

# Christ Our Rock

## Moses Strikes the Rock

Exodus 17:6+ "Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink." And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.

1 Cor 10:4+ and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ.

This is a simple study based on the Scriptural occurrences of "Rock" that are in some way descriptive of our Messiah, Christ Jesus.

As you study the picture of Christ as our Rock remember that this is not just for head knowledge but is imminently applicable to your life. As David says...

**Those who know Thy name will put their trust in Thee;  
For Thou, O LORD, hast not forsaken those who seek Thee.**

**Psalm 9:10- [note](#)**

So ask your Teacher to enable you to truly know Christ's Name, the Rock and when difficult times come, you will have confidence to hide yourself in this Name. Solomon reminds us that...

**The Name of the LORD is a strong tower;  
The righteous runs into it and is safe.**

**Proverbs 18:10- [note](#)**

Christ is the Rock (1Cor 10:4) - here are other names associated with Rock...

- The Rock (Matt. 16:18)
- The Rock That Is Higher than I (Ps. 61:2)
- The Rock of Israel (2 Sam. 23:3)
- A Rock of Offense (Rom. 9:33)
- The Rock of My Refuge (Ps. 94:22)
- The Rock of His Salvation (Deut. 32:15)
- The Rock of Our Salvation (Ps. 95:1)
- The Rock of Thy Strength (Isa. 17:10)

**Erwin Lutzer** says that "Until we have learned to be satisfied with fellowship with God, until he is our ROCK and our fortress, we will be restless with our place in the world. (**Ed**: As our Rock He stabilizes us. As our Fortress, He defends us.)

## **TSUR HEBREW FOR ROCK**

**Rock** ([06697](#))(**tsur**) is used a few times to describe a literal rock (usually a large rock or boulder), but the figurative uses are more common and usually descriptive of Jehovah. **Tsur** is found 70x in **NAS** and 74x in **KJV**.

In Ps 18:2 we find two words for 'rock', the first "rock" being "**sela**" (see below) and the second "rock" being '**tsur**.' **Sela**' more frequently suggests a larger, more massive rock structure such as a **crag** (a steep rugged rock - eg, Job 39:28 uses sela' to describe a safe, resting place for the eagle "upon the rocky crag [sela], an inaccessible place"), a **cliff** or a **mountainside**. Tsur on the other hand refers to smaller rock structures such as a boulder, but these distinctions are not absolute and there is overlap.

See discussion of the image of a rock - from [The Dictionary of Biblical Imagery](#) (on internet - an outstanding resource)

**Rock** is a common metaphor used for God (Jesus) in the Psalter, and stresses several aspects of His **protective care** for the person who trusts in Him. For example, God as our Rock provides a firm, unshakeable foundation ("On Christ the Solid Rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand") for those who rely on Him. In other OT uses, the picture of Christ our Rock is that of a high, inaccessible rocky crag or mountain hideaway. David had experienced such literal places of protection (eg, cave at [Adullam](#) - 1Chr 11:15) by God as Saul and others sought his life. The literal rocks that were David's hiding place were a faint picture of Christ his spiritual Rock in Whom the beleaguered psalmist found safe haven and rest for his soul. In view of the emphasis of Jehovah as our

Rock, the One who protects our soul, you might take a moment and sing praises to your Rock...

### Protector of my Soul

Oh, Protector of my soul  
You will stand against the foe  
In the dark you'll be a Light for me  
The Protector of my soul.

You Who created the ends of the earth  
And guided me onto Your Throne  
Offered Your healing hand to me  
Mercifully made me Your own.

Oh, gracious God above,  
I could never earn Your love,  
I'm amazed to see, what You've given me.  
Oh, gracious God above.

Oh, Holy Spirit come.  
Show the world where life comes from.  
May they always see You abide in me.  
Oh, Holy Spirit come.

**Tsur** is translated a number of times (but not all) in the Septuagint with the Greek word **petra**.

**Tsur** can refer to a **secure**, elevated location (cp Pr 18:10-note where the righteous will be lifted up, even though the battle may still be raging!) **Tsur** speaks of **inaccessibility** (by one's adversaries as in Ps 27:5)

God as a Rock speaks of His provision of a **firm, unshakeable foundation** for all who trust in Him. It speaks of the stability and protect provided by Yahweh.

Though everything might be changing, yet the Lord is still our Rock—**stable, strong, and unchanging**. As Robert Murray M'Cheyne said "The sea ebbs and flows, but the rock remains unmoved." What is true in the physical world, is infinitely more true in the spiritual world! Rest in the Rock of your salvation.

**Samuel Rutherford** addressing the believer's sometimes shaky sense of assurance (eternal security) quipped...

Your Rock is Christ, and it is not the Rock which ebbs and flows, but your sea.

The last words of Jesus in His great Sermon on the Mount call for us to build our house on the Rock, Christ Jesus. The alternative foundation is sand which pictures self. Only a life built on the Solid Rock will endure throughout eternity, for self (works, etc) is sinking sand! How do you know which you are? Jesus' teaching is simple - if you hear His word and do it you are safe. He is not saying your works save you, but that you will be enabled to obey by the indwelling Spirit Who gives you both the desire and the power to obey what you hear. If you hear Jesus' words and do not obey them, this is evidence that you have never been born again and have not received the Spirit of Christ.

Therefore everyone who **hears** these words of Mine, and **acts** upon them (**Ed**: the only way you can "act on them" is to have the enabling power of the Spirit), may be compared to a wise man, who built his house upon the **ROCK**. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and burst against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded upon the **ROCK**. And everyone who hears these words of Mine, and does not act upon them, will be like a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and burst against that house; and it fell, and great was its fall. (Mt 7:24-27, Lk 6:47-49, cp Jesus' repetition of this principle in Lk 8:21, Mt 12:48-50, Lk 11:27, 28, Jn 13:17, James 1:21-25, 1Jn 3:21-24). Play and praise the Rock, our sure, eternal Rock...

### My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less

Than Jesus' blood and righteousness;  
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,  
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.  
On Christ the Solid Rock I stand;  
All other ground is sinking sand.  
- Edward Mote

**Comment:** As Harry Ironside once said "If lips and life do not agree, the testimony will not amount to much!"

We'll build on the Rock, the living Rock,  
On Jesus, the Rock of Ages;  
So shall we abide the fearful shock,  
When loud the tempest rages.

Some build on the sinking sands of life,  
On visions of earthly treasure;  
Some build on the waves of sin and strife,  
Of fame, and worldly pleasure.

O build on the Rock, forever sure,  
The firm and the true foundation;  
Its hope is the hope which shall endure,  
The hope of our salvation.  
-Frank Belden

**NOTE:** The passages which are in **bold green** are considered to be metaphorical descriptions that relate to Jehovah.

### **CHRIST: THE SMITTEN ROCK!**

**Exodus 17:6** (Read Context: Ex 17:1-4,5) "Behold, I will stand before you (the presence of Jehovah - a Theophany) there on the **Rock** (Heb = tsur; Lxx = petra) at Horeb (arid, dry, desert, barren, desolate); and you shall strike (nakah - the same verb is used in Isaiah 53:4 predicting that Christ would be "smitten by God") the **Rock** (Heb = tsur; Lxx = petra), and water will come out of it, that the people may drink." And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.

**Cross-references for water out of the rock:** Nu 20:8-11 Dt 8:15 Neh 9:15 Ps 78:15,16,20 Ps 105:41 Ps 114:8 Isa 48:21 1Co 10:4

**Comment:** First notice the name of the Rock - Horeb which means dry, etc. Water from the desert! This is supernatural. God provides nourishment from the most unlikely place. Note also that this Rock is at Rephidim which means "rest."

**Spurgeon** writes that Jesus "was the Rock of Horeb; that is to say, he was a Rock in a barren and dry land....Isaiah said, 'When we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.' If anyone had looked upon the steep and rugged sides of Horeb, covered with thorn brakes and bushes, he would never have dreamed that there could be concealed within so stubborn a rock a flood of water sufficient to supply the wants of multitudes. He would have held up his hands in astonishment, and exclaimed, 'It is impossible: you may dig water out of barren sand; but I cannot suppose it possible that water can come out of that adamant rock.' So, looking on Jesus, the Jews said, 'Can he be the Saviour long foretold, to usher in the age of gold? Can the carpenter's son be the Messiah? Can this be he who comes to redeem us from our oppressors, and to found a Kingdom which shall never have an end? Is this the Jesus who is to come down like rain upon the mown grass, and as showers that water the earth?' They could not expect salvation from him; he seemed to be a rock of barrenness, and they would not believe that he could become the Saviour of a mighty nation, that he could be One from whose riven side should flow healing streams of blood and water to wash and purify his children."

In Exodus Moses struck the life giving waters of the Nile turning them into blood which resulted in death...

So Moses and Aaron did even as the LORD had commanded. And he lifted up the staff and struck the water that was in the Nile, in the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants, and all the water that was in the Nile was turned to blood. And the fish that were in the Nile died, and the Nile became foul, so that the Egyptians could not drink water from the Nile. And the blood was through all the land of Egypt. (Ex 7:20-21)

In "striking contrast" in Exodus 17 Moses was instructed to take the same staff (Ex 17:5) and strike the barren Rock in the wilderness bringing forth life giving waters to Israel! Paul in his description of Israel in their 40 years of wilderness wanderings, explained that "all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual **rock** which followed them; and the **rock** was Christ." (1Cor 10:4) Wherever Israel went in the wilderness, Christ cared for them. **May we be conscious of His daily presence with us through His Spirit as we pursue our pilgrim journey "as aliens and strangers."**

Note that the Rock (like our Savior Christ Jesus) gave forth no water until it was struck or smitten. By the same token our Lord Jesus could not become our Savior unless He too was smitten.

Isaiah writes "Surely our griefs He Himself bore, And our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten (nakah) of God, and afflicted." (Isa 53:4) Zechariah uses the same Hebrew verb (nakah) in his declaration to "Strike the Shepherd" (the Messiah) (Zech 13:7, quoted by Jesus in Mt 26:31, Mk 14:27).

Notice that the Rock "must be smitten in a peculiar manner; it must be smitten with the rod of the lawgiver, or else no water will come forth." (Spurgeon). Notice also that although the staff was actually in Moses' hand, the psalmist writes that it was Jehovah Who "split the rocks in the wilderness, and gave them abundant drink like the ocean depths. He brought forth streams also from the rock, and caused waters to run down like rivers." (Ps 78:15-16, see also Ps 105:41; Ps 114:8) And so the same staff that was used to bring judgment to the Egyptians, was also used to foreshadow the judgment with which God would smite His own Son. It is not surprising then to find that the verb used in Ex 17:6 for "strike" (patasso in Septuagint translation of Ex 17:6) was the very verb Jesus Himself used to refer to the Crucifixion of Christ when He quoted Zechariah's prophecy declaring that they would ("**strike down** the Shepherd" (Mt 26:31 from Zech 13:7, cp Mk 14:27).

**Spurgeon adds that:** "Our Saviour, Jesus Christ, was smitten with the sword of the lawgiver on earth, and by the rod of his great Father, the Lawgiver in Heaven. None but Moses might smite the rock, for he was king in Jeshurun. So was it with our Saviour. It is true that the Roman nailed him to the tree; it is true that the Jew dragged him to death; but it is equally true that it was his Father who did it all. It is a great fact that man slew the Saviour, but it is a greater fact that God slew him, too. Who was it said, 'Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd, and against the man that is my Fellow'? The prophet tells us, when he adds, 'Saith the Lord.' (Zech 13:7, quoted by Jesus in Mt 26:31, Mk 14:27). It was God Who delivered up his Son for us, and Who will now also with Him freely give us all things. Christ would have been no Redeemer unless His Father had smitten Him. There would have been no acceptable sacrifice, even if the Jew had dragged Him to death, or the Roman had pierced His side, unless the Father's scourge had fallen on His shoulders, and unless the Father's sword had found a sheath in His blessed heart. It was the sword of the Lawgiver that smote Jesus Christ, and made Him our acceptable sacrifice. Believer, take a view of this great fact; it will help thee most solemnly to adore both God the Father and God the Son. Remember, it was the Father who smote the Saviour; and it was the Son who bore the Father's stroke. It was not the cruel Roman lash, it was not the crown of thorns, it was not the nails alone that made Christ the Saviour; it was the great fact that made him cry, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' It was not Pilate and it was not Herod that put him to death as our Saviour; they put him to death as a reputed malefactor; but it was God who gave him up to die for us. His Father said, 'Take him, and let him die.' It was from Heaven that the death-warrant came; it was by God that the blow was struck; and if it had not been from the Father, we should all have been condemned. It was necessary that the rod of the Lawgiver should smite this Rock of Ages, to bring out from it plenteous streams of water, which should cause pardon and peace to flow out to dying souls."

And so just as Moses struck the rock to provide life-giving water for the people to drink, so God struck the Rock of our salvation in Crucifixion. In NT terms the living water made available by the striking of our Rock of Ages is the gift of Holy Spirit - the life giving, ever fresh, sufficient supply of the Spirit. On the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles, Jesus "cried out, saying, "If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.'"But this He spoke of the Spirit, Whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. (John 7:37-39, cp Jn 4:10, Jn 6:63). Are you thirsty (spiritually)? Are you willing to come to the Rock, the only Source of living water?

#### [I Heard The Voice of Jesus say ,](#)

"Behold, I freely give  
The living water; thirsty one  
Stoop down and drink and live."  
I came to Jesus and I drank  
Of that life-giving stream;  
My thirst was quenched, my soul revived,  
And now I live in Him.  
-Horatio Bonar

#### [Another Version by Michael Card](#)

**THOUGHT** - Will you drink, appropriating the spiritual nourishment by faith? What "desert" are you walking through in this season of your life? We all experience those dry, desert times in our spiritual life. May God grant us grace to recall the eternal truth that our Christ our Rock poured forth streams in the desert for Israel and He does the same for us, His beloved, for He is the same, yesterday, today and tomorrow (Heb 13:8).

In John 7:37-39+ "Jesus shifted the focus from the need of the parched mouths in the wilderness to the spiritual need of the thirsty soul for the water of life." (MacArthur)

At Mt Horeb (Mt Sinai), God gave the Law. When Christ our Rock was smitten on the Mount of Calvary, He took the curse of the Law upon Himself as our substitute. And after He was glorified He gave us His Spirit. The Rock was struck, not symbolically by the rod of Moses, but fully and truly by the wrath of the Father, and as a result we were given, not the **LAND** of Israel, but a **LIFE** with God.

Matthew records that when "Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit....the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom, and the earth shook; and the rocks were split." (Mt 27:50-51) The writer of Hebrews says that as new covenant believers "have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh." (Heb 10:19-20)

**John MacArthur:** The Jews had a popular legend, still known and believed by many in Paul's day, that the actual rock that Moses struck followed Israel throughout her wilderness travels, providing water wherever they went. I believe the apostle may have been alluding to this legend, saying, "Yes, a rock did follow Israel in the wilderness. But it was not a physical rock that provided merely physical water. It was a spiritual rock (not petros a large boulder but petra a massive rock cliff), the Messiah (the Hebrew term for Christ) whom you have long awaited, who was with our fathers even then."...That supernatural rock protected and sustained His people and would not allow them to perish. Old Testament believers did not have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, but even during the Exodus they had the sustaining presence of the preexistent Messiah, the preincarnate Christ, caring for and fulfilling the needs of His people. (1 Corinthians Commentary)

**Adrian Rogers:** (Paul says in 1 Corinthians 10:4) that the rock (in Ex 17:6) pictures the Lord Jesus Christ—the Rock of ages, smitten for us. Isaiah 53:4 says, "We did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God" (Isaiah 53:4). You see, Jesus, the Rock of ages, was smitten for us; and, because Jesus was smitten for us, out of His riven side, came forth water. And, that water represents the Holy Spirit, which is the water of life. (cf Jn 6:63, 7:37-39, Jn 4:10-14)]

**Warren Wiersbe:** The rock pictures Jesus Christ who was smitten for us (1 Cor. 10:4) that we might have the living water of the Holy Spirit within (John 7:37–39). He was smitten on the cross that the Spirit of life might be given to save and satisfy thirsty sinners. In the Bible, water for cleansing symbolizes the Word of God (John 13:1–17; 15:3); water for drinking represents the Spirit of God (John 7:37–38). The people could not live without water, nor can we live today without the water of life (John 4:13–14; 7:37–39). This rock is Christ (1 Cor. 10:4), and the smiting of the rock speaks of Christ's death on the cross, where He felt the rod of the curse of the law. (It was this same rod, you will recall, that turned into a serpent, Ex. 4:2–3, and that helped to bring the plagues on Egypt.) The order here is wonderful: in chap. 16 we have the manna, illustrating Christ's coming to earth; in chapter 17 we see the smiting of the rock, which pictures His death on the cross. The water is a symbol of the Holy Spirit, who was given after Christ had been glorified (John 7:37–39).

**D Newell:** The rock portrays supply: out of a rock God provided life-giving water for His thirsty people. Thus the God of enduring strength is also the God of shepherd care who abundantly meets His children's needs. But note that the rock had to be smitten before the streams could flow. Christ was the Rock out of which the waters flowed (Ex. 17:1–7; 1 Cor. 10:4).

**Exodus 33:21** Then the LORD said, "Behold, there is a place by Me, and you shall stand there on the **rock** (Lxx = petra); **22** and it will come about, while My glory is passing by, that I will put you in the cleft of the **rock** (Lxx = petra) and cover you with My hand until I have passed by.

Listen to this great hymn by **Fanny Crosby** ...[He Hideth My Soul](#)

A wonderful Savior is Jesus my Lord, a wonderful Savior to me;  
He hideth my soul in the **cleft of the rock**, where rivers of pleasure I see.

A wonderful Savior is Jesus my Lord—He taketh my burden away;  
He holdeth me up and I shall not be moved; He giveth me strength as my day.

He hideth my soul in the **cleft of the rock** that shadows a dry, thirsty land;  
He hideth my life in the depths of His love, and covers me there with His hand,  
and covers me there with His hand.

**Billy Graham** describes "peace" as hiding in the Rock, Christ Jesus: The storm was raging. The sea was beating against the rocks in huge, dashing waves. The lightning was flashing, the thunder was roaring, the wind was blowing; but the little bird was sound asleep in the crevice of the **rock**, its head tucked serenely under its wing. That is peace: to be able to sleep in the storm! In Christ we are relaxed and at peace in the midst of the confusions, bewilderments, and perplexities of this life. The storm rages, but

our hearts are at rest. We have found peace—at last!

**Numbers 23:9** "As I see him from the top of the **rocks**, And I look at him from the hills; Behold, a people who dwells apart, And will not be reckoned among the nations.

**Deuteronomy 8:15** "He led you through the great and terrible wilderness, with its fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground where there was no water; He brought water for you out of the **rock** (Lxx = *petra*) of flint.

**Deuteronomy 32:4** "The **Rock**! His work is perfect, For all His ways are just; A God of faithfulness and without injustice, Righteous and upright is He....**13** "He made him ride on the high places of the earth, And he ate the produce of the field; And He made him suck honey from the **rock** (*sela*; Lxx = *petra*), And oil from the flinty **rock** (*tsur*; Lxx = *petra*),...**15** "But Jeshurun grew fat and kicked-- You are grown fat, thick, and sleek-- Then he forsook God who made him, And scorned the **Rock** of his salvation....**18** "You neglected the **Rock** who begot you, And forgot the God who gave you birth...**30** "How could one chase a thousand, And two put ten thousand to flight, Unless their **Rock** had sold them, And the LORD had given them up?...**31** "Indeed their rock is not like our **Rock**, Even our enemies themselves judge this....**37** "And He will say, 'Where are their gods, the **rock** in which they sought refuge?"

