

# PSALMS

## Chapter 78

Give ear, O my people, to my teaching; incline your ears to the words of my mouth!  
<sup>2</sup> I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings from of old, <sup>3</sup> things that we have heard and known, that our fathers have told us. <sup>4</sup> We will not hide them from their children, but tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the LORD, and his might, and the wonders that he has done. <sup>5</sup> He established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers to teach to their children, <sup>6</sup> that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and arise and tell them to their children, <sup>7</sup> so that they should set their hope in God and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments; <sup>8</sup> and that they should not be like their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation, a generation whose heart was not steadfast, whose spirit was not faithful to God. <sup>9</sup> The Ephraimites, armed with the bow, turned back on the day of battle. <sup>10</sup> They did not keep God's covenant, but refused to walk according to his law. <sup>11</sup> They forgot his works and the wonders that he had shown them. <sup>12</sup> In the sight of their fathers he performed wonders in the land of Egypt, in the fields of Zoan. <sup>13</sup> He divided the sea and let them pass through it, and made the waters stand like a heap. <sup>14</sup> In the daytime he led them with a cloud, and all the night with a fiery light. <sup>15</sup> He split rocks in the wilderness and gave them drink abundantly as from the deep. <sup>16</sup> He made streams come out of the rock and caused waters to flow down like rivers. <sup>17</sup> Yet they sinned still more against him, rebelling against the Most High in the desert. <sup>18</sup> They tested God in their heart by demanding the food they craved. <sup>19</sup> They spoke against God, saying, "Can God spread a table in the wilderness?" <sup>20</sup> He struck the rock so that water gushed out and streams overflowed. Can he also give bread or provide meat for his people?" <sup>21</sup> Therefore, when the LORD heard, he was full of wrath; a fire was kindled against Jacob; his anger rose against Israel, <sup>22</sup> because they did not believe in God and did not trust his saving power. <sup>23</sup> Yet he commanded the skies above and opened the doors of heaven, <sup>24</sup> and he rained down on them manna to eat and gave them the grain of heaven. <sup>25</sup> Man ate of the bread of the angels; he sent them food in abundance. <sup>26</sup> He caused the east wind to blow in the heavens, and by his power he led out the south wind; <sup>27</sup> he rained meat on them like dust, winged birds like the sand of the seas; <sup>28</sup> he let them fall in the midst of their camp, all around their dwellings. <sup>29</sup> And they ate and were well filled, for he gave them what they craved. <sup>30</sup> But before they had satisfied their craving, while the food was still in their mouths, <sup>31</sup> the anger of God rose against them, and he killed the strongest of them and laid low the young men of Israel. <sup>32</sup> In spite of all this, they still sinned; despite his wonders, they did not believe. <sup>33</sup> So he made their days vanish like a breath, and their years in terror. <sup>34</sup> When he killed them, they sought him; they repented and sought God earnestly. <sup>35</sup> They remembered that God was their rock, the Most High God their redeemer. <sup>36</sup> But they flattered him with their mouths; they lied to him with their tongues. <sup>37</sup> Their heart was not steadfast toward him; they were not faithful to his covenant. <sup>38</sup> Yet he, being compassionate, atoned for their iniquity and did not destroy them; he restrained his anger often and did not stir up all his wrath. <sup>39</sup> He remembered that they were but flesh, a wind that passes and comes not again. <sup>40</sup> How often they rebelled against him in the wilderness and grieved him in the desert! <sup>41</sup> They tested God again and again and provoked the Holy One of Israel. <sup>42</sup> They did not remember his power or the day when he redeemed them from the foe, <sup>43</sup> when he performed his signs in Egypt and his marvels in the fields of Zoan. <sup>44</sup> He turned their rivers to blood, so that they could not drink of their streams. <sup>45</sup> He sent among them swarms of flies, which devoured them, and frogs, which

