

Psalm 78 - “Equipping Parents to Teach Their Children the Great Works of God!” 诗篇 78 - “装备父母来将神的伟大作为教导他们的儿女！”

****READ THE TEXT****

INTRO-

Introductory Illustration

- “What are all histories but God manifesting Himself?” Oliver Cromwell

•If you don’t learn from the past -- you will repeat it.

- If we don’t benefit from past failures, then we’re sure to fall into the same failures ourselves.
- And we know that much of our OT is history: 5 books of Moses (Gen-Deut); the Former Prophets (Josh, Judg, Ruth, Sam, Kings, Chron, Ezra, Neh, Esther).
- But biblical *narrative*/history is more than just **factual-accounts**.
 - God has a divine-purpose behind it all: **instruction, information, warning/caution!, worship, praise, thanksgiving, dissemination/passing it on.**

Background to Ps 78

- **Asaph** authored this lengthy psalm (the longest in the Psalter only after Ps 119) & it is a ‘*historical*’ psalm.
- **WHY Historical Psalms?** [Pss 105-107, 114, 135-136]
 - To remember history. [*information*]
 - To prevent disobedience. [*caution!*]
 - To urge obedience. [*instruction*]
 - To instruct children. [*dissemination*]
 - To worship God. [*adoration*]

V.10, 17, 18, 22, 32, 36, 37, 40, 56, 57, 63-64! - **learn from ‘of old’!**

What lessons ‘**of old**’? From Egypt, to the Red Sea, to the Wilderness, to Manna/water, Crossing the Jordan, entering the Promised Land, driving out the nations.

Be Warned: In history, God’s people attempted to worship him with mere ‘lip-service’ and all the while, God knew of their deceptive, lying, false worship. God is not impressed with *outward religiosity*. **God tests the hearts!** [see vv.8, 18, 36-37, 72*]

Eph 4.18 - nonbelievers have ‘hardness of heart’

Heb 3.10 - nonbelievers ‘go astray in their heart’

THESIS--Tell the Generation to Come the GREAT WORKS OF GOD! (v.4). ***Teach them about God; teach them about past rebellion & teach them about Christ, the Perfect Shepherd!***

1. Look forward
2. Look backward
3. Look upward

I. LOOK FORWARD! >> LISTEN! (1-8)

Look **Forward** to the **Coming Generation!**

- A. Here's the Truth (1-3)
- B. You Must Teach (4-8)
 1. ****note the purpose: vv.6b-7 & v.8**
 2. There must be **urging** the next generation!
 3. There must be **instructing** the next generation!
 4. There must be **modeling for** the next generation!
 5. There must be **reminding** the next generation!
 6. There must be **warning** the next generation!

II. LOOK BACKWARD >> LEARN! (9-64)

Look **Backward** to the **Rebellious Generation!**

In this lengthy section, 3 equal sections/stanzas/parts here each w/ a 3-fold repetition:

1. God's work
2. Israel's wickedness
3. God's wrath

A. Part I

1. **God's Work (9-16)**
 - a) Egypt, Dividing the Sea & the Wilderness
2. **Israel's Wickedness (17-20)**
 - a) They questioned God's power & ability (19-20, 'Can God...?')
3. **God's Wrath (21-22)**

B. Part II

1. **God's Work (23-31)**
 - a) Wilderness—manna, food, meat, water (abundance!)
 - b) See the patience, undeserved kindness to God. ***He abundantly provided & they incessantly rejected Him!***
 - (1) *****how many people does God do that with NOW who reject Him, remain in unbelief, & soil their soul in perpetual sin??*** O behold the kindness of God!
 - (2) *Truth faith looks beyond the GIFT to the GIVER--the Lord of glory!* (Willem VanGemeren).
2. **Israel's Wickedness (32-37)**
3. **God's Mercy (38-39)***

C. Part III

1. **God's Work (40-55)**
 - a) God's Power: plagues in Egypt (43-51)
 - b) God's Power: the Promised Land/Conquest (54-55)
2. **Israel's Wickedness (56-58)**
3. **God's Wrath (59-64)**

That means we must read our Old Testament & know it!

Remember: **2 Timothy 2:13** If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself.

