

Series: Psalms

Title: The Success of the Gospel

Text: Ps 78: 1-8

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**Psalm 78: 1: «Maschil of Asaph.» 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.**

This is a Psalm of instruction, admonition- "*Maschil*." The prophet Asaph penned the Psalm. But Christ gave him the words to write. Notice verses 2 & 4. Christ fulfilled this prophecy.

Matthew 13: 34: All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them: 35: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.

The things kept secret from eternity is the grace and mercy of God in the gospel of Christ. Why did Christ preach to the multitude in parables?

Matthew 13: 10: And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? 11: He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.

God has hidden the gospel from the wise and prudent. He only reveals the gospel unto babes. Babes are those born of the Spirit of God by whom we are made teachable as little children trusting our Father. By Christ coming in the flesh and fulfilling the law and the prophets and by Christ revealing the gospel in our hearts, we see and hear things more clearly than old testament believers.

Matthew 13: 16: But blessed *are* your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. 17: For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous *men* have desired to see *those things* which ye see, and have not seen *them*; and to hear *those things* which ye hear, and have not heard *them*.

Colossians 1: 26: *Even* the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: 27: To whom God would make known what *is* the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: 28: whom we preach...

So this Psalm gives a parable in our Psalm. What is a parable? A parable uses carnal things to illustrate spiritual truth. A parable uses earthly things to illustrate heavenly truth. Psalm 78 gives the history of Israel from God calling them out of Egypt to king David's reign. It illustrates God's grace to his spiritual Israel. Israel is an earthly nation used of God to teach his true Israel that salvation is by Christ our Prophet, Priest and King. David is a type of Christ. At the end of the Psalm we read,

Psalm 78: 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.

Christ is our Shepherd.

Psalm 78: 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.

So God formed Israel to be an earthly parable—an analogy—a type—to teach his spiritual Israel.

**Subject:** The Success of the Gospel

**Proposition:** The reason we believe on Christ is because God ordained that our spiritual fathers should preach the gospel to their children who God called out who then preached it to their children on down to those who preached the gospel to us—and God has ordained it that we preach the gospel of Christ and through our preaching the Spirit shall call out his elect so that they believe on Christ.

**Psalm 78: 1: Give ear, O my people, to my law: incline your ears to the words of my mouth.**

This is our Lord's word to his elect, redeemed, regenerate people—“*Give ear, O MY people.*” Christ says “*give ear to my law—to the words of my mouth*”—the words of Christ's mouth is his gospel. His words are the doctrine of Christ. His gospel is the law of the believer. By the gospel of Christ, Christ rules our hearts.

2 John 1:9: Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.

Most things in this life are not worth giving our ear unto. But the doctrine of Christ we must hearken unto. When Christ's commands in power, we will. It is because Christ gives power to believe on him and follow him by the Spirit.

### **FROM OUR FATHER IN ETERNITY**

**Ps 78: 2 I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old [things kept secret from foundation of the world, eternity]: 3 Which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us.**

Christ is speaking to you and I who believe. He says the gospel is what we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. The gospel began in eternity by God our Father making his purpose known to his Son. When Christ says “our fathers” have told us, it includes our heavenly Father who first told Christ. The Son of God took flesh like his brethren—like God's elect—so that God is his Father and our Father.

John 20:17: Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and *to my God, and your God.*

In eternity, God the Father (God our Father) made known to his Son his purpose in saving his people and entrusted all to Christ to accomplish. From the beginning of the world Christ has taught his people throughout the ages, establishing his testimony, in the heart of each of his elect.

Our great Prophet preached the gospel to Adam and Eve establishing his witness in them. Adam taught his children. Abel taught his children. Christ made it known in the hearts of each of his elect. Then Christ preached the gospel to Abraham declaring in thy Seed shall the nations of the earth be blessed. Abraham preached the gospel to Isaac who Christ called out. On down the line from father to child, father to child. Then over 400 years after God revealed the gospel to Abraham, he established his testimony in Jacob, that is in the children of Israel.