destroyed them. <sup>46</sup> He gave their crops to the destroying locust and the fruit of their labor to the locust. <sup>47</sup> He destroyed their vines with hail and their sycamores with frost. <sup>48</sup> He gave over their cattle to the hail and their flocks to thunderbolts. <sup>49</sup> He let loose on them his burning anger, wrath, indignation, and distress, a company of destroying angels. <sup>50</sup> He made a path for his anger; he did not spare them from death, but gave their lives over to the plague. <sup>51</sup> He struck down every firstborn in Egypt, the firstfruits of their strength in the tents of Ham. <sup>52</sup> Then he led out his people like sheep and guided them in the wilderness like a flock. <sup>53</sup> He led them in safety, so that they were not afraid, but the sea overwhelmed their enemies. <sup>54</sup> And he brought them to his holy land, to the mountain which his right hand had won. <sup>55</sup> He drove out nations before them; he apportioned them for a possession and settled the tribes of Israel in their tents. <sup>56</sup> Yet they tested and rebelled against the Most High God and did not keep his testimonies, <sup>57</sup> but turned away and acted treacherously like their fathers; they twisted like a deceitful bow. <sup>58</sup> For they provoked him to anger with their high places; they moved him to jealousy with their idols. <sup>59</sup> When God heard, he was full of wrath, and he utterly rejected Israel. <sup>60</sup> He forsook his dwelling at Shiloh, the tent where he dwelt among mankind, <sup>61</sup> and delivered his power to captivity, his glory to the hand of the foe. <sup>62</sup> He gave his people over to the sword and vented his wrath on his heritage. <sup>63</sup> Fire devoured their young men, and their young women had no marriage song. <sup>64</sup> Their priests fell by the sword, and their widows made no lamentation. <sup>65</sup> Then the Lord awoke as from sleep, like a strong man shouting because of wine. <sup>66</sup> And he put his adversaries to rout; he put them to everlasting shame. <sup>67</sup> He rejected the tent of Joseph; he did not choose the tribe of Ephraim, <sup>68</sup> but he chose the tribe of Judah, Mount Zion, which he loves. <sup>69</sup> He built his sanctuary like the high heavens, like the earth, which he has founded forever. <sup>70</sup> He chose David his servant and took him from the sheepfolds; <sup>71</sup> from following the nursing ewes he brought him to shepherd Jacob his people, Israel his inheritance. <sup>72</sup> With upright heart he shepherded them and guided them with his skillful hand.

**Ps 78** A psalm of instruction—of warnings not to repeat Israel’s sins of the past but to remember God’s saving acts and marvelously persistent grace and, remembering, to keep faith with him and his covenant. Here as elsewhere (pervasively in the OT), trust in and loyalty to God on the part of God’s people are covenant matters. They do not spring from abstract principles (such as the formal structure of the God-man relationship) or from general human consciousness (such as feelings of dependence on “God” or a sense of awe in the presence of the “holy”), but they result from remembering God’s mighty saving acts. Correspondingly, unfaithfulness is the more blameworthy because it contemptuously disregards all God’s wonderful acts in his people’s behalf (see Ps 105–106). (CSB)

The psalm probably dates from the period of the divided monarchy and may have been composed about the time of the prophet Hosea (both Hosea and Isaiah speak frequently of the northern kingdom as Ephraim since it was the dominant tribe of that realm). Israel’s unfaithfulness is here epitomized in the sin of Ephraim (v. 9); the psalm concludes by recalling the rejection of “Israel” (v. 59) and the abandonment of Shiloh (v. 60), but the election of Judah and Mount Zion (v. 68). Coming, as may be assumed, from the pen of an Asaphite, the psalm was no doubt a warning to worshipers at Jerusalem not to fall away after the manner of their brothers to the north. (CSB)

By placing this psalm next to Ps 77, the editors of the Psalter ranged David alongside Moses (and Aaron) as the Lord’s shepherd over his people (see vv. 70–72; 77:20) who brought the exodus to its (provisionally) climactic fruition by completing the conquest of the promised land—a perspective apparently shared by the author of the psalm. (CSB)

The psalm is composed of 77 (Hebrew) lines (72 numbered verses) and seven stanzas—with an 11-line introduction. After the introduction, the structure of the stanzas is symmetrical: 8 lines, 16 lines, 9 lines, 16 lines, 9 lines, 8 lines. The two sequences of 16 lines-9 lines constitute a thematic cycle, while the two 8-line stanzas frame the double cycle and underscore the contrast between the sin of Israel (“Ephraim,” vv. 9–16) and the unending mercy of God to his people—mercy that is evidenced in his victory over his enemies and his election of Zion (in Judah) and David (vv. 65–72). (CSB)