Note these very 2 crucial points to remember:

God's WORD never changes
God's WAYS never change

III. LOOK UPWARD >>> LOOK to Christ! (65-72)

Look **Upward** to the **Perfect Shepherd!**

A. The Strength of the LORD

1. A warrior (65); triumph (66), sovereignty in election (67)

B. The Selection of the LORD (68)

1. Judah & Mt Zion!

C. The Shepherd of the LORD

1. Do you hear the overwhelming & undeserved kindness of God!? *They don't deserve a shepherd*; but God must shepherd *His people!* What grace & mercy & love!
2. **Vv70-72- David**
 - a) **Future - Ezekiel 34:23-24!**
 - b) **Jesus - 1 Peter 2:22-25***

SOME CLEAR APPLICATIONS:

- **1. teach the next generation to be confident in God (8)**
 - **Parents:** the responsibility is YOURS (so we equip you!) to teach your children the great WORKS of God, the WAYS of God, the WORD of God & the BEAUTY of God!
 - Pass Truths to equip them (vv.5-8)
 - Cf. Ex 10:2; 13:14; Deut 4:9; 6:7, 20-21! — Fathers! **The Father's primary duty in the home is to be the pastor of the house. It's not an option. It's a mandate given by GOD to every husband & father.**
 - Therefore, "each generation should entrust God's Word to the next generation, urge them to put their trust in God, and keep His commands!" (Steve Lawson).
 - The goal, then, is just to open the past history from God's perspective so people can learn the lessons from the past how not to live and how to obey and submit to God!
 - **Formally** — in family worship
 - **Corporately** — in the church meetings
 - **Informally** — in everyday conversations
 - **Prayerfully** — begging for God's blessing
 - **Obediently** — teaching YOUR children as your duty
 - **Consistently** — walking/obeying the Truths you teach the kids
 - **Passionately** — believe what you teach; genuinely!
- Oh Fathers, hear the loving & heart-searching words of Biblical Counselor, JAY ADAMS >>> *"Family worship, in family study of Scripture, in family prayer, in family attendance at the services of the church, in the family witness to a community, and in the family's direct relationship with God in doing the work that He has called them to do as individuals and as a family, You would expect to see great zeal for the training of the children in the knowledge and ways of God. Yet here is where husbands fail most miserably. How often it is that the wife is the sole impetus in the family for these things"* (Jay Adams)
- **Ask yourself:**

- *How often do you refer to the Bible in the course of normal conversation with your children?*
- *How ready/prepared/able are you at teaching and relating the Scriptures to them in everyday life?*
- *How consistently do you USE the Bible when you correct and discipline them?*
- *Do you even know where to Go in the Bible for various counseling issues—dating, purity, idolatry, selfishness, anger, violence, filthy language, fearing God?*
- Matthew Henry when he says, "They that pray in the family do well; they that pray and read the Scriptures do better; but they that pray, and read, and sing do best of all." There is a completeness in that kind of family worship which is much to be desired.
 - Yes — includes: training, instruction, prayer, confession, catechism, intercession.
- JC Ryle exhorts us: "Fill their minds with Scripture. Let the Word dwell in them richly. Give them the Bible, the whole Bible, even while they are young."
- Jonathan Edwards—a pastor/theologian in the 18th c. American revival—wrote in the 1700's: "Every Christian family ought to be as it were a little church, consecrated to Christ, and wholly influenced and governed by His rules. And family education and order are some of the chief of the means of grace".
- 2. learn from the past so you don't repeat it (9)
- 3. guard from heart-rebellion & unbelief (17-21)
- 4. beware of lip-service with no steadfast heart for the LORD (36-37)
- 5. stand in awe of God's great faithfulness & compassion (38-39)
- 6. find comfort in 'The Shepherd' who tenderly cares for his flock (70-72)

CONCLUSION >>

- *I conclude with a quote from Samuel Worcester, from a sermon he preached on October 1811:*
 - Children should be taught early the important truths of God's Word. They should early be taught that there is a God; that He is a being of infinite power and wisdom, knowledge and goodness, justice, mercy, and truth, One God in three Persons; that He is to be loved with all the heart, and obeyed in all things with the most dutiful respect; that His law is holy, just, and good; that all mankind are by nature sinners, and are exposed to everlasting destruction; that God has freely given His own Son to die for sinners, and to bring in everlasting righteousness for their justification; that everyone ought immediately to repent and embrace the Savior; that all the unconverted reject the mercy of God, and will continue to reject it to their eternal ruin; and that all who are thus renewed and made alive to God will be pardoned and sanctified, and finally received to honor, glory, and immortality.
 - These and other gospel truths connected with these should be taught to our children with diligence and faithfulness. They are truths which concern their eternal salvation. Nor are we to say that children CANNOT understand them; for it has been found by pleasing experience that, if proper means are used, children will very early get so much knowledge of divine truth as to be of the greatest benefit to them in all their future lives"
- *Remember this simple Truth:* A godly parent is a child's best guide to God.