

Psalms 81:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The haters of the LORD should have submitted themselves unto him: but their time should have endured for ever.

Analysis

The haters of the Lord should have submitted themselves unto him (יִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה יְהוָה יִכְתָּשׁוּלֹוּ)—Yekachashu means 'to cringe, feign obedience' or 'submit in pretense.' If Israel had obeyed (vv. 13-14), even Yahweh's **haters** would have been forced into grudging submission before victorious Israel, whose God proved supreme. **But their time should have endured for ever**—Israel's prosperity and dominance would have been perpetual.

This counterfactual lament ('what might have been') appears throughout Scripture (Deuteronomy 32:29, Isaiah 48:18, Matthew 23:37). God's original design was for obedient Israel to be such a light to nations that even enemies would acknowledge Yahweh's supremacy (Deuteronomy 4:6-8). Instead, disobedience led to Israel's subjugation. Yet the promise finds ultimate fulfillment in Christ, before whom every knee will bow (Philippians 2:10-11).

Historical Context

Solomon's reign briefly realized this vision: 'All the earth sought to Solomon, to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart' (1 Kings 10:24). Foreign kings brought tribute, acknowledging Yahweh's blessing. But Solomon's idolatry (1 Kings 11) shattered this witness, leading to division and decline. The true 'greater than Solomon' (Matthew 12:42) will establish eternal dominion.

