

## The Faithful God

*Jesus in the Psalms*

Psalm 78

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### I. The Biblical Story and our Cultural Moment

The Apostle Paul remarks in a sermon to the Jews of Antioch in Acts 13 that after King David “*had served the purpose of God in his generation, he died*” (13:36). Likewise, we are called to serve God’s purpose in our generation and then die. God has placed us here in this cultural moment to accomplish His purpose in our generation.

### II. The Faithful God

#### A. Give ear to my law (1-4 cf. Mt 13:34-35)

Matthew declares that these verses were fulfilled in the teachings of our Lord Jesus:

*<sup>34</sup>All these things Jesus spoke to the multitude in parables; and without a parable He did not speak to them, <sup>35</sup>that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: “I will open My mouth in parables; I will utter things kept secret from the foundation of the world.”*

Asaph, in other words, was inspired by the Spirit of Christ. In this psalm, therefore, Jesus summons us to give heed to Him, to listen to Him. He used parables to speak truths that required people to pay attention, to meditate, to reflect. He did not offer pablum but solid food and called His hearers to listen. After all, these “*dark sayings*” weren’t novelties but ancient truths which we promise and covenant to impart to the next generation.

#### B. For God summons you so to do (cf. Dt 6:6-9)

The reason Asaph summons us to listen to him is because *God has ordered the world this way. Fathers* are to teach their *children* and the *children* are to teach their *children* and so on (5-6):

*<sup>6</sup>And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. <sup>7</sup>You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. (Dt 6:6-7 cf. 11:18-21)*

The purpose of our instruction is both *positive* and *negative*. *Positively*, we are to teach our *children* to “*set their hope in God*” (7a) and “*keep His commandments*” (7c) – faith & works! *Negatively*, we are to warn our *children* not to “*forget the works of God*” (7b) and not to be “*like their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation*” (8).

#### C. Rejecting Ephraim and Selecting Judah (9-72)

Asaph summons us to listen to him because he is applying the law of God to his cultural moment, endeavoring to help his generation answer questions which were pressing for them: “*Why had God chosen Judah to be the royal line when Jacob had made \_\_\_\_\_ his firstborn?*”

### 1. God's Faithfulness and Ephraim's Unfaithfulness (9-11, 65-72)

Asaph begins with a description of Ephraim's response to God's word following their entrance into the Promised Land. In short, Ephraim was \_\_\_\_\_ (9-11). Joshua records, "*And [Ephraim] did not drive out the Canaanites who dwelt in Gezer; but the Canaanites dwell among the Ephraimites to this day and have become forced laborers*" (Josh 16:10). So what was the result? First, God arose to *beat back His enemies* and defend His Name (65-66). Second, He *rejected Joseph [Ephraim] and chose the tribe of Judah* (67-72). God pruned His vine.

### 2. God's Faithfulness and Israel's Unfaithfulness (12-64)

So was God's decision to cut off Ephraim and choose Judah consistent with His covenant? His law? His character? Absolutely – and it is this that the intervening verses demonstrate.

- a. God disciplined the Exodus generation (12-31)
- b. God disciplined the Wilderness generation (32-55)
- c. God disciplined the Conquest generations (56-64)

When members of His covenant people become corrupt then God acts to cut them off from His covenant and fulfill His promises through others. *God is not \_\_\_\_\_ on His people; His people are dependent upon Him.*

## III. Lessons for an Unfaithful People

God's faithfulness overcomes even the unfaithfulness of His \_\_\_\_\_ church. The unfaithfulness of men does not thwart the faithfulness of God. When members of God's visible church become corrupt then God will act to cut them off from His covenant and fulfill His promises through others.

### A. Why do you teach in parables?

Jesus announced to Israel in His day, "*The kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it*" (Mt 21:43). Jesus pruned His vine, pruned the visible church.

### B. Long live the West!

The West has been like \_\_\_\_\_ – a place of God's blessing. But guess what happened to Shiloh? God abandoned it. Why? Because of Ephraim's unfaithfulness. So what will happen to the West if we refuse to repent?

### C. I will spew you out of My mouth (cf. Rev 2:5; 3:3; 3:15-16)

God is not dependent on any local church or any association of churches to accomplish His purposes in human history. Remember Jesus' warnings to the churches in Revelation:

- Ephesus (2:5) –
- Sardis (3:3) –
- Laodicea (3:15-16) –

## IV. Conclusion