

## Psalm 78 Second Continued

**Psalm 78:50 "He made a way to his anger; he spared not their soul from death, but gave their life over to the pestilence;"**

Or, "for" it, so that nothing could obstruct it, or hinder the execution of it. Or "he weighed a path for his anger". He weighed it in the balance of justice, and proportioned his anger to their crimes, and punished them according to their just deserts.

"He spared not their soul from death, but gave their life over to the pestilence": Which some understand of their cattle, and of the plague that came upon them. By which they were destroyed, and which was the fifth plague of Egypt (Exodus 9:3). So the Targum, "their beasts he delivered unto death." But Aben Ezra interprets it of the slaughter of the firstborn, expressed in the following verse; and so others.

In the last lesson, we were discussing how the Lord brought the children of Israel out of Egypt with a mighty hand through 10 plagues. God had given the Pharaoh ample time to respond to His request and when he did not respond positively, God had to take drastic measures. The continued disobedience of the Pharaoh and his people angered God. Even though God destroyed them with this plague, He was justified in doing it, because they were weighed in the balance and found wanting.

**Psalm 78:51 "And smote all the firstborn in Egypt; the chief of [their] strength in the tabernacles of Ham:"**

From the prince to the peasant; and not only the firstborn of men, but of beasts also (Exodus 12:29).

"The chief of their strength": Or first of it, as the firstborn is called (Gen. 49:3), in the tabernacles of Ham. In the several cities, towns, villages, and houses of the Egyptians, the descendants of those places cursed Ham. For Mizraim, from whom the Egyptians have their name, and from whence they sprung, was a son of Ham's (Gen. 10:6). Perhaps No Ammon may be particularly meant (Nahum 3:8). The same with Memphis, and which signifies the mansion or palace of Ammon, that is, Ham. And so Chemmis, another city in Egypt, signifies the same; of which see (Psalm 105:23). This was the tenth and last plague: according to Suidas, the plagues of Egypt continued forty days.

This smiting of the firstborn even struck in Pharaoh's home. Pharaoh's first born son died that night. Throughout Egypt, the firstborn died. Some of Ham's descendants settled in Egypt, perhaps this is why tabernacles of Ham was used in the verse above.

**Psalm 78:52 "But made his own people to go forth like sheep, and guided them in the wilderness like a flock."**

That is, he was a shepherd to them. He defended them; provided for them; led them, as a shepherd does his flock (see notes at Psalm 23:1-2).

"And guided them in the wilderness like a flock": By the hands of Moses and Aaron (Psalm 77:20). He also going before them as the Shepherd of the flock, in a pillar of cloud by day, and in a pillar of fire by night. He kept them together as a flock from scattering, straying, and being lost. And directed their way in the untrodden wilderness, through all the windings and turnings of it, and protected them from all dangers and enemies.

We know that an estimated 3 million people left Egypt following Moses (their shepherd). After they began their journey, God led them by a cloud and a fire. Those counted as God's family are called sheep many places in the Bible. One very important time is when Jesus separates the sheep from the goats. The sheep go to heaven and the goats go to hell.

**Psalm 78:53 "And he led them on safely, so that they feared not: but the sea overwhelmed their enemies."**

Through the sea, where the waters were on each side. And through the wilderness, in which were serpents and scorpions, and where they were attacked by many powerful enemies.

"So that they feared not": For though they feared for a while at the Red sea, yet their fears were soon silenced, and they by faith passed through the Red sea as on dry land. And especially their fears were gone, when they saw the Egyptians dead on the sea shore. Wherefore it follows:

"But the sea overwhelmed their enemies": Or "covered" them. The waters returned, and overflowed and drowned the Egyptians, who were their implacable enemies, and vowed their destruction, and were sure of it. But now the Israelites had nothing to fear from them.

This is speaking of the children of Israel walking through the opening in the Red Sea on dry land, and when their enemies pursued the enemy was drowned.

