

Studies in Psalms by [John T Polk II](#) For [The Fellowship Room](#)

Psalm 78

1/2/13

Vs. 1-8 state the purpose of the Psalm is to tell "the generation to come" what not to do; Vs. 9-72 review past lessons from the written Word of God.

Teaching now the lessons of the past to "the generation to come" (verses 4, 6) is the main work God gives to parents. Instead of arrogantly, ignorantly cursing one's father or not blessing one's mother ([Proverbs 30:11-14](#)), we must learn from whatever their mistakes were what not to do in those instances ([1 Corinthians 10:1-12](#)). "The way of a fool *is* right in his own eyes, But he who heeds counsel *is* wise" ([Proverbs 12:15](#)). "A fool despises his father's instruction, But he who receives correction is prudent" ([Proverbs 15:5](#)). "A fool has no delight in understanding, But in expressing his own heart" ([Proverbs 18:2](#)). A fool has opinions, but doesn't listen to lessons of the past. A word to the wise is sufficient.

Verses 1-8: Jesus' use of parables was explained by quoting **verses 1-2** ([Matthew 13:34-35](#)). The generation that had "dark sayings of old" (lessons deeply contained in Scripture) taught to them should have acted better than they had (**verses 2-3**), for God had done "wonderful works," "established a testimony in Jacob," and "appointed a law" in Israel for fathers to teach their children (**Verses 4-6**; [Exodus 12:1-28](#); [Deuteronomy 4:1-10](#); [6:7](#)). If this was not done, it produced another "stubborn and rebellious generation" (**verses 7-8**).

Verses 9-72: In the Wilderness, they quit fighting too soon (**verse 9**; [Exodus 17:8-16](#)), ignored His Law (**verse 10**; [Joshua 5:6](#)), forgot His works (**verse 11**; [Numbers 14:11](#)). The miracles God did (**verse 12**) starting in Zoan in Egypt ([Numbers 13:22](#)) included: dividing the Red Sea (**verse 13**; [Exodus 14:21](#)), leading with a cloud and fire (**verse 14**; [Exodus 13:21](#)), and giving water from rock (**verse 15-16**; [Exodus 17:6](#)). Israelites responded by: more sinning, rebellion, testing God, and questioning God's provision (**verses 17-19**; [Numbers 11:4](#)), provoking Moses to strike the rock (**verse 20**; [Numbers 20:11](#)), more unbelief (**verse 21-22**; [Numbers 11:1](#)). God gave them "manna" (**verses 23-25**; [Exodus 16:2-36](#)), meat (**verses 26-31**; [Numbers 11:31-34](#)), forgiveness when asked (**verses 32-38**; [Numbers 14:18-20](#)). "Nevertheless they flattered Him with their mouth, And they lied to Him with their tongue" (**verse 36**). Lip service can never deceive the God "who searches the minds and hearts" ([Revelation 2:23](#)).

The Israelites repeatedly failed in faith (**verse 39-41**; [Hebrews 3:8-19](#)). **Verses 42-53** refer back to what God had done to deliver Israel out of Egypt in the Book of [Exodus chapters 9-14](#). **Verses 54-66** summarize the conquest of the Promised Land in the Book of Joshua, by God's help (**verse 54-55**; [Joshua 13:17](#)). **Verses 56-66** speak of the days in the Book of Judges, when Israel had failed to clear away all idolatry ([Joshua 13:13](#); [16:10](#)) and became idolatrous themselves ([Judges 2:10-23](#)).



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Verses 67-72 illustrate that God’s plan was carried out, even when Israel demanded a king instead of God’s judge to lead them ([1 Samuel 8:4-22](#)), for God used “the tribe of Judah,” “Mount Zion” (Jerusalem), and “David” through whom Jesus Christ would later come ([Micah 5:2](#); [Matthew 23:36-39](#); [Romans 1:3-4](#)).

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