



Psalms 78

Main Point of Psalm 78

Asaph reflects on God’s faithfulness despite Israel’s history of rebellion against Him—and on God’s decision to dwell with Judah rather than with Israel at large. He uses parables to teach lessons. The story is that of Israel’s history—a pattern followed by Christ’s disciple Stephen in his message of Acts 7.

* Principles to understand and live by, thus a law for life. (Proverbs 1:8; 3:1; 4:2)

Author: Asaph Book: III

The second longest Psalm in the Bible.

A Teaching Song- sakal (to have insight, to teach)

1. The repeated disobedience and ingratitude of the Israelites.
2. The recurring and unending mercy of God to the disobedient nation.
3. Asaph calls this Psalm a parable (v. 2). “I will open my mouth in a parable.”
4. Passing along our spiritual heritage to our children.
5. Commands us to teach our young to follow God. (vv. 5—8)
6. That the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and arise and tell them to their children. (v. 6)
7. O my people hear my teaching: listen to the words of my mouth, what we have heard and known, what our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the LORD, his power, and the wonders he has done.

Ephraim’s act of splintering from Judah is denounced as forsaking God, and Ephraim is portrayed as becoming highly irreligious,	The Lord is my refuge, and my fortress refers to a castle or stronghold, a place of defense and protection against large-scale attacks. The Lord is	The Lord will guard our hearts by filtering our emotions, desires, thoughts, and responses through his Word. He is the watchman that
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particularly in their resistance to the reforms enacted by Hezekiah and Josiah.	your protection in both small as well as big attacks.	protects our souls. His primary means of defense is the Sword (the Word).
Prayer Teach me the ways of compassion Lord and of a steadfast heart. . . cause mercy to spring from my soul when a desire to judge waxes bold. Teach me to lean on you Lord...remove all rebelliousness from me...help me to flow with you and to not provoke you...you are Lord.	Each generation should set its hope anew on God, not forgetting his glorious miracles and obeying his commands. Trust in God. Never forget the works of God but keep his commands to the letter. (v.7)	Final Generation-believers hold that God's people will cease from committing sinful acts before the "close of probation," and before the "time of trouble" (Daniel 12:1; Jer.30:7; Isa 26:20)
How do you pass faith to the next generation? Let God's word guide you. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates" (Deut. 6:6-9).	V. 72 "So he shepherded them according to the integrity of his heart. And guided them with his skillful hands." God is looking for leaders who will lead according like this. Remember that scripture says that David was a man after God's own heart.	Taking refuge in God also means that we use the resources that God has given us: the Word, prayer, and the local church. We cling to the Lord through His Word and prayer, but we are not created to walk through life on our own. When God saved us, he placed us in the body of Christ.
Fortress spiritual meaning: fortress is used to describe	5 Ways to Guard your Heart and Mind	Five Steps to Renewing Your Mind

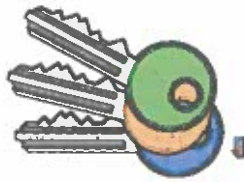
<p>unfailing spiritual support when he wrote, "A mighty fortress is our God." When someone has a hard time trusting others, you might say they have retreated to a "fortress of their own making."</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pray, pray continually. 2. Make requests. Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 3. Practice Gratitude. Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. 4. Renew your mind. 5. Take thoughts captive. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ask the Lord to guard and direct your mind. 2. Recognize the source of self-focused and self-defeating thoughts. 3. Replace self-focused thinking with a God-focused mindset. 4. Rest in the truth that you are accepted in Jesus Christ.
<p>The loss of Shiloh, due to Israel's refusal to obey God, was a momentous development, as the psalm later points out. Yet it followed a pattern of Israel's rebellion since the nation's deliverance from Egypt, which is recounted in the psalm.</p>	<p>Despite God's awesome deliverance (verses 12–16), the Israelites rebelled in the wilderness, trying God's patience (verses 17-18). Though He had divided the Red Sea, they didn't believe He would provide food and drink for them in the desert. They thought they would starve because of His "deliverance" (Ex. 16). When He did provide, they were later unsatisfied with what He gave them (verses 18-22)—even though He gave them manna, the</p>	<p>God gave them what they craved—sending birds in abundance to provide them with meat—but He struck them with a plague for their voracious lust and outrageous ingratitude (verses 26-31). Also found in Numbers 11.</p>