**Comment:** In Dt 32:37 Moses' describes the pagan gods (idols) as a rock, but unlike Jehovah, the Rock of their salvation, the "dead rocks" could provide no refuge in the day of trouble. What is your "dead rock" dear reader? Is it your retirement account, your six figure salary, your castle-like home, etc? Those who seek refuge in their "dead rocks" will not escape the divine wrath to come. The only Rock of Salvation is faith in the finished work of Christ our sure foundation now and forever. "Nowhere else but in Deut 32:31, 37 is the epithet 'Rock' applied to other gods, albeit in such a way that the author evidently took the view that other gods were called by this epithet illegitimately." (Dictionary of deities and demons in the Bible)

**Spurgeon:** Moses had to be put into a cleft of a rock before he could see God. There was a rock in the wilderness, Moses smote it, and water gushed out. The apostle tells us "that rock was Christ." (1Cor 10:4) Very well, Paul, I believe it was, but there is another thing that I believe, I believe that this rock was Christ. I know it was not Christ literally. Moses stood in a literal rock; he stood on the top of a high mountain, hidden in a cleft of a real rock. But, O my soul, what is the cleft of the rock where thou must stand, if thou wouldst ever see God's face, and live? Oh, it is the "Rock of ages, cleft for me," where I must hide! Oh, what a cleaving that was when Jesus died! O my soul, enter into the cleft in Jesus' side. That is the cleft of the Rock where thou must abide, and see God. But when I get into the cleft of that rock, O my soul, when I get into that cleft whose massive roof is the well-ordered everlasting covenant, whose solid golden floor is made of the solemn decrees of the predestination of the Most High, and whose sides are called Jachin and Boaz, that is, establishment and strength, I am in a cleft of a rock which is so enduring that time can never dissolve it. Precious Christ, may I be found in thee amidst the concussion of the elements when the world shall melt away, and the heavens shall be dissolved! Oh, may I stand in thee, thou precious cleft of the Rock, for thou art all-in-all to my soul!...**In closing**, I want to draw one practical inference; what shall it be? Draw it yourselves. Let it be this: There is an hour coming when we must all, in a certain sense, see God (Php 2:10-11-**note**, Rev 1:7-**note**). We must see Him as a Judge (2Ti 4:1-**note**). It becomes us, then, to think seriously whether we shall stand in the cleft of the Rock when he comes. [\*\*God's Glory and His Goodness - Sermon on Exodus 33:18-23\*\*](#)

**Judges 6:21** Then the angel of the LORD put out the end of the staff that was in his hand and touched the meat and the unleavened bread; and fire sprang up from the **rock** (Lxx = *petra*) and consumed the meat and the unleavened bread. Then the angel of the LORD vanished from his sight.

**Judges 7:25** They captured the two leaders of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb, and they killed Oreb at the **rock** of Oreb, and they killed Zeeb at the wine press of Zeeb, while they pursued Midian; and they brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon from across the Jordan.

**Judges 13:19** So Manoah took the young goat with the grain offering and offered it on the **rock** (Lxx = *petra*) to the LORD, and He performed wonders while Manoah and his wife looked on.

**1 Samuel 2:2** "There is no one holy like the LORD, Indeed, there is no one besides You, Nor is there any **Rock** like our God.

**1 Samuel 24:2** Then Saul took three thousand chosen men from all Israel and went to seek David and his men in front of the **Rocks** of the Wild Goats.

**2 Samuel 21:10** And Rizpah the daughter of Aiah took sackcloth and spread it for herself on the **rock**, from the beginning of harvest until it rained on them from the sky; and she allowed neither the birds of the sky to rest on them by day nor the beasts of the field by night.

**2 Samuel 22:2** (See parallel passage Ps 18:1-2) And he said, "The LORD is my Rock (*sela* - cliff, crag, see below; Lxx = *petra*) and my Fortress and my Deliverer;

**Haddon Robinson:** Proverbs 30:26 says "The badgers are not mighty folk, Yet they make their houses in the **rocks** (Heb = sela)" We could learn a lot from the rock badger. This small animal (also called a coney or hyrax) knows where to go when danger comes. The large ragged crags jutting up from the mountains form a perfect hiding place for the badger. If an eagle swoops down and tries to capture him the little animal is protected by the rock. The eagle would have to tear the mountain apart to get to its prey. When a lion is on the prowl for lunch, the badger goes undetected by lying close to the rock because he is the color of the mountain. As long as the badger hides in the rocks, he is safe. If he wanders away into the grassland, he is dead meat. The most courageous badger in the world is no match for even a small lion. The badger is wise enough to know that his strength lies not in working out at the gym but in taking shelter in the crags. If you have the brains of a badger, you'll figure out where your strength lies. "Be strong in the Lord," the Scripture urges us, "and in the power of His might" (Eph. 6:10). "The Lord is my rock and my fortress," cried David after being hunted by his enemies (2 Sam. 22:2). Badgers know where their strength lies. Do you? You have nothing to fear if you stay close to the Rock of Ages.

Although the coney is largely without protection against its enemies, it does have one refuge from its foes in the rock. The conies are full of timorousness and fear. They show their wisdom by running at the least sound of danger into the crannies of the rocks. So it not surprising that in the rock is their permanent abode. The believer like the coney lives in a hostile world and like the coney, we have fled for refuge in the cleft of the Rock, Christ Jesus. "A sense of our own feebleness and vulnerability to our foes--a realization of how little strength we have in ourselves--makes us thankful for our Rock. In times of danger, where do you run? To human wisdom and ways or to the Rock of your refuge? Run to the Rock.

The little coney, when it has once run into the cleft, has the whole strength of the mountain to protect it. Outside the rock it is helpless enough; inside the rock it is perfectly safe. The Bible speaks of Christ as the Rock of His people. The least suspicion of danger sends the conies scampering into their holes. So at every sight or sound of evil we should away at once to the Rock of Ages. Hawks and eagles prey upon them, so they never venture far from the mouth of their hole. Christ is our Rock; never venture away from His safe keeping.

**Seiss writes:** What the conies lack in strength they make up in wisdom. They dart into their mountain fastnesses and are safe. Knowing their natural helplessness, they have the wisdom to make the rocks their habitation, and are stronger in their retreats than all the powers that may come against them. So there is a Rock for us: that Rock is Christ. The conies "make their houses in the rock." The tenant is weak, the habitation is strong. God provides the Rock for the conies, and God provides a Rock for all weakness.

**Pearson on convey in Pr 30:26:** We are taught far more by the conies than to have a prudent regard to our residence and to make it secure. For do what we will, we are at the best but "a feeble folk" in a world full of perils. The real lesson is so to know our lack of spiritual strength as to look above, and resort to God as our strength. "When I am weak, then am I strong," says the Apostle (2 Cor. 12:10), and this paradox should be the Christian's motto. A firm belief in it will make me so distrustful of self as to climb the heights and dwell above the world "in the secret place of the Most High" (Ps. 91:1). Then my "place of defence shall be the munition of rocks" (Isa. 33:16). There "the enemy shall not be able to do (me) violence, the son of wickedness shall not hurt (me)" (Ps. 89:22). Yes, so long as my "life is hid with Christ in God," I am safe; "there shall no evil happen unto (me)" (Ps. 91:10). But I must abide in Christ, not come out of Him, my city of refuge. The moment I do so I am in danger (Numb. 35:26, 27). But oh, what an assurance is mine, that He who points out to the conies their safe abode (Ps. 104:18) undertakes much more for His chosen ones, and is Himself their Rock and House of Defence! Shall it not then be my wisdom and my might to pray unceasingly, "Lead me to the Rock that is higher than I" (Ps. 61:2)?

**Homilist on coney:** Their strength. This consists in **renouncing self**. Their safety is to flee to place of refuge. And as they are so weak themselves, they choose the strongest that can be procured (a cleft in the rock). How wise would be feeble men if they would follow the same tactics. But it is the tendency of man to cling to his own thoughts and his own ways. Each thinks his own efforts, his own plans, his own productions better than his neighbour's. So, especially in religion, man is a feeble creature. If he attempts his own salvation his refuge shall be swept away. But if, knowing his own feebleness, he makes his dwelling in the rock Christ Jesus, he shall be safe. And what a home is that Rock! It contains not only shelter and protection, but provision and joy.

He cannot fail, your faithful God,  
He'll guard you with His mighty power;  
Then fear no ill though troubles rise,  
His help is sure from hour to hour.  
-- Henry G. Bosch

**Spurgeon:** (Comment on Proverbs 30:26) Conscious of their own natural defenselessness, the conies (badgers) resort to burrows in the **rocks**, and are secure from their enemies. My heart, be willing to gather a lesson from these feeble folk. Thou art as weak and as exposed to peril as the timid coney, be as wise to seek a shelter. My best security is within the munitions (that which is set

or fixed, thus which defends, drives back or hinders, thus a rampart or a defense) of an immutable Jehovah, where His unalterable promises stand like giant walls of **rock**. It will be well with thee, my heart, if thou canst always hide thyself in the bulwarks of His glorious attributes, all of which are guarantees of safety for those who put their trust in Him. Blessed be the name of the Lord, I have so done, and have found myself like David in Adullam, safe from the cruelty of my enemy; I have not now to find out the blessedness of the man who puts his trust in the Lord, for long ago, when Satan and my sins pursued me, I fled to the cleft of the rock Christ Jesus, and in his riven side I found a delightful resting-place. My heart, run to him anew to-night, whatever thy present grief may be; Jesus feels for thee; Jesus consoles thee; Jesus will help thee. No monarch in his impregnable fortress is more secure than the cony in his rocky burrow. The master of ten thousand chariots is not one whit better protected than the little dweller in the mountain's cleft. In Jesus the weak are strong, and the defenceless safe; they could not be more strong if they were giants, or more safe if they were in heaven. Faith gives to men on earth the protection of the God of heaven. More they cannot need, and need not wish. The conies cannot build a castle, but they avail themselves of what is there already: I cannot make myself a refuge, but Jesus has provided it, his Father has given it, his Spirit has revealed it, and lo, again to-night I enter it, and am safe from every foe.

**Spurgeon:** Abide in the rifts of the Rock of Ages and let nothing tempt you to quit your stronghold. Little children abide in Him.

**2 Samuel 22:3** My God, my **Rock**, in Whom I take **refuge** (KJV = "in Him will I **trust**"; Hebrew = chacah), My Shield and the Horn of my salvation, my Stronghold and my Refuge; My Savior, You save me from violence.

**G Campbell Morgan:** David had found Jehovah to be at once Rock, that is foundation; Fortress, that is the place of refuge founded on the rock; and Deliverer, that is the One Who guarded the refuge.

**W. Blaikie writes:** The feeling that recognized God as the Author of all his deliverances was intensely strong, for every expression that can denote it is heaped together: "My rock, my portion, my deliverer; the God of my rock, my shield; the horn of my salvation, my high tower, my refuge, my Saviour." He takes no credit to himself; he gives no glory to his captains; the glory is all the Lord's. He sees God so supremely the Author of his deliverance that the human instruments that helped him are for the moment quite out of view. He who, in the depths of his penitence, sees but one supremely injured Being, and says, "Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned," at the height of his prosperity sees but one gracious Being, and adores Him, Who only is his Rock and his salvation. In an age when all the stress is apt to be laid on the human instruments, and God left out of view, this habit of mind is instructive and refreshing. It was a touching incident in English history when, after the battle of Agincourt, Henry V. of England directed the hundred and fifteenth Psalm to be sung; prostrating himself on the ground, and causing his whole army to do the same, when the words were sounded out, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to Thy name give glory." The emphatic use of the pronoun "**my**" by the Psalmist is very instructive. It is so easy to speak in general terms of what God is, and what God does; but it is quite another thing to be able to appropriate Him as ours, and rejoice in that relation. The use of the "**my**" indicates a personal transaction, a covenant relation into which the parties have solemnly entered. One other point has to be noticed in this introduction--when David comes to express his dependence on God, he very specially sets Him before his mind as "worthy to be praised." (2Sa 22:4)

**H W Beecher writes:** God our Rock - A great mountain lifts itself up, with perpendicular face, over against some quiet valley; and when summer thunders with great storms, the cliff echoes the thunder, and rolls it forth a second time, with majesty increased; and we think that, to be sublime, storms should awaken mountain echoes, and that then cause and effect are worthy of each other. But so, too, an oriole, or a song-sparrow, singing before it, hears its own little song sung back again. A little child, lost and crying in the valley, hears the great cliff weeping just as it weeps; and, in sooth, the mountains repeats whatever is sounded, from the sublimest notes of the tempest to the sweetest bird-whisper or child-weeping; and it is just as easy to do the little as the great, and more beautiful. Now God is our rock, and from His heart is inflected every experience, every feeling of joy or grief that any human soul utters or knows.

**Comment:** Later, in verse 31 (2Sa 22:31) David again repeats the idea of "**refuge**" referring to God as a "shield to all whotake **refuge** (chacah) in Him." The KJV translates the Hebrew verb **chacah** (02620) as "**trust**." In fact 35 of the uses of chacah in the KJV are translated **trust**. While the literal meaning of **chacah** is to **seek refuge or flee for protection**, the figurative sense is to **put one's trust in**, to confide or to hope (note that "to hope" is often used in the OT in the sense of "to trust"). The **Septuagint (Lxx)** emphasizes the figurative sense of "to trust" by choosing **peitho** (to persuade, to be persuaded, to trust, to be confident in something or someone) to translate the Hebrew. In summary, in 2Sa 22:2-3 we see David give a declaration of his faith, inserting this affirmation in the midst of a unique string of nine expressive metaphors applied to God by David. Beloved, let us meditate on these metaphors, that our faith might be built up by the truths inherent in each of these great Names of our great God. Our great God can increase our faith as His Spirit renews our mind and takes these truths we behold and transforms us from glory to glory, even into the image of God's Son. Quaker poet John Greenleaf Whittier put it this way in "My Soul and I"

Nothing before, nothing behind;  
The steps of faith  
Fall on the seeming void, and find



The **ROCK** beneath.  
(See Ps 40:2 below)

**2 Samuel 22:32** "For (see 2Sa 22:31 for what David is explaining) Who is God, besides the LORD? And who is a **Rock**, besides our God?...**47** "The LORD lives, and blessed be my **Rock**; And exalted be God, the **Rock** of my salvation

**Comment:** Given the placement of these words toward the end of David's life, this passage suggests that his declaration reflects his remembrance of God's many deliverances over his life. Notice that in 2 verses David refers to His God by nine names (not counting "refuge" or "trust"), and all are connected with divine deliverances (See David's introductory comments below on the discussion of Psalm 18:1-2) which he had experienced by Jehovah His God (note David's repetitive use of the possessive pronoun "my") It therefore behooves all saints to ponder (**consider memorizing**) these great passages.

**Suggestion:** Play Selah's beautiful version of [You Are My Hiding Place](#), asking the Holy Spirit to guide you (Ps 119:18) as you mediate on the variegated picture of Christ that you glean from the metaphors in 2Sa 22:2-3. End your time of faith strengthening worship by using these great Names of God in a prayer of praise to the Rock of your Salvation.

You are My Hiding Place  
You always fill my heart  
With songs of deliverance  
Whenever I am afraid  
I will trust in You.  
I will trust in You.  
Let the weak say  
"I am strong in the strength of the Lord."

**Thou art my HIDING PLACE;**  
**Thou dost preserve me from trouble;**  
**Thou dost surround me with songs of deliverance. Selah.**  
**Psalm 32:7 (Note)**

**Spurgeon comments:** Child of God, let me urge thee to make use of thy God. Make use of Him in prayer; I beseech thee, go to Him often, because He is thy God. If He were another man's God, thou mightest weary Him; but **He is thy God**. If He were my God and not thine, thou wouldst have no right to approach Him; but He is thy God; He has made Himself over to thee, if we may use such an expression, (and I think we may) He has become the positive property of all His children, so that all He has, and all He is, is theirs. O child, wilt thou let thy treasury lie idle, when thou wantest it? No; go and draw from it by prayer.

"To Him in every trouble flee,  
Thy best, thy only Friend."

Fly to Him, tell Him all thy wants. Use Him constantly by faith, at all times. Oh! I beseech thee, if some dark providence has come over thee, use thy God as a **Sun**, for He is a sun. If some strong enemy has come out against thee, use thy God for a **Shield**, for He is a shield to protect thee (Ps 84:11-[Note](#)). If thou hast lost thy way in the mazes of life, use Him for a **Guide**, for the great Jehovah will direct thee. If thou art in storms, use Him, for He is the God Who stills the raging sea, and says to the waves, "Be still." (Mk 4:39) If thou art a poor thing, knowing not which way to turn, use Him for a **Shepherd**, for the Lord is thy Shepherd, and thou shalt not want (Ps 23:1). Whate'er you are, where'er you are, remember God is just what you want (**Ed**: and all that you need), and He is just where you want. I beseech you, then, make use of thy God.

**2 Samuel 23:3** "The God of Israel said, The **Rock** of Israel spoke to me, 'He who rules over men righteously, Who rules in the fear of God,

**1 Chronicles 11:15** Now three of the thirty chief men went down to the **rock** (Lxx = petra) to David, into the cave of [Adullam](#), while the army of the Philistines was camping in the valley of Rephaim.

**Job 14:18** "But the falling mountain crumbles away, And the **rock** (Lxx = petra) moves from its place;

**Job 18:4** "O you who tear yourself in your anger-- For your sake is the earth to be abandoned, Or the **rock** to be moved from its place?

**Job 19:24** "That with an iron stylus and lead They were engraved in the **rock** (Lxx = petra) forever!

**Comment:** They have been **engraved in the rock forever!** Jesus says ""Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words shall not pass away." (Mt 24:35)

**Job 22:24** And place your gold in the dust, And the gold of Ophir among the **stones** (Lxx = petra) of the brooks,

**Job 24:8** "They are wet with the mountain rains And hug the **rock** (Lxx = petra) for want of a shelter.

**Job 28:10** "He hews out channels through the **rocks**, And his eye sees anything precious.

**Job 29:6** When my steps were bathed in butter, And the **rock** poured out for me streams of oil!

**Psalm 18:2** The LORD is my **Rock** (*sela'* or *cela'*) and my Fortress and my Deliverer, My God, my **Rock** (*tsur*), in Whom I take refuge; My Shield and the Horn of my salvation, my Stronghold (Hebrew = *misgab* = characterized by high walls or a rocky fortress, cp Isa 33:16)....

**Psalm 18:31** For who is God, but the LORD? And who is a **Rock**, except our God.

**Psalm 18:46** The LORD lives, and blessed be my **Rock**; and exalted be the God of my salvation,

#### Read the first verse for context:

**Psalm 18:1** (For the choir director. A Psalm of David the servant of the LORD, who) (spoke to the LORD the words of this song in the day that the LORD) (**delivered** him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul. And) (he said,) "I love Thee, O LORD, **my** Strength (*chezeq* = help, strength)."

#### See comment by James Meikle: [Solitude Sweetened](#)

**Comment:** Also see above for comments on the parallel passage 2Sa 22:2-3. Notice that in Ps 18:1-2 David uses the possessive pronoun "**my**" nine times (first use "my Strength" in Ps 18:1). David's sense of personal possession of God is one we should all seek to emulate. If we belong to Him, indeed He is our God! May God's Spirit grant us the desire and power to boldly lay hold of God personally and say, "He is **MY** Rock, the God of **MY** salvation. **Call upon Him** (Ps 18:3).

You might begin calling on Him by remembering times when you experienced Jehovah's great deliverances (our day of salvation being the greatest deliverance - cp Col 1:13-note, Heb 2:14-15-note, Acts 26:18). Remembering what He has done in the past can strengthen/sustain your faith in what He will do in the future.

Observe that David refers to God His **Rock** (*sela'* and *tsur*) twice, emphasizing His trust in the stability and security which is found in Jehovah. David "piles up" these picturesque terms which emphasizes the safety and protection provided by Jehovah to those who belong to Him (cp Paul's great affirmation in Ro 8:38-39-note)

**Robert Cawdray:** As the rocks that are hard to be clambered unto are good refuges to fly unto from the face of pursuers, so God is the safety of all such as in distress do fly to him for succour.

**Psalm 19:14** Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my **Rock** and my Redeemer.

To shake this Rock Your saints are in.  
Tempest or storm shall ne'er prevail  
'Twill stand the blast of hell and sin,  
And anchor sure within the veil!

**Steven Cole comments:** Perhaps the thought of God as the awesome, Almighty Creator and of His authoritative Word makes you want to run from Him. But notice that David responds to God as "my rock and my redeemer" (Ps 19:14). He did not say "my accuser and my judge," but "my rock and my redeemer." A **rock** refers to a place of **refuge**, where a sinner can run for **protection** and **rest**. A redeemer refers to one who has protected or rescued another from bondage and slavery by paying a required price. "**My**" means that David had fled personally to God for redemption. God wants to be to you a rock of refuge and your redeemer who rescues you from bondage to sin and death. He paid the price to rescue you from bondage to sin by sending His only begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. He died in your place, so that God's judgment for your sins fell upon Him. God is now free to forgive and accept you if you will accept the pardon He offers in His Son. Instead of being the God who accuses and condemns you, He can now be the God who forgives you and welcomes you to take refuge in Him.

