

PSALM 78-A MASKIL OF ASAPH

A maskil is a psalm of instruction, perhaps specifically in godliness. Asaph was a leader of one of David's levitical choirs. This psalm was written by a descendant of Asaph since it dates back between 700 and 600 BC during the time of the divided kingdom: Israel (or Ephraim) in the north, and Judah in the south. This psalm is full of content. We will derive the most benefit if we begin early in the week and allow God to prompt us in areas His Word opens up to us. It only takes 10 minutes to read (honest!), so let's begin.

Read Psalm 78 through in one sitting \_\_\_\_ Yes. Read again \_\_\_\_ Yes.

Re-read verses 1-11. *A Plea to Israel (God's People)*

1. a. What is the instruction that earnestly must be passed on to the generations to come (verses 1-4)?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- b. What results from remembering God's deeds (verses 7-8)?

Israel's unfaithfulness is epitomized here in the sin of Ephraim (the Northern Kingdom of Israel), and serves as a warning to worshipers in Jerusalem *not* to follow their example. To help them (and us) heed the warning:

2. What were some characteristics of the Ephraimites?



Read verses 30-41. *God's Discipline*

7. Explain from verse 32 what result God's discipline *should* have and *could* have had in the people's response to Him. Did they learn from their mistakes?
  
8. The scenario goes like this: When God killed their young men, then they sought Him – temporarily (verses 33-38). Were they sincere? How do you know? (Note verse 37.)
  
9. Remember the description of the Ephraimites in verses 8-11, and the Israelites in verses 17-41? How do we respond to God in the same ways? (See Philippians 2:14-15.)

If you can relate to any of those qualities, welcome to the human race!

10. Read aloud verses 38-41. How do these verses encourage you?

11. Skip down to verses 52-55. What qualities of God do you see in these verses?

We can respond to God in belief and love. Verses 42-55 show God's acts - how He delivered His people from Egypt. The story repeats itself in verses 56-64 with Israel setting up her "high places" (verse 58) - altars on hills in honor of pagan idols - resulting in God's discipline of Israel. Shiloh, the center of worship, was destroyed by the Philistines (verse 60) at which time the ark was captured (the physical representation of God's glory to the people).

12. The psalm concludes with God's choice of Judah over Ephraim (verses 65-72).
- a. From reading this psalm why would God reject one tribe and choose another?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - b. How does this apply to each of us?
13. What are some specific ways God has worked in your life in the past that encourages you to put your trust in God (verse 7) and be faithful to Him (verse 8)?