

## ***Psalm 78***

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- A “maschil” or “contemplation” of Asaph. Asaph is a blessed man.

**Psalm 1:1-2** “<sup>1</sup>Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; <sup>2</sup>But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night.”

V: 1 Exhortation; give ear to My Law, (Torah) speaking of the Pentateuch, or the first 5 books of the Bible, but also to “*the words of my mouth.*”

- This would seem to extend the exhortation out to the entirety of the Word of God. For them at that time it would have been the Law and the prophets, for us it is the totality of God’s Word.

**Proverbs 22:21** “That I may make you to know the certainty of the words of truth, that you may answer words of truth to those who send to you.”

**2 Timothy 3:16** “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.”

V: 2-3 These scriptures are Messianic prophecies in that they are fulfilled in the sayings of Jesus:

**Matthew 13:34-35** “<sup>34</sup>All these things Jesus spoke to the multitude in parables; and without a parable He did not speak to them, <sup>35</sup>that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet saying:

“I will open My mouth in parables; I will utter things kept secret from the foundation of the world.”

- So if we use the NT to interpret the OT, that would mean that “dark sayings” are “secrets” that had previously been kept from us.

V: 4-6 Passing God’s truths onto the next generation, it is incumbent on us to somehow communicate God’s truth to our children, both directly and indirectly.

- Literally speaking it to them, reading it to them, taking them to church where they will hear it, talking about it - and then indirectly by seeking to live it out, allowing it to be real to them through our lives.

**Deuteronomy 6:5-7** “<sup>5</sup>You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. <sup>6</sup>And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. <sup>7</sup>You shall teach them diligently to your children, and

shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.”

- I love that as we pray for our children before they go off to Sunday school. I like it even more when later as I hear them talk about what they’re learning. Or how some of the older kids who stay in the main service, how they listen to the study and take notes, writing down the references and so on. Our desire is to build a legacy of faith and be good stewards of the treasure that God has put in our hands, ensuring that it’s passed onto the next generation, and the next.

V: 7 This is the purpose behind passing these truths onto our children - that they would set their hope in God, that they wouldn’t forget His marvelous works, and learn to keep His commandments.

- People are very prone to setting their hope on things that will disappoint them, wherein they have a false hope.

**Psalm 146:5** “Happy is he who has the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God.”

**1 Peter 1:3** “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”

- We’re called to remember God’s Word, and to keep it. This is a stark contrast to what is actually happening in our culture generally - which makes what the ACLU, the teacher’s unions, and social activists - aided by the Supreme Court all the more heinous. They’ve ruled the True and Living God out of the public school curriculum, but then mandated Islam, witchcraft, and New Age Hinduism into the curriculum - trying to get our kids to forget the Lord, His commandments, and essentially lose any hope they might have.
- Some parents think they need to let their kids make their own decisions about religion, church attendance, and Bible study. But here, the psalmist says we are to teach our children in order that they might have hope in God rather than be guided by our culture and society.
- We need to constantly tell our kids about the blessings that will come their way if they walk according to God’s Word and the heartbreak they’ll experience if they choose a different direction. Ours is a privileged responsibility, indeed.

V: 8-11 They / we were warned not to be stubborn or rebellious like their fathers, they weren’t faithful or obedient - faith and obedience being synonymous terms in this context.

- The Northern kingdom, referred to as Ephraim which was the largest and strongest tribe of the Northern kingdom is used as a negative example. They were turned back, they were defeated. Why?
- <sup>10</sup>They didn't keep the covenant, they refused to walk in His law. They forgot His works and His wonders - and they were turned back, defeated in the day of battle.
- When was the last time the United States actually won a war? WWII, when we were a God fearing nation, a praying nation, a Christian, church going nation - now we're more like Ephraim.

**Proverbs 14:34** “Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.”

- Asaph begins to go back over their history, remembering God's mighty works and His great wonders, reminding them of what they had forgotten.

V: 12 God did awesome things for the children of Israel as He delivered them from Egypt. The field of Zoan is a reference to a major city in Egypt that at various times served as it's capital.

V: 13 It's hard to imagine witnessing something like the parting of the Red Sea, as the children of Israel were delivered from Pharaoh's army which was subsequently wiped out by the collapsing of the Red Sea - and forgetting what He had done.

- They seemingly forgot, and because of that, they didn't pass it on to their children.

V: 14 In the same way, God's presence was with them in a tangible way, the pillar of cloud by day, the pillar of fire by night.

- Seeing isn't always believing!

V: 15-16 God graciously and continuously provided for their needs - He made water come from a rock, a lot of water!

V: 17-21 But in spite of that they rebelled even more, sinning against God, testing God, dissatisfied with what they were given, asking for “food of their fancy.”

- God brought water out of the rock, but can he deliver something besides this mana? How about some bread and meat?

V: 21 The Lord heard this and was furious! A fire was kindled, along with His anger which came up “against” Israel.

- Note to self: don't complain about what God has given me, it displeases God.

V: 22 The root issue - after all of that, **they didn't believe**. As with Abraham, belief is accounted as righteousness; dis-belief is accounted as un-righteousness and eventually results in the wrath of God coming against that person.

**Hebrews 11:6** “But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”

V: 23-25 God blessed them, and provided for them - but they didn't appreciate it, in fact they despised it.

- Going back to Numbers 11 as this incident unfolds, they were rejecting the bread from Heaven and in a way rejecting the “bread of life” - Jesus being the bread of life.
- Don't like, or appreciate what God has given, demand something different - ok, here it comes.