	<p>“bread of heaven...angel’s food” (verse 24), which Jesus later explained was symbolic of Himself given for others to partake of in a spiritual sense (John 6).</p>	
<p>The Israelites continued to sin against God, not believing “in His wonderful works” (v. 32).</p>	<p>Christians are warned against following the Israelites’ example in developing an “evil heart of unbelief. . .hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.”</p>	<p>Because they didn’t believe Him, God caused the Israelites to spend the rest of their days “in futility” and “fear” rather than entering the Promised Land (v. 33).</p>
<p>For 40 years they wandered, seeking God then forgetting Him and becoming unfaithful (vv. 34-42).</p>	<p>Yet in His compassion, God averted His wrath on many occasions, remembering “that they were but flesh” (verses 34-42).</p>	<p>God is still the same merciful God, for which we can be ever thankful (Malachi 3:6).</p>
<p>At the root of the Israelites’ unfaithfulness was their failure to remember—in the way they should have—God’s power as exercised to deliver them from their enemies (v. 42).</p>	<p>Asaph expresses what parents should have been teaching their children, again recounts God’s striking of Egypt to free His people and His driving out of the Canaanites to give His people the Promised Land (vv. 43-55).</p>	<p>Having come to “His holy border” in verse 54, “this mountain” in the same verse is evidently the whole land of Israel (as mountains often represent nations in Scripture).</p>
<p>Even in the Promised Land, the people “turned back and acted unfaithfully like their fathers” (v. 57). A major</p>	<p>Verses 58-59 show that the Israelites sank into syncretistic and idolatrous practices, which infuriated God.</p>	<p>Verse 60 Because of their pattern of unfaithfulness, God forsakes the tabernacle of Shiloh, allowing the</p>

<p>reason is probably that succeeding generations failed to pass on what God did for the nation—and to pass on God’s laws.</p>	<p>Syncretistic- blending pagan practice with Christianity. The amalgamation of beliefs or cultures.</p>	<p>enemy Philistines to capture, for a period of time, “His strength... and His glory” referring to the Ark of the Covenant. Many Israelites were killed in the battle, including the high priest Eli’s wicked sons Hophni and Phinehas (vv. 62-64; I Sam 4).</p>
<p>Vv. 65-66 God leading Israel to defeat its enemies in the time of King David, creating an ongoing period of Israelite peace and triumph under Solomon.</p>	<p>God “rejected the tent of Joseph, and did not choose the tribe of Ephraim, but chose the tribe of Judah, Mount Zion which He loved, and He built His sanctuary like the heights” (vv. 67-69). The center of worship is moved from the tabernacle of Shiloh in the territory of Ephraim to the temple of Jerusalem in the land of Judah.</p>	<p>Focus is also placed on God choosing David of Judah, as king over all Israel (vv. 70-71). David’s demeanor and care-giving knowledge as an actual shepherd of sheep was valuable training for shepherding God’s people on behalf of God Himself, the great Shepherd (Psalm 23).</p>
<p>The exaltation of Judah as God’s dwelling in Psalm 78 would take on greater meaning after the division of the Kingdom into north and south upon Solomon’s death and the</p>	<p>Judah still walks with God, even with the Holy One who is faithful. Judah was in essence the faithful remnant of Israel. But Judah would later apostatize as well. Even then, however, an elect few remained as</p>	<p>God building His sanctuary on Mt. Zion could today figuratively represent the building of His spiritual Zion. Indeed, the psalm could be seen, in type, as showing the center of God’s worship being</p>

<p>subsequent apostasy of the northern kingdom.</p>	<p>the true Jews, so to speak—the true Jews of today, the elect remnant according to grace, being God’s Church (Rom. 2:28-29; 11:5).</p>	<p>moved from the physical nation of Israel to the spiritual remnant of Israel—again, the Church.</p>
<p>David in the concluding verses of Psalm 78 is in this picture representative of the rulers of God’s coming Kingdom, especially the chief ruler, David’s descendant Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd who will reign from the throne of David over all nations.</p>	<p>David himself and all the saints will then reign with Him in perfect integrity and skill.</p>	<p>Psalm 78:72 “So, he shepherded them according to the integrity of his heart. And guided them with his skillful hands.”</p>

Study Guide for Psalm 78 by David Guzik



Eight Key takeaways from the Psalms

- 1. The book of Psalms engages almost all of the great themes of the Bible.**
 - A. The righteous versus the wicked and the importance of relying on God and his Word.**
 - B. God’s sovereignty and rule over all people and nations.**
 - C. The interplay between divine and human kingship.**
 - D. God as a place of refuge for all.**
- 2. As human words to and about God, the Psalms instruct us in myriad ways about how to worship God.**