**Psalm 27:5 For** (See context - Ps 27:4 for what David is explaining) in the day of trouble He will conceal (hide, protect) me in His tabernacle (dwelling place, which is the Temple, the Holy of holies!); In the secret place (Hebrew = *seter* = "hiding place" - See song "You are My Hiding Place" in notes above on 2Sa 22:2, cp uses of *seter* in Ps 32:7, 91:1, Ps 119:114) of His tent He will hide me; He will lift me up on a **Rock** (Lxx = petra).

**Comment:** Note the strategic placement of the little preposition "for." Seek to train your eye to discern and query **for** when it is used as a "term of explanation" as it is in this passage. While your insights might not be as "lively" as Spurgeon listen to what he observed based on "for."

"**For**"-and **this is a reason for dismissing all our fear**,-"in the time of trouble he shall hide me." "I am so little that I may easily be hidden away by one so great as God is. 'He shall hide me in his pavilion,' in his own royal tent; and beneath the majesty of his sovereignty my soul shall find perfect security."

**He will lift me up on a Rock** - other translations help amplify the picture - "He will place me on an inaccessible rocky summit" (NET). "He will set me high upon a rock." (NIV) "He will place me out of reach on a high rock." (NLT).

**William Beveridge** said that "God can secure us from fear, either by removing the thing feared, or by subduing the fear of the thing."

God will place His man or woman on a high Rock that is out of the reach of danger. And thus the picture is clearly that Jehovah will provide a place of safety in a high place, above and beyond the attacks of the enemy. One is reminded of the position of believers in the New Covenant, Paul writing that "**you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.**" (Col 3:3) Jesus alludes to the "safe position" of believers in John 10 declaring...

My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and **no one shall snatch them out of My hand.** "My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and **no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.** I and the Father are one. (Jn 10:27-30)

**The day of trouble** for David refers to physical warfare, his physical enemies. He describes himself as in a place of security (in the Rock) where he will have no need to fear the waves of trouble that threaten to engulf him. And dearly beloved, you can aptly apply these same timeless principles and truths to the spiritual warfare in which you are currently engaged (even against seemingly overwhelming odds!) As **Spurgeon** says believers today can experience the same "Three Fold Shelter" and therefore need not fear our adverse circumstances nor our adversaries. God provides His tabernacle, His tent and His Rock for His children.

**NET Note Comment:** The LORD places the psalmist in an inaccessible place where his enemies cannot reach him.

**Wiersbe Comments:** David didn't close his eyes to the circumstances around him; rather, he looked by faith to the Lord and examined his circumstances from heaven's point of view (Heb. 12:1-3). **The Lord was everything he needed just as He is everything we need today.** (Be worshipful)

**Spurgeon comment:** (The Three Fold Shelter) This verse gives an excellent reason for the psalmist's desire after communion with God, namely, that he was thus secured in the hour of peril. For in the time of trouble, that needy time, that time when others forsake me, **He shall hide me in His pavilion** (tabernacle - the dwelling place of God on earth): he shall give me the best of shelter in the worst of danger. The royal pavilion was erected in the centre of the army, and around it all the mighty men kept guard at all hours; thus in that divine sovereignty which almighty power is sworn to maintain, the believer peacefully is hidden, hidden not by himself furtively, but by the king, who hospitably entertains him. **In the secret of his tabernacle shall He hide me.** Sacrifice aids sovereignty in screening the elect from harm. No one of old dared to enter the most holy place on pain of death; and if the Lord has hidden his people there, what foe shall venture to molest them? **He shall set me up upon a Rock.** Immutability, eternity, and infinite power here come to the aid of sovereignty and sacrifice. How blessed is the standing of the man whom God himself sets on high above his foes, upon an impregnable **Rock** which never can be stormed! Well may we desire to dwell with the Lord who so effectually protects his people. (Treasury of David)

In the pavilion of sovereignty, the holy place of sacrifice, and the **Rock** of divine immutability we dwell securely.) (The Interpreter: Spurgeon's Devotional Bible).

"His lofty power shall lift me above the turmoil, and His immutable fidelity, like a Rock that never moves, shall make me to stand fast. The **Rock of ages** is immovable; it stirs not in the fiercest storm that ever rages. God is immutable, He abideth the same for ever; so that we have three firm grounds of confidence, — God's sovereignty, Christ's sacrifice, and God's immutability." (An Exposition of Psalm 27)

"There is the pavilion of sovereignty; there is the tabernacle of sacrifice; there is the rock of immutability; and he who can get in or on those three places is the safest man under heaven. Hidden in God's royal tent, secreted in the innermost shrine of Deity, — the holy of holies, — and set up by the Lord Himself upon an uncrumbling **Rock**, what more can he desire? (Another Exposition of Psalm 27)

"If I dwell with God, he will hide me away in the pavilion of his sovereignty; and, so long as he is King, — and that will be for ever

and ever; — he will not let me perish. His sword and shield shall be stretched out for my defense. Then God has also a tabernacle as well as a royal pavilion; as of old he had the holy of holies, into which no man could enter, on pain of death, save only the high priest on the appointed day. "In the time of trouble," the Lord himself shall take us, and hide us there by the mercy-seat, near the ark of the covenant, where his glory shall shine upon us, and where none can intrude to hurt us. We have the protection of the pavilion of sovereignty and the tabernacle of sacrifice; what two places can be safer? We have also the rock of God's immutability; his people shall stand on that high mount, beyond the reach of their adversaries, where their feet shall never slide. (Another Exposition of Psalm 27)

**I do not stand on shifting sand  
And fear the storm that rages;  
But calm and sure, I stand secure  
Upon the Rock of Ages.**

—Anon.

**To survive the storms of life,  
be anchored to the Rock of Ages**

**Psalm 28:1** A Psalm of David. To You, O LORD, I call; My **Rock**, do not be deaf to me, For if You are silent to me, I will become like those who go down to the pit.

**Spurgeon Morning and Evening:** A cry is the natural expression of sorrow, and a suitable utterance when all other modes of appeal fail us; but the cry must be alone directed to the Lord, for to cry to man is to waste our entreaties upon the air. When we consider the readiness of the Lord to hear, and his ability to aid, we shall see good reason for directing all our appeals at once to the God of our salvation. It will be in vain to call to the rocks in the day of judgment, but our **Rock** attends to our cries. "Be not silent to me." Mere formalists may be content without answers to their prayers, but genuine suppliants cannot; they are not satisfied with the results of prayer itself in calming the mind and subduing the will—they must go further, and obtain actual replies from heaven, or they cannot rest; and those replies they long to receive at once, they dread even a little of God's silence. God's voice is often so terrible that it shakes the wilderness; but his silence is equally full of awe to an eager suppliant. When God seems to close his ear, we must not therefore close our mouths, but rather cry with more earnestness; for when our note grows shrill with eagerness and grief, he will not long deny us a hearing. What a dreadful case should we be in if the Lord should become for ever silent to our prayers? "Lest, if thou be silent to me, I become like them that go down into the pit." Deprived of the God who answers prayer, we should be in a more pitiable plight than the dead in the grave, and should soon sink to the same level as the lost in hell. We must have answers to prayer: ours is an urgent case of dire necessity; surely the Lord will speak peace to our agitated minds, for he never can find it in his heart to permit his own elect to perish.

### **A GREAT PRAYER: "BE MY ROCK OF REFUGE"**

**Psalm 31:2** Incline Your ear to me, rescue me quickly; be to me a **Rock** (tsur) of strength, A stronghold (fortress) to save me. (Ps 31:3 "for Thou art my Rock (sela') and my Fortress...")

**Comment:** The Hebrew word for **strength** is **maoz** which describes a place or means of safety, a protection, a stronghold, a fortress, a fortified place, a defense, a strength. The **Septuagint** translates **Rock of strength** with a single Greek word **hyperaspistes** which means one who holds a shield over someone and thus identifies God as my "Protector" (NET translates it "Be my Protector and Refuge". YLT = "Be to me for a Strong Rock." NKJV. ESV, NIV = "Be my Rock of Refuge.")

**Spurgeon paraphrases David:** "Be my **Engedi** (1Sa 22:29 = when King Saul pursued David to kill him) my **Adullam** (cp 1Sa 22:1, 2 = the site of the cave to which David escaped and gathered 400 men who were in distress, etc); my immutable, immovable, impregnable, sublime, resort.

**John Gill adds that the Rock of refuge speaks of:** shelter and security from enemies, as well as to build his everlasting salvation on, and to stand firmly upon, and out of danger;

**Alexander Maclaren:** It sounds strange logic, "Be . . . for Thou art," and yet it is the logic of prayer, and goes very deep, pointing out both its limits and its encouragements.

If we were to read thus: "Be Thou a strong Rock to me, for a house, a fortress (Ps 31:2), for Thou art my Rock and my Fortress (Ps 31:3)," we should get the whole force of the parallelism. Of course the main idea is that of the "Rock," and "Fortress" is only an exposition of one phase of the meaning of that metaphor.

I. what God is. "A rock, a fortress-house." What is the force of that metaphor?

1. **Stable being** is the first thought in it, for there is nothing that is more absolutely the type of unchangeableness and steadfast continuance. God the Unchangeable rises, like some majestic cliff, round the foot of which rolls for ever the tide of human life, and round which is littered the successive layers of the leaves of many summers.

2. Then besides this stable being, and the consequences of it, is the other thought which is attached to the emblem in Scripture, and that is **defense**. "His place of defense shall be the munitions of rocks." When the floods are out, and all the plain is being dissolved into mud, the dwellers on it fly to the cliffs. "Lead me to the rock that is higher than I."

3. But the Rock is a defense in another way. If a hard-pressed fugitive is brought to a stand and can set his back against a rock, he can front his assailants, secure that no unseen foe shall creep up behind and deal a stealthy stab and that he will not be surrounded unawares.

II. our plea with God, from what he is. "Be Thou to me a Rock . . . for Thou art a Rock." Is that not illogical? No, for notice that little word "**to me**"--be Thou to me what Thou art in Thyself, and hast been to all generations." That makes all the difference. It is not merely "Be what Thou art," although that would be much, but it is "be it to me," and let me have all which is meant in that great Name. But then, beyond that, let me point out to you how this prayer suggests to us that all true prayer will keep itself within God's Revelation of what He is.

III. the plea with God drawn from what we have taken him to be to us. "**Be Thou to me a strong Rock, for Thou art my Rock and my Fortress.**" What does that mean? It means that the suppliant has, by his own act of faith, taken God for his; that he has appropriated the great Divine revelation, and made it his own. Now a man by faith encloses a bit of the common for his very own. When God says that He "so loved the world that He gave His . . . Son," I should say, "He loved me, and gave Himself for me." When the great revelation is made that HE is the Rock of Ages, my faith says: "My Rock and my Fortress." Having said that, and claimed Him for mine, I can then turn round to Him and say, "Be to me what I have taken Thee to be." (A. Maclaren, D. D.)

**Application: Are you in affliction? Don't know to whom you can turn? Not sure anyone will listen to your complaints?** If you are in the New Covenant with Jehovah, then you have the right (privilege) to cry out to Him for His help for He is your Covenant Defender! Therefore confidently pray Psalm 31:2 asking God to be to you "**rescue you quickly**" and to be your "**Rock of strength**, (and your) **Stronghold to save**" you out of all your distresses (cp 1Cor 10:13-note = He may not deliver you **OUT OF** the distress per se, but He will deliver you **IN** and **THROUGH** the distress by giving you the specific way of escape so that you might be supernaturally enabled to endure! cp Ps 18:3). After you have prayed, take a moment and listen to this rousing Gaither rendition of "I Go to the Rock" (if you own a tambourine, have it ready for use - I couldn't resist getting mine out to sing with joy to the Lord.)

#### **I GO TO THE ROCK — The Gaithers**

Tell me where do I go?  
When there's nobody else to turn to  
Who do I talk to?  
When nobody wants to listen  
Who do I lean on? Oh  
When there is no foundation stable  
I go to the rock  
I know He is able, I go to the rock

#### **REFRAIN:**

**I go to the Rock of my salvation  
I go to the Stone the builders rejected  
I run to the Mountain  
And the Mountain stands by me  
When all around me is sinking sand  
On Christ the Solid Rock I stand  
When I need a shelter, when I need a friend  
I go to the Rock**

Where do I hide till the storms have all passed over

Where do I run to when the winds of sorrow threaten

Is there a refuge in times of tribulation

When my soul needs a consolation.  
Where do I go? I go to the rock

#### REFRAIN

### A GREAT PRAYER: "LEAD ME TO THE ROCK THAT IS HIGHER THAN I"

**Psalm 61:2** From the end of the earth I call to You when my heart is faint (overwhelmed, covered, enveloped - his soul is enveloped by darkness and/or calamity); Lead me to the **Rock** that is higher than I (too high for me to reach without God's aid, high enough to protect from the crashing waves of adversity).

**NET:** From the most remote place on earth I call out to you in my despair. Lead (guide) me up to an inaccessible rocky summit!

**CSB** I call to You from the ends of the earth when my heart is without strength. Lead me to a rock that is high above me,

**Comment:** Several commentators feel that David wrote this Psalm after his favorite son Absalom drove him from his throne, forcing him to flee Jerusalem to save his life.

**Higher than I** and also higher than all dangers that assail us, for on that High Rock, Christ Jesus, we can rest in safety. When we are led to our High Rock, it is as if we are led to His secret place, covered with His feathers as an eagle covers her young, screened from the heat of trials under the shadow of our High Rock, yea, hidden in the hollow of His hand. There is in Christ our High Rock abundant provision for everything necessary for life and godliness (2Pe 1:3).

**MacArthur:** David expresses his disregard of personal autonomy and his reliance on his God in this metaphor for refuge.

**Wiersbe** notes that David's "true Rock was God. His true Shelter and his true Strong Tower was God. It's good to know that when we are away from the safety of home and city, we still have the safety of the Lord....God never intended that His people "throw in the towel." Remember these truths. He is always listening to your cry. He is always with you and will never forsake you, whatever your circumstances. You can always rejoice in God's protection. Apply the truths of this psalm to your situation today." (Prayer, Praises and Promises)

**Spurgeon:** Most of us know what it is to be overwhelmed in heart; emptied as when a man wipes a dish and turns it upside down; submerged and thrown on our beam ends like a vessel mastered by the storm. Discoveries of inward corruption will do this, if the Lord permits the great deep of our depravity to become troubled and cast up mire and dirt. Disappointments and heart-breaks will do this when billow after billow rolls over us, and we are like a broken shell hurled to and fro by the surf. **Blessed be God, at such seasons we are not without an all-sufficient solace, our God is the harbor of weather-beaten sails, the hospice of forlorn pilgrims. Higher than we are is He, His mercy higher than our sins, His love higher than our thoughts.** It is pitiful to see men putting their trust in something lower than themselves; but our confidence is fixed upon an exceeding high and glorious Lord. A **Rock** He is since he changes not, and a high **Rock**, because the tempests which overwhelm us roll far beneath at His feet; He is not disturbed by them, but rules them at His will. If we get under the shelter of this lofty **Rock** we may defy the hurricane; all is calm under the lee of that towering cliff.

Alas! such is the confusion in which the troubled mind is often cast, that we need piloting to this divine shelter. Hence the prayer of the text. O Lord, our God, by thy Holy Spirit, teach us the way of faith, lead us into Thy rest. The wind blows us out to sea, the helm answers not to our puny hand; Thou, Thou alone canst steer us over the bar between yon sunken rocks, safe into the fair haven. How dependent we are upon Thee—we need Thee to bring us to Thee. To be wisely directed and steered into safety and peace is Thy gift, and Thine alone. This night be pleased to deal well with thy servants. (Morning and evening)

**Psalm 61:3** For (David now explains the Rock and why he desires to be led to the Rock - his past experience encourages his present plea - may we all imitate this pattern!) Thou hast been a **refuge** for me, A **tower** of strength against the enemy.

**Comment:** Note from "**where**" (ends of the earth) and "**when**" (heart is faint) David cries out to God. His cry reflects His faith, his belief that the One Who has been his refuge and tower in times past, is worthy to be called upon even though he was overwhelmed. **The lesson is that even when our circumstances threaten to overwhelm us, we can by faith cry out to the faithful Rock of our salvation.** (cp Jonah's cry in Jonah 2:2-3) For "**what**" does he pray? To be led to the high Rock. Do you feel like you are overwhelmed dear saint? May the Spirit of Christ stir in your heart a plaintive plea "Lead me to the Rock, Christ, Who is higher than I."

**Ryrie Comments:** An asylum that David could not reach in his own strength and that gives protection and security. God is that

asylum, pictured by four figures of speech (in Ps 61:3-4): *refuge, tower of strength, tent, and shelter of Thy wings.*

I. The distress supposed. "When my heart is overwhelmed."

1. By distressing temptations.
2. By providential visitations.
3. By inward fears and depressions.

II. The asylum referred to. "The rock higher than I."

III. The prayer presented. "Lead me to the rock," etc.

1. Conscious insufficiency.
2. Confidence in Christ's all-sufficiency.
3. Earnest desire to feel our connection with Christ. (J. Burns, D. D.)

**Heart is faint (overwhelmed):** Overwhelming troubles are such as sweep over a man, just as the mighty billows of the ocean sweep over and submerge the sands. These are troubles which struggle with us, as it were, for life and death; troubles which would leave us helpless wrecks; troubles which enter into conflict with us in our prime, which grapple with us in our health and strength, and threaten to conquer us by sheer force, no matter how bravely we may contend. Such trouble the psalmist knew. P B Power

**Lead me to the Rock:** The import of the prayer is the expression of conscious weakness, "Lead me." He feels the need of assisting grace, and Divine support--and with the self-diffidence and conscious weakness of a little child, he tries to grasp his Father's hand--"Lead me." "Higher than I." This implies confidence--faith in God--in the sufficiency of Christ. He acknowledges in Christ some one to look up to, superior to any human source; here is humility, (J. D. Carey.)

**Jeremiah Dyke:** The tower (in Ps 18:2) and the **ROCK** were too high for David himself to get into, and therefore he sets to the scaling ladder. "Lead me to the ROCK, and into the tower that is higher than I. Hear my cry, attend unto my prayer." So he makes prayer the scaling ladder to get upon that ROCK and into that TOWER that otherwise had been too high for him; he gets that safety and deliverance which otherwise but by prayer unto God had been impossible to have been obtained.

**F Elwin:** Lead me to the rock that is higher than I. The language is very remarkable. It gives us the idea of a man suffering shipwreck. The vessel in which he has been sailing has sunk. He has been plunged into the mighty ocean; and there he is buffeting the waves, struggling for life, panting for breath, and just about to give up all for lost. Suddenly he discovers a rock towering above him. If he can but climb up to the top of it, and get sure footing upon it, the billows will not be able to reach him, and he will be safe. Now, the prayer in our text is the cry of that poor wretch for help. He is so spent and exhausted, that he cannot reach the rock himself. He shouts aloud for the friendly hand of some one stronger than himself, or for a rope that may be flung to him by those who are already safe on the rock, if by these helps he may gain it. Lead me to the rock, cries the poor perishing wretch. "O, lead me, guide me, direct me to it; for I am so worn and spent, that I cannot reach it otherwise. I am at the point to die; and I must sink, and be no more seen for ever, if there is none to help me." Thus he calls for some one to rescue him from the deep, and to place him on the rock. But what rock? He knows that unless the rock be a high one, he will not be in safety, though he should be on it. The rock, he says, "must be higher than I, or the waves will reach me, and wash me off again." It is not a rock, the top of which just shows itself above the sea, no higher than a man's own body, that will save the life of a shipwrecked mariner. Such a rock may occasion the wreck, but it will not afford any help to the sufferers afterwards; it is a rock to split upon for destruction, not to stand upon for safety

**Matthew Henry:** The particular petition he put up to God when his heart was overwhelmed and he was ready to sink: Lead me to the rock that is higher than I that is, 1. "To the rock which is too high for me to get up to unless thou help me to it. Lord, give me such an assurance and satisfaction of my own safety as I can never attain to but by thy special grace working such a faith in me." 2. "To the rock on the top of which I shall be set further out of the reach of my troubles, and nearer the serene and quiet region, than I can be by any power or wisdom of my own." God's power and promise are a rock that is higher than we. This rock is Christ those are safe that are in him. We cannot get upon this rock unless God by his power lead us. I will put thee in the cleft of the rock, Exodus 33:22. We should therefore by faith and prayer put ourselves under the divine management, that we may be taken under the divine protection.