V: 26-31 He sent them quail until they were sick of it, then He sent a plague and struck down many who had despised the Lord.

**Numbers 11:20** “but for a whole month, until it comes out of your nostrils and becomes loathsome to you, because you have despised the Lord who is among you, and have wept before Him, saying, “why did we ever come up out of Egypt?””

V: 29 “.... *He gave them their own desire...*”

Scary verse:

**Psalm 106:15** “And He gave them their request, but sent leanness into their soul.”

V: 32-33 In spite of all that (again) they continued to sin, or continued in the sin of disbelief which eventually led to the 40 years of wandering in the wilderness.

- The final straw was the disbelief of the 10 spies, but this was part of what led up to it.
- Wasted, fearful years.

V: 34-35 When they were under the gun, having a hard time, under judgment - the people turned to God, cried out to Him - as they later would in the times of the judges.

- “Most High God” - “El-Elyon”
- “Redeemer” (H-1350) “gā' al” (go-el, kinsmen redeemer)

V: 36-37 God doesn't want lip service, our hypocritical outward expressions - "He requires truth in the inward parts..."

This is something they and we all would struggle with:

**Isaiah 29:13** "Therefore the Lord said: Inasmuch as these people draw near with their mouths and honor Me with their lips, but have removed their hearts far from Me,.."

V: 38-39 "*But*" - in contrast to faithless hypocrisy, He being full of compassion!

- He forgave them, didn't destroy them, many a time turned His anger away - longsuffering, patient.
- He remembered their / our limitations, we are mere dust!

**Psalms 103:14** "He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust."

- We so often expect so much more of ourselves than God does; He knows us better than we know ourselves, He's never disappointed in us.
- This is a picture of God's grace in action.

Describing our lives:

**James 4:14** "... It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away."

- Our lives are short, compared to eternity, "and does not come again."
- We have one shot at it - no re-incarnation, no 2<sup>nd</sup> chance after this life is over.

**Hebrews 9:27** "And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment."

V: 40-42 They provoked God and grieved Him, tempting Him, limiting Him, not remembering His power.

God announced Himself to Abraham:

**Genesis 17:1** "When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am Almighty God;" "**El-Shaddai**"

- He is the Almighty, the omnipotent all powerful God yet he can be limited by man.
- Through their sin and lack of faith they limited what God wanted to do for them, God wants to bless us but we limit Him at times.

- God wants to use us in a mighty and powerful way, but there are times when we limit the work of God in our lives.
- God help us that we don't put limitations on God by our unbelief or by our manner of life, but that God would be free to do all that He is desiring to do in and through us, for His glory.
- We also have to be careful not to reduce God to anything less than He is, not to limit God in any way.

V: 43-51 Reviewing the 10 plagues and God's deliverance of Israel out of the bondage of Egypt.

V: 52-54 Contrast, He made His own people to move forth like a flock of sheep being tenderly cared for.

**Isaiah 40:11** "He will feed His flock like a shepherd; He will gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and gently lead those who are with young."

- He delivered them to Mount Sinai, then on to the promised land.

V: 55 God brought them into the promised land, driving out the inhabitants in the process.

V: 56-58 God was faithful to keep His promises, but the children of Israel were not, they provoked the Most High God, the holy One of Israel through their disobedience and faithlessness.

- They turned back: Like a "deceitful bow" - you take your weapon into battle, and as you draw back the arrow, the bow breaks in your hands, becomes useless, deceitful.

**Luke 9:62** "But Jesus said to him, "No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

**Hebrews 10:38-39** "<sup>38</sup>Now the just shall live by faith; but if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him. <sup>39</sup>But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul."

- They turned to their "high places" and carved images; committing spiritual adultery, unfaithfulness.

V: 59-66 Again God was furious and abhorred Israel.

- <sup>65</sup>This is metaphorical; God doesn't slumber or sleep, He doesn't get drunk.

**Psalm 121:4** “Behold, He who keeps Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.”

- A sad list of repercussions.
  1. The tabernacle at Shiloh was forsaken, conquered by the Philistines.
  2. The Ark of the Covenant captured by the Philistines.

**1 Samuel 4:21** “Then she named the child Ichabod, saying, the glory has departed from Israel! Because the ark of God had been captured and because of her father-in-law and her husband (Phinehas).”

3. Israel’s army defeated, many young men killed - many maidens had no one to marry.
4. Eli’s sons killed in battle, their wives didn’t mourn for them.
5. Israel became a reproach.

**Galatians 6:7-8** “<sup>7</sup>Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. <sup>8</sup>For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.”

V: 67-72 God rejected the tribe of Joseph who was used to save the nation from famine while they were in Egypt. He rejected Ephraim - the largest of the tribes and chose Judah instead to be the primary or leading tribe - from which the Lion of the Tribe of Judah would eventually emerge.

- The Tabernacle was moved from Shiloh, in Ephraim to Gibeah, in Benjamin which was effectively Judah.
- He later chose the area of Judah to place His temple on Mt. Zion.
- He chose David of the tribe of Judah and raised him up to lead His sheep as a shepherd king over His flock.
- David was a man after God’s own heart and shepherded the sheep of Israel “according to the integrity of his heart, and God’s heart and guided them by skillful hands.
- David being a precursor of our Great Shepherd, The Good Shepherd - Jesus.
- Valuable lessons to be learned, and to be passed onto the next generation.

**2 Peter 1:12** “<sup>12</sup>For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. <sup>13</sup>Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you,”