

Psalm 78	Plague Number	Exodus Parallel
v. 44	#1 – River of Blood	7:15-21
v. 45	#4 – Flies	8:20-32
v. 45	#2 – Frogs	7:25 - 8:15
v. 46	#8 – Locusts	10:1-20
v. 47	#7 – Hail & Lightening	9:13-35
v. 48	#5 – Diseased Livestock	9:1-7
vv. 49-51	#10 – Death of the Firstborn	11:1 - 12:36

D. **The Failure of the Bow.** Twice the tribe of Ephraim is mentioned as those who carried the bow (vv. 9, 57).

- Verse 9.** Ephraim was in a must-win battle but its bowmen failed. Is this Ephraim's loss of the ark (1 Sam 4), or their loss to Philistia (1 Sam. 31)?
- Verse 57.** Ephraim (and Israel as a whole) became as worthless as a mishapen bow that could no longer fire properly.
- Irony.** In Jacob's prophecy about the future of Ephraim (one of Joseph's sons), he praised him for his handy use of the bow. **Gen. 49:23-24.** This proved true for much of Israel's history, but Ephraim failed in some sense to fulfill its destiny.

E. **The Drunken Warrior.** Verse 65 describes God with a striking simile—that of a drunken soldier awaking to wreak havoc. The point of similarity is not that God had lost control but that he He was utterly fearless and unstoppable in His battle for Israel. In this verse, God's action takes the form of liberating Israel after the failed leadership of the tribe of Ephraim.

F. **Sanctuary Cities.**

- Vv. 60-64. Shiloh,** a city in the hill country of Ephraim, was the home of the Tabernacle for many years. But Israel's unfaithfulness resulted in God abandoning the site to the Philistines. 1 Sam 4-6; Jer. 7:14.
- Vv. 67-69. Zion,** the city of David, was selected as God's permanent home for the Temple.

G. **The Impeachment of Ephraim.** Ephraim failed to fulfill its high calling & forfeited its place of leadership. God's choice of Judah is highlighted in the word order in vv. 67-68.

<p>Then he rejected the tents of Joseph; The tribe of Ephraim He did not choose; But He chose the tribe of Judah, Mount Zion, which He loved.</p>

PSALM 78



GOD, MY EXCEEDING JOY
A JOYFUL JOURNEY THRU THE PSALMS

SLOW TO LEARN

PART 2

Nov. 14, 2021 AM

- GENRE:** Wisdom Psalm with Historical Reflection & Prophetic Insight
- SETTING & USAGE:** Part of Book 3 (Pss 73-89), written by the worship leader Asaph between 966 – 930 BC, with tensions between North & South in view.

III. NOTES ON IMPORTANT FEATURES

A. Key Terms.

- Israel *forgot* (vv. 7, 11, cf. 42); *rebelled* (vv. 8, 17, 40, 56) *tried [God]* (vv. 18, 41, 56); *erred* (vv. 17, 32); *did not believe* (vv. 22, 32, 37, etc.).
- God *wrought wonders* (vv. 4, 12); *become angry* (vv. 21, 59, 62); *killed* (vv. 31, 34, 47); *was merciful* (v. 38, four phrases, etc.).

B. **Prophetic History.** The author, Asaph, not only functions as a wise man (vv. 1-8) but also a prophet (1 Chron 25:1; Matt 13:35). The record of Israel's history (vv. 9-72) is the prophet's inspired, poetical assessment of the nation's five centuries of unfaithfulness with her faithful God.

C. **Cycles of History.** Israel's history has often been called a recurring cycle of redemption, disobedience, tribulation, repentance, and deliverance. That cycle is evident in Ps 78 and reinforced in a literary way by the repetition of Israel's history (vv. 9-39, 40-72).

D. **Covenant Unfaithfulness.** Verses 10 & 37 are the first times that the word "covenant" is used in the Psalms.

- The one spoken of here is the Mosaic Covt made at Mt. Sinai (Ex. 19 ff). Both times instances in Ps 78 refer to Israel breaking the covenant.
- The unique use of the word "covenant" in this psalm may be intended to contrast it with the special arrangement that God made with David which is referred to as a covenant in **2 Sam. 23:5 (cf. 7:12-16)**.

E. **The Plagues of Egypt:** The plagues of Egypt are recounted in vv. 43-51, but they are not all mentioned, and they are not in historical order. They are recounted with poetic freedom. (Yet a different order is used in Psalm 105:27-36.

