

Good morning, Church. Daily Reading, Acts 13.

Psalm 80:1-3 "Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel,
you who lead Joseph like a flock.
You who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth.
Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh,
stir up your might
and come to save us!

Restore us, O God;
let your face shine, that we may be saved!" (ESV)

Many times in the OT and NT, the people of God are referred to as sheep (not very flattering if you know anything about sheep), and the Lord is the Shepherd. Consider Psalm 23:1, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want." Or, Psalm 100:3 "We are His people and the sheep of His pasture."

In John 10:11, Jesus claimed to be "the Good Shepherd."

After the resurrection, Jesus asked Peter three times if he loved Him. After Peter's confirmation of his love for Jesus, the Lord responded with "Tend My lambs," "Shepherd My sheep," and "Tend My sheep."

Sheep are needy animals, and maybe this is why Asaph is asking God to once again pay attention to the needs of His people, His flock, and to restore His own.

There are times God must restore us or turn us again to His blessings. To cause us to repent, so we might be brought back to our place before God and His love.

Notice something special, the four names mentioned. All four, descendants of who? Jacob and his favorite wife, Rachel. Joseph and Benjamin were brothers, and Ephraim and Manasseh were brothers, but also sons of Joseph, whom he had in Egypt.

When the Israelites marched in the wilderness, it was these three, Benjamin, Manasseh, and Ephraim that marched together and camped out before the Tabernacle, all descendants of the same mother, Rachel.

As these three "brothers" marched, camped, and fought together, God would unite and restore them, much the same way God unites and restores His church today. May the church stand united as one against the forces of evil.