

Psalms 78:42

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

They remembered not his hand, nor the day when he delivered them from the enemy.

Analysis

They remembered not his hand, nor the day when he delivered them from the enemy. While God remembered their frailty (v. 39), they forgot His faithfulness. Zākar (זָכַר, "remembered not") means more than mental recall—it means failing to act on remembered truth. Yād (יָד, "hand") represents God's mighty power in action, especially in redemption (cf. "mighty hand and outstretched arm").

"The day" (yôm, יוֹם) likely refers to Passover night, the defining moment of Israel's identity as redeemed people. Pādâ (פָּדָה, "delivered") is redemption language—God paid the price to liberate them from šar (שָׂר, "enemy/oppressor"). Their amnesia wasn't about facts but meaning: they forgot who they were (redeemed) and who God was (Redeemer).

Spiritual amnesia remains the primary threat to God's people. We forget our slavery to sin, Christ's deliverance, and our identity as the redeemed. This is why Scripture commands remembrance—Lord's Supper, baptism, Scripture reading—as guardrails against covenant-breaking forgetfulness.

Historical Context

Asaph transitions to detailed rehearsal of the Exodus plagues (vv. 43-51), the foundation of Israel's national existence. The Passover was to be remembered

annually (Exodus 12:14), but memory faded without intentional cultivation. By Asaph's time, Israel needed remedial instruction in their own salvation history.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. What "days of deliverance" in your spiritual journey do you need to remember more actively?
2. How can you cultivate practices that prevent spiritual amnesia about God's past faithfulness?
3. What connection exists between forgetting God's salvation and present unfaithfulness?

Interlinear Text

לָא	זָכְרוּ	אֶת	יְדוֹ	וְ	אֲשֶׁר	פָּדָה
H3808	They remembered	H853	not his hand	nor the day	H834	when he delivered
	H2142		H3027	H3117		H6299
מִן־	צָרָה					
H4480	them from the enemy					
	H6862					

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 32:21 (Parallel theme): And hast brought forth thy people Israel out of the land of Egypt with signs, and with wonders, and with a strong hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with great terror;

Exodus 14:12 (Parallel theme): Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness.

Judges 8:34 (Parallel theme): And the children of Israel remembered not the LORD their God, who had delivered them out of the hands of all their enemies on every side:

Psalms 78:11 (Parallel theme): And forgat his works, and his wonders that he had shewed them.

Exodus 13:9 (Parallel theme): And it shall be for a sign unto thee upon thine hand, and for a memorial between thine eyes, that the LORD'S law may be in thy mouth: for with a strong hand hath the LORD brought thee out of Egypt.

Isaiah 11:11 (Parallel theme): And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea.