

Questions on Ps 80

1. The structure of this psalm is marked by a repeated refrain. What is it, and where does it occur?
2. How does the refrain vary from one instance to another? What pattern do you see in this variation?
3. What does the request “turn us” mean? Suggestion: look at the parallels available through the Treasury of Scripture Knowledge in your Bible SW. What reason for the nation's suffering does this verb suggest?
4. Compare and contrast the distinct stanzas marked off by the refrain, in terms of length and subject matter. Can you suggest how the earlier stanzas function with respect to the last one?
5. With what portion of the nation is the Psalm primarily concerned (verses 1-2)?
6. Given v. 1, which of the tribes in v. 2 would you expect to be mentioned, and which would you not expect?
7. How does Num 2 explain the inclusion of the unexpected tribe? You might also find the ISBE (International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia) article on this tribe helpful (available as a free module in e-Sword and other Bible sw).
8. What historical event does Asaph seem to have in mind in this Psalm?
9. If this is the case, can you suggest a pun in the refrain?
10. In what two ways does God show his anger against his people (vv. 5, 6)?
11. Whom does the metaphor of the vine represent (vv. 8-16, cf. Isa 5:1-7; Ezek 17), and from where does Asaph borrow it (Gen 49:22)?
12. Whom does the “son of Man” represent (v. 17)? Look up the Hebrew word translated “branch” in v. 15 (using Strongs), and consider the background of “man of thy right hand” in the light of v. 2.
13. In the light of the refrain, how does v.18 represent the climax of the Psalm?