

**THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION**  
**Psalms: Living By Faith In God**  
**LXXX. Handling A Sense Of Great Loss**  
**(Psalm 80:1-19)**

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

A lot of people today are experiencing a sense of great loss:

(1) Many sense a great loss of truth and justice in the mainstream media and the federal government: Since “House Speaker Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif.” stated that the House will “begin an impeachment inquiry” as “evidence mounts that President Biden directly benefited from his son Hunter’s lucrative overseas influence-peddling operation,” the “White House has entered panic mode” and “sent a letter to major news outlets” stating, “It’s time for the media to ramp up its scrutiny of House Republicans for opening an impeachment inquiry based on lies.” (“Panic mode is activated,” Ibid., September 16, 2023, p. 6A)

However, media “journalists are having increasing trouble covering up the evidence of criminal behavior. CNN’s ‘fact-check’ evaluates several claims,” but “(i)n each case . . . tacitly or explicitly acknowledges that the claim . . . is true, but then goes on to explain why the truth doesn’t really count . . . (So,) as long as the House proceeds with its inquiry . . . the media will have two options: Allow the discrepancy between the facts and the reporting to grow, or face the fact that, while the fire has not been located, smoke is billowing out of the White House.” (Ibid.)

More significantly, the Republican-American editorial complained of “the institutional rot that led the federal government’s failure to investigate what at the very least *appears* to be an operation to extort and launder money from foreign actors . . . (T)he Department of Justice and Special Counsel David Weiss” need “to be held accountable for their failure” to investigate the Bidens and the “House” must “figure out who in the Obama administration was aware of President Biden’s involvement in Hunter’s business dealings and why they refused to act.” (Ibid.)

(2) Evangelicalism is facing a sense of great loss in regard to the truth: In 2018, R. Albert Mohler, Jr., President of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, told how Pastor Andy Stanley, an influential megachurch pastor, a 1985 graduate of my alma mater, Dallas Theological Seminary, and son of the late Bible teaching Pastor Charles Stanley, “claimed in 2016 that the Church veered into ‘trouble’ when it began to make its arguments on the basis of the Bible.” (R. Albert Mohler, Jr., “Getting ‘Unhitched’ from the Old Testament? Andy Stanley Aims at Heresy,” August 10, 2018; albertmohler.com) That belief has apparently since deeply affected Pastor Stanley, for last Monday, Dr. Mohler reported that “Andy Stanley” will host a conference that “is designed as a platform for normalizing the LGBTQ+ revolution” in churches. (R. Albert Mohler, Jr., “The train is leaving the station,” September 18, 2023; wng.org) “Scheduled speakers . . . include two men who are married to other men . . .” (Ibid.) Dr. Mohler summed, “This conference . . . is structured . . . as a departure from historic normative biblical Christianity,” Ibid.

Need: *So, we ask, “How does God want us to handle a sense of great loss?!”*

- I. **Psalm 80:1-19 was composed when Israel’s ten northern tribes had been taken away captive to Assyria, and it “reveals the shock that event had in Jerusalem,” Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, ftn. to Psalm 80.**
- II. **The psalmist thus provided three refrains in verses 3, 7, and 19 that intensify in their appeal levels where the first refrain addresses the Lord as “God,” the second as “God Almighty,” and the third as “Lord God Almighty,” exposing an intensifying appeal for God’s merciful restoration of the captured tribes!**
- III. **Also, each refrain is “(m)ore than a cry for national restoration, . . . (but) a desire for spiritual revival (v. 18) and implies a confession of sin,” Ibid., Ryrie, ftn. to Psalm 80:3.**
- IV. **In making his appeal, the psalmist repeatedly highlighted a SENSE of GREAT LOSS (as follows):**
  - A. In verses 1-2 before the first refrain in verse 3, the psalmist highlighted the **nation’s** loss of the northern tribes:
    1. He noted that God was Israel’s Shepherd who led “Joseph” like a flock, Psalm 80:1. Joseph’s descendants in the very large tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh were defeated and taken captive by the Assyrians.
    2. The psalmist then mentioned Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh, these tribes being descendants of Jacob’s wife Rachel, and they all marched together and camped together on the west side of the tabernacle during the wilderness journeys during Israel’s Exodus out of Egypt, Numbers 2:18-25.
    3. Thus, the psalmist lamented the **nation’s** loss of the entire western side of their ancient campsite!
  - B. In verses 4-6 before the second refrain in verse 7, the psalmist told of the great **personal** loss of joy and honor.
  - C. However, in verses 8-18 before the third and most dramatic refrain in verse 19, the psalmist highlighted **God’s loss** of the northern tribes over which He had devoted so much time and attention in developing them:

1. The northern tribes of Israel are likened in Psalm 80:8-16 to a choice grapevine that God had cultivated:
2. “A vineyard calls for harder and more regular labor than any other form of agriculture,” and “(t)he vines need constant care and several years of watchful cultivation are necessary before they bear fruit,” *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, Volume Five, p. 882.
3. Thus, the psalmist described **God’s loss** of the northern tribes in which **He** had invested so much care:
  - a. The Lord had brought this vine out of Egypt in the Exodus, He had driven out pagan nations to make room for it, and He had cleared the ground and planted it so that it had taken root and filled the land, v. 8-11.
  - b. However, God Himself had allowed the Assyrians figuratively to break down this vine’s protective walls so that all who passed by might pick its fruit and that wild animals of the land might feed on it, v. 12-13.
  - c. Thus, the psalmist urged God to restore His vine that had been so valuable to Him, that He might once again watch over the vine that He had planted and raised up like a son for Himself, Psalm 80:14-16.
4. In verses 17-18, the psalmist exchanged the figurative expression of a prized vine for that of a dear son, urging the Lord to revive the northern tribes as His own son that they might praise God once again.

***Lesson:*** *When Israel’s northern tribes were captured by Assyria for their sin against God, the shock of that loss led the psalmist in Jerusalem to imply a confession of sin and to plead with the Lord to restore what had been lost.*

***Application:*** *(1) May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God’s gift of eternal life, John 3:16; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11. (2) As for applying this psalm, (a) unlike ancient Israel that was a theocracy in covenant relation with God, we live in a secular nation, so we cannot confess the sins of our nation for God to restore it as in Israel’s case. (b) However, The Revelation 2-3 prophecy of Church History in view of what has already occurred imply a degree of God’s blessing if we obey Him, and we explain it in our Conclusion.*

**Conclusion:** (To illustrate the message and provide additional guidance . . .)

Scripture offers us insight on handling the issues of concern noted in our sermon introduction (as follows):

(1) As for the loss of credibility in the mainstream media, elected officials and the bureaucracy, (a) we recall our previous references to the prediction in Revelation 3:21 with 7:17 of God’s permitting a “mini-Great Tribulation” to occur in our era that is marked by oppressive leaders full of intrigue who afflict their subordinates. God is allowing this trial to occur to drive believers in Christ back to a right relationship with Him in place of their indulging in the lusts of the flesh, the eyes and the pride of life, or “worldliness.” God is also permitting this trial to cause unbelievers to seek balm for their pain and find it in salvation by faith in Christ followed by the exposition of Scripture in Biblical churches. May we then adjust accordingly for God’s personal blessing. (b) We have also noted in our Revelation 2-3 studies of the seven eras of Church History that God opened up the New World for religious liberty in reward for Martin Luther’s stand for the truth, and God also allowed the United States with its Bill of Rights to be formed to support such liberties in reward for Jonathan Edwards’s stand for Biblical truth, and that the wording in Revelation 3:21 implies similarities between our era and the eras of Luther and Edwards. Since God promises **worldwide** influence by the “overcomer(s)” in our era (Revelation 3:21), our need as believers is to obey the Lord now that He might provide blessings for believers **worldwide** in reward for our obedience as “overcomer(s)” today!

(2) As for Andy Stanley’s “departure from historic normative biblical Christianity” (Ibid., Mohler, “The train is leaving the station”), (a) his effort to normalize the LGBTQ+ revolution in churches did not occur overnight, for Andy and I both graduated from the same seminary within a decade of each other where we were taught the divine authority of Scripture! (b) Rather, he faced an environment of departing from Scripture’s divine authority, and he yielded to it over time: Andy’s father, Pastor Charles Stanley of First Baptist Church in Atlanta, was divorced by his wife in 2000 for adultery among other things, but Charles Stanley stayed on as pastor when his Church voted to keep him providing he did not remarry! (“Andy Stanley,” [bijog.com](http://bijog.com)) This violated Scripture on several counts, so Andy in time found it tolerable to “unhitch” himself from the divine authority of the Old Testament that condemned LGBTQ+ (Ibid., Mohler, “Getting ‘Unhitched’ from the Old Testament? Andy Stanley Aims at Heresy”). Once “unhitched” from Old Testament authority, Andy “unhitched” from New Testament verses that called LGBTQ+ sin like the Old Testament did! In no longer seeing LGBTQ+ as sin, Andy next promoted the LGBTQ+ revolution. (c) The lesson: (+) We must rely on the Holy Spirit to respect and obey all Scripture as God’s authoritative Word as Galatians 5:16 and 2 Timothy 1:13 and 3:16 teach, and (+) daily read Scripture as Deuteronomy 17:18-20 directs.

**May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God’s gift of eternal life. May we handle the great sense of loss we see in a decaying world by cleaving to God and His Word, and finding cleansing from any sin we commit by confession to the Lord for renewal and blessing.**