Second-longest psalm in the Psalter. Seems to have originated during the days of the division of the land between the Northern (Israel) and Southern (Judah) Kingdoms (v 67, recounted in 1Ki 12), after the construction of Solomon’s temple (v 69). Thus, it may have been written by a descendant of Asaph. The psalm culminates in God’s deeds to and through David, highlighting the importance of the covenant with David (2Sm 7:1–17) and its fulfillment in Christ. (TLSB)

Format: Vv 1–4, teaching for the next generation; vv 5–8, God appointed a Law; vv 9–16, the exodus; vv 17–20, rebellion in the wilderness; vv 21–31, God is just, yet gracious; vv 32–55, testing God again and again; vv 56–66, the Lord punishes His people and His adversaries; vv 67–72, Judah and David chosen. (TLSB)

**78:1–8** Our children must hear what our fathers have told us, so that they may be faithful to the Lord. (CSB)

This introduction stresses the depth and the permanent relevance of God’s revelation to Israel. (PBC)

**78:1–2** This introduction is written in the style of a wisdom writer. (CSB)

**78:2** *parables ... hidden things.* The Hebrew underlying these two expressions occurs in 49:4 (“proverb,” “riddle”) and Eze 17:2 (“parable,” “allegory”)—which raises the question of whether the author is here influenced by prophetic use of wisdom language. While both terms had specialized uses—those reflected in 49:4—they apparently also became conventionalized more generally for instruction in a wide variety of forms. (CSB)

Psalmist is teaching the meaning of Israel’s salvation history, a meaning unknown when not revealed by God. Mt 13:35 quotes v 2 to indicate that Jesus’ parables, which were “dark sayings” to those who did not receive them through faith, also proclaimed God’s saving acts. (TLSB)

The word translated “parable” refers to any kind of message which requires careful study and comparison with the hearer’s own situation before they can understand it properly and apply it correctly. (PBC)

*sayings things from of old.* † Things for instruction from the past. Mt 13:35 refers to this verse as a prophecy of Jesus’ parabolic teaching. Matthew perceived in this psalm a prophetic voice anticipating that of the great Prophet. The “parables” of the psalm are, however, more like the teaching of Stephen (Ac 7) than that of Jesus. (CSB)

**78:3–4** *fathers ... tell to the coming generation.* The faith is to be taught as much by the leaders of each family (Eph 6:4) as it is by the leaders of the community of faith (clergy); cf v 6. (TLSB)

*deeds ... might ... wonders.* Object of the teaching is God's mighty deeds for our salvation (Ac 2:11, 22–36). (TLSB)

**78:4–5** The Lord's saving acts and covenant statutes—both must be taught, and in relationship, for together they remain the focal point for faith and obedience down through the generations (see vv. 7–8). (CSB)

**78:4** *not hide them.* See Job 15:18. (CSB)

**78:5** *testimony.* The covenant, e.g., Ex 19:3–6; 24; hence, the entire exodus is God's mighty deed. (TLSB)

*teach their children.* See, e.g., Ex 10:2; 12:26–27; 13:8, 14; Dt 4:9; 6:20–21. (CSB)

The permanent and enduring relevance of God's word is shown by the emphasis on passing it from one generation to another. (PBC)

**78:7** *set their hope in God.* God's saving works are taught so that the hearers may believe. Cf Ac 2:11, 38, 44; Rm 10:17. (TLSB)

They should be reminded of the spiritual heritage so that they, too, will look for the fulfillment of the promises of the covenant. (A Commentary on the Psalms - Ross)

*not forget* – To “forget” means that they would deliberately disregard them, not only the memory of the events, but what they teach about the nature and will of God. (A Commentary on the Psalms - Ross)

**78:8** *stubborn and rebellious.* Like a rebellious son (see Dt 9:6–7, 24; 31:27). (CSB)

Because Israel had a long history of unfaithfulness to the Lord and His covenant, the psalmist warns about the dangers of unfaithfulness. (TLSB)

*generation.* A people with certain characteristics (see 24:6; Dt 32:5, 20), thus not limited to the exodus generation (see vv. 9–11, 56–64). (CSB)