They teach us how to sing, dance, rejoice give thanks, confess sin, grieve, express anger, make requests of God, proclaim God’s name far and wide, and more.
- 3. The Psalms teach us that God has sovereign rule as the great King over all things.**

God rules over creation itself and over all nations and people groups—down to each individual person. As the sovereign King, God asserts his control over the most powerful forces in nature. He proclaims his authority over all the false gods of the nations, gods that were such a temptation for his own people time and time again.
- 4. The Psalms celebrate that God is a good God.**

God is holy, loving, merciful, protective of his people, faithful, a keeper of promises, a giver of good gifts. He protects the vulnerable in society—the widow, the fatherless, the outsider, and the poor—and expects his representatives on earth to carry out this mission.
- 5. The Psalms praise Go for being a just God.**

The Lord vindicates his people, punishes evil, and cares for the marginalized. He opposes the wicked, whether individuals (Psalms 1:4-6) or nations (Psalm 2) and will mete out justice for their wickedness.

- 6. The Psalms reveal God's plan for the nations that the people of Israel be a testimony to them, causing them to turn to Him.
It is an inclusive vision that shows God's desire for all peoples to know him.**
- 7. The Psalms declare God is a great and powerful God.
The Creator and Sustainer of all things, he is mightier than any god humans can conjure up and more powerful than all the nations and armies of the world.**
- 8. The Psalms are fulfilled in the life and ministry of Jesus.
Jesus was the ultimate example of the righteous person in Psalm 1 and of God's anointed son, the King Messiah, in Psalms 2. Jesus also experienced most of the same travails that David and other psalmists did, so their laments and prayers anticipated his own (Psalms 16; 22; 69). The book of Psalms has been the hymnbook and prayer book for countless generations of Jews and Christians over the centuries. It contains the entire range of human emotions, from the highest points of joy and thanksgiving to the lowest points of depression and loss and everything in between. They instruct the faithful in the best ways to praise and thank God and they model legitimate ways to grieve and to address God boldly and directly in the midst of pain and sorrow. The Psalms are transparent, passionate, emotive, personal, and genuine—and they provide believers with language with which to express our own deepest emotions and passions.**

Article written from content in the Introduction to Psalms in the NIV Biblical Theology Bible.



Ezekiel's Vision Chapter 8

Introduction:

God, having given the prophet a clear foresight of the people's miseries that were hastening on, here gives him a clear insight into the people's wickedness, by which God was provoked to bring these miseries upon them, that he might justify God in all his judgments, might the more particularly reprove the sins of the people, and with the more satisfaction foretell their ruin. Here God, in vision brings him to Jerusalem, to show him the sins that were committed there, though God had begun to contend with them (v.v. 1-4), and there he sees:

- I. The image of jealousy set up at the gate of the altar (vv. 5-6).
- II. The elders of Israel worshipping all manner of **images in a secret chamber** (vv. 7-12).
- III. The women weeping for Tammuz (vv. 13-14). **Tammuz**, Sumerian Dumuzi, in Mesopotamian religion, **god of fertility** embodying the powers for new life in nature in the spring.
- IV. The men **worshipping the sun** (vv. 15-16).
- V. And then appeals to him whether such a provoking people should have any pity shown them (vv. 17-18).

Ezekiel was now in Babylon; but the messages of wrath he had delivered in the foregoing chapters related to Jerusalem, for in the peace or trouble thereof the captives looked upon themselves to have peace or trouble, and therefore here he has a vision of what was done at Jerusalem, and this vision is continued to the close of the 11th chapter.

- I. The **first vision** he had was in the fifth year of captivity, in the fourth month and the fifth day of the month, (1:1-2) THIS was just 14 months after. Perhaps it was after he had lain 390 days on his left side, to bear the iniquity of Israel, and before he began the forty days on his right side, to bear the iniquity of Judah; for now, he was sitting in the house, not lying. God keeps a particular account of the messages he sends to us, because he will shortly call us to account about them.
- II. The opportunity is taken notice of, as well as the time.
 1. The prophet was himself sitting in his house, in a sedate composed frame, deep perhaps in contemplation. The more we retreat from the world, and retire into our own hearts, the better frame we are in for communion with God: those that sit down to consider what they have learned shall be taught more. Or, he sat in his house, ready to preach to the company that resorted to him, but waiting for instructions on what to say. God will communicate more knowledge to those who are communicative of what they do know.
 2. The elders of Judah, that were now in captivity with him, sat before him. It is probable that it was on the sabbath day, and that it was usual for them to attend on the prophet every sabbath day, both to hear the word from him and to join with him and prayer and praise: and how could they spend the sabbath better, now that they had neither temple nor synagogue, neither priest nor altar? It was a great mercy that they had opportunity to spend it so well, as the good people in Elisha's time, II Kings 4:23. But some think it was on some extraordinary occasion that they attended him to enquire of the Lord and sat down at his feet to hear his word.
 - (1.) When the law had perished from the priests at Jerusalem, whose lips should keep knowledge (7:26), those in Babylon had a prophet to consult. God is not tied to places or persons.
 - (2) Now that the elders of Judah were in captivity they paid more respect to God's prophets, and his word in their mouth, than they did when they lived in peace in their own land, when God brings men into the cords of affliction, then he opens their ears to discipline, Job 36:8, 10; Ps. 141:6. Those that despised

