

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

Psalm 81

1/7/13

Vs. 1-5 give a call for rejoicing;
Vs. 6-16 give a reminder of why rejoice.

There isn't much to indicate either the time, place, or event in which this Psalm was written, but it seems typical of many Psalms, in that God is to be praised for His past help of the Israelites. God did not have to repeat His miracles in delivering His people from Egyptian slavery, for their faith had to be in His inspired, written account of those events ([Exodus 9-17](#)).

Verses 1-5: God is to be praised by those who: (**verse 1**) "sing aloud," "make a joyful shout," (**verse 2**) "raise a song." Music before God, clearly, should be vocal and come from the heart ([Ephesians 5:19](#)). Mention of the addition of instruments of music to accompany such singing ("timbrel," "harp," "lute") show they are that, additions.

That they were not authorized by God is noticed by:

- (1) Nothing is ever said by Moses that God authorized them ([Exodus - Deuteronomy](#))
- (2) They are labeled, "the instruments of David" ([2 Chronicles 29:25-26](#)) because David "made" them ([1 Chronicles 23:5](#))
- (3) They were condemned in [Amos 6:5](#)

Instrumental accompaniment of the singing praise for God has never been authorized by God for His pleasure! God is: "God our strength," (**verse 1**) and "God of Jacob," who delivered up Jesus for us to be saved ([Acts 3:13](#)). In **verse 3**, the trumpet blast signified that God had something to say ([Numbers 29:1-6](#); [Exodus 19:16-20](#); [Leviticus 25:9](#)), as a "statute" and a "law" (**verse 4**) for "Israel," "Jacob," "Joseph," all terms used to represent God's covenant people under Moses' Law ([Deuteronomy 5:1-3](#); [Exodus 19:3-6](#); [Genesis 50:24-25](#)). Israelites were delivered from Egypt as a "mixed multitude" speaking "a language I did not understand" (**verse 5**), simply meaning their sinful attitudes were like a foreign language to God, as Jesus will one day say ([Matthew 7:21-23](#)).

Verses 6-16: God gives Scriptural reminders: **verse 6** that God delivered them while they were being used for slave labor ([Exodus 1:8-14](#)); **verse 7** that God heard their pleas ([Exodus 2:23](#)), lead them out of Egypt with pillars of cloud or fire over the most holy place ([Exodus 13:21](#)), tested them with Meribah waters ([Exodus 17:1-7](#)). In **verse 8** the people were admonished to "hear" and "listen," or notice "how" to listen ([Luke 8:18](#)).

All Scriptures and comments are based on the New King James Version, unless otherwise noted.



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In **verses 9-10**, God starts over with the basic of how to recover their place with God: no other gods (**Exodus 20:3-5**); for only one God could and did lead them out of Egypt. They had been punished (**verses 11-12**) by God backing away and leaving them to their own devices: “not heed,” “their own stubborn heart,” “to walk in their own counsels.” They quit listening to God, so He left them alone to their own laws and practices (**Acts 7:42**), which God even does today (**Romans 1:28-32**). If, and whenever, God’s people, then or now, turn, listen to God, and walk in His ways (**verse 13**), then: (**verse 14**) He would protect them from their enemies; (**verse 15**) He would forever deal with “haters of the LORD;” (**verse 16**) fed them with wheat and honey. The fact that these blessings don’t happen should cause God’s people to examine themselves as to why not!

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