

## *PSALMS 81 and 82*

According to scholars, the original setting for this psalm is either that of the Passover or Feast of Tabernacles. It will certainly suit either festival. And the psalm is of so general a character that its admonition would be appropriate to any observance. The psalm is a plea for faithfulness to Yahweh, for loyalty and fidelity in view of all that God has done for Israel, his chosen nation.

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

- 1 Sing for joy to God our strength; shout joyfully to the God of Jacob.
- 2 Raise a song, strike the timbrel, the sweet sounding lyre with the harp.
- 3 Blow the trumpet at the new moon, at the full moon, on our feast day.
- 4 For it is a statute for Israel, an ordinance of the God of Jacob.
  
- 5 He established it for a testimony in Joseph when he went throughout the land of Egypt.  
I heard a language that I did not know:
- 6 "I relieved his shoulder of the burden, his hands were freed from the basket.
- 7 "You called in trouble and I rescued you; I answered you in the hiding place of thunder;  
I proved you at the waters of Meribah. Selah
  
- 8 "Hear, O My people, and I will admonish you; O Israel, if you would listen to Me!
- 9 "Let there be no strange god among you; nor shall you worship any foreign god.
- 10 "I, YAHWEH, am your God, who brought you up from the land of Egypt;  
open your mouth wide and I will fill it.
- 11 "But My people did not listen to My voice, and Israel did not obey Me.
- 12 "So I gave them over to the stubbornness of their heart, to walk in their own devices.
  
- 13 "Oh that My people would listen to Me, that Israel would walk in My ways!
- 14 "I would quickly subdue their enemies and turn My hand against their adversaries.
- 15 "Those who hate YAHWEH would pretend obedience to Him,  
and their time of *punishment* would be forever.
- 16 "But I would feed you with the finest of the wheat,  
and with honey from the rock I would satisfy you."

\*\*\*\*\*

The 82nd psalm presents a judgment pronounced by Yahweh on the judges, or rulers, of Israel. It is a warning, much like that which King Jehoshaphat gave to his judges, saying, "Take heed what ye do, for ye judge not for man, but for YAHWEH, who is with you in the judgment" (2 Chr. 19:6). Asaph no doubt saw around him much bribery and corruption

among the magistrates of Israel, and he penned this psalm to rebuke that sin of partiality which so dishonored God. It is a sharp reprimand which we all should take to heart.

## Psalm 82

### A Psalm of Asaph.

- 1 God takes His stand in His own congregation; He judges in the midst of the rulers.
- 2 How long will you judge unjustly and show partiality to the wicked? Selah
- 3 Vindicate the weak and fatherless; do justice to the afflicted and destitute.
- 4 Rescue the weak and needy; deliver *them* out of the hand of the wicked.
- 5 They do not know nor do they understand;  
they walk about in darkness; all the foundations of the earth are shaken.
- 6 I said, "You are gods, and all of you are sons of the Most High.
- 7 "Nevertheless you will die like men and fall like *any* one of the princes."
- 8 Arise, O God, judge the earth! For it is You who possesses all the nations.

## PRAYER

*O Lord our God, how often have we judged others with sinful partiality. We are reluctant to examine our own hearts, for pride reigns there. We beseech you, give us not over to our own heart's lusts, neither let us follow our own imaginations, but grant that we may maintain a successful battle with our great adversary, the devil, who walks about seeking whom he may devour. We implore your mercy for our nation's judges, that they may rule impartially and administer punishment for wickedness and vice, knowing that they too shall be judged at that great day when Christ sits on the throne and they find themselves standing before him to give account of all their works. We ask in Christ's name. Amen.*