**Psalm 78:54 "And he brought them to the border of his sanctuary, [even to] this mountain, [which] his right hand had purchased."**

Of the land of Canaan, which the Lord had sanctified, and set apart for them. And of Jerusalem, the holy city, the city of the great God, and of the temple where his residence was to be. So the Targum, "to the border of the place of the house of his sanctuary:"

"Even to this mountain, which his right hand purchased": The mount Moriah, on which the temple was built. This psalm being composed, as Aben Ezra and Kimchi think, after it was made known to David by the prophet Gad, the place where the temple should be built. Namely, on the very mountain, on part of which David had his palace. And this was obtained and possessed, not by the power nor through the merits of the Israelites, but through the power and goodness of God (see Psalm 44:3).

This perhaps, is speaking of His holy land. The mountain being the mountain where the temple would be built. The mountain would be mount Zion. It was the land that God had promised Abraham. This land was not won by the Israelites, but by the Right Hand of God.

**Psalm 78:55 "He cast out the heathen also before them, and divided them an inheritance by line, and made the tribes of Israel to dwell in their tents."**

The seven nations, the Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites (Deut. 7:1).

"And divided them an inheritance by line": The land of Canaan was divided among the nine and a half tribes by Joshua, the other two and a half having had their portion assigned them on the other side. This distribution was made very exactly by lot, by line, and measure, so that every tribe had their proper portion and inheritance (see Joshua 13:6).

"And made the tribes of Israel to dwell in their tents": In the cities, towns, villages, and houses of the Heathen cast out before them.

Some people looking at this, might say that God was cruel to cast the heathen out, but God had given them ample time to repent but they did not. Notice that it was God that cast them out of this land. Each of the twelve tribes of Israel had an allotted land that they were to live in. This inheritance that they received was forever. Some would try to say today that they should give up some of this land, but the Bible says it belongs to the 12 tribes and their descendants forever. To read more about the dividing of the land, read Joshua chapters 13 to 19.

**Psalm 78:56 "Yet they tempted and provoked the most high God, and kept not his testimonies:"**

After the death of Joshua, and in the times of the judges, by worshipping and serving the gods of the nations. And forsaking the Lord their God, who had done such great things for them (Judges 2:11).

"And kept not his testimonies": The laws of God, which testified and declared his mind and will. Nor observed his word and ordinances, which testified of his grace, and of the way of salvation by Jesus Christ.

It seems that all this that the Lord had done for them was not enough. They still did not obey God and keep the law He had given them.

**Psalm 78:57 "But turned back, and dealt unfaithfully like their fathers: they were turned aside like a deceitful bow."**

"Deceitful bow": This is a useless bow.

Sometimes I feel so sorry for God. He has done so much for them, and He loves them so much, but they still are rebellious and do things displeasing to Him. A deceitful bow is one that you cannot depend on to shoot accurately. Sometimes to your own injury, the bow will bend in use, and cause the one using it harm. Isn't this just what these people are doing to God? They are turning on Him and breaking His heart. Sometimes I am sure that God felt that He would have been better off if He had not chosen them. We Christians better not point a finger at them, without pointing back at ourselves as well. Not to stay with the faith that we had in the Lord is one of the things that upsets the Lord worse than anything. I have said it so many times, but it is true. To know God in His fullness, and then to be unfaithful to Him is very dangerous. The 6th chapter of Hebrews tells us a great deal about this. Do not let other things become more important to you than God is.

**Psalm 78:58 "For they provoked him to anger with their high places, and moved him to jealousy with their graven images."**

Which they built to Baal, and other Heathen deities.

"And moved him to jealousy with their graven images": Which they worshipped (see Judges 10:6). Which idolatry was spiritual adultery, and so made the Lord jealous of them, who stood in the relation of a husband to them, as a man becomes jealous by the unchaste and lascivious conduct of his wife. And such a course of life the Israelites lived, throughout the reigns of the judges, at certain seasons, until the times of Eli and Samuel. When the Ark was carried captive, of which mention is made in the following verses.

The one thing that He just could not overlook is the worship of other gods.

Exodus 34:14 "For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name [is] Jealous, [is] a jealous God."

God had a specific place for them to worship Him. The groves and high places had never been pleasing to God. It was really idolatry.

**Psalm 78:59 "When God heard [this], he was wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel:"**

Literally, "God heard;" that is, he understood this. He was acquainted with it. He heard their prayers addressed to false gods. And he heard their praises sung in honor of idols.

