

PSALM 78

A maskil of Asaph.

Geneva, 1551



1. Give ear, my peo-ple, lis-ten as I teach you
and let the words of my in-struc-tion reach you.
The wis-dom that on God's de-crees is found-ed
will be to you in par-a-bles ex-pound-ed.
Their hid-den truths I will for you un-fold -
the things our fa-thers taught us from of old.

2. These we'll pass on, *not from their children* hide them,
that *those accounts* of *bygone days* may guide them,
and we will tell the *coming generation*
how *God has* dealt with *Israel, His* nation –
the wondrous *works the LORD* for them has done,
the glory that *His mighty* hand has won.
3. To Israel *He gave His* revelation,
His *law as* Jacob's *ever-firm* foundation,
and *all our* fathers *He, the LORD,* commanded
to *make it* known to *those from them* descended,
that also *they might* pass it on in turn
and teach His *law to children* not yet born.

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4. Then they would put their trust in God their Sav-iour
and not for-get His deeds of love and fa-vour,
nor come to share their fath-ers' con-dem-na-tion,
that stub-born and re-bel-lious gen-er-a-tion
whose spir-its were not faith-ful to the LORD,
by whom God was re-ject-ed and ig-nored.

5. The Ephraimⁱtes *with bows for war* assembled,
yet *they in battle all turned back* and trembled.
They *did not keep God's covenant* but denied Him,
despised His law and *shamelessly defied* Him,
forgot what *He had done* for them alone,
the *miracles that He* to them had shown.
6. God worked great *marvels*, and *their fathers* saw them;
in *Egypt's land*, in *Zoän*, *wonders* awed them.
There *He* the waves for *Israel* divided
and *through the sea* His *chosen people* guided.
He made the *water stand up* like a heap;
His mighty *hand restrained* the roaring deep.

7. By day He gave a cloud to lead and guide them;
with fiery light did He all night provide them.
Drink as abundant as the seas He gave them;
He split the rocks, and springs welled up to save them.
From barren crags He made fresh fountains burst,
and rivers flowed to quench His people's thirst.
8. God in the desert gave them His protection,
yet they rebelled; His mercy met rejection.
In sin and disobedience they persisted,
and God Most High they boldly tried and tested.
In stubborn pride, defiantly they raved,
demanding from His hand the food they craved.
9. They slighted God and said, "Will He be able
to spread us in the wilderness a table?
He struck the rock, we saw the fountains gushing
and streams of water through the desert rushing,
but can He also give His people bread
and bring us meat so that we will be fed?"
10. Therefore the LORD, who heard their provocation,
was full of wrath against His chosen nation.
His fiery rage against all Israel mounted;
His anger rose, for never they recounted
what He had done to help them in their plight;
they did not trust His saving power and might.
11. Yet to the skies God's orders then were given;
He opened wide the very doors of heaven.
God showed His mercy, Israel sustaining
with plenteous manna down upon them raining.
The food of angels gave He them for bread,
and with the grain of heaven they were fed.

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12. The east wind He called up from heav-en's bor-ders,
led forth the south wind to o-bey His or-ders,
and on their wings they brought what God had giv-en,
for quails, like dust that by a storm is driv-en,
rained down up-on them from the dark-ened sky;
then they had flesh in plen-ti-ful sup-ply.

13. They ate and *were well filled with what they wanted; what they had craved, that He had freely granted. They gorged themselves, and while they celebrated, with food still in their mouth and greed unsated, God's anger rose against them, and they died; He slew their strongest men, their flower and pride.*
14. But still they *sinned and did not cease to grieve Him; despite His wonders they would not believe Him. Their days He ended, and like fog they vanished; with sudden death and terror they were punished. But when He slew them, they would once again return to Him, repenting of their sin.*

15. Then they remembered God, their Rock and Saviour,
the Most High God who with redeeming favour
had brought them from the land that had enslaved them.
They flattered Him, yet thought that He would save them.
Though with their lips they might fine words express,
they scorned His covenant in their faithlessness.
16. Yet He in pity and in lovingkindness
forgave them their iniquity and blindness,
did not destroy them when His wrath was burning,
but He restrained the anger they kept earning,
remembering that they were but mortal men,
a passing breeze that will not come again.
17. How often they would all rebel and leave Him!
How often they would in the desert grieve Him!
They kept on testing Him, His love denying,
the Holy One of Israel defying,
and they forgot the glorious day when He
redeemed His people from their enemy.
18. Through wondrous deeds He Israel delivered;
He turned to blood all Egypt's mighty rivers.
By swarms of flies its people were tormented,
and with a plague of frogs they were confronted.
Their crops He to the hungry locust gave;
their fields were left with nothing they could save.
19. With hail and sleet their vines and trees He shattered;
their cattle He with bolts of lightning scattered.
He loosed on them His wrath and indignation,
brought them distress and widespread devastation.
Destroying angels He among them sent,
who brought great ruin everywhere they went.

