



Give ear, O my people, to my teaching;
incline your ears to the words of my mouth!
I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark
sayings from of old, things that we have heard
and known, that our fathers have told us.

(PSALM 78:1-3)

STRUCTURE

- v. 1-8** Summons to hear the history of the fathers and learn from it.
- v. 9-53** God was merciful and good to His people in Egypt and in the wilderness. They repaid Him with rebellion.
- v. 54-64** God was merciful and good to His people in Canaan. They repaid Him with rebellion.
- v. 65-72** Despite their rebellion, God kept His promises to Judah and David and delivered His people from their adversaries.

AT A GLANCE

AUTHOR One of the eleven psalms of Asaph, a musician from the time of King David.

MORE TO THE STORY This psalm of Israel's history shows the continual cycle of God's mercy to Israel, their thankless rebellion, His judgment and their cry for help.

"ZOAN" (v. 12, 43) is the Hebrew name for a major city in the land of Goshen, the region of Egypt where the Israelites lived.



CHRIST IS HERE

Of all the descendants of Jacob, there is only one who remained faithful to God: Christ Jesus. He showed perfect obedience toward His Father and total trust in Him.



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This psalm teaches how to read the Old Testament as St. Paul would have us do: to learn from the history of ancient Israel as both warning and instruction to us (see ROM. 15:4; 1 COR. 10:1-6). Jesus fulfills the words of verse 2 as He tells His parables (MATT. 13:35), so that His hearers would listen attentively and heed His teaching in faith, doing what Israel continually failed to do in her own history. Psalm 78 summarizes the gracious work of God for His people, from the Exodus out of Egypt through their wandering in the wilderness to their settlement in the Promised Land. It also sets forth Israel's continual rebellion against God and outright apostasy despite all of God's miracles and mercies. Yet this psalm ends with the comforting encouragement that God remained merciful and gracious. He was not only long-suffering; He was also faithful to His promises to His chosen remnant. He delivered Judah and the house of David from their enemies, preserving the remnant of the faithful. So too He remains faithful to His holy church, leading and guiding her through all her days. The chief spiritual task of parents is to teach these truths to their children.

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USE IN THE CHURCH

Antiphon: v. 1a

In the Daily Office: Thursdays at Matins

At the Divine Service:

Introit verses for Pentecost Tuesday and Trinity 19

One-Year:

LSB Trinity 8 and historic Trinity 9 (v. 1)

Three-Year:

Introit for Easter Monday (ant: v. 4) and Proper 13B (ant: v. 72); introit verses for Easter 4C (v. 70–72)

Verse for Proper 13A and Proper 11B (v. 25)

Hymn: LSB 867, "Let Children Hear the Mighty Deeds"

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SPIRITUAL CARE

- Preparation for confession.
- Concerning God's Word and the fear of God.
- For God's mercy, grace and forgiveness.
- For the proclamation of the Gospel.
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PSALM PRAYER

Almighty, incomprehensible and merciful Lord, You do not destroy sinners as soon as they grieve You by their offences, but Your set Your mercy before Your wrath. Whenever we provoke You to smite, let Your loving-kindness cause You to forgive. Feed us, then, with the bread of angels, that receiving its might, we may overcome the wily craft of the evil one, and by Your help enter the open gates of heaven; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

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