**78:9–16** The northern kingdom has violated God's covenant, not remembering his saving acts (a message emphasized by the prophets Amos and Hosea). Israel's history with God has been a long series of rebellions on her part (vv. 9–16, 32–39, 56–64), beginning already in the desert (vv. 17–31, 40–55). (CSB)

**78:9–11** Symbolic reference to the faithlessness of Israel. (TLSB)

**78:9** *Ephraimites.* The northern kingdom, dominated by the tribe of Ephraim. (CSB)

One of the larger Israelite tribes. Often refers to all of Israel or, after the division, to the Northern Kingdom. (TLSB)

They are probably singled out because of their later leadership in the secession of the northern kingdom of Israel under Jeroboam. (PBC)

*turned back.* Neither the tribe of Ephraim nor the northern kingdom had a reputation for cowardice or ineffectiveness in battle (see, e.g., Dt 33:17). This verse is best understood as a metaphor for Israel's betrayal of God's covenant (see v. 10), related to the figure of the "faulty bow" (v. 57). (CSB)

**78:11** *forgot his works* – The term "forgot" here also stresses the point that they did not live by faith under the dominating influence of such a powerful God. (A Commentary on the Psalms - Ross)

**78:12–16** A summary reference to the plagues in Egypt and to the water miracles at the Red Sea and in the desert. In the two cycles that follow (vv. 17–39, 40–64), further elaboration intensifies the indictment. (CSB)

The psalm intertwines two themes: the goodness of God in leading Israel from Zoan (their dwelling place in Egypt) to Zion (the permanent home of the temple) is contrasted with Israel's persistent ingratitude. (PBC)

**78:12** *Zoan.* A city in the northeast part of the Nile delta. (CSB)

City in the eastern part of the Nile Delta, known in Gk as Tanis (cf Nu 13:22. (TLSB)

**78:13** See Ex 14:1–15:21. (CSB)

**78:13-16** Psalmist relates God's saving deeds in the exodus; cf Ex 13:21–15:21; 17:1–7; Nu 20:1–13. (TLSB)

**78:15–16** See v. 20; Ex 17:6; Nu 20:8, 10–11. (CSB)

**78:17–31** Israel's rebelliousness in the desert; God's marvelous provision of food—and his anger. (CSB)

**78:17-31** Israel responded to the Lord's saving acts with ingratitude; they brought God's wrath upon themselves; cf Ex 15:22–16:36; Nu 11:4–34. Their ingratitude arose from a lack of faith and trust (cf v 22). (TLSB)

**78:17** *continued.* Although no sin in the desert has yet been mentioned, the poet probably expected his readers to recall (in conjunction with the miraculous provisions of water just mentioned) how the people grumbled at Marah because of lack of water (see Ex 15:24). (CSB)

**78:18** *put God to the test.* See vv. 41, 56; see also note on Ex 17:2 (Israel fails the Lord's testing of her by putting the Lord to the test.). (CSB)

**78:19** *Can God spread a table ... ?* For a different use of the same imagery see 23:5. (CSB)

**78:20** *food ... meat.* The poet is probably combining and compressing two episodes (Ex 16:2–3; Nu 11:4). (CSB)

It is as if one miraculous deed was insufficient; they had other desires that they expected to be met and murmured about those as well. (A Commentary on the Psalms - Ross)

**78:23** *opened the doors of the heavens.* For this imagery see Ge 7:11; 2Ki 7:2; Mal 3:10. (CSB)

**78:24** *rained down* – The image of rain forms a fitting image for the sending of manna from heaven (Exodus 16:4), and the reference to the opening the doors signifies the provision was in abundance. (A Commentary on the Psalms - Ross)

**78:25** *bread of angels*. So called because it came down from heaven. (CSB)

Poetic ways of indicating that this bread was provided in a miraculous fashion. (TLSB)

*angels*. Lit. “mighty ones.” The Hebrew word is used only here of the angels, but reference is clearly to heavenly beings (see 103:20). (CSB)

Lit, “powerful ones,” though translated by rabbis as “angels.” (TLSB)

Mortals ate heavenly food! If the food had not been otherworldly, they would not have named it “manna,” which is explained in Exodus with “what is it?” It provided the bread/gain for the wilderness journey; it was not the only food they ate in the wilderness, for they had animals with them. But the unusual nature and the abundance of the manna served as an example of God’s ability to provide food for them. (A Commentary on the Psalms - Ross)

