

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

Psalm 80

1/4/13

Vs. 1-7 laments over the broken condition of God's People;
Vs. 8-16 illustrate the problem with a metaphor of a vine;
Vs. 17-19 finish with another appeal for God to change their plight.

There is little information to place this within a particular historical event, although it appears to fit into the Babylonian conquest of the Southern Kingdom of Judah ([2 Chronicles 36:11-21](#)). Just as in Psalm 79, God permitted them to be severely punished because "they mocked the messengers of God, despised His words, and scoffed at His prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against His people, till *there was no remedy*" ([2 Chronicles 36:16](#)). This had been, not occasional sin, but an abandonment of God's Law!

Verses 1-7: This Psalm concerns those in **verse 1** who are represented by Joseph, who had saved his brothers, and father, Israel ([Genesis 47:11-17](#)), therefore his name stood for all of the Israelites. God's presence was represented over the Ark of the Covenant between angels' wings ([Exodus 25:10-22](#)). Jacob's (name changed to Israel, [Genesis 17:5](#)) beloved wife, Rachel bore the sons, Joseph and Benjamin ([Genesis 35:24](#)). Joseph is represented in the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, in the Northern Kingdom, but Joseph's brother, Benjamin's tribe in the Southern Kingdom. Joseph's tribes and his brother's tribe stood for all of God's People in these happenings (**verse 2**). Only God can change His disfavor (**verse 3**), or change His anger (**verse 4**), stop His People's tears (**verse 5**), or reverse the ridicule from outsiders (**verse 6**). It is left up to God to deal differently with them (**verse 7**). What is missing from this appeal is the humility and repentance of His People! Their anguished cry asks the question "How long will You be angry?" (**verse 4**)

Verses 8-16: The Nation of Israel is the "vine" God brought out of Egypt (**verse 8**); planted, grown, and expanded it in the Promised Land from the Mediterranean Sea to the Euphrates River (**verses 9-11**); but now had been destroyed by enemies, described as a "boar" and "a wild beast" (**verses 12-13**). God is asked to reconsider this "vine," "vineyard," and "branch" (**verses 14-15**), for it presently had been "burned with fire" and "cut down" (**verse 16**).

Verses 17-19: God is reminded (**verse 17**) that to recover Israel would continue the promise to Abraham, "the man of Your right hand," which the New Testament reveals was Jesus Christ ([Galatians 3:13-18](#)). Following Jesus' resurrection from the dead, "after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God" ([Mark 16:19](#)). If God restores the Nation of Israel, they promise never to abandon God again (**verse 18**). Only God can save His People (**verse 19**). He did, and they were!



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Every prophecy in the Old Testament to restore God’s People to the Promised Land was fulfilled in the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah. There is no Old Testament prophecy that places physical Israel in a physical land after the earthly life of Jesus Christ. Jesus taught that “true worship” of God would no longer be “in Jerusalem” ([John 4:21-24](#)); that His sacrifice was to be remembered in the Lord’s Supper “in the kingdom of God” ([Mark 14:22-25](#)); and it would take a “new birth” to be in His kingdom ([John 3:3-7](#)). No one can prove from the Bible of God’s promises where the physical Israelites (1) are God’s People today; (2) are promised a land on earth; (3) should ever keep Moses’ Law after Jesus’ cross.

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