### **CHRIST ESTABLISHED HIS WITNESS IN JACOB**

**Psalm 78: 5: For he established a testimony [a witness] in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel,...**

The Son of God established his witness—his testimony—his gospel—in Jacob, the same as when Christ came in the flesh and established the gospel in the early church. Everything revealed to his elect in Israel—when known in newness of spirit—is the gospel in shadow and type. The gospel Christ established in Jacob are the dark sayings of old. It is the eternal gospel of God in shadow and type.

For example, the Lord provided the passover lamb and delivered the children of Israel out of Egyptian bondage through the blood of a substitute which died in the place of all the firstborn in Egypt. God gave them the ceremony to keep the passover. The Lord told them that when their children asked what it meant they were to teach the gospel of Christ our Passover. The fathers were to teach their children that God delivered them by the blood of a passover lamb which foreshadowed Christ our Passover. That passover

ceremony pictured Christ to come. Christ is the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of his people throughout the world.

The purpose for which God established his testimony in the children of Israel was that they might teach their children the gospel of Christ.

## **ELECT CHILDREN SHALL BE BORN**

**Psalm 78: 5: For he established a testimony [a witness] in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children: 6: That the generation to come might know *them*, even the children *which* should [shall] be born; *who* should [shall] arise and declare *them* to their children:**

God has an elect people who shall be born of God in Spirit and in truth. “*The generation to come*” is God’s elect—his “*chosen generation*.” They shall be born-again by the Word through the preaching of the gospel by the Spirit of God.

Psalm 22: 30: A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation. 31 They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done *this*.

Not all the children of Israel were the true children of God. But those who were God’s elect were counted by God as the generation who God promised shall be born again. God regenerated and revealed the gospel of Christ in their hearts. Then they taught the spiritual meaning of the law to their children and God regenerated his elect among their children.

So from Abraham to Isaac to Jacob, to the elect in Israel, to David, on through the ages, God has always had his witness. His gospel has always gone forth. Each spiritual father preached the gospel to their children and God quickened the elect throughout the ages. It came to us and God quickened us to spiritual life through the gospel.

**Psalm 78: 3: Which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. 4: We will not hide [the gospel] 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.**

Notice verse 3: “*our fathers have told us 4: We will not the gospel from their children*”. As we preach the gospel and God quickens his elect, those believers are our ancient father’s children. They are *Abraham’s children*. You who believe today are Abraham’s children.

Galatians 3: 29: And if ye *be* Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.

From time to time someone writes to tell me how they sorrow for a child or a family member who does not believe the gospel. We know that sorrow. I know that sorrow. But we have this consolation, God shall make his elect hear and believe on Christ. If our physical children are his, God shall regenerate them through the gospel. And we also have this consolation—*his word shall not return unto him void*. Those God quickens through the gospel that we preach are our spiritual children. Some have turned out to be our physical children but all who God regenerates to faith in Christ are our spiritual children. God shall not lose one. Christ said,

John 10: 27: My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: 28: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any *man* pluck them out of my hand. 29: My Father, which gave *them* me, is greater than all; and no *man* is able to pluck *them* out of my Father’s hand.

My grandmother told me a story of my grandfather hearing the gospel for the first time. He was a free will preacher. But one day he walked into a little country store. The man who owned the store, brother McGoogan, preached the gospel to him. My grandfather came home and told my grandmother, “I’ll never go back in there. That man believes God chose a people, Christ died only for them and the Spirit of God

must regenerate them and give them faith to believe—and God only saves them. I will never go back in that store!” My grandmother said, “But every chance he got, he went back.” The Lord graciously regenerated my grandfather and God established his church there in south Arkansas. Years later, God quickened me and taught me the gospel through his preaching.

