

Psalm 78-79: Faith Stories.

Psalm 78 continues the tradition of passing on the record of God's marvellous works of old from one generation to another. Psalmist Asaph implored his generation to keep the Law and not forget God's works and rebel. They should not do as their ancestors in the wilderness did, who were slain by the Lord's anger, or as a later generation did when Shiloh was plundered before the Lord chose David. The poem is a sad recounting of how their ancestors forgot God's works, but it also recounts how the Lord graciously delivered them.

1-8: Asaph called the **people** to **hear** his instruction about the Lord's **deeds, power, and wonders** that He would make **known** to his **generation**. These had been handed down from earlier generations as God had commanded. The LORD planned this so that the nation might **trust** Him and obey the Law, not stumbling in unbelief and rebellion **like their** unfaithful **forefathers**.

9-11: It is difficult to know for sure which event these verses refer to. Ephraim's failure in **battle** and her disobedience to God, whenever they occurred, may have resulted in Judah's being made preeminent over Ephraim.

In the rest of the psalm Asaph reviewed God's intervention in Israel's history. In verses 12-39 the writer recounted the marvellous things God did for Israel's ancestors at the Exodus and in the desert and their failure to obey Him.

12-39: Asaph described God's wonders in the plagues (Exodus 7-11) in **Zoan**, capital city of **the land of Goshen in** northeast **Egypt** (Psalm 78:12), at the crossing of **the Red Sea** (Exodus 14:21-22), and in the wilderness (Exodus 13:21; 17:6). **But** the people murmured and rebelled **against Him** (Psalm 78:17-20). Doubting God's ability, they put Him to the test expecting Him to do miracles for them when they were out of His will.

21-33: Asaph told how **the LORD** met the Israelites' murmuring first with **anger** in sending **fire** (Numbers 11:1-3), then by showering them with **manna** (Exodus 16:14-31), called **the bread of angels** because it was sent by God (Exodus 16:4), then with the **meat** of quails (Exodus 16:13) driven in by southeast winds (Numbers 11:31). Asaph also recalled that **God's anger** destroyed those who **craved** (Numbers 11:33).

34-39: Asaph added that **whenever** the Lord punished His people, they **turned to Him** as **their Rock** and **Redeemer**, even though **their hearts were not** right. But God forgave them, repeatedly restraining **His anger**, because **He remembered that they were** mere imperfect humans.

In verses 40-72 Asaph recounted the marvellous things God did for the nation from the time of the plagues to His giving them David as their king, and also the people's disobedience.

40-55: Asaph lamented **how often** the people **rebelled in the desert**, forgetting the mighty works that demonstrated God's **power**. So, having briefly referred to the plagues in **Egypt**, he now described some of them in greater detail. **Sycamore-fig** trees were common **in Egypt**. He also wrote about God's great

deliverance of the people through the wilderness as **He led them like a flock** and about the Conquest of the **land**.

Then Asaph sadly recalled how the people tested **God, rebelled against Him**, and turned to false gods. Because of this the Lord was **angry** and had **Shiloh** plundered so that **the ark** was captured (1 Samuel 4:4-11). Many **people** were killed at that time, including the **priests** Hophni and Phinehas.

65-72: Asaph then reminded the people how **the Lord awoke**, figuratively speaking, like a mighty **man** and saved His people from their **enemies**. But **then He rejected the tents of Joseph**, Manasseh and **Ephraim**, representing the Northern tribes, and **chose** Judah's **Zion** for the location of **His sanctuary**, and **David His servant** to be His king. The disbelief and disobedience that brought disaster at the Battle of Aphek (1 Samuel 4:1-11) marked the turning point to a new priesthood and a new sanctuary, and a king to lead the people, God's **inheritance**.

Psalm 79

Complaining that Jerusalem had been devastated, the saints slaughtered, and their enemies encouraged to scoff, the Psalmist pleaded with the Lord not to remember their sins but to deliver them for His name's sake.

1-4: The writer lamented that **the nations** had **invaded** the land of God's people, **defiled the temple**, and plundered the holy city. Moreover, they had slaughtered many of God's servants, leaving them unburied for predators to devour. All this had made Israel an object of **scorn** and **reproach**.

5-9: he pleaded with the LORD not to remember their sins but to help them in their **need**. He wanted to know **how long** the Lord would **be angry** with their **sins**, with His **jealousy** burning **like fire**. God was asked to destroy their enemies and deliver His own **quickly for His glory** and **for His name's sake**, that is, because of His reputation.

10-12: Seeking to motivate the LORD to answer his plea for deliverance, the Psalmist desired that He would keep the Israelite **prisoners** alive and end the nations' mockery of God's people by turning on them **seven times** and ending the nations' **reproach** against God's supposed inability to help His own.

13: After the Lord would release His **people** from bondage, the psalmist promised that then they, **the sheep of His pasture**, would be eternally grateful and would **praise Him forever**.

1 Timothy 4:12 – *Let no one despise you youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit in faith, in purity.*