

# Psalm 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

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**Romans 2:1** — Judging others

**Revelation 20:12** — Judgment according to deeds

## Study Questions

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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

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וְנִפְלַּת יָם מִים  
H2005 Behold he smote the rock gushed out that the waters and the streams  
H5221 H6697 H2100 H4325 H5158

שָׂא רַיִךְ יְהִי אָמֵן שֶׁתְּנִתְּנֵן כְּמַתְּבֵן  
overflowed H1571 bread also can he give he provide flesh  
H7857 H3899 H3201 H5414 H518 H3559 H7607

לעquo:

for his people

H5971

## Additional Cross-References

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**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.