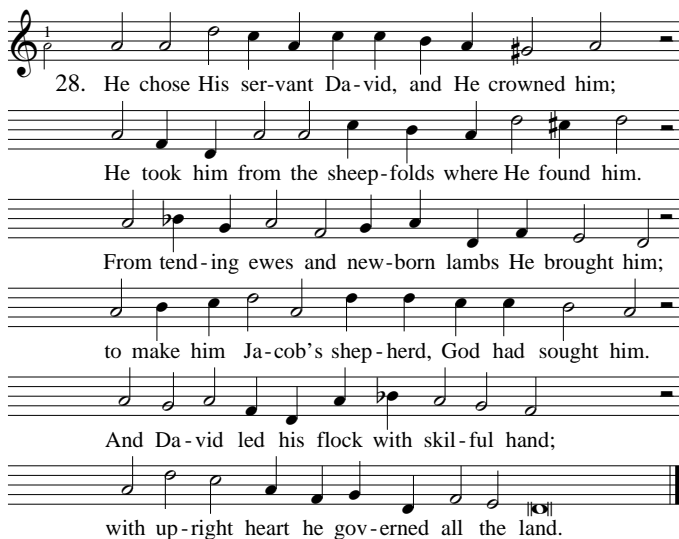
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20. Free rein He gave to His con-sum-ing an-ger;
from death He did not spare them an-y long-er
but gave them up to plague and dev-as-ta-tion.
He in the tents of Ham brought des-o-la-tion;
their first-born He struck down, and they all died -
their eld-est sons, all E-gypt's joy and pride.

21. Then like a *shepherd* He His people guided,
and *in the desert* they in Him confided.
He led His flock, and *without fear* they followed,
for *all their foes* the *raging sea* had swallowed.
Thus to His *holy land* He brought His own,
to hills and *dales* which His right hand had won.
22. Before them He drove out the *heathen* nations,
apportioned to the *tribes* their habitations,
and *in their tents* they safely found a dwelling.
Yet they, against the *Most High God* rebelling,
cast off His laws and Him no longer served,
and, like their *fathers*, from His ways they swerved.

23. They like a *faulty bow, all warped and twisting*,
provoked *God's anger when, in sin persisting*,
they *with their heathen worship made Him* jealous;
in *servng worthless idols they were* zealous.
Great was *God's wrath when He saw* them rebel.
He *utterly rejected* Israel.
24. From *Shiloh's tent, His dwelling, He* departed,
forsook *those who were faithless and false-hearted*.
He *to the clutches of the foe* surrendered
His *holy ark, the symbol of His splendour*.
In *anger that His word had been* ignored,
He gave His *people over* to the sword.
25. Their young men *were consumed as flames* drew near them;
their *maidens* had no *wedding songs* to cheer them.
Their *priests fell* by the *sword of heathen nations*;
their *widows* could not *voice their lamentations*.
The land was *ravaged by the godless foe*,
and all *endured great misery* and woe.
26. He then turned *back to those He had* forsaken;
as *from deep slumber did the Lord* awaken,
just *like a warrior who with wine* is heated.
He *struck His foes* until they all *retreated*,
and as they *fled, He at their backs* took aim;
He put them *all to everlasting* shame.
27. The tents of *Joseph's offspring He* rejected,
nor was *His house in Ephraim* erected.
But *He chose Judah's tribe in His* good pleasure –
Mount *Zion, which He loved, His pride* and treasure.
He built His *temple like the heavenly* heights,
firm like the *earth, enduring* by His might.

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28. He chose His ser-vant Da-vid, and He crowned him;
He took him from the sheep-folds where He found him.
From tend-ing ewes and new-born lambs He brought him;
to make him Ja-cob's shep-herd, God had sought him.
And Da-vid led his flock with skil-ful hand;
with up-right heart he gov-erned all the land.