**Spurgeon pictures the state of being overwhelmed:** Imagine a vessel at sea, and you can get an idea of the meaning of our text. It has been laboring in a storm; sometimes lifted up to heaven, as though its masts would sweep the stars; then again descending until its keel seemed dragging on the ocean bed; first staggering this way, and then that way, reeling to and fro, now rushing forward and now starting back--like a drunken man, or like a madman who has lost his way. At last, a huge sea comes

rolling on; its white crest of foam can be seen in the distance, and the sailors give up all for lost; on comes the wave, gathering up all its strength till it dashes against the ship, and--down the vessel goes, it is **overwhelmed**. The decks are swept, the masts are gone, the timbers are creaking, the ship descends, and is sucked down as in a whirlpool; all is lost. "David says

**That is the case with my heart; it is overwhelmed, drawn into a vortex of trouble, borne down by a tremendous sea of difficulty, crushed and broken; the ribs of my soul seem to have given way; every timber of my vessel is cracked and gone out of its place. My heart is overwhelmed within me."**

Can you now get an idea of the extreme sorrow of the psalmist's spirit?

**"Yet," says he, "even then will I cry unto Thee."**

Oh, noble faith, that can cry amidst the shrieking of the tempest and the howling of the storm!

Oh, glorious faith, that from the bottom of the sea can shoot its arrows to the heights of heaven!

Oh, masterpiece of faith, that from a broken spirit can present prevailing prayer!

Oh, glorious triumph, that from the end of the earth can send a prayer which can reach all the way to heaven!

**Spurgeon: From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee** He was banished from the spot which was the centre of his delight, and at the same time his mind was in a depressed and melancholy condition; both actually and figuratively he was an outcast, yet he does not therefore restrain prayer, but rather finds therein a reason for the louder and more importunate cries. To be absent from the place of divine worship was a sore sorrow to saints in the olden times; they looked upon the tabernacle as the centre of the world, and they counted themselves to be at the far end of the universe when they could no longer resort to the sacred shrine; their heart was heavy as in a strange land when they were banished from its solemnities. Yet even they knew right well that no place is unsuitable for prayer. There may be an end of the earth, but there must not be an end to devotion. On creation's verge we may call upon God, for even there He is within call. **No spot is too dreary, no condition too deplorable; whether it be the world's end or life's end, prayer is equally available. To pray in some circumstances needs resolve, and the psalmist here expresses it,**

**I will cry.** It was a wise resolution, for had he ceased to pray he would have become the victim of despair; **there is an end to a man when he makes an end to prayer.** Observe that David never dreamed of seeking any other God; he did not imagine the dominion of Jehovah to be local: he was at the end of the promised land, but he knew himself to be still in the territory of the Great King; to him only does he address his petitions.

**When my heart is overwhelmed: --when the huge waves of trouble wash over me, and I am completely submerged, not only as to my head, but also my heart. It is hard to pray when the very heart is drowning, yet gracious men plead best at such times. Tribulation brings us to God, and brings God to us. Faith's greatest triumphs are achieved in her heaviest trials. It is all over with me, affliction is all over me; it encompasses me as a cloud, it swallows me up like a sea, it shuts me in with thick darkness, yet God is near, near enough to hear my voice, and I will call him.**

Is not this brave talk? Mark how our psalmist tells the Lord, as if he knew he were hearing him, that he intended to call upon him: our prayer by reason of our distress may be like to a call upon a far off friend, but our inmost faith has its quiet heart whispers to the Lord as to one who is assuredly our very present help.

**Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.** I see Thee to be my refuge, sure and strong; but alas! I am confused, and cannot find Thee; I am weak, and cannot climb Thee. Thou art so steadfast, guide me; Thou art so high, uplift me.

There is a mint of meaning in this brief prayer. Along the iron bound coast of our northern shores, lives are lost because the rocks are inaccessible to the shipwrecked mariner. A clergyman of one of the coast villages has with immense labour cut steps up from the beach to a large chamber, which he has excavated in the chalk cliffs; here many mariners have been saved; they have climbed the rock, which had else been too high for them, and they have escaped.

We have heard of late, however, that the steps have been worn away by the storms, and that poor sailors have perished miserably within sight of the refuge which they could not reach, for it was too high for them: it is therefore proposed to drive in iron stanchions, and to hang up chain ladders that shipwrecked mariners may reach the chambers in the rock. The illustration is self interpreting. Our experience leads us to understand this verse right well, for the time was with us when we were in such amazement of soul by reason of sin, that although we knew the Lord Jesus to be a sure salvation for sinners, yet we could not come at Him, by reason of our many doubts and forebodings. A Saviour would have been of no use to us if the Holy Spirit had not gently led us to Him, and enabled us to rest upon Him.

To this day we often feel that we not only want a **ROCK**, but to be led to it. With this in view we treat very leniently the half



unbelieving prayers of awakened souls; for in their bewildered state we cannot expect from them all at once a fully believing cry. A seeking soul should at once believe in Jesus, but it is legitimate for a man to ask to be led to Jesus; the Holy Spirit is able to effect such a leading, and he can do it even though the heart be on the borders of despair. How infinitely higher that we are is the salvation of God. We are low and groveling, but it towers like some tall cliff far above us. This is its glory, and is our delight when we have once climbed into the **ROCK**, and claimed an interest in it; but while we are as yet trembling seekers, the glory and sublimity of salvation appall (discourage) us, and we feel that we are too unworthy ever to be partakers of it; hence we are led to cry for grace upon grace, and to see how dependent we are for everything, not only for the Saviour, but for the power to believe on him.

**Spurgeon** ([From his Sermon on Psalm 61:2 entitled "The High Rock"](#)): Now, as some of you will be exercised with troubles, remember that the Rock is higher than you are; and when your troubles reach you, if you are not high enough to escape them, climb up to the Rock Christ, for there is no trouble that can reach you when you get there. Satan will be howling at you, and perhaps he will be nibbling at your heel, barking and biting at you; so climb into the Rock Christ, and he will not be able to reach you, and you will scarcely hear his howling; he will be low down in the valley when you are in the Rock higher than he is. Fears will arise, and doubts will come in like a flood; there is no place so safe in the time of a flood as a high rock, so climb to the Rock Christ, and then, though the waves of the sea roar, and the mountains shake with the swelling thereof, you will be secure if you are on the Rock that is higher than you are. And oh! while the world is dragging you down, forever be seeking to be climbing up. If the devil says, "Come down again, and be worldly; come down, and be selfish," always cry, "Lord, lead me up, lead me to the Rock that is higher than I am. My country is in the skies, help me to be climbing upwards; never permit me to descend, lead me to the Rock that is higher than I am."

**Spurgeon gives an illustration of Christ the "Highest Rock"**: This Rock is higher than you are. All you have enjoyed of Christ is but as the beginning of a topless mountain. When I have been in Scotland, I have gone up some of the hills there; and I have thought, "This is a very high place indeed; what a fine view there is, what a height I have reached!" "Ah!" some one has said, "but if you were to see the Alps, this hill would only seem like the beginning, you would only have got to the foot when you had climbed as high as this;" and so it is with you. By your experience, your sweet enjoyment, you think you have reached the top of the mountain; but Christ comes and whispers to you, "Look yonder, far above those clouds; you have only begun to go up; this hill of communion is only one step; as yet you have only taken a child's leap; you have farther to go, far higher than you could imagine or conceive." Ah! this is indeed a Rock higher than thou art, the highest in communion, and the next to the throne of God.

**Spurgeon Morning and Evening**: Most of us know what it is to be overwhelmed in heart; emptied as when a man wipes a dish and turns it upside down; submerged and thrown on our beam ends like a vessel mastered by the storm. Discoveries of inward corruption will do this, if the Lord permits the great deep of our depravity to become troubled and cast up mire and dirt. Disappointments and heart-breaks will do this when billow after billow rolls over us, and we are like a broken shell hurled to and fro by the surf. Blessed be God, at such seasons we are not without an all-sufficient solace, our God is the harbor of weather-beaten sails, the hospice of forlorn pilgrims. Higher than we are is He, His mercy higher than our sins, His love higher than our thoughts. It is pitiful to see men putting their trust in something lower than themselves; but our confidence is fixed upon an exceeding high and glorious Lord. A **Rock** He is since He changes not, and a high **Rock**, because the tempests which overwhelm us roll far beneath at His feet; He is not disturbed by them, but rules them at His will. If we get under the shelter of this lofty Rock we may defy the hurricane; all is calm under the lee (shelter) of that towering cliff. **Alas! such is the confusion in which the troubled mind is often cast, that we need piloting to this divine shelter.** Hence the prayer of the text. O Lord, our God, by thy Holy Spirit, teach us the way of faith, lead us into thy rest. The wind blows us out to sea, the helm answers not to our puny hand; Thou, Thou alone canst steer us over the bar between yon sunken rocks, safe into the fair haven. How dependent we are upon Thee—we need Thee to bring us to Thee. To be wisely directed and steered into safety and peace is Thy gift, and Thine alone. This night be pleased to deal well with Thy servants.

**Worship with a beautiful song based on Psalm 61:2-4 (sing it as a prayer to El Elyon, the Most High God, the Exalted One, the King of kings, the Lord of lords):**

### **[Lead Me To The Rock](#)**

When my heart is overwhelmed,  
Hear my cry, give heed to my prayer.  
When my eyes are dim with tears,  
O Father make them clear.

#### ***Refrain:***

***From the end of all the earth***

***When my heart is fainting***

***Let me know that You have heard.***

*Lead me into safety.*

*And lead me to the Rock*

*The Rock that is higher.*

*Lead me to the Rock,*

*The Rock that is higher than I.*

You O Lord have been for me,  
A Refuge from my enemies.  
Let me live within Your strength,  
In the shelter of Your wings.

**Psalm 62:2** He only is my **Rock** and my Salvation, My stronghold; I shall not be greatly shaken.

**Comment:** **He only** - indeed there is no other Name (Acts 4:12). **Spurgeon adds:** **Alone**, and without other help, God is the foundation and completion of my safety. We cannot too often hear the toll of that great bell **only**; let it ring the death knell of all carnal reliances, and lead us to cast ourselves on the bare arm of God.

**Spurgeon comments:** Sometimes a metaphor may be more full of meaning and more suggestive than literal speech: hence the use of the figure of a **ROCK**, the very mention of which would awaken grateful memories in the psalmist's mind. David had often lain concealed in rocky caverns, and here he compares his God to such a **secure refuge**; and, indeed, declares Him to be **His only real protection, all-sufficient in Himself and never failing**. At the same time, as if to show us that what he wrote was not mere poetic sentiment but blessed reality, **the literal word salvation follows the figurative expression: that our God is our Refuge is no fiction**, nothing in the world is more a matter of fact. **He is my defense (stronghold), my height, my lofty rampart, my high fort**. Here we have another and bolder image; the tried believer not only abides in God as in a cavernous rock; but dwells in him as a warrior in some bravely defiant tower or lordly castle. **I shall not be greatly moved**. His personal weakness might cause him to be somewhat moved; but his faith would come in to prevent any very great disturbance; not much would he be tossed about. **Moved**, as one says, "but not **removed**." Moved like a ship at anchor which swings with the tide, but is not swept away by the tempest. When a man knows assuredly that the Lord is his salvation, he cannot be very much cast down: it would need more than all the devils in hell greatly to alarm a heart which knows God to be its salvation.

**Spurgeon** ([From his sermon on Psalm 62:2: God Alone the Salvation of His People](#)): Look on yon rocks and wonder at their antiquity, for from their summits a thousand ages look down upon us...**Even so is our God pre-eminently ancient**. His head and his hair are white like wool, as white as snow, for he is "the ancient of days," and we are always taught in Scripture to remember, that he is "without beginning of years." Long ere creation was begotten, "from everlasting to everlasting," he was God.

"My rock!" What a history the rock might give you of the storms to which it has been exposed; of the tempests which have raged in the ocean at its base, and of the thunders which have disturbed the skies above its head; while it, itself, has stood unscathed by tempests, and unmoved by the buffetings of storms. So with our God. **How firm hath he stood — how steadfast hath he been — though the nations have reviled him**, and "the kings of the earth have taken counsel together!"...

Look at the rock again: see how firm and unmoved it stands! It doth not stray from place to place, but it abideth fast for evermore. Other things have changed, islands have been drowned beneath the sea, and continents have been shaken, but see, the rock stands as steadfast as if it were the very foundation of the whole world and could not move till the wreck of creation, or the loosening of the bands of nature. **So with God: how faithful he is in his promises! how unalterable in his decrees! how unswerving! how unchanging! The rock is immutable**, nought hath been worn from it...Lo, he is my rock, he is the same, and his kingdom shall have no end. Unchangeable he is in his being, firm in his own sufficiency; he keeps himself immutably the same; and "therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed."

The ten thousand uses of the rock, moreover, are full of ideas as to what God is. You see the **fortress standing on a high rock**, up which the clouds themselves can scarcely climb, and up whose precipices the assault cannot be carried, and the armed cannot travel, for the besieged laugh at them from their eminence. **So is our God a sure defense and we shall not be moved if he hath "set our feet upon a rock, and established our goings."**

Many a giant rock is a source of admiration from its elevation; for on its summit we can see the world outspread below, like some small map; we mark the river or broadly spreading stream, as if it were a vein of silver inlaid in emerald. We discover the nations beneath our feet, "like drops in a bucket," and the islands are "very little things" in the distance, while the sea itself seems but a basin of water, held in the hand of a mighty giant. **The mighty God is such a rock; we stand on him, and look down on the world, counting it to be a mean thing.**

We have climbed to Pisgah's top, from the summit of which we can race across this world of storms and troubles to the bright land

of spirits — that world unknown to ear or eye, but which God's truth revealed to us by the Holy Ghost.

This mighty rock is our **refuge**, and it is **our high observatory, from which we see the unseen**, and have the evidence of things which as yet, we have not enjoyed. I need not, however, stop to tell you all about a rock, we might preach for a week upon it, but we give you that for your meditation during the week. "**He is my rock.**" How glorious a thought! How safe am I, and how secure: and how may I rejoice in the fact, that when I wade through Jordan's stream he will be my rock! I shall not walk upon a slippery foundation, but I shall tread on him who cannot betray my feet; and I may sing, when I am dying, "He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him."

**Ralph Robinson comments:** David speaks of him as high and strong, and as a rock to stand upon, a rock of defense and refuge, a rock of habitation (Psalm 71:3, in Hebrew), and a rock to be praised. Psalm 95:1

**Psalm 62:6** He only is **my Rock** and **my** salvation, **My** stronghold (refuge, high place, high tower, secure height, a retreat); I shall not be shaken (upended = NET).

**Illustration of Shaking and Yet Unshakeable:** A century ago an ocean liner sank off the southwest coast of England, taking many people down with it. A 16-year-old galley boy, who was tossed up along the rugged shore, survived by clinging to a rock all night long. When he was finally rescued, he was asked, "*Didn't you shake as you were clinging all night to that rock?*" The boy replied, "*Yes, of course. But the rock never shook once*" The ancient Israelites learned from their experiences in the desert that **rocks** were more than masses of stone. A **rock** could serve as shelter from a sudden storm. It could provide a cool shadow from oppressive heat. It was a stronghold and a place of safety from enemies (Ps. 61:2,3; 62:1,2; Isa 32:2). Just as the Hebrews found the Rock of their salvation in the Lord Who brought them up out of Egypt, so we find our Rock of salvation in the One Who through His Son delivered us from bondage to sin. **When storms of trouble threaten to overwhelm us, we can cling to Him in faith, thankful that our Rock is our unshakable refuge.** —V. C. Grounds (Our Daily Bread)

**Spurgeon on not be shaken:** not even in the least degree. See how his confidence grows. In the second verse (Ps 62:2) an adverb qualified his quiet; here, however, it is absolute; he altogether defies the rage of his adversaries, he will not stir an inch, nor be made to fear even in the smallest degree. A living faith grows; experience develops the spiritual muscles of the saint, and gives a manly force which our religious childhood has not yet reached.

**Psalm 62:7** On God **my** salvation and **my** glory rest; the **Rock** of **my** strength, **my** refuge is in God.

**NET** Psalm 62:7 God delivers me and exalts me; God is **my strong Protector** and my Shelter.

**NIV** Psalm 62:7 My salvation and my honor depend on God; he is **my mighty Rock**, my Refuge.

**NLT** Psalm 62:7 My victory and honor come from God alone. He is **my Refuge, a Rock** where no enemy can reach me.

**Comment:** When Jesus is our **Rock** (and we really believe that truth), David says we need not be greatly shaken. The winds of adversity will blow, but we can stand on our unshakeable Rock, Christ Jesus.

The Hebrew word for **Refuge** (machaceh) means a place of refuge, shelter from danger. It was used to describe one literally taking shelter (Isa 4:6).

**Spurgeon comments:** He multiplies titles, for he would render much honour to the Lord, Whom he had **tried**, and **proved** to be a faithful God under so many aspects. Ignorance needs but few words, but when experience brings a wealth of knowledge, we need varied expressions to serve as coffers for our treasure. **God who is our ROCK when we flee for shelter, is also our STRONG ROCK when we stand firm and defy the foe; He is to be praised under both characters.** Observe how the psalmist brands his own initials upon every name which he rejoicingly gives to his God-- **my** expectation, my rock, **my** salvation, **my** glory, **my** strength, **my** refuge; he is not content to know that the Lord is all these things; he acts faith towards him, and lays claim to him under every character. What are the mines of Peru or Golconda to me if I have no inheritance in them?

**It is the word my which puts the honey into the comb. If our experience has not yet enabled us to realize the Lord under any of these consoling titles, we must seek grace that we may yet be partakers of their sweetness. The bees in some way or other penetrate the flowers and collect their juices; it must be hard for them to enter the closed cups and mouthless bags of some of the favorites of the garden, yet the honey gatherers find or make a passage; and in this they are our instructors, for into each delightful name, character, and office of our covenant God our persevering faith must find an entrance, and from each it must draw delight.**

**Abraham Wright comments:** There are several **Names of God** given in this verse, that so every soul may take with him that name which may minister most comfort to him. Let him that is pursued by any particular temptation, invest (clothe or dress himself with) God (cp Ro 13:14), as God is a **REFUGE**. Let him that is buffeted with Satan, battered with his own concupiscence (strong

desires, especially sexual desires) receive (take) God, as God is his defense and shield. Let him that is shaken by perplexities in his understanding or scruples in his conscience, lay hold on God, as God is his ROCK and his anchor; let him that hath any diffident jealousy and suspicion of the free and full mercy of God, apprehend God, as God is his SALVATION; and let him that walks in the ingloriousness and contempt of the world, contemplate God, as God is GLORY. **Any of these notions is enough to any man; but God is all these, and all else, that all souls can think, to every man.**

**ILLUSTRATION: OUR ROCK AND OUR REFUGE** - Psalm 62:7: A century ago an ocean liner sank off the southwest coast of England, taking many people down with it. A 16-year-old galley boy, who was tossed up along the rugged shore, survived by clinging to a rock all night long. When he was finally rescued, he was asked, "Didn't you shake as you were clinging all night to that rock?" The boy replied, "Yes, of course. But the rock never shook once."

The ancient Israelites learned from their experiences in the desert that rocks were more than masses of stone. A rock could serve as shelter from a sudden storm. It could provide a cool shadow from oppressive heat. It was a stronghold and a place of safety from enemies (Ps. 61:2-3; 62:1-2; Isa. 32:2). That's why it meant so much when David called the Lord "my rock and my salvation" (Ps. 62:6) and "my strength, and my refuge" (V. 7). David knew firsthand how important a rock could be in times of trouble.