When I came here most of our children were young children. We taught them the gospel as God commands. And God has called many of them. Over 10 years ago I was asked to preach in Pennsylvania for a year and a half. Every Sunday afternoon after service here I went over there. Ben was in that congregation. He was around 10 or 12 years old. Sarah was around the same age over here. We never knew that God would regenerate Ben and Sarah through the gospel and they would marry. So much more God did through that which we never could have imagined. He called out others and they are here now.

Now some that were children back when we began are grown believers married to believers and having children of their own. God keeps calling out his elect through his gospel. And I think back to that little country store where my grandfather stumbled in to buy a coke and the store owner told him about Christ our Righteousness. So our purpose in this earth as the church of our Lord Jesus is to preach his gospel. God continues to call out his elect throughout the ages.

## THE GOSPEL WE ARE TO PREACH

**Psalm 78: 4:...shewing to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done.**

“*The praises of the LORD*” means the glory of the LORD. His election, predestination, redemption, effectual calling, adoption—all of God’s salvation—is all is to the praise of the glory of his grace. The gospel we preach is the praise of the glory of God the Father, Son, and Spirit.

Ephesians 1: 3: Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ: 4: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: 5: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, 6: TO THE PRAISE OF THE GLORY OF HIS GRACE, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. 7: In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; 8: Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; 9: Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: 10: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; *even* in him: 11: In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: 12: That we should be TO THE PRAISE OF HIS GLORY, who first trusted in Christ. 13: In whom ye also *trusted*, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, 14: Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto THE PRAISE OF HIS GLORY.

Sinners saved by grace know that we have nothing to glory in of ourselves. God saves through the preaching of Christ and him crucified that “*no flesh shall glory in his presence...that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord*” (1 Cor 1: 29-31).

“*His strength*”—we preach to the generation to come “*His strength.*” We preach God’s omnipotent sovereign power over all his providence. But also we preach God’s sovereign strength in salvation. It is God’s sovereign strength to choose whom he will. His sovereign strength works all things after the counsel of his own will. We are saved by his sovereign saving strength by the right hand of his power, his righteousness, Christ Jesus. The Power of God unto salvation is Christ our Righteousness. Christ is our Strength who purged the sins of his people and made us the righteousness of God in him.

“*His wonderful works that he hath done.*” All the wonderful works he did in Israel typified God’s wonderful works of salvation in Christ.

**Psalms 78: 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.**

Their deliverance from Egypt and across the Red Sea pictured Christ delivering the elect out of our bondage of sin, the bondage of the law and the bondage of this world.

God's provision throughout the wilderness is a type of Christ bringing his church through this world. He led them by a cloud by day and fire by night—the Spirit of Christ. He fed them manna from heaven picturing Christ the Bread. He gave them water out of the smitten Rock—that Rock is Christ—Christ was smitten as our Substitute and from Christ comes the water of life in the heart of those regenerated by the Spirit.

God delivering Israel into Canaan is a type of Christ delivering his people into the promised heavenly Canaan and not losing one.

By God's grace he sets our hope in God and keeps us in remembrance of his works so that we persevere in faith and love as Christ commands.

**Psalm 78: 7: That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments:**

Christ commands us to believe on Christ and love one another, persevering unto the end trusting Christ to save.

Hebrews 6: 19: Which *hope* we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; 20: Whither the forerunner is for us entered, *even* Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

Galatians 5:5...we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.

After all that God showed the natural fathers they rebelled and turned back. Why did they turn back?

**Psalm 78: 22...because they believed not in God, and trusted not in his salvation:**

This Psalm is an admonition to us to never turn from Christ but to believe on him unto the end, following Christ, obeying Christ and loving one another. But by the grace of God we are kept by his power—preserved in faith—so that “we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.” (Heb 10: 39). Christ has reconciled us and by his keeping grace in the end he shall “present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight: If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled and *be* not moved away from the hope of the gospel.” (Col 1: 22-23).

**Amen!**