

Psalms 77:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Is his mercy clean gone for ever? doth his promise fail for evermore?

Analysis

Is his mercy clean gone for ever? (חֶסֶד לֹא פָסַח לְצִדְקָה). Chesed (חסֶד)—God's covenant loyalty, steadfast love, faithful kindness—is central to Hebrew theology. Aphes (אָפֵשׁ) means to cease, come to an end, be exhausted. Can chesed—God's defining attribute—simply terminate? The question is theologically shocking yet psychologically honest.

Doth his promise fail for evermore? (גָמָר אַמְרָה לְדֹר וּלְדֹר). Gamar (גָמָר) means to complete, finish, or cease. Omer (אַמְרָה) is God's spoken word or promise. Le-dor vador (לְדֹר וּלְדֹר) means "generation to generation." Could God's word—which is "for ever settled in heaven" (Psalm 119:89)—actually fail across generations? The psalmist articulates what many believers feel but fear to say: What if God breaks His word?

Historical Context

God's chesed is His covenant commitment demonstrated supremely in the exodus (Exodus 15:13, 20:6). His promises to Abraham, Moses, and David formed Israel's confidence. Yet historical catastrophes—Egyptian bondage, wilderness wandering, Assyrian invasion, Babylonian exile—seemed to contradict these promises. The prophets insisted chesed never ceases (Lamentations 3:22, Isaiah 54:10). The New Testament reveals God's ultimate chesed in Christ (John 1:14, Ephesians 2:4-7).

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. What is the significance of questioning whether God's *chesed* (covenant love) can fail?
2. How do you respond when circumstances seem to contradict God's explicit promises?
3. How does the cross demonstrate that God's *chesed* and promises are eternally secure?

Interlinear Text

וְלֹא צָה הַאֲפָא ס
clean gone for ever Is his mercy fail doth his promise for evermore
H656 H5331 H2617 H1584 H562 H1755

וְלֹא:
for evermore
H1755

Additional Cross-References

2 Peter 3:9 (Covenant): The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

Romans 9:6 (Parallel theme): Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel:

Numbers 14:34 (Covenant): After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years, and ye shall know my breach of promise.

Numbers 23:19 (Parallel theme): God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?

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