

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Psalms: God's Nurture Of The Inner Man In The Life Of Faith

LXXVIII: Invitation To Learn To Heed God From The Lessons Of History

C. Invitation To Learn To Heed God From Israel's Failure Regarding The Exodus (Psalm 78:42-53)

I. Introduction

- A. The spiritual lessons of Biblical history are more important than even the lessons of secular history.
- B. Psalm 78:1-72 deals with Biblical history's repeat lessons on heeding God, and we view the third segment of that psalm in verses 42-53 on the lesson of Israel's failure regarding the Exodus for our insight and edification:

II. Invitation To Learn To Heed God From Israel's Failure Regarding The Exodus, Psalm 78:42-53.

- A. The introductory remarks of this psalm comprise the first part of verse one in the Hebrew text (Kittel, Biblia Hebraica, p. 1042), so we stay with the numbering system of the English Bible.
- B. By way of review, in our last lesson, we learned how Israel's forefathers in the wilderness failed to trust God in verses 17-41 as had the men of Ephraim back in verses 9-11.
- C. However, Psalm 78:42-53 **then** reports how these **forefathers** in the **wilderness** had failed to trust God **BY ALSO failing to RECALL God's help to them BACK in EGYPT**, so we translate those verses as follows: (42) "They did not remember His power, the day He redeemed them from the oppressor," (43) "the day He displayed His miraculous signs in Egypt, His wonders in the region of Zoan." (44) "He turned their rivers to blood; they could not drink from their streams." (45) "He sent swarms of flies that devoured them, and frogs that devastated them." (46) "He gave their crops to the grasshopper, their produce to the locust." (47) "He destroyed their vines with hail and their sycamore-figs with sleet." (48) "He gave over their cattle to the hail, their livestock to bolts of lightning." (49) "He unleashed against them His hot anger, His wrath, indignation and hostility -- a band of destroying angels." (50) "He prepared a path for His anger; He did not spare them from death but gave them over to the plague." (51) "He struck down all the firstborn of Egypt, the firstfruits of manhood in the tents of Ham." (52) "But He brought His people out like a flock; He led them like sheep through the desert." (53) "He guided them safely, so they were unafraid; but the sea engulfed their enemies."
- D. We note significant observations and applications of this psalm (as follows):
 - 1. Where the men of Ephraim had failed to recall God's goodness to the generation of Israel that experienced the wilderness journeys (Psalm 78:1-16), and where that generation in the wilderness in turn failed to trust the Lord (Psalm 78:17-41), their failure the wilderness in turn rose from their previous failure to recall their history of God's great, miraculous works to redeem them out of the land of Egypt by a strong hand!
 - 2. The argument presented in verses 42-53 is breathtaking: God had miraculously extended enormous power not only to devastate Egypt to get the Egyptians to release Israel from bondage (v. 42-51), but then gently to lead Israel like timid sheep are led, guiding them safely through even the Red Sea though God crushed Pharaoh's pursuing chariot army with the great sea waters (v. 52-53). The point is this: if God expended so much energy and wrath against Israel's Egyptian overlords to get her out of Egyptian bondage, and then very gently, carefully pampered her in getting her out of Egypt into the wilderness as if Israel were a timid, vulnerable flock of sheep, then God was not about to let her suffer destruction in the wilderness that had no food or water provisions! Forgetting God's great expenditure of energy and power coupled with His gentle treatment of Israel was inexcusable for the forefathers in the wilderness, and it left them open to distrusting God and His commitment and ability to provide for their needs in the wilderness!

Lesson: (1) *Though the men of Ephraim failed to recall God's great provisions for their forefathers who had made the wilderness journey to the Promised Land, and though that generation in the wilderness in turn was also dreadfully unfaithful to the Lord, inciting His wrath and terrorizing punishment, the forefathers in the wilderness were inexcusably wrong not to trust that God Who had worked so hard and considerately on Israel's behalf just to get her out of Egypt was now going to provide for her survival in the wilderness!* (2) *The principle of precedents richly applies here: when God STARTS to help His people achieve a long-sought goal (the Promised Land), He INTENDS to COMPLETE that achievement (actually getting them to the Promised Land).*

Application: (1) *May we learn from the lessons of Bible history to trust God in facing hardships lest we gravely sin!* (2) *May we always recall that if God has helped us go PART way towards a goal, He will help us REACH it, that we learn to be CONFIDENT that God will FINISH what He has BEGUN to achieve for us! (Philippians 1:6)*