

## Questions on Ps 78

Because of the length of this psalm, I'll give you the structure (with a few hints as to the reason for it), and concentrate the questions on the contents.

1-8, Prolog.

9-39, Interchange in the Wilderness. *The beginning of this section is marked by an explicit introduction of one of the actors in v.9. (Explicitly naming of an actor is a common way of marking a discourse break.) Throughout this section human and divine actions alternate.*

40-64, Summary of Rebellion. *This section differs from the alternations of the previous section in three ways. 1) Instead of frequent alternations, we have only one: rebellion in 40-58, and God's response in 59-64. (Note that God's actions in 43-55 are presented, not as the response to what the people do in 40-42, but as antecedent actions that they spurn.) 2) The previous section concerned the wilderness wanderings, but this section reaches back to the plagues in Egypt and forward to the settlement in Canaan. 3) The previous section has only two actors—God and the people. This section introduces a third, their heathen enemies.*

65-72, Resolution. *The Lord is introduced explicitly with a new name. The references to the people are no longer condemning, but laudatory.*

Now some questions.

1. From vv. 1-8, please state concisely the lesson he wants his readers to take away from the Psalm.
2. According to v. 2, in what form is he going to present this lesson? What is the essence of a biblical parable? (The Hebrew word means to be equal or to compare; the Greek word means to throw two things down alongside one another.)
3. To whom do “they” and “them” refer throughout vv. 9-39, and in vv. 40-42, 56-68? See what you can learn about this tribe from a Bible dictionary.
4. Can you find a historical event behind v. 9 might refer, appropriate for the period of history with which the Psalm is concerned? How might v.2 help understand this verse?
5. Vv. 9-39 are an alternation of human and divine actions. Make a list of the kinds of things that the people do, the kinds of things that God does, and which responds to which. What lessons can you learn about God's interaction with his people?
6. Compare v. 57 with v. 9. Pay attention to the Strong's numbers on the verbs. Can you begin to understand Asaph's parable?
7. To what event does v. 60 refer? What makes this particular city relevant to the theme of this psalm (compare v. 9)?
8. How does v. 67 represent a change from previous history? (What previous national leaders came from Ephraim?)
9. What is surprising, yet appropriate, about David's background in vv. 70-71, compared with the leaders in the previous question?
10. Meditate on the qualifications and responsibilities of the ruler in v. 72. Use Strongs to help you understand the nuances of “fed.”
11. Matt 13:34,35 claims that our Lord's use of parables fulfills v. 2. Give some thought to the nature of this fulfillment. Does it concern only the form of parabolic teaching, or is there some similarity between the content of Asaph's parable and our Lord's parables?