

September 29
Psalm 78

Psalm 78 is a Psalm of instruction, a song designed to warn the people of God against repeating the sins of the past, while reminding them of God's mighty actions on their behalf and of His wonderful grace.

Asaph, the writer of this Psalm, tells the story of God's dealing with Israel, paying special attention to two specific themes: The first theme is the sins of Israel. Here are the things he mentions:

- 1) They refused to walk in His law.
- 2) They forgot his works.

One of the reasons all of the ancient history of Israel is so crucial for us today is because it can teach us so much about our changeless God, and can strengthen our hands for present (and future) trials! It is so important that we develop a thorough acquaintance with the mighty acts of God in redemption history. If you know what God has done in and through the people of the past, then it helps to greatly strengthen your faith for the task of living today.

- 3) The Psalmist says the Israelites spoke against Him saying, *"Can God spread a table in the desert?"*
- 4) They didn't trust His salvation, His redemption, His deliverance.
- 5) They lied to Him, they flattered Him with their mouths and lied with their tongues.
- 6) The Psalmist says they grieved Him.
- 7) They limited Him, and oh, how often we are guilty of doing precisely that, of not believing that God is big enough to do what He says He will do, so settling with so much less than what He purposes for us.
- 8) Finally they worshipped graven images. Idolatry certainly takes a much different form in the church of Jesus Christ today but it is no less present than it was in Old Testament days.

The second theme of Psalm 78, is the grace of God as demonstrated in His mighty acts of redemption. So in Psalm 78 there is a long litany of God's faithful actions:

- 1) Verse 13 - He divided the sea.
- 2) Verse 14 - He led them with cloud by day and fire by night.

- 3) Verse 15 - He gave them water out of rocks.
- 4) Verse 24 - He rained down manna for them - all of these things of course referring to Israel's experience in the Exodus.
- 5) Verse 38 - He was full of compassion and therefore forgave their iniquity. The Psalmist might have said 'over and over and over and over again.'
- 6) Verse 43 - He wrought signs for them in Egypt.
- 7) Verse 54 - He brought them into the Promised Land.
- 8) Verse 55 - He cast out the heathen before them.
- 9) Verses 70-71 - He chose David to lead them - one of the things that Psalm 78 is seeking to do is to connect David and the leadership that God gave to him with Moses and Aaron and their divinely granted leadership. (If you look back and read Psalm 77, you will pick that theme up loudly and clearly.)
- 10) Verse 72 - God fed them.

All those things are but a sampling of what God has done for Israel. If we become acquainted with His actions toward men, then we will be more likely to trust Him and respond, in faith, to the urgent needs that we are facing.