

Psalms 78:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Behold, he smote the rock, that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed; can he give bread also? can he provide flesh for his people?

Analysis

Behold, he smote the rock, that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed; can he give bread also? can he provide flesh for his people?—

Israel's 'can he also' exposes addiction to novelty: yesterday's miracle doesn't count toward today's faith. The Hebrew *nāḥal* (streams) flooded the desert, yet they immediately demanded new categories of provision. God's résumé meant nothing to their chronic unbelief.

This parallels the Pharisees demanding 'another sign' after Jesus fed thousands (Matthew 16:1-4). No amount of evidence satisfies determined skepticism. Jesus diagnosed it: 'an evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign' (Matthew 12:39). Faith rests in the Giver, not the gifts; it trusts the Person, not the portfolio of past performances.

Historical Context

The rock-smiting preceded the manna (Exodus 16-17), yet this psalm compresses events to reveal the logical absurdity: if God provides water from stone, why doubt His ability to provide food? Yet Israel's unbelief wasn't logical but spiritual rebellion.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. Do you treat God's past faithfulness as irrelevant to present circumstances, demanding fresh proof?
2. How does the mindset 'what have you done for me lately' poison your relationship with God?

Interlinear Text

וַיִּזְרַח	מֵיִם	וַיִּנְחַל יָם	וַיִּשָּׂא פֹה	הַגִּם	לֶחֶם	יָ וְכֹל	תֵּן	אֵם	יָכֵן	רֶשֶׁת
H2100	H4325	H5158	H7857	H1571	H3899	H3201	H5414	H518	H3559	H7607
gushed out	that the waters	and the streams	overflowed		bread	also can	he give		he provide	flesh
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Additional Cross-References

Numbers 20:11 (Parallel theme): And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also.