

Having A Basic Understanding of Some Old Testament Truths

Part 108 – Hear The Law Through God Bringing David To Shepherd His People (Psalms 78)

1. Did God want His word shared from generation to generation?

Yes: “(1) Give ear, O my people, to my law: incline your ears to the words of my mouth. (2) I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old: (3) Which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. (4) We will not hide them from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done. (5) For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, **which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children**” (Psalms 78:1-5).

Dark sayings are parables, hidden sayings, etc. (Proverbs 1:6 and Matthew 13:11-13).

Generations of old need to answer the spiritual questions of the new generations (Exodus 12:26-27; 13:14-15, and Psalms 44:1).

We must teach our children the truth (Genesis 18:18-19, Deuteronomy 6:6-7, Psalms 145:4, and Ephesians 6:4).

2. Does the passing on of God’s word help future generations?

Yes: “(6) That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children: (7) That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments: (8) **And might not be as their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation;** a generation that set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not stedfast with God” (Psalms 78:6-8).

Caution... You can FORGET (Deuteronomy 4:9; 4:23; 8:11, Proverbs 4:5, and Jeremiah 18:15).

When the older generation in Israel could have really made the change: “O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever” (Deuteronomy 5:29)!

There is much to learn from the mistakes of past generations (I Corinthians 10:1-12).

3. Did the children of Ephraim remember God’s works/law?

No: “(9) The children of Ephraim, being armed, and carrying bows, turned back in the day of battle. (10) They kept not the covenant of God, and refused to walk in his law; (11) And forgot his works, and his wonders that he had shewed them” (Psalms 78:9-11).

I.E.: Deuteronomy 1:41-44

4. What events led up to God kindling a fire against Jacob and His anger coming up against Israel?

“(12) Marvellous things did he in the sight of their fathers, in the land of Egypt, in the field of Zoan. (13) He divided the sea, and caused them to pass through; and he made the waters to stand as an heap. (14) In the daytime also he led them with a cloud, and all the night with a light of fire. (15) He clave the rocks in the wilderness, and gave them drink as out of the great depths. (16) He brought streams also out of the rock, and caused waters to run down like rivers. (17) And they sinned yet more against him by provoking the most High in the wilderness. (18) And they tempted God in their heart by asking meat for their lust. (19) Yea, they spake against God; they said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness? (20) Behold, he smote the rock, that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed; can he give bread also? can he provide flesh for his people? (21) Therefore the LORD heard this, and was wroth: so a fire was kindled against Jacob, and anger also came up against Israel” (Psalms 78:12-21).

5. Did they fail to believe in God and trust in His salvation?

Yes: *“Because they believed not in God, and trusted not in his salvation” (Psalms 78:22).*

See also: **Psalms 106:24, Isaiah 7:9, and Hebrews 3:8-12.**

6. What did Israel do when God fed them with manna from above?

They didn't stop eating, still rebelled, gave in to their lust, and God slew the fattest of them: *“(23) Though he had commanded the clouds from above, and opened the doors of heaven, (24) And had rained down manna upon them to eat, and had given them of the corn of heaven. (25) Man did eat angels' food: he sent them meat to the full. (26) He caused an east wind to blow in the heaven: and by his power he brought in the south wind. (27) He rained flesh also upon them as dust, and feathered fowls like as the sand of the sea: (28) And he let it fall in the midst of their camp, round about their habitations. (29) So they did eat, and were well filled: for he gave them their own desire; (30) **They were not estranged from their lust. But while their meat was yet in their mouths, (31) The wrath of God came upon them, and slew the fattest of them, and smote down the chosen men of Israel. (32) For all this they sinned still, and believed not for his wondrous works” (Psalms 78:23-32).*** See also: v.18 – hadn't learned!!!

Lust for food or anything else never is completely satisfied: **Psalms 106:14, Proverbs 13:25, and Proverbs 27:20; cf. I Peter 2:11.**

7. When did Israel seek after and remember God?

“(33) Therefore their days did he consume in vanity, and their years in trouble. (34) When he slew them, then they sought him: and they returned and enquired early after God. (35) And they remembered that God was their rock, and the high God their redeemer” (Psalms 78:33-35).

8. Did Israel continue seeking after and remembering God? Why or why not?

No: “(36) Nevertheless **they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues.** (37) For **their heart was not right with him,** neither were they steadfast in his covenant” (Psalms 78:36-37).

See also: **Deuteronomy 5:28-29, Psalms 106:12-13, and Isaiah 29:13.**

Our hearts have to be in the right place to please the Lord (**II Chronicles 12:14, Ezra 7:10, and Hosea 4:6-8.**)

9. What kept God from utterly destroying Israel?

“(38) *But he, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not: yea, many a time turned he his anger away, and did not stir up all his wrath. (39) For he remembered that they were but flesh; a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again*” (Psalms 78:38-39).

To bring Christ into the world, God really showed mercy: **Genesis 22:18, Jeremiah 14:10, Ezekiel 6:3-10, Isaiah 65:9, Micah 7:18, and Hebrews 7:14.**

10. Did Israel rarely test God’s patience?

No, they did so often: “(40) *How oft did they provoke him in the wilderness, and grieve him in the desert! (41) Yea, they turned back and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel*” (Psalms 78:40-41).

11. Did Israel forget just a few things God did in their sight?

No, they forgot many things that God did in their sight: “(42) *They remembered not his hand, nor the day when he delivered them from the enemy. (43) How he had wrought his signs in Egypt, and his wonders in the field of Zoan: (44) And had turned their rivers into blood; and their floods, that they could not drink. (45) He sent divers sorts of flies among them, which devoured them; and frogs, which destroyed them. (46) He gave also their increase unto the caterpillar, and their labour unto the locust. (47) He destroyed their vines with hail, and their sycamore trees with frost. (48) He gave up their cattle also to the hail, and their flocks to hot thunderbolts. (49) He cast upon them the fierceness of his anger, wrath, and indignation, and trouble, by sending evil angels among them. (50) He made a way to his anger; he spared not their soul from death, but gave their life over to the pestilence; (51) And smote all the firstborn in Egypt; the chief of their strength in the tabernacles of Ham: (52) But made his own people to go forth like sheep, and guided them in the wilderness like a flock. (53) And he led them on safely, so that they feared not: but the sea overwhelmed their enemies. (54) And he brought them to the border of his sanctuary, even to this mountain, which his right hand had purchased. (55) He cast out the heathen also before them, and divided them an inheritance by line, and made the tribes of Israel to dwell in their tents*” (Psalms 78:42-55).

12. What example were the children of Israel following when they turned away from God?

*“(56) Yet they tempted and provoked the most high God, and kept not his testimonies: (57) **But turned back, and dealt unfaithfully like their fathers:** they were turned aside like a deceitful bow” (Psalms 78:56-57).*

13. What did Israel provoke God to anger with?

“(58) For they provoked him to anger with their high places, and moved him to jealousy with their graven images” (Psalms 78:58).

You’d think they would have taken heed to God’s strong warnings (cf. **Leviticus 26:27-35**). **We’ll see this come true in the next question!!**

14. Did God allow Israel to provoke Him without any consequences?

No: *“(59) **When God heard this, he was wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel:** (60) So that he forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent which he placed among men; (61) And delivered his strength into captivity, and his glory into the enemy's hand. (62) He gave his people over also unto the sword; and was wroth with his inheritance. (63) The fire consumed their young men; and their maidens were not given to marriage. (64) Their priests fell by the sword; and their widows made no lamentation” (Psalms 78:59-64).*

15. What did the Lord do when He, “awaked as one out of sleep”?

He kept His promise to Abraham, lifted up Judah, and gave David the reigns so that the seed promise would come forth. THANKS BE TO GOD, for OUR SALVATION is in God not destroying Israel: *“(65) Then the Lord awaked as one out of sleep, and like a mighty man that shouteth by reason of wine. (66) And he smote his enemies in the hinder parts: he put them to a perpetual reproach. (67) Moreover he refused the tabernacle of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim: (68) But chose the tribe of Judah, the mount Zion which he loved. (69) And he built his sanctuary like high palaces, like the earth which he hath established for ever. (70) He chose David also his servant, and took him from the sheepfolds: (71) From following the ewes great with young he brought him to feed Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance. (72) So he fed them according to the integrity of his heart; and guided them by the skilfulness of his hands” (Psalms 78:65-72).*