

## SummerInThePsalms #6 – *Can God?*

### Psalm 78:1-11, 19-20

The Psalms, the Hymnbook of the Soul, Heaven's Playlist, are meant to not only impart truth, but to invite us to connect with and experience our God in that truth.

Psalm 78 is the longest of what is called the historical Psalms.

The title – “Maschil of Asaph” - indicates that it was a song of instruction, written to be learned, sung and repeated for the generations to come.

**Psalm 78 is not just a song—it's a warning and a promise. A history lesson set to music. And it asks one of the most relevant questions for every generation: 'Can God?**

We begin with

#### **I. The Intriguing Call.**

**A. The proclamation** – vs. 1. Strong. Pay attention.

**E. B. The parable.** Cf. Jesus in Matthew 13:34-35

Matthew 13

34. All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them:

35. That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.

**The power of a parable: Hidden truths for those who will seek and see...**

**C. The peculiar description.**

***“dark sayings of old”*** -

**God invites us into poetic riddles—timeless enigmas wrapped in rhythm and memory; ancient, eternal truths**

#### **D. Praise: vs. 3 - For the fathers which told... showed us!**

Let me pause for just a moment and praise, thank God for, **those who have gone before us and taught us, showed us, led us to know and trust our God!**

**I thank God for those right here and now, who in the midst of perhaps the most challenging times in history, are impacting their children** – our children... I am so grateful.

**When I talk to these little ones...** See their trust in and love for the Lord... see them growing even in their early years into the champions of tomorrow, I am humbled... excited... and amazed.

Our prayers are with each of you in this quest.

#### **E. Purpose. Vs. 4-7**

##### **1. The Commitment:**

- Vs. 4 - **We will not fail those** who are counting on us and generations to come!
- Vs. 4 - We will “shew”

**The simple explanation:** We won't just tell occasionally or send them to others to hear. We accept the mantle: WE WILL SHEW...

**The ancient application:** This is from an ancient word:

- Core meaning: **To polish**
- Basis use:
  - **To inscribe on a stone;**
  - **To Score with a mark; intensively, to recount, i.e. celebrate,** declare, number, penknife, reckon, scribe, shew forth, speak, talk, tell (out), writer.

##### **2. The Consciousness: vs. 4, 5, 6**

***“Their children... and their children... and generations to come!”***

**The future is being prepared today – in me. In you.  
The stakes couldn't be higher!**

### 3. The Content:

***What is the ancient, timeless truth for today and hope for tomorrow?***

Vs. 3 - ***"The praises of the LORD"*** – Jehovah. Jesus.

- Who He is.
- What He has done.
- What He can do.

**"testimonies"** – vs.5

Illustration:

A famous cowboy and media personality who was pretty much a wasted life stumbled in to a Billy Graham revival.

He got saved... his life was transformed.

Stuart Hamlin wrote a song expressing his testimony which Jim Reeves sang to millions:

*It is no secret what God can  
What He's done for others, He'll do for you.  
With arms wide open, He'll pardon you.  
It is no secret what God can do!*

**The testimonies of lives changed by Jesus are beacons of hope beckoning in the darkness of life.**

### 4. The Consequence: vs. 7 – ***"So that..."***

***If we could choose one thing for ourselves, our children, future generations, what would it be?***

- Education?
- Wealth?
- Health?
- Prosperity?

***"That they":***

- *Might set their hope in God!*
- *Live accordingly!*

- The history lesson says the rest: ***And experience what only God can do!***

### **Question:**

When we do that, who then is responsible for the outcome?

When we choose not to do that, who is responsible for the outcome?

### **That becomes the theme of the rest of the Psalm!**

The core question, set forth in this opening, is actually repeated several times

Vs. 19 – ***“Can God...”***

Vs. 20 – ***“Can he...?”***

***Can God?***

## **II. The Criticism**

We don’t have the time to dive into the depths of this Psalm. **There is much that is sad and tragic and depressing.**

***Why do we have it? Why does God spend so much time on the negative?***

As Churchill observed, ***“Those who fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it.”***

Long before Churchill, Paul wrote to New Testament believers (1 Corinthians 10)

***“that ROCK was Christ...”*** vs. 4

***“But with many of them God was not well pleased...”*** vs. 5

***“Now these things were for our examples, to the intent that we should not...”*** Vs. 6+

Lust

Idolatry

Fornication

Murmuring

**A. The Pathetic (haunting) picture:** vs. 9 –

They were armed... had everything they needed... but didn't use what they had!

They had truth... but no trust.

And so, they ran.

**B. The Process:**

- **They forgot....**

Cf. Romans 1:21- *“when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were they thankful; but became vain in their imaginations... Professing themselves to be wise they became fools...”*

The Psalms over and over: *“Forget not...!”*

- **They sinned. They rebelled against His word and will.**

When they forgot, they turned to an infinite number of alternative paths, all ending in death and disappointment.

Solomon observed,

*There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.* (Proverbs 16:25)

James wrote,

*“When lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Do not err, my beloved brethren!”*  
*James 1:15-16*

Read this text! Over and over, when they forgot, they rebelled and sinned.

- **They suffered. Every single time.**

- **They played games with God: vs. 36-37**

- **The Core Problem:** They chose whether to trust God and live accordingly, or not. *“Can God?”*

- **They limited God!**

**\*\*\* Imagine – a puny, frail, broken person tying the hands of Almighty God!**

**The Creator who controls the universe and can do anything?**

**Through unbelief we tie the nail pierced hands that want only to lead and provide and protect!**

**Is this the future we want? Want for our children?**

**This is an historical Psalm. What are we to learn?**

- How did it work out for them?
- How about through history?
- How about in your life, and mine?

**Psalm 37 records the tragic failure to trust God who never fails!**

**III. The Choice**

**Psalm 78 begins revealing the eternal heart of God.**

**The Psalm ends**

***“So he shepherded them according to the integrity of his heart, and guided them by the skillfulness of his hands.” Vs. 72***

**This is the kind of God we serve—not just powerful, but personal. Not only able, but good.**

**Psalm 78 was written, sung & preserved...for “**generations to come**” – **For us!****

- **There are timeless truths waiting to be discovered in our time!**
- **Truths for today. For a tomorrow we can’t really even imagine.**

**There is a choice before us today. And- we will choose.**

**A. Now as then, the Ultimate Answer/The Eternal Truth: The LORD. Jesus. Our God!**

**B. We are then called to**

- Set our hope in Him!
- Remember – He has and will never fail! Everything that has ever come from God as been... Perfect. Good. Glorious.
- Keep His Commandments: i.e. – Live accordingly!

**Close:**

**Our children are watching.**

**Our generation is answering the same question: ‘Can God?’**

**What we show them, what we speak, what we live—will echo into the future.**

**Let’s give them a clear answer:**

***Yes, He can.***

***Yes, He has.***

***Yes, He will.***