

Tuesday, January 24, 2023 • Read Psalm 78:9–31

Questions from the Scripture text: Who had what in v9a? But did what anyway (v9b)? What two other things (v10)? And what fourth (v11)? What was one of these great wonders (v12–13)? What was another (v14a)? And a third (v14b)? And a fourth (v15–16)? How had Israel responded then (v17)? Especially by what (v18–20)? Who heard them saying this (v21)? What was His triply-described response? What was the most offensive part of their insulting questions (v22)? What did God do for these rebels, who spoke against Him and did not trust Him (v23–5)? Which doors did He open (v23, cf. Gen 7:11)? What rained down instead of a flood (v24a)? What sort of grain did He give them (v24b)? What sort of food (v25a)? How much of it (v25b)? What else did He give them (v26–27)? How much? And how easily obtained (v28)? To what purpose (v29–30)? But what came upon them in the midst of this (v31a)? With what results (v31b–c)?

How quickly and shockingly can God's people forget Him and rebel? Psalm 78:9–31 looks forward to the opening portion of morning public worship on the coming Lord's Day. In these twenty-three verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **our sinful natures are like those of that wilderness generation, who had been saved by glorious works but almost immediately sinned, rebelled against, spoke against, and tested God in their hearts.**

The Lord established a testimony in Jacob (v5a) in order that fathers should make them known to their children to succeeding generations (v5d–6). The goal was that they would remember the works of God and keep His commandments (v7). But the problem was that the fathers to whom this charge was given did not even remember God's works for themselves (v8). This week's passage recounts their forgetting God's works for themselves.

Why did Ephraim fail in battle (v9b) despite their weaponry (v9a)? Because victory is not by might nor by strength, but by the Spirit of God. And they had rebelled against Him. They did not keep His covenant (v10a). They refused to walk in His law (v10b).

His works and wonders did not move them (v11). Such rebellion came even from those who saw the marvelous plagues by which He delivered them in Egypt (v12), the marvelous deliverance that He gave them through the sea (v13), the marvelous display of His presence to them in the glory cloud and pillar of fire (v14), and marvelous provision of water in the desert (v15–16). The greatness of the wonders. The number of the wonders. The quickness with which they forgot them. All of these are shocking!

Let us not flatter ourselves that we would be more affected toward God if we could only see many great wonders from Him. He has appointed not the works themselves but the repeated telling of the testimony (v5a) and the law (v5b) as the means by which He overcomes our sinful nature. It doesn't come from our fathers, for they were rebellious. It doesn't come from the wonders, for even those wonders could not bring the fathers to trust the Lord or obey Him.

It's not that they forgot the wonders themselves. They remembered the water from the rock (v20a–c). They just didn't believe in Him or trust Him (v22). All of our doubtings and grumbings are rebellion and sin against Him Who has proved Himself repeatedly. And He has proven Himself most at the cross!

Despite their rebellion against Him, He gave them more reason to love and wonder, with the raining down of bread enough to fill them all (v23–25). And He gave them more reason to pause and fear with the great plague that came with the quail meat (v26–31, cf. Num 11:33). How great is the mercy of God! And how great the stubbornness and persistence of man's sinfulness! Desperately, then, we need to make use of His Word in the way that He has prescribed, so that generations of His people will set their hope in Him by grace, and remember Him by grace, and obey Him by grace.

When do you tend most to grumble? What, from God's Word, applies directly to those situations? What, from God's actions, reminds you that He must surely be doing you good even at those times?

Sample prayer: Lord, we thank You that You Yourself have given a testimony in Jacob and a law in Israel, so that by Your almighty Word, we might be made those who hope in You and remember You and obey You. We praise You for Your mighty and merciful work at the cross of Jesus Christ. Surely, this is the greatest of Your wonders! But help us now, by Your Spirit, we pray. In our flesh, we are often forgetful even of Your cross, and we indulge grumbling hearts. Grant that Your Spirit's blessing upon Your Word would make us a thankful, worshiping, loving, serving people this day unto You, our God, we ask in Jesus's Name, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP78D "Yet in the Desert Still They Sinned" or TPH78 "O My People, Hear My Teaching"

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(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Psalm 78 verse 1931. These are God's words. The children of Ephraim being armed, and carrying bows, turned back in the day of battle. That did not keep the covenant of God, they refused to walk in His law. And forgot His works. And His wonders that He had shown them.

Marvelous things He did in the sight of their fathers and the land of Egypt and the field of Zoan. He divided the sea and caused them to pass through. And He made the water stand up like a heap. In the daytime. Also, He led them with the cloud and all the night with the light to fire.

He split rocks in the wilderness. And gave them drink and abundance like the depths. You also brought streams out of the rock? And caused waters to run down like rivers. But they sinned even more against Him. By rebelling against the most high in the wilderness. When they tested God in their heart by asking for the food of their fancy, Yes, they spoke against God.