"He was wroth": This is language taken from the common manner of speaking among people. For language derived from human conceptions and usages must be employed when we speak of God, though it may be difficult to say what is its exact meaning. The general sense is that his conduct toward them was as if he was angry. Or was that which is used by a man who is displeased.

"And greatly abhorred Israel": The idea in the word rendered abhorred is that of rejecting them with abhorrence. That is, the reference is not merely to the internal feeling or emotion, but to the act which is the proper accompaniment of such an internal feeling. He cast them off; he treated them as not his own. The addition of the word "greatly" shows how intense this feeling was. How decided was his aversion to their conduct.

Abhorred in this particular instance, means despised. This is really spiritual adultery. They have sinned against God. Again, Christians, we must do it God's way, not our way. To worship God in any other way than the way He chose would be spiritual adultery.

**Psalm 78:60 "So that he forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent [which] he placed among men;"**

"Tabernacle of Shiloh": Shiloh was an early location of Jehovah worship in the Promised Land. The capture and removal of the Ark from Shiloh by the Philistines symbolized God's judgment (compare Joshua 18:1; 1 Sam. 1:9; 3:1; 4:1-22).

God had dwelt in the midst of His people in the Most Holy Place in the tabernacle. He is so angry with these people that He can not stand their presence, so He leaves the Most Holy Place.

**Psalm 78:61 "And delivered his strength into captivity, and his glory into the enemy's hand."**

That is, the Ark, considered as the symbol of his power. This constituted the defense of the people; this was the emblem of the presence of God, which, when with them, was their real protection. The allusion here is to the time when the Ark was taken by the Philistines in the days of Eli (see 1 Sam. 4:3-11).

"And his glory": That which was emblematic of his glory, to wit, the Ark.

"Into the enemy's hand": The hand or power of the Philistines.

This is speaking of the Ark of the Covenant falling into enemy hands. Of course, the Ark was an earthly house for the power and presence of God. We find in the following Scripture that really no house can contain God.

2 Chronicles 2:6 "But who is able to build him a house, seeing the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain him? who [am] I then, that I should build him a house, save only to burn sacrifice before him?"

The presence of the Light is in all churches who profess Jesus Christ as Lord today. What a sad day it would be for His presence to leave because of the worldliness we have brought into our churches.

**Psalm 78:62 He gave his people over also unto the sword; and was wroth with his inheritance.**

To those that kill with the sword, as the Targum. That is, to the Philistines, when there fell of them thirty thousand men at once (1 Sam. 4:10).

"And was wroth with his inheritance": And the above showed that he was, though they were his inheritance. His portion and possession, and he had chosen them for it (Psalm 33:12).

Thirty thousand of the Israelites were killed in the battle where they lost the Ark.

1 Samuel 4:10-11 "And the Philistines fought, and Israel was smitten, and they fled every man into his tent: and there was a very great slaughter; for there fell of Israel thirty thousand footmen." "And the ark of God was taken; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain."

When God left their presence, they could not win the battle. God's anger would not allow Him to help them. They must be taught a lesson.

**Psalm 78:63 "The fire consumed their young men; and their maidens were not given to marriage."**

Fire here may be regarded as an image of destructive war as in (Num. 21:28). "For there is a fire gone out of Heshbon, a flame from the city of Sihon: it hath consumed Ar of Moab," etc. The idea here is, that the young people had been cut off in war.

"And their maidens were not given to marriage": As the young people who would have entered into this relation were cut off in war. The margin here is "praised"; "The maidens were not praised." This is in accordance with the Hebrew. The idea is, "Their virgins were not praised in nuptial songs;" that is, there were no marriage celebrations; no songs such as were usually composed on such occasions in praise of those who were brides. The Septuagint and the Latin Vulgate render this much less accurately, and much less beautifully, were not lamented.

So many of the young men were killed in battle that there were no men for the maidens to marry.

**Psalm 78:64 "Their priests fell by the sword; and their widows made no lamentation."**

Compare (1 Sam. 4:11). It was considered a special calamity that the ministers of religion were cut down in war.

"And their widows made no lamentation": That is, the public troubles were so great, the danger was still so imminent, the calamities thickened so fast, that there was no opportunity for public mourning by formal processions of women. And loud lamentations, such as were usual on these occasions (see notes at Job 27:15). The meaning is not that there was a want of affection or attachment on the part of the friends of the slain. Or that there was no real grief, but that there was no opportunity for displaying it in the customary manner.

