

Sunday Night Message
January 11, 2014
Psalm 78 – Learning from the Past
Series – The Psalms
Text – Psalm 78

Introduction to the Psalms of Asaph

Psalm 73 through 83 (as well as Psalm 50, are attributed to Asaph. Asaph was a musician who was also a worship leader in the sanctuary. (See 1 Chronicles 15:16–19; 16:4–7, 37–42; 2 Chronicles 5:12–14; 29:13; 35:15).

Introduction to Psalm 78

This psalm is a history psalm in that it teaches the past history of Israel, and instructs the reader to learn present principles.

Turn to 1 Corinthians 10:1 - 14

I The Principles Recorded (1 – 8)

1 Learn from the past.

“Those who cannot remember the past are doomed to repeat it.”

Those who do not learn from the past are doomed to make the same mistakes that the former generations did.

2 What God has taught us we are responsible to give to the next generation.

Turn to Deuteronomy 6 and 8; 9:7

II The Past Reviewed (vs. 9 – 58)

In this section of the psalm, Asaph will review all that God did for the combined Kingdoms of Israel and Judah, and he will point out that the Northern Kingdom forgot about the God who had blessed them.

v. 9 – “the children of Ephraim” This was half of the tribe of Joseph. The other half was Manasseh. This reference is obscure in that it does not seem to be recorded in the historical passages. Some believe that Ephraim here is representative of the whole northern kingdom of Israel. Ephraim was the largest and most powerful tribe in the Northern Kingdom. They descended

from the firstborn of Joseph, and they were the tribe of both Joshua and Jeroboam. The Tabernacle was located in Shiloh, which was within the borders of Ephraim.

v. 12 – Zoan is a city in Egypt, known by the Greeks as Tanis. It was the dwelling place of Pharaoh at the time of the Exodus.

Notice v. 19 – this is a classic statement of unbelief. They doubted God’s ability to provide for them.

Notice v. 39 – God knows what we can and can’t do:

Sometimes God is a lot more understanding about our weaknesses and failures than we are.

"Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust." (Psalm 103:13-14)

Notice v. 41 – “they limited the Holy One of Israel”. God wants to do so much with us, but our unbelief and rebellion limits Him. The Holy Spirit wants to flow through you to bless others, but when we quench Him and grieve Him He won’t do what He would like to do through us.

III The Punishment Remembered (59 – 64)

God destroyed the Northern Kingdom of Israel because of their rebellion to Him. They were taken into captivity by the Assyrians.

IV The Present Reward (vs. 65 – 72)

Because Judah remained faithful to God, God refused the tribe of Ephraim and Shiloh where the Tabernacle was, and promoted the tribe of Judah and the City of Jerusalem.

Conclusion

The conclusion that Asaph was making was simple: don’t be like those before us that rebelled against God, and make sure our children are taught all of this so that they won’t make those mistakes either.