

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

D. Invitation To Heed God From Israel's Failure Under The Judges

(Psalm 78:54-72)

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 fourth segment of that psalm in verses 54-72 on the lesson of Israel's failure in the period of the judges for our insight:

II. Invitation To Heed God From Israel's Failure Under The Judges, Psalm 78:54-72.

- 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. In past lessons from this psalm, we learned how Israel had failed to trust God in the experiences of the men of Ephraim as well as in their earlier respective forefather's generations in the wilderness and then in the Exodus.
- C. However, Psalm 78:54-72 **then** reports how Israel's **forefathers** in the **Promised Land in the era of the judges ALSO** failed to trust God **by ALSO failing to RECALL God's help to THEIR forefathers**, so we translate those verses as follows: (54) "And He brought them to the border of His holy land, to the hill country His right hand had taken." (55) "He drove out nations before them and allotted their lands to them as an inheritance; He settled the tribes of Israel in their homes." (56) "But they put Elohim to the test and rebelled against the Most High; they did not keep His statutes." (57) "Like their fathers they were disloyal and faithless, they twisted like a faulty bow." (58) "They angered Him with their high places; they aroused His jealousy with their idols." (59) "When Elohim heard them, He was very angry; He rejected Israel completely." (60) "He abandoned the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent He had set up among men." (61) "He sent the ark of His might into captivity, His splendor into the hands of the enemy." (62) "He gave His people over to the sword; He was very angry with His inheritance." (63) "Fire consumed their young men, and their maidens had no wedding songs." (64) "Their priests were put to the sword, and their widows could not weep." (65) "Then Adonai awoke as from sleep, as a man wakes from the stupor of wine." (66) "He beat back His enemies; He put them to everlasting shame." (67) "Then He rejected the tents of Joseph, He did not choose the tribe of Ephraim;" (68) "but He chose the tribe of Judah, Mount Zion, which He loved." (69) "He built His sanctuary like the heights, like the earth that He established forever." (70) "He chose David His servant and took him from the sheepfolds;" (71) "from following after (*m* ["from"] + '*ahar* ["follow after"])", Ibid., p. 29-30) the nursing ewes (*'ul*, B. D. B., A Heb. and Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 732) He brought him to be the shepherd of His people Jacob, of Israel His inheritance." (72) "And he [David] shepherded them with integrity of heart; with skillful hands he led them."
- D. We note significant observations and applications of this psalm (as follows):
 - 1. Repeating the sins of several generations of the forefathers, Israel's forefathers in the period of the Judges, though having seen God graciously provide them the Promised Land, they sinned against the Lord just like multiple generations of Israel before them, with God punishing them accordingly, Psalm 78:55-64.
 - 2. However, as before, God graciously moved to deliver His people and provide the Davidic kingdom, with David who had learned sensitively, graciously and skillfully to lead God's vulnerable people from tending sheep and even following after slow-moving, vulnerable nursing ewes so that Israel had every opportunity once again to obey the Lord so as to enjoy blessing and not divine discipline, Psalm 78:65-72.
 - 3. The psalm ends with a subtle warning: if God had provided Israel with the excellent leadership in king David, a man ultimately qualified in heart and mind skillfully, gently to lead God's people in the ways of the Lord, Asaph's generation was all the more accountable to God to heed Him contrary to the failures of multiple past generations in Israel, or suffer intense divine discipline for unbelief and idolatry!

Lesson: *Asaph's long recollection of Israel's history that relates how multiple generations had failed to trust and to heed the Lord with resulting severe divine discipline ends with God's latest act of goodness in providing blessing under the skillful, godly leadership of David. Accordingly, Israel was to learn the lessons of her history in taking advantage of the godly, excellent leadership she then had in David lest she sin and suffer God's severe discipline!*

Application: *May we heed Asaph's call in our era to learn from the failures of past generations to heed the Lord.*