

Psalms 78:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old:

Analysis

The psalmist declares "I will open my mouth in a parable" (Hebrew *efhtach bemashal pi*), announcing his teaching method. "Parable" (Hebrew *mashal*) is broader than the NT concept, including proverbs, riddles, and instructive narratives. "Dark sayings of old" (Hebrew *chidot miqqedem*) refers not to obscure mysteries but to profound lessons from history requiring interpretation. Matthew 13:35 quotes this verse as fulfilled in Christ's teaching, showing that Jesus's parables continue this wisdom tradition. The verse establishes that history is not mere data but revelatory teaching, requiring Spirit-illuminated understanding to grasp its theological significance.

Historical Context

Psalms 78 is a *maskilim* (instructional psalm) recounting Israel's history from the Exodus through the Davidic covenant. Asaph uses historical recitation as catechesis, teaching covenant children God's mighty works and Israel's repeated rebellions. This method reflects Deuteronomy 6:6-9's command to teach children diligently. Ancient Israel lacked mass literacy; oral history preserved through poetic recitation was crucial for transmitting faith.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does viewing history as "parable"—revelatory teaching—change your reading of Scripture and providence?
2. What "dark sayings of old" from church history or your own past illuminate present circumstances?
3. In what ways did Jesus use historical examples and parables to reveal spiritual truth, and how should we follow His teaching method?

Interlinear Text

אֶפְתָּח	בְּמִשְׁלָל	פִּי	אֶבְיטָה	חֹד וְיָד וְתִ	מִנִּי	קִדְמִים:
I will open	in a parable	my mouth	I will utter	dark sayings	H4480	of old
H6605	H4912	H6310	H5042	H2420		H6924

Additional Cross-References

Mark 4:34 (Parallel theme): But without a parable spake he not unto them: and when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples.

Psalms 49:4 (Darkness): I will incline mine ear to a parable: I will open my dark saying upon the harp.

Proverbs 1:6 (Darkness): To understand a proverb, and the interpretation; the words of the wise, and their dark sayings.