**78:26–28** See Ex 16:13; Nu 11:31. (CSB)

**78:26** *east wind ... south wind*. Since the quail were migrating from Egypt at this time, the south wind may have carried them north and the east wind may have diverted them to the desert area occupied by the Israelites (the book of Numbers does not provide wind directions). (CSB)

**78:27** *like dust ... like sand*. Similes for a huge number – A simile (common in the ancient Near East) for the large number of Abram’s offspring.). (CSB)

**78:31** *laid low* – Their burial place was named “the Graves of those who Craved” as a warning for all time. (A Commentary on the Psalms - Ross)

**78:32–39** Rebelliousness, which became Israel’s way of life, showed itself early in the desert wandering (vv. 17–31) and continued throughout that journey. (CSB)

**78:32** *they still sinned*. They did not believe God would give them the land He promised; cf Nu 13:25–14:10. (TLSB)

*did not believe*. That God could give them victory over the Canaanites (see Nu 14:11). (CSB)

Their unbelief was especially shocking because God had so fully proved his power in Egypt. (PBC)

**78:33** *days vanish like a breath* – The word used means “empty of substance,” like a vapor, a breath”; it indicates that the life of the rebellious people ended with nothing. Their life from this point on vanished as they waited in terror for death. This is perhaps the most painful cost of rebellion, to live out a wasted life waiting to die. (A Commentary on the Psalms - Ross)

The exodus generation was condemned to die in the desert (see Nu 14:22–23, 28–35). (CSB)

Descriptive of their death in the wilderness (Nu 14:21–38). (TLSB)

**78:34–37** A cycle repeated frequently during the period of the judges. (CSB)

Israel’s repentance was often insincere and superficial. “We must examine our heart and conscience [1 Corinthians 11:28; 2 Corinthians 13:5], and we must act like people who desire to be right with God [Psalm 78:37]. The more this is done, the more the heart will be warmed and enkindled, so it may not become entirely cold” (LC V 54). (TLSB)

**78:35** *Rock*. “Rock” is a common poetic figure for God (or the gods), symbolizing his unfailing strength as a fortress refuge or as deliverer.) (CSB)

*Redeemer*. Deliverer. (CSB)

**78:38–39** Cf Ex 34:6–7; Ps 103:2–5, 14. God’s forgiveness accomplishes what we cannot do for ourselves by any means. (TLSB)

**78:38** See Ex 32:14; Nu 14:20 (Accepted the atonement sacrifices you appointed and so forgave our sins.). (CSB)

Their survival was due to the compassion and patience of God. This is the emphasis the psalmist wants his generation to realize. (A Commentary on the Psalms - Ross)

*restrained*. Chemnitz: “God did not pour out His total wrath in these punishments” (*LTh* 1:112). (TLSB)

**78:40–64** The second cycle (the first is vv. 17–39). (CSB)

**78:40–55** Israel’s rebelliousness began in the desert; she did not remember how she had been delivered from oppression by God’s plagues upon Egypt (see v. 12). Yet he brought them through the sea and the desert and established them in the Promised Land. (CSB)

Israel continued to be disobedient and unbelieving despite God’s repeated acts of mercy and salvation. Six of the ten plagues recorded in Ex 7–12 are mentioned here: the first, fourth, second, eighth, seventh, and tenth. (TLSB)

**78:41** *Holy One of Israel*. Occurs 26 times in Isaiah (see especially 5:24) and only 6 times elsewhere in the OT.). (CSB)

**78:42** *they did not remember* – They knew what he had done, but they did not translate that awareness into loyal faith. They deliberately neglected their great redemption – they did not keep it in mind as a foundation for faith. (A Commentary on the Psalms - Ross)

**78:44–51** The plagues upon Egypt (see Ex 7–12): The sequence in Exodus is followed only in the first and last; the third, fifth, sixth and ninth plagues are not mentioned. (CSB)

**78:47** *sycamores*. A large tree, yielding fig-like fruit as well as useful timber. To ensure good fruit, the gardener had to slit the top of each fig—which may be the procedure referred to by the obscure Hebrew word here rendered “took care of.”). (CSB)

**78:49** *destroying angels*. The poet personifies God's wrath, indignation and hostility as agents of his anger. (CSB)

Agents of God's wrath. (TLSB)

**78:50** *path for His anger*. Describes God's judgment against Egypt by the slaying of all their firstborn. (TLSB)

**78:51** *tents*. Dwellings. (CSB)

*Ham*. For the association of Ham with Egypt. (CSB)

Another name for Egypt, as the Egyptians were among the descendants of Noah's son Ham. (TLSB)

**78:52** *led out His people like sheep*. Cf Nu 27:17; Is 63:11. (TLSB)

**78:53-55** The exodus (v 53) and taking of the Promised Land (vv 54-55, recounted in the Book of Joshua) were the climax of God's deeds of salvation early in the OT. (TLSB)

**78:53** *sea*. Red Sea. (CSB)

**78:55** Summarizes the story told in Joshua. (CSB)

**78:56-64** Rebelliousness continued to be Israel's way of life in the Promised Land (a recurring theme of Judges; see also 1Sa 2:12-7:2), so God rejected Israel (v. 59; see Jer 7:15). (CSB)

We might think that once Israel was established in its own land the rebellion of the wilderness years would come to an end. But instead of thanking God for the bounty of their land the Israelites gave credit to the idols of the land and served them in place of the Lord. (PBC)

**78:56-57** Faithlessness continued to be a problem within Israel, as attested esp in Jgs. (TLSB)

**78:57** *faulty bow*. As in v 9, a symbolic depiction of faithlessness. (TLSB)

**78:58** *high places*. Where false gods were worshiped. (TLSB)

*jealousy*. God's intense reaction to disloyalty to him – God will not put up with rivalry or unfaithfulness. Usually his "jealousy" concerns Israel and assumes the covenant relationship (analogous to marriage) and the Lord's exclusive right to possess Israel and to claim her love and allegiance.). (CSB)

**78:59** *rejected Israel completely*. Abandoned her to her enemies. The psalmist does not speak of a permanent casting off of Israel, not even of the ten northern tribes. (CSB)

As the subsequent history of Israel proves, this does not mean that God permanently rejected all the Israelites. He preserved a remnant. (TLSB)

**78:60** *Shiloh*. The center of worship since the time of Joshua (see Jos 18:1, 8; 21:1-2; Jdg 18:31; 1Sa 1:3; Jer 7:12), it was located in Ephraim between Bethel and Shechem (see Jdg 21:19).



Apparently it was destroyed by the Philistines when they captured the ark or shortly afterward. (CSB)

The tabernacle at Shiloh was bereft of the ark of the covenant by Israel's enemies as a judgment from God. In fact, the entire tabernacle at Shiloh may have been destroyed by the Philistine attack, which started at Aphek, 25 mi W. According to archaeologists, the Israelite settlement at Shiloh was violently destroyed c 1060 BC. (TL SB)

*captivity*. Refers to the capture of the ark of the covenant. (TL SB)

It took many years for Israel to recover from this disaster. Throughout the days of Samuel and Saul Israel had no central sanctuary, although there was a tabernacle at Gibeon. It was only in the days of David that the ark was brought to Jerusalem, and the preparations were made to build the temple as the one central sanctuary. (PBC)

**78:61** *his might ... his splendor*. The ark is here so called because it was the sign of God's kingship in Israel and the focal point for the display of his power and glory (see 26:8; 63:2; 1Sa 4:3, 21–22). (CSB)

**78:62, 71** *his inheritance*. See Dt 9:29. (CSB)

**78:63** *Fire*. Often associated with the sword (see vv. 62, 64) as the two primary instruments of destruction in ancient warfare. (CSB)

*no wedding songs*. So great was the catastrophe that both the wedding songs of the brides and the wailing of the widows (see v. 64) were silenced in the land. (CSB)

**78:64** *priests were put to the sword*. See 1Sa 4:11. (CSB)

**78:65–72** The Lord's election of Judah (instead of Ephraim) as the leading tribe in Israel (anticipated in Jacob's deathbed blessing of his sons, Ge 49:8–12), of Mount Zion (instead of Shiloh) as the place of his sanctuary (royal seat), and of David as his regent to shepherd his people. By these acts the Lord established his people securely as his kingdom in the promised land, following the long period of Israel's troubles from the death of Joshua to the death of Saul —by then God's salvation of Israel begun in the exodus reached its climactic (if provisional) fulfillment (see introduction to Ps 68 and the combination of echoes of God's saving act in the exodus and through David in Isaiah's prophecy of Israel's future deliverance, Isa 11:11–16). (CSB)

