

# New Beginnings

A New Year, if it's to be better, needs an Old Time Religion: Psalm 78



WEST SOUND COMMUNITY CHURCH

WINTER 2022

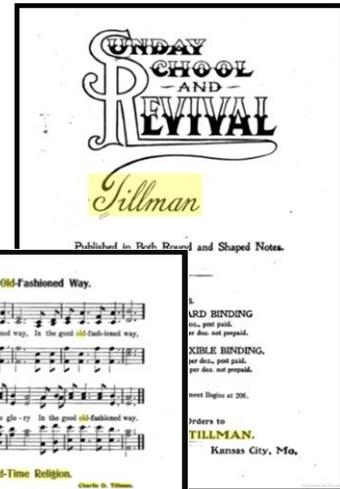
"Give Me That Old Time Religion" is a song of unknown origin. It probably dates from the 1800s. Charles Dillman copyrighted the song and published it in his song book "The Revival" (1891). However, he didn't write the song. He heard it a couple years earlier at a camp meeting. The song had been published at least once before...in 1873 by G. D. Pike in his Jubilee Singers collection. Further, it's highly likely it predated Pike as a favorite Black/African American Spiritual, and, possibly, even earlier in the form of an English folk song. At this point, we still do not know its beginning. Still, it rings true...

...well it rings true so long as "that old time religion" one sings about is biblically authentic and accurate.

In fact, there is no greater New Year's resolution than this...

- *"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise."* (Deuteronomy 6:4-7)
- *"And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the LORD, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD"* (Joshua 24:15)
- *"But watch yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly like a trap. For it will come upon all who dwell on the face of the whole earth. But stay awake at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are going to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man."* (Luke 21: 34-36)
- *"Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God."* (Philippians 1:27,28)

In a world either half-baked or scorched, it's not something old we need, it's something that never grows old...the biblical, faithful, historical, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit good news.



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That Old Time Religion

We get a taste of this in Psalm 78, so let's take a brief look and see if we can extract its old time religion...

...that was good enough for Moses  
...good enough for David...  
...good enough for Daniel  
...good enough for Peter...and good enough for me  
and good enough for you.

**First** notice the contrast between the Lord's faithfulness and the tendency of God's people to be unfaithful.

From verse nine until the very end, we find a host of historical episodes in which God faithfully cares for Israel, yet Israel consistently breaks faith with the Lord. Consider several examples:

God's Faithfulness

He parted the red sea (vs. 13)  
He led them with a pillar of smoke  
by day and a pillar of fire by night (vs. 14)  
  
He gave them manna from heaven (vs. 24)  
He atoned for their sin (vs. 38)  
He drove the nations out of Canaan (vs. 55)  
He shepherded and guided them (vs. 72)  
He shepherded and guided them (vs. 72)

Israel's Broken Faith

They forgot his works (vs. 11)  
They sinned more and more against him (vs. 17)  
  
They tested God in their hearts (vs. 18)  
They flattered God with lip service (vs. 36)  
They rebelled against God (vs. 40)  
They tested and provoked God (vs. 41)  
They didn't remember how he saved them (vs. 42)

**Second**, notice what it looks like when God's people remain faithful.

 Every adult follower of the Lord will abide in him and his truth. Vss. 1-3

- Give ear to my torah, incline your ears to my emer
- I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings from of old, things that we have heard and known, that our fathers have told us.

 Every adult follower of the Lord will teach the next generation to abide in God and his truth. Vss. 4-8

- We must not hide the Lord's glorious deeds, might, and wonders...  
the Lord's testimony and law... ...from the children. (vss. 4,5)
- The children must grow up and do the same for their children. (6)
- So every generation of the Lord's followers will remain faithful to his old time religion. (vss. 7,8)