

Psalm 78:18-19 (NIV)

18 They willfully put God to the test by demanding the food they craved.

19 They spoke against God; they said, “Can God really spread a table in the wilderness?”

The word “to speak against” or “to speak contrary to” God. It’s not merely questioning it carries the tone of defiance, complaint, and unbelief. It reflects a posture of distrust, even in the face of God’s demonstrated power.

So in verse 19, when it says,

“They spoke against God, saying, ‘Can God really spread a table in the wilderness?’”

it’s not an innocent question. It’s a rebellious statement, challenging God’s ability and faithfulness.

The passage is part of a larger Psalm (Psalm 78) that recounts Israel’s repeated cycle of rebellion and God’s continued mercy. Even after God delivered them from Egypt through miraculous

signs and wonders (Psalm 78:12-16), they still doubted His provision.

Their question "Can God prepare a table in the wilderness?" was not born from lack of knowledge, but from a heart hardened by unbelief (cf. Hebrews 3:7-12). This question represents:

- Spiritual forgetfulness: They forgot what God had done.
- Testing God: They treated God like He needed to prove Himself again (see Deuteronomy 6:16).
- Ingratitude: Rather than giving thanks, they complained and demanded.
- Superficial faith: They believed in God's past acts, but doubted His present and future power.

This reflects a broader biblical principle: words can either express faith or unbelief. In this case, their words revealed their deep lack of trust, and thus, they "spoke against" God.

New Testament

The same spirit of unbelief is warned against in the New Testament:

Hebrews 3:12 (NIV)

"See to it, brothers and sisters, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God."

1 Corinthians 10:10-11 (NIV)

"And do not grumble, as some of them did and were killed by the destroying angel. These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us..."

The apostle Paul reminds believers that the Israelites' attitude in the wilderness serves as a warning. Their complaining, testing, and unbelief are patterns we must avoid.

Personal Reflection

Just like the Israelites, we may find ourselves in spiritual "wilderness" seasons times of need, testing, or uncertainty. In such times, our words matter. Will we complain and speak against God, or will we trust and praise Him even when we don't understand His ways?

Let us be people whose speech reflects faith and gratitude, not doubt and defiance.

Proverbs 18:21 (NIV)

"The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit."

To speak against God is to speak words of rebellion, doubt, and ingratitude it is to question His power and faithfulness, even when we have seen what He can do. May we not fall into the same trap. Instead, let our words be filled with faith, praise, and trust in the God who can not only prepare a table in the wilderness but who invites us to dine with Him in every season.

Shalom.

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