PSALM 78

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PURPOSE: Asaph prophetically calls Israel's to understand the causes of her long history of unfaithfulness to her redeeming God, and to see the wisdom of His selecting both Judah as His new temple home and David as the rightful king as God reconstitutes the nation.

Type: Wisdom Psalm with Prophetic Recollection
Author: Asaph, a chief sanctuary musician
Date: During Solomon's early reign, after the temple's completion in 966 BC

HEADING	INTRODUCTION: A CALL TO LEARN GOD'S WAYS vv. 1-8	PROPHETIC RECOUNTINGS OF ISRAEL'S HISTORY: ISRAEL'S REDEMPTION FORGOTTEN AND HER MANY REBELLIONS vv. 9-64					PROPHETIC AFFIRMATION: JUDAH'S ELECTION vv. 65-72	
<p>Song Type <i>Maskil</i> (perhaps <i>Instruction</i> or <i>Skillful</i> <i>Song</i>)</p> <p>Authorship Asaph</p>	<p>Invitation to Listen v. 1</p> <p>Promise to Reveal Mysteries of Their Heritage vv. 2-3</p> <p>Resolution to Bequeath Truth to Subsequent Generations vv. 4-8</p> <p><i>Corporate Resolve to Bequeath Wisdom</i> v. 4</p> <p><i>The Law's Requirement to Bequeath Wisdom</i> vv. 5-6</p> <p><i>The Positive & Negative Benefits of Bequeathing Wisdom</i> vv. 7-8</p>	CYCLE ONE: Israel's Rejection of Her Redeemer vv. 9-39			CYCLE TWO: Israel's Rejection of Her Redeemer vv. 40-64			<p>God's Rousing to Act Fearsomely for Israel vv. 65</p> <p>God's Elimination of Israel's Enemies (in the Rise of David's House) v. 66</p> <p>God's Rejection of Ephraim as Israel's Chief Tribe v. 67</p> <p>God's Choice of Judah as Israel's Chief Tribe vv. 68-72</p> <p><i>Zion as God's Choice for the Temple</i> vv. 68-69</p> <p><i>David as God's Choice as King</i> vv. 70-71</p> <p><i>Affirmation of David's Character & Leadership</i> v. 72</p>
		Indictment of Ephraim, Israel's Leading Tribe vv. 9-11	Indictment of Israel's Forgetfulness of Her Redeemer vv. 12-33	Summary of God's Faithful Interactions vv. 34-39	Indictment of Israel's Wilderness Rebellions vv. 40-41	Recollection of God's Deliverance from Egypt vv. 43-53	Recollection of Israel's Experience in Canaan vv. 54-64	
		<p>Failed in a Must-Win Battle v. 9</p> <p>Forsook the Mosaic Covenant v. 10</p> <p>Forgot God's Ancient Wonders v. 11</p>	<p>God's Wonders in Israel's Exodus vv. 12-16</p> <p>Israel's Rebellious Unbelief in the Wilderness vv. 17-20</p> <p>God's Anger at Israel's Unbelievable Unbelief vv. 21-33</p> <p><i>Announcement of Wrath</i> vv. 21-22</p> <p><i>Wrath Tempered with Merciful Provision of Food</i> vv. 23-29</p> <p><i>Judgment by Plague</i> vv. 30-31</p> <p><i>Elimination of the Unbelieving Generation</i> vv. 32-33</p>	<p>Cycles of God's Judgment & Israel' Repentance vv. 34-35</p> <p>Israel's Problem with Half-Hearted Repentance vv. 36-37</p> <p>God's Mercy in Withholding Full Wrath for Covenant Unfaithfulness vv. 38-39</p>	<p>Their Grieving of God in the Wilderness vv. 40-41</p> <p>Their Forgetting of Their Redemption from Egypt v. 42</p>	<p>The Plagues of Egypt Recounted vv. 43-51</p> <p><i>Retelling of Selected Plagues</i> vv. 43-48</p> <p><i>The Climactic Plague of the Firstborn</i> vv. 49-51</p> <p>God's Shepherding of Israel out of Egypt vv. 52-53</p>	<p>God's Victorious Introduction of Israel into the Land vv. 54-55</p> <p>Israel's Rebellions in the Land vv. 56-64</p> <p><i>Introductory Indictment</i> vv. 56-57</p> <p><i>Israel's Idolatry</i> v. 58</p> <p><i>God's Abandonment of the Shiloh Tabernacle in Ephraim</i> vv. 59-64</p>	