Just as the Hebrews found the rock of their salvation in the Lord who brought them up out of Egypt, so we find our rock of salvation in the One who through His Son delivered us from bondage to sin. When storms of trouble threaten to overwhelm us, we can cling to Him in faith, thankful that our Rock is our unshakable refuge.- Vernon C. Grounds

O safe to the Rock that is higher than I  
My soul in its conflicts and sorrows would fly;  
So sinful, so weary -- Thine, Thine would I be;  
Thou blest "Rock of Ages," I'm hiding in Thee.  
-- Cushing

**You may tremble on the rock of ages,  
but the rock will never tremble under you.**

**Psalm 71:3** Be to me a **Rock** (tsur) of habitation to which I may continually come; You have given commandment to save me, for You are my **Rock** (Sela/Cela) and my Fortress.

**NLT** "Be to me a **protecting rock of safety**, where I am always welcome. Give the order to save me, for you are my rock and my fortress."

**Comment: "Habitation"** means dwelling or refuge and is used in other passages to refer to God's heavenly abode (Dt. 26:15; 2Chr. 30:27; Zech. 2:13) and the sanctuary where He dwells among His people (1Sa 2:29; 2Chr. 36:15). Did you notice that David did not just desire to dwell **WITH** God but **IN** God? This reminds one of Moses' words "Thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations" (Ps 90:1) **And so as you meditate on these truths inherent in Ps 71:3, is this not a great prayer to pray! Have you ever ask God to be to you your "Rock of habitation"? This is a prayer for Yahweh to be our Rock where we may safely abide, to which we may resort and feel safe. The picture is of utmost security. Do you suffer from fear and/or anxiety? Consider praying (in faith) this prayer to God. He will hear and answer this prayer according to 1Jn 5:14-15. And beloved, you will not "wear out" this great prayer or your privilege to abide in Christ your Rock (cp Jn 15:5, 1Jn 2:28 and 1Jn 3:24 tells us an additional component of how we abide in Him = keep His commandments) for David adds "to which I may continually come."**

**Matthew Henry:** "I fly to Thee, and am sure to be safe in Thee, and under Thy protection. If Thou secure me, none can hurt me." Those that are at home in God, that live a life of communion with him and confidence in him, that continually resort unto him by faith and prayer, having their eyes ever towards him, may promise themselves a strong habitation in him, such as will never fall of itself nor can ever be broken through by any invading power and they shall be welcome to resort to him continually upon all occasions, and not be upbraided as coming too often.

**Spurgeon:** David in his younger days had been obliged to hide himself away with his followers in the great caverns and rocks of his native land. In the cave of Adullam, by the rocks of the wild goats, he had dwelt amid the sternest surroundings of nature. No doubt he had climbed aloft upon the mountain's side, and then had penetrated into one cave after another, and treated them as chambers of his house of rock. There he had spent both nights and days, looking from on high upon the plains beneath, often seeing his cruel pursuers passing by in eager hunt for him, while he himself was secure in his rocky fastness. Nothing leaves a clearer impression upon the memory than a residence amidst such scenes....The man David, as full of grace as of genius, as

saturated with the Spirit of God as with the spirit of poetry, could not but in his loftiest songs speak of his God in language culled from the cave....

The wicked say, "No God"; but David sighed for none but God. The mere pretender would have God on Sabbaths and high days, and in times of trouble; but David would have God all the day, and every day. The formalist is satisfied with a word with God in the morning, and another at night; when he is either hurried or sleepy, he forces from himself the tax of a minute or two in prayer; but he that loves the Lord delights to walk with him evermore, yea, to make his home with God, and to abide in Him....

David had realized in God Peaceful Security. "Be thou my strong habitation" — **"my rock of habitation."** Now, the child of God when he enters into the Lord by faith feels himself perfectly safe. Safe, first, from all risk of the Lord's changing or failing. God himself is strong, his love is immutable, his power is unfailing. This is the solid ground of our security. When the winds are out in all their fury those of us whose habitations stand on the top of a hill know the value of stability. There are periods in the rage of the storm when our habitation shakes like a ship which trembles from stem to stern — and though this is very exciting, it does not create a sense of peaceful security. When once we enter into God, we do not shake or know fear. Rise winds, roar waves, blow tempests, howl hurricanes, there is do shaking our sure abode in God. David in the rock had often defied the storm; for he felt that though the earth should be removed, and the mountains be cast into the midst of the sea, he would not fear. Such be the confidence of every child of God. God changeth not, God's arm is not shortened; God is not vanquished; no purpose of God shall be defeated; no decree of his shall fail. Rocks may dissolve, but the eternal God changeth not, and his people in him shall have a sure abode. ([God Our Continual Resort - Sermon on Psalm 71:3](#))

**Spurgeon:** Jehovah deserves our confidence; let him have it all. Every day must we guard against every form of reliance upon an arm of flesh, and hourly hang our faith upon the ever faithful God. Not only on God must we rest, as a man stands on a rock, but in him must we trust, as a man hides in a cave. The more intimate we are with the Lord, the firmer will our trust be. God knows our faith, and yet he loves to hear us avow it; hence, the psalmist not only trusts in the Lord, but tells him that he is so trusting.... **MY ROCK** - In God we have all the security of nature which furnishes the rock, and art which builds the fortress, could supply; he is the complete preserver of his people. Immutability may be set forth by the rock, and omnipotence by the fortress. Happy is he who can use the personal pronoun "**my**" --not only once, but as many times as the many aspects of the Lord may render desirable. Is He a strong habitation? I will call him "**my** strong habitation (my Rock of habitation), "and he shall be **my** rock, **my** Fortress, **my** God (Psalms 71:4), **my** hope, **my** trust (Psalms 71:5), **my** praise (Psalms 71:6). All mine shall be His, all His shall be mine. This was the reason why the psalmist was persuaded that God had commanded his salvation, namely, because he had enabled his to exercise a calm and appropriating faith. ([Treasury of David](#))

**Expositor's Bible on Rock of Habitation:** That thought of God as a habitation to which the soul may continually find access goes very deep into the secrets of the devout life.

**Spurgeon:** David knew what it was to hide himself away in the great caverns and rocks of his native land. He had done so in the cave of Adullam. And such residences are never forgotten. You may live for an age in such a town as this, and forget it all. What is there to remember in this labyrinth of bricks and mortar? But when you get into the clear bracing atmosphere of the hills, amid these crags and glens, and you spend a night in some mountain cave, you will never forget that. And David never did. And in his loftiest songs he speaks of God in language culled from the cave.

**Barnes:** " That is, a rock where I may safely make my abode, or to which I may resort and feel safe. In Psalm 31:2, this is, "Be thou my strong rock, for an house of defense to save me." The idea is the same

**John Gill:** This is very appropriately said, when David was driven out of his dwelling place, and palace at Jerusalem, by his son, as Kimchi observes. When God's people have no certain dwelling place, which is sometimes their case, they always find one in the Lord; particularly in his heart's love; for he that dwells in love dwells in God (1Jn 4:16); and a strong habitation He is: wherefore He is called a strong rock, a strong hold, a strong tower; he is as a wall of fire around his people, a munition of rocks; his salvation is as walls and bulwarks, and his power as a garrison in which they are kept.

**Matthew Henry:** What his requests to God are, in this confidence. That he might always find rest and safety in God (Psalm 71:3): Be thou my strong habitation be thou to me a rock of repose, whereto I may continually resort. Those that are at home in God, that live a life of communion with him and confidence in him, that continually resort unto him by faith and prayer, having their eyes ever towards him, may promise themselves a strong habitation (Rock of habitation) in him, such as will never fall of itself nor can ever be broken through by any invading power and they shall be welcome to resort to him continually upon all occasions, and not be upbraided as coming too often.

**William Jay on "Rock of habitation" reminds us that** we know the way. There is a door, and we have the key. No sentinel keeps us back; the dwelling is our own: and who dares to forbid us all its accommodations and contents? Kings, however disposed, cannot be always approachable. Owing to the multitude of their claims, and the limitation of their powers, and the

importance of keeping up a sense of their dignity, they are only accessible at certain times, and with stately formalities. But the King of kings allows us to come boldly to the throne of grace (Heb 4:16); and enjoins us in every thing, by prayer and supplication, to make our requests unto Him (Php 4:6). We cannot be too importunate, or by our continual coming weary Him (Lk 18:1-2, 3-6).

**Psalm 73:26** My flesh and my heart may fail, but (**NOTE THE STRIKING CONTRAST**) God is the strength (**Rock**) of my heart and my portion forever.

**Comment:** Strength of my heart is literally "rock of my heart" - one way to read this would be the rock on which my heart relies

**John Gill on "the rock of my heart":** when overwhelmed with distress through outward trouble, or in the lowest condition with respect to spiritual things; when grace is weak, corruptions strong, temptations prevail, and afflictions are many; then does the Lord support and sustain His people, and strengthens them with strength in their souls; and in the moment of death, by showing them that its sting is taken away, and its curse removed; that their souls are going to their Lord, and about to enter into his joy; and that their bodies will rise again glorious and incorruptible.

**Alexander Maclaren:** the psalmist here, just because to-day God is the Rock of his heart, is sure that that relation must last on, through life, through death, aye I and for ever, "when all that seems shall suffer shock."

**Matthew Henry:** My flesh and my heart fail. Note, Others have experienced and we must expect, the failing both of flesh and heart. The body will fail by sickness, age, and death and that which touches the bone and the flesh touches us in a tender part, that part of ourselves which we have been but too fond of when the flesh fails the heart is ready to fail too the conduct, courage, and comfort fail. [2.] Sovereign relief provided in this distress: But God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever. Note, Gracious souls, in their greatest distresses, rest upon God as their spiritual strength and their eternal portion. First, "**He is the strength of my heart, the rock of my heart**, a firm foundation, which will bear my weight and not sink under it. **God is the strength of my heart** I have found him so I do so still, and hope ever to find him so." In the distress supposed, he had put the case of a double failure, both flesh and heart fail but, in the relief, he fastens on a single support: he leaves out the flesh and the consideration of that, it is enough that **God is the strength of his heart**. He speaks as one careless of the body (let that fail, there is no remedy), but as one concerned about the soul, to be strengthened in the inner man.

**T. Hannam:** "God is the strength (**rock**) of my heart." God is the soul's power. Without Him it has no moral strength to resist the wrong, to pursue the right, to endure trials, to welcome death, to serve humanity, and to honour God. God is the strength. As sap in all the branches of the tree, He is strength to all the faculties of the soul. "Our sufficiency is of God."

**Spurgeon:** His God would not fail him, either as protection or a joy. His heart would be kept up by divine love, and filled eternally with divine glory. **After having been driven far out to sea, Asaph casts anchor in the old port. We shall do well to follow his example. There is nothing desirable save God; let us, then, desire only Him.** All other things must pass away; let our hearts abide in Him, Who Alone abideth for ever. (Amen)

**Psalm 78:15** He split the **rocks** in the wilderness and gave them abundant drink like the ocean depths....

**Spurgeon:** Moses was the instrument, but the Lord did it all. Twice he made the flint a gushing rill. What can he not do?

**Psalm 78:20** "Behold, He struck the **Rock** so that waters gushed out, And streams were overflowing; Can He give bread also? Will He provide meat for His people?"....

**Spurgeon:** They admit what he had done, and yet, with superabundant folly and insolence, demand further proofs of his omnipotence.

**Psalm 78:35** And they remembered that God was their **Rock** (Read the context to answer the question "When did they remember?" Ps 78:34), and the Most High God their Redeemer.

**Spurgeon:** *Sharp strokes* awoke their *sleepy memories*. (Ps 78:34) *Reflection* followed *infliction*. They were led to see that all their dependence must be placed upon their God; for He alone had been their shelter, their foundation, their fountain of supply, and their unchangeable friend. What could have made them forget this? Was it that their stomachs were so full of flesh that they had no space for ruminating upon spiritual things? **And the high God their Redeemer.** They had forgotten this also. The high hand and outstretched arm which redeemed them out of bondage had both faded from their mental vision. Alas, poor man, how readily dost thou forget thy God! Shame on thee, ungrateful worm, to have no sense of favors a few days after they have been received. Will nothing make thee keep in memory the mercy of thy God except the utter withdrawal of it?

**Psalm 81:16** "But I would feed you with the finest of the wheat, and with honey from the **Rock** I would satisfy you."

**Commentary:** A striking metaphor for prosperity, provision, abundance. What a contrast - honey from the hardest, seemingly most unlikely source. As Morris says "honey deposited in the rocks, the most barren aspect of the wilderness, was a metaphor for

the abundance God would have provided for His people, if they had obeyed Him (Deuteronomy 32:13)." (Defender's Study Bible)

Don't rebel against God and thus miss the blessings He wants to give you (Note the word "would" 7x in Ps 86:13-16!). Dwelling on past failures only leads to a life focused on regret, on what "would" have been. If you have failed the Lord (most of us have), then confess and come back to Him and receive His complete cleansing and full forgiveness. Dedicate yourself to Him, yield quickly to His Spirit's urgings and begin experiencing the things that "would" have been. God has the best plan for you and He can turn our defeats into triumph in Christ. May we not be of that number who have to speak the saddest of all words "It might have been." "It is true that sometimes opportunity knocks only once. Though it is laden with choicest treasures, it may seem at the moment to conflict with personal plans or to involve personal sacrifice. It represents God's very best for us, but for reasons of our own we let the opportunity pass. We refuse His best and settle for His second best. All the time He is saying, "I would but you would not.'" (W. MacDonald)

**John Phillips comments:** By abandoning the gold standard of true worship, not only lost out morally and militarily, they lost out materially: "He should have fed them also with the finest of the wheat: and with honey out of the rock should I have satisfied thee" (Ps 81:16). Instead of the riches God wanted to bestow, Israel was left to her own resources and was soon bankrupt. No wonder we call this the psalm of the lost opportunity. Israel might have had "the finest of the wheat." The word translated "finest" literally means "the fat"-in other words, nothing but the best. That is what God wanted for His people-even in terms of material things. By abandoning Him, they lost everything-even the material things for the sake of which they had abandoned Him. There is a lesson in that for us which needs no comment. Jesus said: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you."

**Steven Cole:** Sweetness in adversity (81:16): If His people will obey, God promises to satisfy them with honey from the rock. Rocks are harsh, unpromising things when it comes to feeding the hungry. The desert where Israel wandered had a lot of rocks and not much else. Who would expect anything satisfying from a rock? But God can bring honey from the rock to satisfy His people. The bees would go into the cracks of the rocks and store their sweet honey which oozed out. It's a picture of how the Lord can bring sweetness and nourishment for His people even out of adversity. He doesn't always take away the rocks, but He can make them drip with honey. The way to avoid a wasted life is to walk in obedience to the Lord. Notice all the occurrences of the word "would" in Ps 81:13-16. It's a word of desire and contingency. It shows God's desire to bless, if only His people would obey. It shows what might have been. But also, it shows what can be. This psalm is here not just to get us to look back and lament. It's here to get us to look ahead with hope. Even though we may grieve over wasted years in the past when we disobeyed the Lord, if we will turn from our sin and begin to obey Him now, He will feed us with the finest of the wheat. He will satisfy us with honey from the rock. He is gracious and compassionate. He forgives all our sin through Christ when we turn to Him. ([Psalms](#))

**John Gill:** The **Rock** spiritually and mystically designs (represents an outline or sketch of) Christ, the Rock of salvation (Ps 95:1, 89:26, 1Corinthians 10:4); the **honey** out of the rock, the fulness of grace in Him, and the blessings of it, the sure mercies of David, and the precious promises of the everlasting covenant; and the Gospel, which is sweeter than the honey or the honeycomb (Ps 19:10), and with these such are filled and satisfied who hearken to Christ and walk in His ways; for, as the whole of what is here said shows what Israel lost by disobedience, it clearly suggests what such enjoy who hear and obey.

**Robert Alden comments:** These few verses (Ps 81:11-16) are a commentary on the lives of some Christians. Despite all that God has done to save us, we ignore Him. Though His only begotten Son gave His life, we refuse to yield our lives to His service. We also have the deaf ear, the stubborn heart, and the selfish counsel that characterized His people of old. How God wishes we would not grieve His Spirit! How He loves to bless us by eliminating our troubles and giving us spiritual wheat and honey! How He would feed and satisfy us! But we do not listen or walk in His ways. Or do we?

**Spurgeon:** "He should have fed them also with the finest of the wheat." Famine would have been an unknown word, they would have been fed on the best of the best food, and have had abundance of it as their every day diet. "And with honey out of the rock should I have satisfied thee." Luxuries as well as necessaries would be forthcoming, the very rocks of the land would yield abundant and sweet supplies; the bees would store the clefts of the rocks with luscious honey, and so turn the most sterile part of the land to good account. The Lord can do great things for an obedient people. When his people walk in the light of his countenance, and maintain unsullied holiness, the joy and consolation which he yields them are beyond conception. To them the joys of heaven have begun even upon earth. They can sing in the ways of the Lord. The spring of the eternal summer has commenced with them; they are already blest, and they look for brighter things. This shows us by contrast how sad a thing it is for a child of God to sell himself into captivity to sin, and bring his soul into a state of famine by following after another god. O Lord, for ever bind us to thyself alone, and keep us faithful unto the end.

**Wiersbe:** One of God's promises to His children recorded in Psalm 81:16 is that He will satisfy us with "honey out of the rock." Of course, you and I know that honey is perhaps the sweetest thing that nature can produce; and a rock is one of the hardest things in nature. So, here we have sweetness coming out of hardness—"honey out of the rock." This is one of God's promises, and you

should claim it for yourself. God is not speaking in literal terms in Psalm 81:16; you and I get honey either from the honeycomb or from a jar. The Lord is saying something much deeper: **“You are going to have hard places in life; you are going to run up against the rocks. But don’t be discouraged: I’m going to give you honey out of the rock. You’re going to experience sweetness out of the hard experiences of life.”** I used to wonder why God didn’t remove the rocks from the path of life. Certainly none of us enjoys going through the hard places, and if God really loved us, He would go ahead of us and remove the rocks. Well, I’ve grown some and I’ve come to realize that God knows what He is doing. You and I don’t appreciate the rocks, but we need them just the same. I’m sure you have learned, as I have, that some of the sweetest experiences of life have come because of the rocks....One of the tests of maturity is how a person gets his enjoyment in life. Some get their pleasures by doing what is wrong, and, of course, this is the lowest possible way to live. Others get their pleasure by avoiding responsibilities and difficulties and being sheltered and protected. That approach to life can never make a person strong and mature. The mature Christian doesn’t deliberately look for difficulties, but neither does he run away from them. Rather he accepts them in the will of God and asks the Lord to give him “honey out of the rock.”

This is what James is trying to teach us in the very first verses of his letter, when he writes: “My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. . . .” (James 1:2–3). Trials are not working against us; they are working for us! James is saying, “Don’t run around the rocks, or stand there and expect God to remove them. Instead, look for the honey that is sure to come from the rocks!” Paul says the same thing when he writes, “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose” (Rom. 8:28). No matter how many rocks we may encounter as we go through life, we can always find “honey in the rocks” if we will turn everything over to the Lord.

Right now you may be going through a hard place. You’ve been faithfully doing your job, yet you are right up against a rock, and the rock won’t move. Ask God to give you the honey out of the rock. There is always sweetness out of hardness when you let the Lord have His way. Everybody has to have a system for handling the hard places of life. Some people try to ignore them and pretend that they don’t exist, and, of course, this only makes the hard places harder. Other people just give up and expect their friends to see them through. It is wonderful to have friends, and we are supposed to share each other’s burdens, but we can’t expect them to do for us what we won’t do for ourselves....