The Scripture from 1 Samuel above, told us that 2 sons of Eli died. This does not mean that the widows did not grieve for them, it means they had no body to bury. The bodies were left on the battlefield.

**Psalm 78:65 "Then the Lord awakened as one out of sleep, [and] like a mighty man that shouteth by reason of wine."**

"Mighty man ... wine": The picture is that of a furious, raging warrior entering the battle on Israel's side.

This sleeping of the Lord was in the spiritual sense. He just wasn't paying any attention to their problems for a while to make them realize what they had done. You might even say God allowed this to happen to them in punishment for their idolatry. God never completely turns His back. Just as we see here, He said it is enough and He will now fight for them again.

**Psalm 78:66 "And he smote his enemies in the hinder parts: he put them to a perpetual reproach."**

From behind; that is, as they fled. There are two ideas here: One, that they fled at his approach, or turned their backs. The other, that as they fled, he smote and destroyed them.

"He put them to a perpetual reproach": As discomfited; as defeated and scattered; as unable to contend with him. The allusion is, probably, to the victories of David, occurring after the events related in the preceding verses.

It seems that the Lord struck them from the back and drove these Philistines away. The battle between Israel and the Philistines ran on for years. Goliath (the giant), was a Philistine.

**Psalm 78:67 "Moreover he refused the tabernacle of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim:"**

That is, the tabernacle of Moses, which had been for a long time at Shiloh, a city in the tribe of Ephraim, the son of Joseph. When the Ark was brought back by the Philistines, it was not returned to Shiloh, but carried to Kirjath-jearim, where it remained twenty years. And after that was taken to Zion, the city of David (1 Sam. 7:1). So the Targum, "and he rejected the tabernacle which he had stretched out in the border of Joseph." He did not refuse the tabernacle, or remove his presence from it; but he refused the place it had been in, or refused that it should be there anymore.

"And chose not the tribe of Ephraim": To be the tribe within whose limits the tabernacle should be permanently set up. Or within whose limits the place of public worship was finally to be established.

The natural thing for Him to do would be to choose Joseph's inheritance to dwell in, since Joseph was Israel's favorite. Possibly, it was just because He loved mount Zion so much. It is God's privilege to reject whoever He chooses and also, to choose whoever He will, without having to explain to us.

**Psalm 78:68 "But chose the tribe of Judah, the mount Zion which he loved."**

"The tribe of Judah": Instead of the prestigious tribes, God chose Judah. In Judah was Mt. Zion where the central worship center of Jehovah was located. Also, David their king, as well as his royal descendants, were from this tribe.

I still believe this was the holy mountain which God loved.

**Psalm 78:69 "And he built his sanctuary like high [palaces], like the earth which he hath established for ever."**

His holy place; that is, his tabernacle. The temple was not then built; and, when reared, it was not on Mount Zion, but on Mount Moriah. The name Zion, however, was often given to the whole city.

"Like high palaces": The word palaces is not in the original. The Hebrew means simply high places, like hills or mountains. The meaning is, that his sanctuary was exalted, as if it were placed on a high hill. It was a conspicuous object. It could be seen from afar; it was the most prominent thing in the land (see notes at Isa. 2:2).

"Like the earth": Permanent and established.

"Which he hath established for ever": Margin, as in Hebrew, founded. The earth is often represented as founded or established on a solid basis, and thus becomes an emblem of stability and perpetuity.

This is speaking prophetically of the temple that Solomon built in Jerusalem. This beautiful temple was the envy of the whole world.

**Psalm 78:70 "He chose David also his servant, and took him from the sheepfolds:"**

He chose him that he might set him over his people as their king. The idea is, that David was selected when he had no natural pretensions to the office, as he did not pertain to a royal family, and could have no claim to such a distinction. The account of this choice is contained in (1 Sam. 15:1-30).

"And took him from the sheep-folds": From the humble occupation of a shepherd (1 Sam. 16:11; 2 Sam. 7:8).

David was a shepherd boy when Samuel anointed him.