They said Can God prepare a table in the wilderness? Behold He struck the rock so that the water is gushed out and the streams overflowed. Can He give bread? Also Can He provide meat for His people. Therefore, y'all play. He heard this and was furious. So a fire was kindled against Jacob.

And danger also came up against Israel because they did not believe in Him and did not trust in His salvation. He had commanded the clouds above and opened the doors of heaven. He had rained down manna on them to eat and given them. The bread of heaven, men, ate angels' food.

He sent them food to the fall. He caused an east wind to blow in the heavens. By His power, He brought in the south wind. He also reigned meat on them like the

dust. Feathered fell like the sand of the seas and he let them fall in the midst of their camp, all around their dwelling's.

So they age and were filled For, he gave them. Their own desire. They were not deprived of their craving. But while their food was still in their mouths, The wrath of god came against them and slew the stoutest of them. And struck down. The choice men. Of Israel. So far the reading of god's inspired and inherent word.

This is describing. Why we need the word of god? Day by day in the home week by week and the assembly. He has told us and verse 5. He established a testimony in jacob and pointed a law in israel and that this would be taught from one generation to the next.

The idea is both in the home Deuteronomy 6. Um, And in the assembly why verse 7 so that they may set their hope and god. And not forget the works of god. But keep his commandments. The reason he gave that to these people. Is because they themselves were wicked.

There to do this for their children, so that their children will not be like they are So that the children will verse 8, not be like their fathers. And now, He's just describing that stubborn rebellious generation that did not set its art, a right? Which is why when we were beginning in, Uh in our worship just now we were praying from psalm 95 and we're praying from hebrews 3 and 4.

About not being like those who, when they heard his voice in the wilderness, went astray in their hearts and went to hell. It's not just that they fell in the wilderness and didn't enter the land. When he was three and four explains psalm 95, it says, psalm 95 was written hundreds of years.

After the wilderness wanderings, what it's talking about is not failing to enter the land of rest, meaning, a tract of Palestine in the in the Near East, That you would be in for some 70 or 80 years. It's talking about entering god's final rests. When you have ceased from your works, in this world, the reason god still extends to us, a sabbath keeping the day on which we don't forsake the assembling of ourselves together the day in which we use the word of god.

And it's not just men who address us by the word of god for. Then we would have no hope but it's jesus from heaven. Who attends his word with his power. So that if we reject him and his word, his preaching, his word and in family worship. Also, then we are resisting, the holy spirit.

And we, Uh, we are bringing ourselves closer and closer to that dreadful position and hebrews chapter 6. Where Where there is no longer, hope for repentance and we never know when we have come to that place in this life and so he says that he's given them the word so that they would not be like their fathers.

And there's an implication. For those fathers who are to teach their children, the word that this word may also work for that. Although, It's sobering that for those who are already setting their ways setting, their hearts sitting their mind gotten closer. To the point of no return that hebrews to which the opening verses of Hebrews 6.

Uh, refers. That there is humanly speaking less hope. Than there is for the children. And yet Deuteronomy, 6 had said, let these words be in your heart. And then speak of them with your children. So there is hope. For us all in the word of god and its hope to teach us the lesson that israel failed to learn from the mighty works of god and he talks verse 9, then about the children of Ephraim being armed and carrying bows being turned back.

In the day of battle because they had refused to walk in his law. Why had they refused to walk in his law? Why did they not keep the covenant wide? Did they receive covenant curse? Which part of the covenant curse was that they would flee from their enemy and part of the covenant blessing?

Was that one of them would chase a hundred of their enemy? Why did that happen to them? Because they Had refused to walk in his law. Why had they refused to walk in his law verse 10 because they had forgotten his works? Verse 11 and the wonders that he had shown them.

He lists some of those works. Uh, the plagues that he That he brought on egypt as marvels and signs in verse 12, the dividing of the red sea in verse 13, his own miraculous appearing to that by cloud and by fire and verse 14, has giving them water from the rock, which itself was already a response to their complaining and their grumbling.

And yet in mercy, he did a marvel and gave them water from the rock and versus 15 and 16. And despite all of those things. Ensure they were joists, i'm sure. Over when god plagued the egyptians they rejoice. We have a we have the song of moses and then Miriam leading the women in israel.

Uh, singing the song of moses. Uh, after god had given them deliverance at the red sea. They rejoiced and sure. When god gave them water the gosh, out of the rock and caused the streams. The water is run down like rivers for 16. And so, we can't rest on the idea that we've had times in which we thought about great things that jesus has god has done in jesus.

And that we felt warm and fuzzy about them. We can't say oh well, i'm safe because i felt warm and fuzzy once about jesus dying for sinners. Because if we're still grumblers and complainers, And we don't trust in god for the present and we don't trust in god for the future.

Then are we really remembering his works? No remembering. His works means you cling to christ and over against everything that your fleshiness wants to say, in anxiety, or grumbling or discouragement and over everything in your circumstances. You say he who did not spare his own son. But gave him up for me.