Jesus faced the rocks of life, and finally men took Him outside the city and crucified Him on a rock, a hill called Calvary, a place that looked like a skull. And then His friends took His dead body and placed it in a rock— Joseph’s new tomb—where it lay for three days. But then He arose from the dead! From the hill of Calvary and from the tomb flows the sweet honey of salvation—honey out of the rock! Have you trusted Christ as your Savior? God says, “O taste and see that the Lord is good!” Once you know Christ as your Savior and Lord, then you can face the hard places of life with confidence and courage, because God will give you “honey out of the rock.” **(The Bumps Are What You Climb On)**

**Spurgeon** (from his book "Only a Prayer Meeting") **writes:** “Oh!” says one, “I do not have much honey out of the Rock; I wish I could taste of this sweetness.” You may do so, you shall do so, if you will only live near the Rock Christ Jesus. We must not expect the honey to come leaping out of the Rock ever so far, because we are living at a distance from the Rock. If you want “honey out of the Rock,” you must live close to the Rock. Child of God, if you want “honey out of the Rock,” view Jesus in the garden, sweating “as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground” (Luke 22:44). He is sweating drops of honey for you. View His thorn-crowned head, and you will see every thorn sparkling and opening a fissure to let out the honey for you. Think much of Jesus, live close to Him; then will you get “honey out of the Rock.” How did the honey get out of the Rock? The Rock of ages was cleft for me. Ah, beloved, neither you nor I would ever have had “honey out of the Rock” if Jesus had not died! The Rock of ages was riven for sinners! It was when Christ’s side was pierced that the honey flowed from His heart. The wounds of Jesus stream forth with precious sweets for His beloved ones. Again I say, live near to Jesus, and with “honey out of the Rock” He will satisfy you.

Thou shalt taste the stream that flows  
From thine eternal Rock.

**Albert Barnes:** Palestine abounded with bees, and honey was a favorite article of food. Genesis 43:11; Deuteronomy 8:8; Deuteronomy 32:13; 1 Samuel 14:25-26; Isaiah 7:15; Ezekiel 16:13; Matthew 3:4. Much of that which was obtained was wild honey, deposited by the bees in the hollows of trees, and as it would seem in the caverns of the rocks. Much of it was gathered also from rocky regions, and this was regarded as the most delicate and valuable. I do not know the cause of this, nor why honey in high and rocky countries should be more pure and white than that obtained from other places; but the whitest and the most pure and delicate honey that I have ever seen I found at Chamouni in Switzerland. Dr. Thomson (land and the Book, vol. ii. p. 362) says of the rocky region in the vicinity of Timnath, that “bees were so abundant in a wood at no great distance from this spot that the honey dropped down from the trees on the ground;” and that “he explored densely-wooded gorges in Hermon and in Southern



Lebanon where wild bees are still found, both in trees and in the clefts of the rocks." The meaning here is plain, that, if Israel had been obedient to God, he would have blessed them with abundance - with the richest and most coveted productions of the field.

**Psalm 89:26** "He will cry to Me, 'You are my Father, My God, and the **Rock** of my salvation (See Ps 95:1 below for discussion of "salvation")'

**Comment:** Only those who are born again can truly call God their Father (cp Jn 1:12-13, 1Jn 3:1) Notice that the description of the Lord as **Father** (cp. Ps 2:7; 89:26; Isa 63:16; 64:8; Jer 3:19) and Creator (Ge 14:22; Ec 12:1; Isa 27:11; 40:28; 43:15) is rare in the OT, and the two are placed together only in Dt 32:6. Philip Keller in his book "A Layman Looks at the Lord's Prayer", points out that in the OT God is described as Father fewer than seven times (with a few other indirect and remote allusions). In the Gospels, Jesus speaks of God as Father more than 70 times and used this title in all of His prayers, except on the Cross when He bore our sin and quoted Psalm 22:1, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"

**F B Meyer on Rock:** His unchangeableness is a bed-rock upon which we may build with certitude.

The many Scriptures that picture God (Jesus) as the Rock are designed to give the believer encouragement that his salvation is secure because it is not built upon the work of man but the work of God that was accomplished through the Person and Work of Christ Jesus. Our foundation is secure on the Rock of Ages.

**John Gill** sees this passage as clearly Messianic so that the Rock of His salvation was the Rock that bore Jesus up "and where he stood firm, while he was working out the salvation of his people; and though he was not saved from sufferings and death, yet he was quickly delivered from the grave, and raised from the dead, and set at the right hand of God, where he must reign till all enemies are put under his feet."

**Are you in distress? Let the Spirit lift up your spirit as you sing to your Father, your God, this old Maranatha chorus...**

#### [Rock Of My Salvation](#)

You are the Rock of my salvation  
You are the Strength of my life  
You are my Hope and my Inspiration  
Lord unto You will I cry.

I believe in You, believe You,

For Your faithful love to me.

You have been my Help in time of need.

Lord, unto you will I cleave.

**Psalm 92:15 (Context: Old Age - see Ps 92:14)** To declare that the LORD is upright; He is my **Rock**, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.

**Comment:** As we come to end of life's race, may God grant that we all like Moses (see similar words in his parting "song" = Dt 32:4) give a testimony that throughout our life, we have experienced that God has indeed been our **Rock**! Have you experienced Him as your very own Rock? ( His Security. Immutability. Unshakeability. His Comfort in the heat of trials. His living waters for daily sustenance.

**Steven Cole:** Those who have walked with God for years will declare that He is their ROCK, the firm foundation that has enabled them to stand firm through many trials. And as they pass through the waters of death, with Hopeful (in Pilgrim's Progress, by John Bunyan [Spire Books], p. 141) they will cry out, "Be of good cheer, my brother; I feel the bottom, and it is good."

**Matthew Henry adds:** I have chosen Him for my Rock (**Ed:** Albeit He first choose me!) on which to build, in the clefts of which to take shelter, on the top of which to set my feet. I have found Him a Rock, strong and stedfast, and His word as firm as a Rock. I have found" (and let every one speak as he finds) "that there is no unrighteousness in him." He is as able, and will be as kind, as his word makes him to be. All that ever trusted in God found Him faithful and all-sufficient, and none were ever made ashamed of their hope in Him.

**Spurgeon:** Here is the psalmist's own seal and sign manual; still was he building upon his God, and still was the Lord a firm foundation for his trust. For shelter, for defense, for indwelling, for foundation, God is our **ROCK**; hitherto He has been to us all that He said he would be, and we may be doubly sure that He will abide the same even unto the end. He has tried us, but He has never allowed us to be tempted above what we are able to bear (1Cor 10:13): He has delayed our reward, but He has never been unrighteous to forget our work of faith and labour of love (1Th 1:3, Heb 6:9-10). He is a Friend without fault, a Helper without fail. Whatever He may do with us, He is always in the right; His dispensations have no flaw in them, no, not the most minute. He is true

and righteous altogether, and so we weave the end of the psalm with its beginning, and make a coronet of it, for the head of our Beloved.

**Spurgeon** ([Sermon on Psalm 92:13-15: The Trees in God's Courts](#)): Now, David added at the end, "He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him." I want every one of my elderly friends to add his Amen to this sentence, and to set his seal that God is true. Come forward as witnesses, attest the deed while it is being executed, and put your names to the record and say, "I bear witness to that." At least. I want you in the silence of your hearts to come and say, "Yes, I can bear witness." David says, "He is my rock."

My aged brethren, can you say,

"God is the rock on which my hope is founded-my foundation, and he has never failed me. The rock will never shake, never move, never give way. He is the rock of my defense-the 'rock of ages cleft for me.' I have hidden myself in Him, and I have been safe. He is the Rock of my abiding (habitation). I have dwelt in Him and lived in Him, and I have found Him my castle and my high tower. He is a Rock for immutability."

Can you say that, brethren? He has never changed-never. He has been "without variableness or shadow of turning." (Jas 1:17KJV) Every good and perfect gift have I received from him. Bear witness to it. This is what is wanted in this age-that you should bear witness that **God is a Rock: firm, strong, faithful, immutable-the defense of His people.**

**W. Jay** ("He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.") - Every one can say this, and will say this, who has, like David, made God his rock for building upon--his rock of danger--his **rock of refreshment**, whose streams follow him all the wilderness through. (Ed: Yea, even as the "spiritual Rock" Christ followed Israel through their wilderness wandering, so too our Rock is with us through every storm, every trial, and finally even when we walk through the valley of the shadow of death, so that we need not fear. Ps 23:4)

**Albert Barnes (on my Rock)**: He is my defense; that which constitutes my security. See the notes at Psalm 18:2. This is language of strong confidence in view of all that is said in the psalm.

**Psalm 94:22** But the LORD has been my stronghold, and my God the **Rock** of my refuge (NLT = "a mighty Rock where I can hide.")

**Comment**: Taking refuge in God equates with placing one's trust in Him in Nahum 1:7 "The LORD is good, A stronghold in the day of trouble, And He **knows** (Lxx = ginosko, cp use of ginosko in Mt 7:23, cp 2Ti 2:19) **those who take refuge in Him.**" (cp Ruth the Moabitess in Ru 2:12, See also Ps 64:10, Zep 3:12).

Even as the rocks of the Judean wilderness provided shelter from one's foes, so too does Christ our Rock ever provide spiritual refuge

**Psalm 95:1** O come, let us sing for joy to the LORD, Let us shout joyfully to the **Rock** of our salvation (**Hebrew** = **yesha'** [Lxx = **soter** - see note below] = deliverance, rescue, liberty not bondage, welfare, a situation safe and free from danger).

**Comment**: The Hebrew literally reads "to the rocky summit of our deliverance." The Septuagint renders "to the **Rock** of our salvation" as "**to God our Saviour** (Lxx = **soter**)" (cp, Lk 1:47). Notice the little preposition "**for**" (a **term of explanation**) in **Ps 95:3** which explains the psalmist's call to joyfully praise our Rock.

The waters may roar, the mountains may shake, the earth may reel like a drunken man, yet we will fix our eyes on and hide safely in the Rock of our salvation.

Unshakeable Rock of our Salvation  
We place our hope in Thee  
No matter what our lot or station  
Our refuge is in Thee,  
Thou art our final expectation  
Of ev'ry hope, its consummation. .

**As noted the Septuagint uses the Greek noun soter**- **Soter** describes God as the source of salvation - the Deliverer, the Preserver, the Protector, the Healer, the One Who rescues man from danger or peril and unto a state of prosperity and happiness. **Soter** is Jesus Christ as the agent sent by God to bring deliverance to sinful mankind.

Jesus is the **Rock of our salvation** (see meaning of Hebrew word for "salvation" above), the Rock Who saves us. He is our security. Our strong ground of confidence. The basis of our eternal hope. Note the personal nature of salvation emphasized by the use of the possessive pronouns: "**our**" (Ps 95:1) and "**my**" (Ps 89:26).

Those of us who live in earthquake prone areas have few illusions about terra firma. The earth moves often and without warning. The only way in which our foot cannot be moved is for it to be standing upon the Solid Rock Himself. When we are anchored in eternity, we can deal with time. When we are immutably united to the everlasting Rock Who moves all things, we ourselves cannot be moved. Indeed, in Him "all creation holds together." (Col 1:16).

**Application: When you are tempted to grumble or complain or feel despondent, determine (enabled by the Holy Spirit in you [Php 2:13-note] Who gives you the desire and the power) to sing a song of praise. It is one of the best ways to experience calm and contentment when life becomes bleak.**

As Kenneth Osbeck says "Singing God's praises provides many important benefits to believers. There is the awareness that God is pleased when the voice is lifted in praise: "He who offers praise honors me" (Psalm 50:23)." (Amazing Grace)

**Robert Hawker writes that** believers are enjoined by the Holy Ghost to invite one another to sing the praises of Jehovah, their Rock, their Jesus, their salvation. (Poor Man's Old Testament Commentary, Vol. 4: Job–Psalms)

**John Gill comments let us shout joyfully:** to Christ, the Rock, 1Co 10:4, a Rock, for height, being higher than the saints, than the kings of the earth, than the angels in heaven, than the heavens themselves; for strength, being the mighty God, and mighty Saviour; for shelter, being the saints security from avenging justice and wrath to come: a Rock, on which the church and all believers are built, and which endures for ever; "the Rock of salvation", being the author of spiritual and eternal salvation, and the strength and security of it; not only is he strong to do it, but, being done by him, it is safe in him; wherefore shouts of joy and songs of praise are due unto him. This shows that vocal singing is meant, singing with an harmonious and musical voice; and that social singing, or singing in concert together, is intended.

**J W Hardman:** The shipwrecked mariner, hoping for safety on the sea-girt rock; the hunted fugitive, flying for a refuge to the cliff on the plain; the fainting traveler, throwing himself down in the shade of rock in the desert; the steep and precipitous hill, with its encircling stream, forming the site of a mighty fortress: each of these pictures tells us of weakness finding comfort and aid, each sets forth the value of the redeeming work, and the mighty mission of Christ our Lord. For the very idea of a rock is that of stability and strength, that which cannot be moved, that on which we may rest secure. "For us and our salvation" Christ died, says the noble language of our Creed. He is the great example of self-sacrifice, and of the One who devoted Himself to death and suffering for the benefit of "the many." But how shall we apply to our own selves the benefit of Christ's work? How shall we find a refuge in the Rock of our salvation.? By a humble and faithful realization of what He has done for us (Ed: By trusting Him. By running to Him as our Rock of Refuge. By Hiding in Him). (Biblical Illustrator-Psalms)

**Psalm 105:41** He opened the **Rock** and water flowed out; It ran in the dry places like a river.

**Psalm 114:8** Who turned the **Rock** into a pool of water, The flint into a fountain of water.

**Psalm 144:1** A Psalm of David. Blessed be the LORD, my **Rock**, Who trains my hands for war, and my fingers for battle;

**Spurgeon:** If you begin praising God ("Blessed be the LORD") you are bound to go on. The work engrosses the heart. It deepens and broadens like a rolling river. Praise is something like an avalanche, which may begin with a snowflake on the mountain moved by the wing of a bird, but that flake binds others to it and becomes a rolling ball: this rolling ball gathers more snow about it till it is huge, immense; it crashes through a forest; it thunders down into the valley; it buries a village under its stupendous mass. Thus praise may begin with the tear of gratitude; anon the bosom swells with love; thankfulness rises to a song; it breaks forth into a shout; it mounts up to join the everlasting hallelujahs which surround the throne of God. What a mercy is it that God by His Spirit will give us greater capacities by and by than we have here! for if we continue to learn more and more of the love of Christ we shall be driven to sore straits if confined within the narrow and drowsy framework of this mortal body.

**Proverbs 30:19** The way of an eagle in the sky, The way of a serpent on a **rock**, The way of a ship in the middle of the sea, And the way of a man with a maid.

**Isaiah 2:10** Enter the **rock** and hide in the dust From the terror of the LORD and from the splendor of His majesty....19 Men will go into caves of the **rocks** And into holes of the ground Before the terror of the LORD And the splendor of His majesty, When He arises to make the earth tremble....21 In order to go into the caverns of the **rocks** and the clefts of the cliffs Before the terror of the LORD and the splendor of His majesty, When He arises to make the earth tremble.

**Isaiah 8:14** "Then He shall become a sanctuary (miqdash = sacred place, holy place); But to both the houses of Israel, a stone ('eben - Lxx = lithos, cp Isa 28:16) to strike and a **Rock** (Lxx = petra) to stumble over, And a snare and a trap for the inhabitants of Jerusalem. (cp NT allusion - Lk 2:34 and quotes Ro 9:33, 1Pe 2:8)

**Isaiah 10:26** The LORD of hosts will arouse a scourge against him like the slaughter of Midian at the **rock** of Oreb; and His staff will

be over the sea and He will lift it up the way He did in Egypt.

**Isaiah 17:10** For you have forgotten the God of your salvation And have not remembered the **Rock** of your refuge. Therefore you plant delightful plants And set them with vine slips of a strange god.

**Isaiah 26:4** "Trust in the LORD forever, **for** (term of explanation-explains why we should trust in Jehovah forever) in GOD the LORD (Hebrew of "God the LORD" = "Yah Yahweh"), we have an everlasting **Rock**. (KJV = "everlasting strength")

**Young's Literal:** Trust ye in Jehovah for ever, For in Jah Jehovah is a **ROCK OF AGES**,

**Context:** Isa 26:1-6 refers to a time in the future in Israel. Isa 26:3 "The steadfast of mind Thou wilt keep in perfect peace (Literally "shalom, shalom"), because he trusts in Thee. (**Rocks** symbolize stability, something in which a person can place his trust)

**Teed** writes that "Because of the Messiah's presence there, that city is figuratively said to have salvation for its walls and ramparts (Isa 26:1KJV "salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks.") (At the beginning of the Millennium) This city will be opened for the righteous, a reference to the remnant of believers throughout the world (**Ed:** Isa 26:2 "Righteous nations [goyim = foreign nations, Gentiles, heathens]" could refer to the "Righteous Gentiles" who enter the Messiah's Kingdom). People who trust in the LORD will enjoy perfect peace now as well as in the Millennium. This availability of inner tranquility encourages believers to continue trusting the Lord because He is firm like a Rock (Isaiah 17:10; 44:8); and He is eternal."

**Comment:** It is interesting that NAS (NAB, NIV, NLT) capitalize "Rock" but the popular ESV does not. Young's Literal Translation has the familiar phrase "Rock of ages." Augustus Toplady's hymn "**Rock of Ages**" is based on this more literal reading. Indeed, God's Name is El Olam, the Everlasting God, a sure refuge throughout this short life and for all the "length" of eternity. The truth that we have (possess) an everlasting Rock should serve to stabilize us when winds of adversity blow and our faith begins to falter. In those times we need to make a conscious choice to **recall to our mind** that Jesus is truly our Rock, our Everlasting Rock and that He is with us to anchor (rocks were often used as anchors!) us throughout the storms of life. Jesus is our Rock, the One Who anchors our soul. To survive the storms of life, be anchored to the Rock of Ages. And remember that the storms of our life prove the strength of our anchor. **Where have you cast your anchor?**

Jesus is our **Rock of ages** "Actively, to protect, to throw the cool shade of His protection upon the suffering of His people; passively to resist the utmost shock and assault of His foes." Let us contemplate the nature of God; no other nature yields a lasting satisfaction and repose to the beholder. "As soon as we turn aside from beholding it, nothing is seen but what is fleeting, and then we immediately faint. Thus ought faith to rise above the world by continual advances; for neither the truth, nor the justice, nor the goodness of God is temporary and fading, but God continues to be always like himself." (Pulpit Commentary)

**John Piper:** if you are born again, if the Spirit of God really dwells in you, if you are the children of God by adoption, if Christ is now your treasure, and God is your hope, then the seed of all these traits is in you, and they will flourish if you go on trusting in God's future grace. Like I read this week in Isaiah 26:3-4, "Thou dost keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trust in thee. Trust in the Lord for ever, for the Lord God is an everlasting rock." In other words, go on trusting God for his future, endless, rock-like dependability to meet all your needs (physical, moral, spiritual); and the Spirit will be released in you to work these utterly unnatural and wonderful traits.

**W E Vine** (on Isa 26:3): This (perfect peace - Isa 26:3) is to be enjoyed at all times by those who, instead of being overcome by difficulties or by yielding to the pressure of spiritual foes and human antagonism, put their trust in the Lord, staying their mind upon Him. The peace possessed is not the outcome of mere self determination, it is ministered by the keeping power of the Lord Himself. It is that peace which essentially characterized Christ, and of which He said, "Peace I leave with you, My peace [lit., the peace which is Mine] I give unto you." The experience of this leads the possessor to utter the exhortation, "Trust ye in the Lord forever: for in the Lord JEHOVAH is the rock of ages"

**Spurgeon (Morning and Evening):** Seeing that we have such a God to trust to, let us rest upon Him with all our weight; let us resolutely drive out all unbelief, and endeavor to get rid of doubts and fears, which so much mar our comfort; since there is no excuse for fear where God is the foundation of our trust. A loving parent would be sorely grieved if his child could not trust him; and how ungenerous, how unkind is our conduct when we put so little confidence in our heavenly Father who has never failed us, and who never will. It were well if doubting were banished from the household of God; but it is to be feared that old Unbelief is as nimble nowadays as when the psalmist asked, "Is His mercy clean gone for ever? Will He be favorable no more?" David had not made any very lengthy trial of the mighty sword of the giant Goliath, and yet he said, "There is none like it." He had tried it once in the hour of his youthful victory, and it had proved itself to be of the right metal, and therefore he praised it ever afterwards; even so should we speak well of our God, there is none like unto him in the heaven above or the earth beneath; "To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One." There is no rock like unto the rock of Jacob, our enemies themselves being judges. So far from suffering doubts to live in our hearts, we will take the whole detestable crew, as Elijah did the prophets of Baal, and slay them over the brook; and for a stream to kill them at, we will select the sacred torrent which wells forth from our Saviour's

wounded side. We have been in many trials, but we have never yet been cast where we could not find in our God all that we needed. **Let us then be encouraged to trust in the Lord for ever, assured that His ever lasting strength will be, as it has been, our succor and stay.**

**Spurgeon:** There are some saints who have numbness of soul: the stripes of Christ can best quicken them; deadness dies in the presence of his death, and rocks break when the Rock of Ages is seen as cleft for us.

### Rock of Ages

Rock of ages, cleft for me,  
let me hide myself in Thee;  
let the water and the blood,  
from Thy wounded side which flowed,  
be of sin the double cure,  
save from its guilt and power  
Not the labors of my hands,  
Can fulfill Thy law's demands.  
Could my zeal no respite know.  
Could my tears forever flow,  
All for sin could not atone.  
Thou must save, and Thou alone.  
Nothing in my hand I bring;  
Simply to Thy cross I cling.  
Naked come to Thee for dress  
Helpless, look to Thee for grace.  
Foul, I to the fountain fly.  
Wash me, Saviour or I die.  
While I draw this fleeting breath,  
when my eyes shall close in death,  
when I soar to worlds unknown  
see beyond Thy judgment throne,  
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,  
let me hide myself in Thee.

**Isaiah 30:29** You will have songs as in the night when you keep the festival, And gladness of heart as when one marches to the sound of the flute, To go to the mountain of the LORD, to the **Rock** of Israel.

**Isaiah 44:8** 'Do not tremble and do not be afraid (Lxx translates with a present imperative - commands = a continual charge to saints); Have I not long since announced it to you and declared it? And you are My witnesses (charged to the nation in the OT, something they did miserably, but a charge [repeated in Isa 43:10, 12, cf Isa 49:6 > Acts 13:47 "a light for the Gentiles"] that came to fruition in Acts 1:8 through individual Jews at the birth of the Church). Is there any God besides Me, Or is there any other **Rock**? I know of none.'

**NET:** Don't panic! Don't be afraid! Did I not tell you beforehand and decree it? You are my witnesses! Is there any God but me? There is no other sheltering rock; I know of none.

**Context:** In Isaiah 44:6-23 we see a striking contrast between the Lord's power to control history and the inability of worthless idols. There is only one God and He alone is sovereign. Get a grip on this truth and it will grip you and hold you in the "cleft of the Rock" when times are tough (which will happen at some time in everyone's life!)

**Comment:** Notice the "antidote" for trembling fear in this passage. God alone is our Rock. Notice also that this true God has

"announced" (read Isa 44:7) what will happen before it happens (another reason to be diligent to study the prophetic books of Scripture). Our problem is forgetfulness of how stable and sure is God as our Rock. One reason we must be daily eating His Word, is because of fallen, fleshy, forgetful spirits. When we read His Word which is purer than silver refined sevenfold, we are reminded that our omniscient, omnipotent Rock is the only rock on which to build for salvation (past tense and salvation present tense = daily sanctification), the only Rock we can run to for shelter and safety, the Rock of Ages, Christ Jesus, on which the Church is founded such that the gates of hell cannot prevail (Mt 16:18). And notice that if the omniscient One knows of no other gods, there can be no other! Worship Him with your whole being every hour of every day.

**M Villiers has an excellent, practical comment:** THE REASON WHY WE SHOULD NOT FEAR. The reason is, that the Lord thus argues with us: "Have not I told thee from that time, and have declared it?" That is, God challenges man to deny this fact, that He knows the end from the beginning, and has proved that He knows it by **foretelling** the end from the beginning. This is the manner in which God argues in other passages. (Isa 42:9). God knows the end; God foresees the means, and foreseeing the means He exercises control over those means--everything that happens therefore, great or small, is under the control of God, who "orders all things after the counsel of His own will," (Eph 1:11) and **consequently we have nothing to fear**, because we are in His hands who "doeth all things well." (Mk 7:37) This is the manner in which we find the argument used in Isa 51:12. Having thus stated the Christian's **duty** as well as his **privilege**--not to fear; and having seen what the **reason** is, that God has foretold all things, and therefore decreed and settled all things from the beginning, HE THEN CHALLENGES HIS PEOPLE in these words--**"Ye are even My witnesses,"** and therefore urges upon them, by the strongest possible personal appeal, to bear testimony to the fact that the Lord He is God, and our God too, for ever and for ever. (Biblical Illustrator-Isaiah)

**Isaiah 48:21** They did not thirst when He led them through the deserts. He made the water flow out of the **Rock** (Lxx = *petra*) for them; He split the **Rock** (Lxx = *petra*) and the water gushed forth.

**Ron Teed Comments:** With Cyrus' edict (2Chr 36:22-23; Ezra 1:1-4) allowing the Jews to return home, God urged His people to leave Babylon quickly. Because this return was like being redeemed (Isaiah 43:1), this time from Babylon not Egypt, the people could rejoice. After the Egyptian Exodus God provided water in the deserts and from the rock (Exodus 17:1-7). Here too, it is implied, God would provide for them in their second "Exodus." God would go before them and prepare the way, and they had nothing to fear. Liberation Day! Having expressed his love for them, God prophetically signaled the day of his people's liberation from Babylon. He pictured their salvation as an escape from a desert to a land of abundant water. God is reminding them of specific ways He took care of His people during their Exodus from Egypt. It is good to remember what God has done in the past so as to strengthen your faith in whatever the current trial.

**Isaiah 51:1** "Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness, Who seek the LORD: Look to the **Rock** (Lxx = *petra*) from which you were hewn And to the quarry from which you were dug.

**Comment:** The Septuagint modifies **rock** with the adjective *stereos* which means solid. The literal translation of the Greek reads **"Look** (not a suggestion but a command. Do this now!) **to the Solid Rock."** **That is a needed reminder for all of us.** It is so easy for our eyes to be distracted from the matchless glory of the Rock of our salvation, Christ Jesus.

**Jeremiah 18:14** 'Does the snow of Lebanon forsake the **rock** of the open country? Or is the cold flowing water from a foreign land ever snatched away?

**Jeremiah 21:13** "Behold, I am against you, O valley dweller, O **rocky** plain," declares the LORD, "You men who say, 'Who will come down against us? Or who will enter into our habitations?'

**Nahum 1:6** Who can stand before His indignation? Who can endure the burning of His anger? His wrath is poured out like fire And the **rocks** are broken up by Him.

**Habakkuk 1:12** Are You not from everlasting, O LORD, my God, my Holy One? We will not die. You, O LORD, have appointed them to judge; And You, O **Rock**, have established them to correct.

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## Summary of Scriptures on Christ the Rock and the Stone

Genesis 49:24 > Exodus 17:6 > Exodus 33:21 > Numbers 20:11 > Deut 32:4 > 2Samuel 23:3 > Psalm 18:2 > Psalm 18:31 > Psalm 18:46 > Psalm 19:14 > Psalm 27:5 > Psalm 28:1 > Psalm 31:2-3 > Psalm 40:2 > Psalm 42:9 > Psalm 61:2 > Psalm 62:2 > Psalm 62:6-7 > Psalm 71:3 > Psalm 78:16 > Psalm 78:20 > Psalm 78:35 > Psalm 81:16 > Psalm 89:26 > Psalm 92:15 > Psalm 94:22 > Psalm 95:1 > Psalm 105:41 > Psalm 114:8 > Psalm 118:22 > Psalm 144:1 > Isaiah 8:14 > Isaiah 17:10 > Isaiah 26:4 > Isaiah 28:16 > Isaiah 30:29 > Isaiah 32:2 > Isaiah 33:16 > Isaiah 44:8 > Isaiah 48:21 > Isaiah 51:1 > Da 2:34 > Da 2:35, 44, 45, 46 > Hab 1:12 > Zech 4:7 > Mt 7:24,25 > Mt 16:18 > Mt 21:42 > Mk 12:10 > Luke 20:17 > Acts 4:11 > Ro 9:32-33 > Acts 4:11 > 1Cor 1:23 > 1Cor 10:4 > Ephesians 2:20 > 1Pe 2:4-5, 6, 7, 8

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The storms of life reveal the strength of our faith.

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**A Rock-Solid Foundation** - As Christians we can become so preoccupied with our earthly affairs that we shift our confidence from Jesus Christ to faith in our own intellect. Then something happens to shake the foundation on which we had been building.

Phillip E. Johnson, a gifted lawyer and primary spokesman for the Intelligent Design movement, suffered a stroke and was likely to have another. Plagued by frightening thoughts during those first few days after his stroke, he was profoundly touched when a friend came and sang, "On Christ, the solid rock, I stand—all other ground is sinking sand."

Johnson writes, "What was the solid rock on which I stood? I had always prided myself on being self-reliant, and my brain was what I had relied on. Now the self with its brain was exposed as the shaky instrument it had always been. I was a Christian, even an ardent one in my worldly fashion, but now all the smoke was blown away, and I saw Truth close up." He resolved to keep Jesus at the center of his life and is now a different man.

How quickly we rely on our intellect and reasoning, only to find that it is a "shaky instrument." Let's never forget that Jesus is the only rock-solid foundation of truth on which we can always depend. Build your life on the solid foundation—Jesus Christ. —Herbert Vander Lugt

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## THE INCOMPARABLE ROCK!

1860

**James Smith** reminds us that "Every creature has some rock"

**"There is no Rock like our God!"**

1 Samuel 2:2

As creatures, we all need...an object of trust, one on whom we can lean, one in whom we can confide, one to whom we may look for defense and safety. **Every creature has some rock** — some object of dependence and trust; for without this, there would be recklessness or despair.

Some make a 'rock' of their **wealth**, some of their **talents**, some of their **station**, some of their **friends**, some of their **good deeds**, some of their **religious observances**, some of their **name** or **fame**.

But the Christian's rock is his God, that is — God in Christ. Yes, **Jesus is . . . the foundation of his hopes, the source of his strength, the anchor of his safety, and the fountain that supplies him!**

In Christ, his Rock — he finds honey; and this Rock pours out rivers of oil for him,

**"He nourished him with honey from the Rock,  
and with oil from the flinty crag."**

Deuteronomy 32:13.

This Rock, Christ — is the Rock of his salvation.

This Rock of ages — is the Rock of his strength.

Of this Rock, he can sing,

**"The Lord is my Rock, my fortress and my deliverer;  
my God is my Rock, in whom I take refuge,  
my shield and the horn of my salvation.  
He is my stronghold, my refuge and my savior!"**

2 Samuel 22:2-3

Looking around upon all others, he can say,

"But their 'rock' is not like our Rock; even our enemies concede." Deuteronomy 32:31.

There is no rock like our Rock: none so great, none so ancient, none so durable, none so suited to meet all a sinner's needs.

**On this Rock**

we build for eternity! We have no doubt that our immortal interests are safe.

**To this Rock,**

we run for safety, and smile at the opposition of all our foes.

**In this Rock,**

we hide, and are safe from the sword of divine justice, as well as the rage of infernal Hell.

**In this Rock**

we take shelter, and are uninjured by the windy storm and tempest.

**From this Rock**

we look for all our supplies — and we are not, cannot be disappointed.

**Beneath its shade —**

we enjoy peace and comfort! In its cleft — we are safe for evermore!

How safe, how happy is the believer — having God for his ROCK; for . . .

he builds on a foundation that can never decay,

he trusts in a stronghold that can never be taken,

he hides in a refuge from which he can never be expelled!

**"The Lord lives! Praise be to my Rock!  
Exalted be God, the Rock, my Savior!"**

2 Samuel 22:47

Great Rock for weary sinners made,  
When storms of sin infest the soul;  
Here let me rest my weary head,  
When lightnings blaze, and thunders roll!

Within the clefts of His dear side,  
There all his saints in safety dwell;  
And what, from Jesus, shall divide?  
Not all the rage of earth or hell!

O sacred Covert from the beams  
That on the weary traveler beat,  
How welcome are your shade and streams,  
How blessed, how sacred, and how sweet!

And when that awful storm takes place,  
That hurls destruction far and near,  
My soul shall refuge in Your grace,  
And take her glorious shelter there!

To shake this Rock your saints are in.  
Tempest or storm shall ne'er prevail  
'Twill stand the blast of hell and sin,  
And anchor sure within the veil!

><>><>><>

**Thomas Watson...**

Christ is resembled to a ROCK. 1 Corinthians 10:4: "That Rock was Christ." He is a Rock in a threefold sense:



First, He is a rock of offense. A rock breaks the waves. The church, being built upon Christ—all the adversaries that come against her are like a ship coming full sail against a rock.

Second, He is a Rock for defense. The dove hides in the rock. Song of Solomon 2:14: "O my dove in the clefts of the rock." Christ's wounds are the clefts of the rock where the believing soul, this dove, hides itself!

Third, He is a rock for comfort. The rock is a screen to shade off the heat; so Christ is called in Isaiah 25:4, "a shade from the heat." He shades a poor sinner from the scorchings of God's wrath! Also, honey came out of the rock in Deuteronomy 32:13: "He made him to suck honey out of the rock—and oil out of the flinty rock." The honey of the promises—and the oil of gladness come out of this blessed Rock!

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**William Law** has a short dissertation on **ROCK**

"That Rock was Christ."

—1 Cor. 10:4

It is a truth which cannot be too dearly prized, or too industriously brought into use, that the field of nature is a volume full of Christ. On every side abundant objects picture Him. Piety looks around and learns Gospel-lessons. Thus meditation is supplied with edifying stores, and from familiar view gleans spiritual delight. While the unenlightened see a bare prospect, the true believer finds an illustrative Bible in Creation's wonders.

This statement is verified in the Rock. To casual observers, it frowns a hard, impenetrable mass. It presents a stern front, devoid of verdure, and barren of all charms. But to faith it gives instructive lessons, and opens out some teaching images. Let us draw near and reverently ponder; and may the Spirit which announced, "that Rock was Christ," direct us to wise views!

#### **I. The Rock is a hard substance.**

It is firm and strong. It melts not like snow beneath the sunny rays. It yields not as wax to outward pressure. It is not as soil easily indented by the spade and harrow. It defies each rough assault.

These properties are emblems of Christ's person. Doubtless He is very man. He has assumed our nature, and will forever wear it. In heaven He shows glorified humanity. But He is marvelously more. He is God of God, and very God of very God. Therefore He is strong in the might of omnipotence, and firm as Deity can be. Let faith rejoice in every help to this assurance. In each Rock let it behold Christ's strength.

#### **II. The Rock stands out immovable in stability.**

Vast piles of sand may be removed by art and industry. But what skill, what mechanism, can prevail against the fixedness of the Rock! The waves may lash, but all their fury beats in vain. The storm may hurl its fierce bolts around, but the Rock totters not. The mass never shakes, nor tumbles, nor succumbs. No object more exhibits resistance to all attempts to move it.

In this stability Christ is apparent. We know that all the hostile powers of earth and hell combined against Him. Satan assailed with bold effrontery, but was baffled and repulsed. Our Rock firmly stood unmoved. The arch-enemy excited evil men to ply their utmost efforts. But futile was their enmity, and vain their machinations. On the Cross he showed all-conquering might. By death He destroyed him that had the power of death. When all which diabolical hatred could excite had burst upon His head, the Rock stood invincible. Let faith give thanks, and rejoice with joy unspeakable. The Rock on which it stands never can be moved.

#### **III. The Rock presents a sure foundation.**

Jesus in His heavenly teaching speaks of the "wise man which built his house upon a Rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a Rock." (Matt. 7:24, 25)

Believers are represented as coming to Jesus "as to a living stone, and as living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." (1 Pet. 2:4, 5) Strong, indeed, are those who are thus cemented into Christ. The union renders them one in firmness with the divine foundation. As it can never be removed, so they endure in undisturbable stability. Doubtless they will be sorely tried. Satan, who assailed the Head, will use his every weapon against each member. But as he failed to move our Rock, so will he fail when he assails the building. The foundation cannot be destroyed: and no stone of the building can be subverted.

#### **IV. The Rock pours forth streams in the desert.**

When Israel panted in a dry and thirsty land, the Lord gave them refreshment, not from some cavern or moist valley, but from a

rocky fissure. The people at Rephidim were sorely distressed. Water failed. They and their cattle had no supplies to quench their thirst. Their impatient threats drove Moses to the throne of grace. This refuge never fails. The Lord replied, "Behold, I will stand before you there upon the Rock in Horeb; and you shall smite the Rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink." (Exod. 17:6) The yielding Rock sent forth the needful help: and throughout the lengthened march abundant water trickled in the rear.

The Spirit helps us to discern our never-failing stream. "They drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ." (1 Cor. 10:4) That Rock is ever near, ready to refresh the thirsty flock. "When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue fails for thirst, I, the Lord, will hear them, I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them." (Isa. 41:17) It is forever true, "There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God: the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High." (Psa.46:4) This river is the Spirit, the gift of Jesus. This the apocalyptic seer beheld. "He showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb." (Rev. 22:1) Let, then, the parched and weary in all hours of need flee to their Rock. Supplies will flow. They who seek to this Rock for reviving grace, are "as a well-watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not." (Isa. 58:11)

#### **V. The Rock affords refreshing shade.**

Isaiah, with enraptured eye fixed on the coming Savior, cries, "A man shall be as a hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great Rock in a weary land." (Isa. 32:2) Lively images here show the excellency of our Lord. In every need He is a solace and a sure refuge. But the subject confines our thought to the Rock diffusing shade around. Imagine, when a noontide of sultry heat oppresses, and fields are parched and dry, and unmitigated rays assail the earth with fiery power, that a great Rock invites to cool retreat. With eager step the traveler, the shepherd and the flock move towards it, and stretched beneath its shadowy arms obtain relief.

Such is the shelter of the blessed Jesus in the heat of the scorching day. The Church found this defense, and rejoiced beneath the partial covering of the branches of a tree. "I sat down under His shadow with great delight, and His fruit was sweet to my taste." (Song 2:3) A gourd was great delight to the fainting Jonah. The pillar of cloud by day warded off oppressive rays from the wayfaring camp. Much more welcome is the covering shade of our beloved Lord. In our journey through earth's wilderness, we are exposed to burning trials. Satan's darts are barbed with fire; persecution is inflamed with fury; temptations are as a heated furnace. The menaces of the law are as the forked lightning. But Jesus calls us to repose by His side. He gives the tender assurance, "The sun shall not smite you by day, nor the moon by night." (Psa. 121:6)

This shade gives not only comfort, but fertility. Thus guarded, the fruits of grace thrive vigorously. It is written, "Those who dwell under His shadow shall return; they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine: the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon." (Hos: 14:7)

#### **VI. Birds seek shelter in Rocks.**

In these heights they safely build their nests and rear their young. In the Canticles the Church is addressed, "My Dove in the clefts of the Rock!" (Song 2:14) Here the fowler can lay no snares. Here the archer can direct no arrows. No climbing rustic can invade the secrecy. Thus the Rock affords a shelter which no enemy can reach.

The soul, exposed to many terrors, is safe in the cleft side of Jesus. In this position it enjoys security. "Who can lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" (Rom. 8:33, 34) The Savior, wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities, conceals from all the fury of divine displeasure. The sword of vengeance is in Him sheathed. There is therefore now no peril to those who are in Christ Jesus, who nestle in the fissures of the Rock. The Church rejoices in the knowledge that her "place of defense is the munitions of Rocks." (Isa. 33:16) When fears alarm, she flees to the Rock which is higher than all foes, and gladly sings, "You are my hiding-place." (Psa. 32:7) Believer, realize your happy state. Look out from the clefts of your Rock, and smile at baffled foes.

**VII. It is supposed that hives sheltered in a Rock give sweetest honey.** They are safe from exhalation of damp soil. Moses, enumerating the choice blessings bestowed on Israel, adds, "He made him to suck honey out of the Rock, and oil out of the flinty Rock." (Deut. 32:13) When it is stated that no good thing would have been withheld from an obedient people, it is added, God "would have fed them also with the finest of the wheat, and with honey out of the Rock would I have satisfied you." (Ps. 81:16) Thus Jesus supplies His people with rich joys. His word is a very hive of exquisite food. The invitation goes forth, "Eat, O friends; drink, yes, drink abundantly, O beloved." (Song 5:1) The Spirit testifies, "The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether; more to be desired are they than gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb." (Ps 19:9, 10) Who can express the exuberant happiness, when the King "brings His beloved to the banqueting house, and His banner over them is love." (Song 2:4) Every promise, also, is replete with sweetness, and they are exceeding many, great and precious.