1 Samuel 16:13 "Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah."

**Psalm 78:71 "From following the ewes great with young he brought him to feed Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance."**

Margin, as in Hebrew, From after. The meaning is, that he followed after them. That is, he attended them, or watched over them as a shepherd. The single word rendered "the ewes great with young" is a participle meaning to ascend. To go up; and then, to bring up, to nourish. The exact idea here is doubtless that of bringing up, or of suckling them, and the word should have been so translated here. It is so rendered by Luther. The idea in our translation has been derived from the Septuagint and the Latin Vulgate. The meaning is, that he brought him from being a shepherd to be the ruler of his people, expressed still in the language of a shepherd's life.

"To feed Jacob his people": Rather, to be a shepherd to them. To perform toward them the office of a shepherd, including the ideas of governing them, providing for them, and defending them (see notes at Psalm 23:1-2).

"That is, to rule over them": This is said in allusion to his having been a shepherd. And nothing is more common than for kings to be represented as shepherds, and their acts of government by leading and feeding. And one and the same word in the Greek language signifies to feed and rule: and so the Targum, "he brought him to rule over Jacob his people:" this was a great honor indeed, to be the governor of the Lord's people. A special people above all people on the face of the earth, and whom he had chosen to be his inheritance. And in this also he was a type of Christ, who has the throne of his father David given him. And who reigns over the house of Jacob. One of whose titles is King of saints; for as the government of the world in general, so of the church in particular, is on his shoulders (Luke 1:32).

Jesus is of course, the great Shepherd. David is called from the humble job of a sheepherder to feed God's people. One of the greatest teachings in the Bible is how God takes those who the world thinks is not capable of doing a job and God shows him or her, how to do the job the way He would have it done. The people who can really get something done for God, are those who know they cannot do the job unless God leads them every step of the way. David had not trained to be king. God made him king. David was humble enough that God could show David how He wanted the job done.

**Psalm 78:72 "So he fed them according to the integrity of his heart; and guided them by the skillfulness of his hands."**

The word "skillfulness" means "understanding, intelligence, knowledge, insight". As the leader of the nation, David put into practice the skills he learned as a shepherd. Ultimately, this verse is fulfilled in Christ, the eternal Good Shepherd (John chapter 10).

Remember, the anointing and the Spirit of God which came upon David. David was successful at these jobs God had given him to do, because God was working through David. Even though David sinned, he loved God in his heart. He repented and God forgave him.

### **Psalm 78 Second Continued Questions**

1. The Egyptians were weighed in the balance and found \_\_\_\_\_.
2. How many plagues were put on Egypt?
3. Why did the smiting of the firstborn touch Pharaoh?
4. What does the statement, tabernacles of Ham, mean?
5. God's people went forth like \_\_\_\_\_.
6. They were guided in the wilderness like a \_\_\_\_\_ .
7. How many of the Israelites were there in Egypt, estimated?
8. What is verse 53 speaking of?
9. The border of God's sanctuary was where?
10. Who divided the territory for the Israelites?
11. What is the name of the mount in the holy land that is God's mountain?
12. Why was it not cruel for God to cast out the heathen?
13. How long was the holy land given to the 12 tribes of Israel?

14. Where, in the Bible, do we find the details of the dividing of the land?
15. What does verse 57 compare their unfaithfulness to?
16. What is a deceitful bow?
17. Where do we find the Scriptures that warn unfaithful Christians?
18. What had they provoked God to anger with?
19. What does the word abhorred mean?
20. Where had God dwelt to be near His people?
21. What was His strength speaking of?
22. What was the Ark?
23. Give the Scripture from 2 Chronicles 2:6.
24. Where is the Light of God?
25. Why would this Light leave the church?
26. How many Israelites lost their lives in the battle where the ark was lost to the enemy?
27. Who were the 2 sons of Eli who died in this battle?
28. Why were their maidens not given in marriage?
29. Why did the widows not make lamentation?
30. Was the Lord asleep?
31. What does the Scripture mean, smote them in their hinder part?
32. Who was the famous giant of the Philistines?
33. What does the author believe influenced the Lord to choose Judah over Joseph?
34. What is verse 69 speaking of prophetically?
35. What was David doing when God called him?
36. What happened to David when Samuel anointed him?
37. How was David (being untrained) able to do the work God had for him to do?
38. Even though David sinned, what was always right about him?

39. He repented and God \_\_\_\_\_ him.