**78:65** *awoke as from sleep*. Poetic hyperbole to highlight the contrast between God's action in behalf of his people in the days of David and the preceding time of Israel's troubles (see note on 7:6). (CSB)

Depicts God's care and rescue of His people, though He had ignored them due to their unfaithfulness. (TL SB)

*like a strong man shouting because of wine*. The anger of a drunken brawler describes God's wild response to Israel's enemies. (TL SB)

**78:66** *put his enemies to rout* – Through these events the priesthood changed, Samuel came to power, and eventually this led to the choice of David to be king. (A Commentary on the Psalms - Ross)

**78:66–72** The saving events noted have two focal points: (1) God’s decisive victory over his enemies (thus securing his realm) and the establishment of Zion as his royal city, and (2) the appointment of David to be the shepherd of his people. (CSB)

**78:67** *tents of Joseph*. A figure for the tribe of Ephraim (for the figurative use of “tents” see v. 51; see also 69:25; 83:6; 84:10; 120:5; Ge 9:27; Dt 33:18; 1Ki 12:16; Job 8:22; 12:6; Hab 3:7; Mal 2:12). (CSB)

Both names refer to the Northern Kingdom of Israel after the division of the tribes into the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. God rejected the Northern Kingdom on account of its persistent unbelief and idolatry. The ark was not returned to Shiloh in the territory of Joseph (Ephraim) but was taken to Jerusalem in the territory of Judah. (TLSB)

**78:68-70** *Judah ... David*. God’s saving deeds reach a high point with David, whose family led the Southern Kingdom of Israel. The Lord chose the lowliest son of Jesse (1Sm 16:1, 11–13) to be the leader of His people. With David, the Lord made a covenant (2Sm 7:1–17), promising that a son of David will rule forever. This covenant promise is fulfilled in Jesus’ birth and ministry (Rm 1:3–4). (TLSB)

**78:68, 70** *he chose ... Mount Zion ... He chose David*. See Ps 132. (CSB)

**78:69** *sanctuary*. David’s son Solomon built the temple as a part of the fulfillment of God’s covenant with David; this temple itself points to Christ and His redemptive ministry (Jn 2:19–22). (TLSB)

*heights ... earth*. The verse is subject to two interpretations: (1) The Lord built his sanctuary as impregnable as a mountain fortress and as enduring and unmovable as the age-old earth, or (2) the Lord built his sanctuary as secure and enduring as the heavens and the earth and there manifests himself as the Lord of glory (see 24:7–10; 26:8; 63:2; 96:6), even as he does in the creation (see 19:1; 29:9; 97:6). (CSB)

**78:70** *his servant*. Here an official title marking David as a member of God’s royal administration. (CSB)

**78:71** *shepherd*. David had been a shepherd (1Sm 16:11), but as God’s anointed king, he became another kind of shepherd, the leader of God’s people in right faith and worship. This aspect of David’s life pointed to his descendant Jesus (Ezk 34:23–24; 37:24; Mi 5:2–4), whose ministry provides us with the ultimate shepherd’s care and deliverance (Mt 2:6; Jn 10:11, 17–18; Rv 7:17). He continues to provide for us through the work of ministers of the Gospel (“pastor” lit means “shepherd”; Ac 20:28; 1Pt 5:2–4). (TLSB)

**78:72** Israel under the care of the Lord’s royal shepherd from the house of David was for the prophets the hope of God’s people (see Eze 34:23; 37:24; Mic 5:4—fulfilled in Jesus Christ, Mt 2:6; Jn 10:11; Rev 7:17). (CSB)

**Ps 78** God’s dealings with Israel of old point to His acts toward us today. Israel’s history teaches us to see and to repent of our own lack of faith. Also, God’s saving deeds in Israel’s history,

especially in His acts toward and through David, point us to what Christ has done so that we may have God's ongoing forgiveness and salvation. • "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He has ... raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David" (Lk 1:68–69). Amen. (TLSB)