vision in the valley of vision prized it now that the word of the Lord was precious and there was no open vision.

(3) When our teachers are driven into corners, and are forced to preach in private houses, we must diligently attend them there. A minister's house should be a church for all his neighbors. Paul preached in his own hired house at Rome, and God owned him there, and no man forbad him.

III. The divine influence and impression that the prophet was now under: The hand of the Lord fell there upon me. God's hand took hold of him, and arrested him, as it were, to employ him in this vision, but at the same time supported him to bear it.

IV. The vision that the prophet saw. V. 2. He beheld a likeness, of a man we may suppose, for that was the likeness he saw before, but it was all brightness above the girdle and all fire below fire and flame. This agrees with the description we had before of the apparition he saw Ch. 1:27. It is probably that it was the same person, the man Christ Jesus. It is probably that the elders that sat with him (as the man that journeyed with Paul) saw a light and were afraid, and this happy sight they gained by attending the prophet in a private meeting, but they had no distinct view of him that spoke to him, Acts 22:9.

VI. The prophet's remove, in vision to Jerusalem. The apparition he saw put forth the form of a hand, which took him by a lock of his head, and the Spirit was that hand which was put forth, for the Spirit of God is called the finger of God. Or, The spirit within him lifted him up, so that he was borne up and carried on by an internal principle, not an external violence. A faithful ready servant of God will be drawn by a hair, by the least intimation of the divine will to his duty; for he has that within him which inclines him to a compliance with it. Ps. 27:8. He was miraculously lifted up between heaven and earth as if he were to fly away upon eagles' wings. This, it is probable, the elders that sat with him saw; they were witnesses of the hand taking him by the lock of hair, and lifting him up, and then perhaps laying him down again in a trance of ecstasy while he had the following visions, whether in the body or out of the body, we may suppose, he could not

tell any more than Paul in a like case, much less can we. Those are best prepared for communion with God and the communications of divine light that by divine grace are raised up above the earth and the things of it, to be out of their attractive force. But, being lifted up towards heaven, he was carried in vision to Jerusalem, and to God's sanctuary there; for those that would go to heaven must take that in their way. The Spirit represents to his mind the city and temple as plainly as if he had been there in person. O that by faith we could thus enter into Jerusalem, the holy city, above and see the things that are invisible!

VII. The discoveries that were made to him there.

1. There he saw the glory of God (v.4).
2. There he saw the reproach of Israel—and that was the image of jealousy, set northward, at the gate of the altar, (vv. 3, 5).

The very setting up of this image in the house of the Lord was enough to provoke him to jealousy; for it is in the matters of his worship that we are particularly told, I the Lord thy God am a jealous God. Those that placed this image at the door of the inner gate, where the people assembled, called the gate of the altar, thereby plainly intended, (1) to affront God, to provoke him to his face, by advancing an idol to be a rival with him for the adoration of his people, in contempt of his law and in defiance of his justice. (2) to debauch the people, and pick them up as they were entering into the courts of the Lord's house to bring their offerings to him, and to tempt them to offer them to this image, like the adulteress Solomon describes, that ~~sits~~ sits at the door of her house; to call passengers who go right on their ways, Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither, Prov. 9:14-16. With good reason therefore is this called the image of jealousy.

We may well imagine what a surprise and what a grief it was to Ezekiel to see this image in the house of God, when he was in hopes that the judgments they were under had by this time, wrought some reformation among them, but there is more wickedness in the world, in the church, than good men think there is. God appeals to him whether this was not bad enough, and a sufficient ground for God to go upon in casting off this people and abandoning them to ruin.

We have further discovery of the abominations that were committed at Jerusalem, and within the confines of the temple too. (7-12)

How the discovery is made. (v. 7)

What the discovery is (v. 10).

What the remark is that made upon it (v. 12).

The inference drawn from these discoveries (v. 17).