

## Studies In Psalms by [John T Polk II](#) For [The Fellowship Room](#)

Psalm 79

1/3/13

Vs. 1-5 pour out the painful story of a ruined people;  
Vs 6-10 request that God punish foreign nations, but have mercy toward God's own;  
Vs. 11-13 mention the humility a stunned Judah is feeling.

This Psalm seems to be descriptive of the hurt inflicted upon Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon ([2 Chronicles 36:11-21](#)). The opening lament is an agonizing cry to God who has judged His people for their sins ([2 Chronicles 36:14-17](#)). In [Jeremiah 52:28-30](#), the repetitions, length, and numbers of the sieges are listed.

**Verses 1-5:** God's own people, it seems, had defiled the temple of God before the Chaldeans could get to it (**verse 1**; [2 Chronicles 36:14](#)). Babylonian butchery is depicted (**verse 2-3**; [2 Chronicles 36:17](#); [2 Kings 25:19-21](#)). That this has been done by God for their sins is evident in **verses 4-5**, and their guilty consciences ask "how long?"

**Verses 6-10:** The appeal in **verses 6-7** is for God to turn His wrath on the nations who have violently acted toward Judah. In **verses 8-9**, God is asked to forgive and forget their sins, and only says "we have been brought very low," not the strongest assessment they could have made, and seem to think God must make them right! Then, in **verse 10**, they raise the issue of "will the enemies think they have prevailed against God?" Judeans should have worried about what their sins and corruption did to ruin God's reputation among the nations. With this lesson before us, Christians are reminded: "Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation" ([1 Peter 2:11-12](#)).

One of the atheist's arguments against God is the misbehavior of His people, but not only is that unfair because God grants freewill, it avoids the atheist having to acknowledge the living God and one's own sins. "Do not speak evil of one another, brethren. He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy. Who are you to judge another?" ([James 4:11-12](#)) Who are they to criticize either God (whom they deny exists!) or Christians (when they refuse to become one and see for themselves, [Psalm 34:8](#)). The hypocrisy of their position is manifest to right-thinking people!

**Verses 11-13:** Too hurt to sing, too humbled to praise God, their "groaning" is from having been taken "prisoner" (**verse 11**). Retaliation is in the hand of God, not in their own power (**verse 12**). All they have left is to promise to be worshiping sheep in the future (**verse 13**).



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This should be a somber reminder to the churches of Christ, that no one is impervious to sin ([1 Corinthians 10:12](#)), and God can still allow evil men to prevail when Christians have become like them ([Hebrews 12:4-11](#)).

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