God in a new way through His name Yahweh, the Self-Existent One who becomes Israel's Covenantal Redeemer from Bondage (Ex. 3:14-15).

A4 GOD'S INDUCEMENT OF HIS DISOBEDIENT PEOPLE 81:11-16

B1 Israel's Disobedience 81:11

C1 {11} "But My people did not listen to My voice,

C2 And Israel did not obey Me.

B2 God's Resultant Judgment 81:12

C1 {12} "So I gave them over to the stubbornness of their heart,

C2 To walk in their own devices.

B3 God's Yearning for Attentive Obedience 81:13

C1 For Listening: {13} "Oh that My people would listen to Me,

C2 For Obedient Lifestyle: That Israel would walk in My ways!

B4 God's Conditional Promise of Judgment against Israel's Enemies 81:14

C1 Subduing Israel's Enemies; {14} "I would quickly subdue their enemies

C2 Rebuffing Israel's Adversaries: And turn My hand against their adversaries.

B5 God's Punishment of the Hypocrites 81:15

C1 The Pretense of Those Who Hate Yahweh: {15} "Those who hate the LORD would pretend obedience⁴ to Him,

C2 The Punishment of Those Who Hate Yahweh: And their time of *punishment* would be forever.

B6 God's Promise of Pampering of His People 81:16

C1 With Fine Wheat: {16} "But I would feed you with the finest of the wheat,

C2 With Superb Honey: And with honey from the rock I would satisfy you."

⁴ 81:15 - pretend obedience to Him: NIV reads "cringe before Him."

EXPANDED ANALYSIS OF PSALM 81

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