

# Psalm 78:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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

## Analysis

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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

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Psalm 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

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**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

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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

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בָּמָשׁ לְ אַפְתָּחַ הַמִּדְמָרָן מִנְיָן כָּדָם: אַבְּ יִשְׁעָה הַיְלָדָת אֶת־דָּבָרָי  
I will open in a parable my mouth I will utter dark sayings of old  
H6605 H4912 H6310 H5042 H2420 H4480 H6924

## Additional Cross-References

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**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.