He will surely together with and give me all things. So even if i'm led as sheep to the slaughter, even if i'm killed all day long. Even if i'm under attack by demons, won't leave me alone and i have all of these troubling thoughts all the time. He who did not spare his own son, but gave jesus to me, will with jesus together with him.

Give me all things. God is for me. Even if all these things are against me and all of these things cannot prevail against me if god is for me. That's how faith in jesus christ. Trusts god in the present and trust god for the future. Because remembering his wondrous works, doesn't just mean, we have a mental recollection.

Of his wondrous works. It means we know the god with whom we act. Or with whom we interact is the same as he was, then his character is the same as he was as it was. Then his purposes are the same as they were then. He is saving me.

No matter what? And so, what the what the word of god is four verse 7 is that they may set their hope and god And what it's trying to prevent in us is that we would not forget his works verse 11, we would not do as they did, look at verse 22.

When they when they commit their rebellion in verses 17 through 20 and they say, can i give us bread too? Can they give us meat too? How does god? Uh, describe that response from them. The the fury and the fire and the anger in verse 21, arise because verse 22, they did not believe in god and did not trust in his salvation.

You see that's the right response to his works and his wonders, isn't it? To believe. In god today. That he is still carrying out his saving of me today. But everything that comes in his providence, And despite the continuation of my remaining sin, which feels like a wall within my members, roman 7.

Despite those things god, who did those wonders to save me then and now those wonders for us, Are not. Yes, plagues on egypt and red sea, crossings and fire, and cloud and water from a rock, the wonders. Our god himself. Become a man dying on a cross rising from the dead greater wonders.

And the way to remember him, And respond to him rightly as to say, even despite might continuing battle with remaining sin, and i continuing battle with doubt and all of the difficult things that i suffer at the hands of others. And, and in more ordinary Providence in god's creation.

What unbelievers would call natural disasters. But what i call the hand, the providence of my god, That no matter what i suffer from myself or from others, or from devils, or in the world. God is saving me. God who came and died on the cross and rose again from the dead.

He's saving me. I trust his salvation. Verse 22. But we're not going to trust his salvation. Unless we use the means. By which he works in us the home to trust in his salvation. That's why he gave a law and a testimony in israel. That we would have day by day morning and evening in the home.

Week by week morning, and evening, in the assembly. The words of god that he uses. To cure the rebellious heart. To hold back. And suffocate the remaining sin.

And notice that. If instead of using God's word to, View god's providence. This way. We received from god instead. What? Our heart's grave? That's not mercy. That's wrath. He causes the east wind to rise again to blow in the heavens. This is directly related. Uh, to He doesn't use the exact language here, but he did use the exact language in the actual crossing of the red sea.

Right, so verse 13. He divided the scene calls them pass through that, that happened by a strong east wind, This type. This time, he brings the wind but not in mercy. Because as the quail drop around them and as they start killing and eating, And they're full, what are they full of verse 29 and 30?

Their own desire. They're craving. Their food for their mouths. You hear the repetition? And how? It's telling us that god giving us what we want, is not love. It's wrath. Just like a parent to always gives their child what they want, is love them. It's a way to hate your child.

Is to give them whatever they want. And so with the food still in their mouth, the wrath of god. Comes upon them. The plague starts and he's and he kills The stoutist of them strikes down the choicemen of israel. I'm not sure. That the spirit gave us that peace of information.

In the original. In. In the narrative. As they were in the wilderness. The the ones who are killed in the plague where the strongest and best romance perspective,

So what a mercy of god that he continues to give us his word. I think each of us, Uh, feel must feel. If we're paying attention and spirit, helping us feel convicted. About how much we want the lord to give us our own desires. The things that we think would really make things well in the church or really make things well in the family.

Maybe. You don't think about those things as much as i do. Maybe you do by God's grace to you, Or the things that we think would really make things better for my life. If i could have this, if someone would do that, And then he comes to us in his word and says That's not what makes things better in your life.

What makes things better in your life. This trusting my salvation. Remembering. In your daily. Interactions with god, that he is the god of the cross and the god of the resurrection. And the god of the ascension and the god of the enthronement of the lord jesus christ. And yes the god who plagued itant split the sea and Was in pillar of cloud and fire and water from the rock.

But those are so small that comparison to what we have now. May the lords do for us and in us by his work. So that we would not be those who go astray in our hearts. Rebell against him. And continue to think and live as if getting our desires.

Would be a mercy. May god give us what he Desires and his wisdom and his love. Let's pray. Her father in heaven. We thank you and bless you. For this portion, of your word for giving it to us today. Lord. A bless your name for the wisdom of your providence.

And giving me to have to have these words in my mouth for the family. After the morning that i had. So that As a good father, you come with your correction. And i pray that not just for me, but for all of us. That you would by your spirit, make us wise.

And that your word of rebuke would enter deeper into us than 100 blows. Would enter the deeper into us than Much difficult providence. That you would even be pleased to spare us. The hard providence. By doing the work in us. By your words, softening the heart. Grant that we ask in jesus name.

Amen.