

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 unfailing 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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<p>particularly in their resistance to the reforms enacted by Hezekiah and Josiah.</p>	<p>your protection in both small as well as big attacks.</p>	<p>protects our souls. His primary means of defense is the Sword (the Word).</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>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)</p>	<p>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)</p>
<p>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).</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>Fortress spiritual meaning: fortress is used to describe</p>	<p>5 Ways to Guard your Heart and Mind</p>	<p>Five Steps to Renewing Your Mind</p>

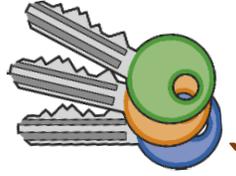
<p>unfailing spiritual support when he wrote, “A mighty fortress is our God.” When someone has a hard time trusting others, you might say they have retreated to a “fortress of their own making.”</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pray, pray continually. 2. Make requests. Come to me, all you who 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 God 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.**