Reviving power also issues from honey. Of Jonathan it is stated, that "he put forth the end of the rod that was in his hand, and dipped it in a honeycomb, and put his hand to his mouth; and his eyes were enlightened." (1 Sam. 14:27) Thus vigor and strength

are renewed to those who feast on honey from their Rock.

**VIII. The Rock stands not only as a refuge, and a spot where waters flow, and in which rich stores are hived: it also affords solemn warning. Falls from its heights, resulting from incautious steps, are destruction.**

Thus those who make profession of the faith of Jesus, and desert their first love, encounter fearful fall. The Spirit warns, "If after they have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them." (2 Pet. 2:20, 21)

Alas! such cases are not rare. Stony-ground hearers too often show a blighted form. With joy they hear the Word, but there is no steady step, no firm advance. The path is slippery, the head becomes dizzy, some trial assails, the hold on Christ relaxes, a grievous fall ensues, and mangled limbs proclaim a terrible catastrophe. Many run well, and have good prospect of reaching the summit, but their end is to perish at the base. Demas loves the world, and falls. Lot's wife looks back, and stands a warning to the tottering professor. It is better never to have seen the Rock, than to commence ascent, and stumble into ruin.

**IX. Another warning speaks terribly. To some Christ is "a stone of stumbling, and a Rock of offense, even to those who stumble at the Word, being disobedient." (1 Pet. 2:8)** The pure, the holy walk of faith, imposes a yoke which worldly shoulders will not bear. To renounce the world, to flee its vanities, to tread down its cheating pleasures, to scorn its painted baubles, to reject its poisoned goblet, is an effort which the unstable refuse to endure. Then the end comes. The Rock falls on them, and grinds them to powder. "Those enemies of Mine, who did not want Me to be king over them—bring them here and kill them in front of Me." (Luke 19:27) To stand on the Rock is everlasting life; to reject it is eternal woe.

## SELA' HEBREW FOR ROCK

**Rock** ([05553](#)) (**sela'**) is a masculine noun according to Strong refers to 1 crag, cliff, rock. 1A crag, cliff. 1B as stronghold of Jehovah, of security (figurative). TWOT says sela' "refers basically to a cleft in a rock, thence a rock or cliff."

**Sela'** often speaks of rock faces especially cliffs (Isa 2:21), where eagles (Job 39:28) and hyraxes (rock badgers Pr 30:26) live. People are thrown off sela' (Ps 141:6). Mountain goats is literally "goats of the sela'" (Job 39:1). Sela' is sometimes used as a proper noun: "the rock of Etam" (Jdg 15:8), David's "Rock of Escape" (1Sa 23:28), two rock crags, " name of the one was Bozez, and the name of the other Seneh" (1Sa 14:4). "Clefts of the rock" in Obadiah 1:3 may refer to Sela, an Edomite fortress city. Sela' is associated with crevices and clefts (Jer 13:4; 49:16), also with fortresses (Isa 33:16). The destruction of Tyre prophesied by God would become like a bare rock (Ezek 26:14). Crypts were carved in sela' (Isa 22:16). Sela' occasionally occurs with tsur the other Hebrew word for rock (4x; Dt 32:13, Ps 18:2, Ps 71:3, Isa 2:21). The Septuagint sometimes translates sela' (Isa 42:11) as Petra, perhaps corresponding to Petra in Jordan.

Metaphorically, sela' is used in a bad sense to describe spiritual obstinacy (Jer 5:3). It describes God's destruction of Babylon (Jer 51:25).

In a good sense, sela' is used as a metaphor to describe God as a place of security, stability, refuge (Ps 31:3, Ps 40:2).

Sela' is related to Arabic root sala'a split ( sil'un "fissure")

God is David's (and our) sela' (Ps 18:2 - first use = sela', second = tsur). The first use of sela' in Nu 20:8 refers to Christ (1Cor 10:4). **Tsur** and **Sela'** at times clearly overlap in meaning because they are both used to refer to the same Rock, Christ Jesus (Ex 17:6 uses tsur, Nu 20:8, 10 both use sela', Neh 9:15 uses sela' uses sela')

See [discussion of the image of a rock](#) - from [The Dictionary of Biblical Imagery](#) (on internet - an outstanding resource)

**Swanson** classifies **sela'** as

1. LN 2.14–2.28 stone, i.e., earthen material generally made of cooled volcanic material, with a special focus on the hardness of it (Jer 5:3);
2. LN 1.46–1.50 cliff, crag, i.e., a relatively large elevated section of rock as compared to a stone (of a size to be picked up), and easy to hide in its clefts (2Ch 25:12), note: in Isa 42:11 some parse as n.pr., see 6153;

3. LN 2.14–2.28 rock, boulder, i.e., a large piece of stone, big enough to lay large objects upon (Jdg 6:20; Jer 23:29);

4. LN 85.67–85.85 stronghold, formally, rock, i.e., a place where one resides as a hiding or defensive position (Isa 31:9);

5. LN 12.1–12.42 Rock, i.e., a title of a supernatural being (Ps 42:10[EB 9]+);

6. LN 4.1–4.37 unit:  $\gamma\lambda\gamma\ \gamma\lambda\gamma$  ( $\gamma\tilde{a}\text{-}\tilde{e}\tilde{l}\ \text{s}\tilde{e}\text{-}\tilde{l}\tilde{a}$ )<sup>1</sup> mountain goat, a wild goat or ibex, i.e., an animal of the Capra family, with a focus on its inaccessibility for observation (Job 39:1) (Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains : Hebrew)

**Sela/cela** - 54 verses in the OT, translated as -- cliff(4), cliffs(4), crag(2), crags(3), mountain\*(1), Rock(1), rock(39), rocks(4), rocky(1), Sela(1).

**Numbers 20:8** "Take the rod; and you and your brother Aaron assemble the congregation and speak to the **Rock** before their eyes, that it may yield its water. You shall thus bring forth water for them out of the rock and let the congregation and their beasts drink." ...<sup>10</sup> and Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly before the rock. And he said to them, "Listen now, you rebels; shall we bring forth water for you out of this rock?"...<sup>11</sup> Then Moses lifted up his hand and struck the **Rock** twice with his rod; and water came forth abundantly, and the congregation and their beasts drank.

**A M Hodgkin writes:** It was on account of the disobedience of Moses and Aaron in striking the rock that they were not allowed to enter the Promised Land. On the first occasion, in Exodus, the Rock was a type of our smitten Savior. But only once was He smitten for us. On the second occasion they were commanded to speak to the Rock. The Hebrew word for rock in Exodus 17:6 signifies a low-lying bed-rock. The word in Numbers 20:8 is a high and exalted rock. (Christ in All the Scriptures)

**Numbers 24:21** And he looked at the Kenite, and took up his discourse and said, "Your dwelling place is enduring, And your nest is set in the **cliff**."

**Deuteronomy 32:13** "He made him ride on the high places of the earth, And he ate the produce of the field; And He made him suck honey from the **Rock** (sela'), And oil from the flinty **Rock**, (tsur)

**Judges 6:20** The angel of God (Surely the pre-incarnate Christ) said to him, "Take the meat and the unleavened bread and lay them on this **rock**, and pour out the broth." And he did so.

**Judges 15:8** He struck them ruthlessly with a great slaughter; and he went down and lived in the cleft of the **rock** of Etam...<sup>11</sup> Then 3,000 men of Judah went down to the cleft of the **rock** of Etam and said to Samson, "Do you not know that the Philistines are rulers over us? What then is this that you have done to us?" And he said to them, "As they did to me, so I have done to them."...<sup>13</sup> So they said to him, "No, but we will bind you fast and give you into their hands; yet surely we will not kill you." Then they bound him with two new ropes and brought him up from the **rock**.

**Judges 20:45** The rest turned and fled toward the wilderness to the **rock** of Rimmon, but they caught 5,000 of them on the highways and overtook them at Gidom and killed 2,000 of them...<sup>47</sup> But 600 men turned and fled toward the wilderness to the **rock** of Rimmon, and they remained at the rock of Rimmon four months.

**Judges 21:13** Then the whole congregation sent word and spoke to the sons of Benjamin who were at the **rock** of Rimmon, and proclaimed peace to them.

**1 Samuel 13:6** When the men of Israel saw that they were in a strait (for the people were hard-pressed), then the people hid themselves in caves, in thickets, in **cliffs**, in cellars, and in pits.

**1 Samuel 14:4** Between the passes by which Jonathan sought to cross over to the Philistines' garrison, there was a sharp **crag** on the one side and a sharp **crag** on the other side, and the name of the one was Bozez, and the name of the other Seneh.

**1 Samuel 23:25** When Saul and his men went to seek him, they told David, and he came down to the **rock** and stayed in the wilderness of Maon. And when Saul heard it, he pursued David in the wilderness of Maon...<sup>28</sup> So Saul returned from pursuing David and went to meet the Philistines; therefore they called that place the **Rock** of Escape.

**2 Samuel 22:2** He said, "The LORD is my **Rock** and my fortress and my deliverer;

**1 Kings 19:11** So He said, "Go forth and stand on the mountain before the LORD." And behold, the LORD was passing by! And a great and strong wind was rending the mountains and breaking in pieces the **rocks** before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind. And after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the

earthquake.

**2 Chronicles 25:12** The sons of Judah also captured 10,000 alive and brought them to the top of the **cliff** and threw them down from the top of the **cliff**, so that they were all dashed to pieces.

**Nehemiah 9:15** "You provided bread from heaven for them for their hunger, You brought forth water from a **Rock** for them for their thirst, And You told them to enter in order to possess The land which You swore to give them.

**Comment:** Clearly an allusion to the Rock (tsur) which was Christ (1Cor 10:4) which Moses struck in Ex 17:6 (both uses are tsur).

**Job 39:1** "Do you know the time the mountain goats (of the rock) give birth? Do you observe the calving of the deer?...**28** "On the cliff he dwells and lodges, Upon the **rocky** crag, an inaccessible place.

**Psalms 18:2** The LORD is my **Rock** and my fortress and my deliverer, My God, my rock (tsur), in whom I take refuge; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.

**Psalms 31:3** For You are my **Rock** and my fortress; For Your name's sake You will lead me and guide me. (**Note:** In Ps 31:2 David prays for God to "Be Thou to me a rock [tsur] of strength and in Ps 31:3 explains the basis for his prayer is that very fact. See comments below regarding a principle of prayer.)

**Spurgeon:** Here the tried soul avows yet again its full confidence in God. Faith's repetitions are not vain. The avowal of our reliance upon God in times of adversity is a principle method of glorifying him. Active service is good, but the passive confidence of faith is not one jot less esteemed in the sight of God. The words before us appear to embrace and fasten upon the Lord with a fiducial grip which is not to be relaxed. The two personal pronouns, like sure nails, lay hold upon the faithfulness of the Lord. O for grace to have our heart fixed in firm unshaking belief in God! The figure of a rock and a fortress may be illustrated to us in these times by the vast fortress of Gibraltar, often besieged by our enemies, but never wrested from us: ancient strongholds, though far from impregnable by our modes of warfare, were equally important in those remoter ages—when in the mountain fastnesses, feeble bands felt themselves to be secure. Note the singular fact that David asked the Lord to be his rock Ps 31:2 because he was his rock; and learn from it that we may pray to enjoy in experience what we grasp by faith. Faith is the foundation of prayer.

**David Dickson:** What the Lord is engaged to be unto us by covenant, we may pray and expect to find him in effect. "Be thou my strong rock," saith he, "for thou art my rock."

**Psalms 40:2** He brought me up (lifted me) out of the pit of destruction (the slimy pit), out of the miry clay (the mud and mire), and He set my feet upon a **Rock** making my footsteps firm.

**Spurgeon's Comment:** The Redeemer's work is done. He reposes on the firm ground of His accomplished engagements; He can never suffer again; for ever does He reign in glory. What a comfort to know that Jesus our Lord and Saviour stands on a sure foundation in all that He is and does for us, and His goings forth in love are not liable to be cut short by failure in years to come, for God has fixed Him firmly. He is for ever and eternally able to save unto the uttermost them that come unto God by Him (Heb 7:25KJV), seeing that in the highest heavens He ever lives to make intercession for them. Jesus is the true Joseph taken from the pit to be Lord of all. **It is something more than a "sip of sweetness" to remember that if we are cast like our Lord into the lowest pit of shame and sorrow, we shall by faith rise to stand on the same elevated, sure, and everlasting rock of divine favor and faithfulness.**

**Psalms 40:1** is the context to help grasp Ps 40:2: "I waited patiently for the LORD; And He inclined to me, and heard my cry." Petition preceded deliverance!

**Comment:** The hymnist Charles Gabriel (1856-1932) expressed the truth of Ps 40:2 in his famous hymn '[He Lifted Me \(play and praise our Rock's grace, mercy and omnipotence for lifting each of us out of the miry clay. Yes, "Praise His Name. He lifted me!"\)](#)...

In loving kindness Jesus came  
My soul in mercy to reclaim,  
And from the depths of sin and shame  
Thru grace He lifted me.  
He called me long before I heard,  
Before my sinful heart was stirred,

But when I took him at His word,

Forgiv'n He lifted me.

His brow was pierced with many a thorn;  
His hands by cruel nails were torn  
when from my guilt and grief, forlorn,  
in love He lifted me.

Now on a higher plain I dwell,  
And with my soul I know 'tis well;  
yet how or why, I cannot tell,  
He should have lifted me.

**From sinking sand**

**He lifted me;**

**With tender hand**

**He lifted me;**

**From shades of night**

**To plains of light,**

**O praise His name,**

**He lifted me!**

**Wiersbe comments:** When we wait for the Lord and wait on Him, we aren't being idle. In this psalm David cries out to the Lord and asks for help. Waiting on the Lord is worthwhile because of what He is going to do for us. It is not idleness, nor is it carelessness. And it certainly isn't complacency. Instead, waiting is that divine activity of expecting God to work. And He never disappoints us. Figuratively, David had been down in a horrible pit. He was sinking in the mire. But he waited on the Lord. And God not only pulled him out of the pit, but He put him on a rock and established his footing. He said, "David, I'm going to take you out of the mire and put you in the choir." "He has put a new song in my mouth--praise to our God" (Psalm 40:3). Are you waiting on the Lord? Are you praying about something and asking, "O God, when are You going to do this? When are You going to work?" Remember, one of these days your praying will turn to singing. Your sinking will turn to standing. Your fear will turn to security as He puts you on the rock. Just wait on the Lord. He's patient with you. Why not be patient with Him and let Him work in His time? Waiting for the Lord's help sometimes forces you to your limits. But take comfort in knowing that while you wait on Him, God is working out His purposes in your life. Are you in a difficult situation, waiting for God to do something? Leave your burden with the Lord and trust Him to act. He never disappoints you when you wait on Him. ([Prayer, Praise & Promises- A Daily Walk Through the Psalms- Warren W. Wiersbe-a highly recommended devotional tool to supplement your personal time in the Psalms](#))

Play this old **Maranatha Chorus** as you meditate on the truth that your feet are eternally sure foundation because they are set upon the Rock of our salvation, our Everlasting Rock...

### [We Shall Stand](#)

**We shall stand with our feet on the Rock**

Whatever men may say we'll lift your name on high

We shall walk through the darkest night

Setting our faces like flint, we'll walk into the Light.

**Psalm 42:9** I will say to God my **Rock**, "Why have You forgotten me? Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?"

**Psalm 71:3** Be to me a **Rock** of habitation to which I may continually come; You have given commandment to save me, For You are my rock and my fortress.

**Psalm 78:16** He brought forth streams also from the **Rock** And caused waters to run down like rivers.

**Comment:** The Rock was Christ (1Cor 10:4). The provision was waters running "down like rivers." Today that is manifest in the presence of the Holy Spirit even as Jesus taught in Jn 7:38 declaring that "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.'" The hymn writer William Williams (1717–1791) put this OT picture into verse (see opening line of second stanza below).

Indeed, may we all experience "rivers of living water" now that the Rock has been smitten and glorified (cp Jn 7:39).

Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah, pilgrim thru this barren land;  
I am weak, but Thou art mighty—Hold me with Thy pow'rful hand:  
Bread of Heaven, Bread of Heaven, feed me till I want no more.

**Open now the crystal fountain, whence the healing stream doth flow;**

Let the fire and cloudy pillar lead me all my journey through;  
Strong Deliverer, strong Deliverer, be Thou still my strength and shield.

**[Guide Me Oh Thou Great Jehovah](#)**

**Psalm 104:18** The high mountains are for the wild goats; The **cliffs** are a refuge for the rock badgers (shephanim).

**Psalm 137:9** How blessed will be the one who seizes and dashes your little ones Against the **rock**.

**Psalm 141:6** Their judges are thrown down by the sides of the **rock**, And they hear my words, for they are pleasant.

**Proverbs 30:26** The badgers are not mighty people, Yet they make their houses in the **rocks**;

**Comment:** The defenseless rock badger provides a poignant picture of Christ our ROCK OF REFUGE: Spurgeon writes "Conscious of their own natural defenselessness, the badgers resort to burrows in the rocks and are secure from their enemies. The little badger, when it has once run into the cleft, has the whole strength of the mountain to protect it. Outside the rock it is helpless enough; inside the rock it is perfectly safe. The least suspicion of danger sends the badgers scampering into their holes. So at every sight or sound (or temptation) of evil we should fly at once to the Rock of Ages! Hawks and eagles prey upon the rock badger, so they never venture far from the mouth of their hole. Christ is our Rock: Never venture far from His safe keeping! My heart, be willing to gather a lesson from these feeble folk. We are as weak and as exposed to peril as the timid badgers, so we must be as wise to seek a shelter in the cleft of the Rock. Our best security is within the rampart of an immutable Jehovah, where His unalterable promises stand like giant walls of rock. It will be well with our heart, if we always seek to hide ourselves in the bulwarks of His glorious attributes, all of which are guarantees of safety for those who put their trust in Him (Ps 56:3-4-note). Blessed be the name of the Lord (Job 1:21-note), I have so done, and have found myself like David in the cave of Adullam (1Sa 22:1-note), safe from the cruelty of my enemy; for long ago, when Satan and my sins pursued me, I fled into the cleft of the ROCK Christ Jesus, and in His riven side I found a delightful resting-place. Let your heart run to Him anew today, whatever your present grief may be. Jesus feels for you (Heb 4:15-note). Jesus consoles you. Jesus will help you (Heb 2:18NIV-note). No monarch in his impregnable fortress is more secure than the badger in his rocky burrow. The master of ten thousand chariots is not one whit better protected than the little dweller in the mountain's cleft. In Jesus the weak are strong (2Cor 12:9-10-note), and the defenseless safe; they could not be more strong if they were giants, or more safe if they were in heaven. Faith gives to men on earth the protection of the God of heaven. More they cannot need, and need not wish. The badgers cannot build a castle, but they avail themselves of what is there already: I cannot make myself a REFUGE, but Jesus has provided it, His Father has given it, His Spirit has revealed it, and lo, again today let us enter it, and be safe from every foe. Abide in the rifts of the Rock of Ages and let nothing tempt you to quit your stronghold. Little children abide in Him (1Jn 2:28-note)."

**Song 2:14** "O my dove, in the clefts of the **rock**, In the secret place of the steep pathway, Let me see your form, Let me hear your voice; For your voice is sweet, And your form is lovely."

**Isaiah 2:21** In order to go into the caverns of the rocks (tsur) and the clefts of the **cliffs** Before the terror of the LORD and the splendor of His majesty, When He arises to make the earth tremble.

**Isaiah 7:19** They will all come and settle on the steep ravines, on the ledges of the cliffs, on all the thorn bushes and on all the watering places.

**Isaiah 22:16** 'What right do you have here, And whom do you have here, That you have hewn a tomb for yourself here, You who hew a tomb on the height, You who carve a resting place for yourself in the rock?

**Isaiah 31:9** "His **rock** will pass away because of panic, And his princes will be terrified at the standard," Declares the LORD, whose fire is in Zion and whose furnace is in Jerusalem.

**Isaiah 32:2** Each will be like a refuge from the wind And a shelter from the storm, Like streams of water in a dry country, Like the shade of a huge **rock** in a parched land.

**See comment by James Meikle: [Solitude Sweetened](#)**

**NLT Paraphrase:** Isaiah 32:1 Look, a righteous king is coming! And honest princes will rule under him. 2 He will shelter Israel from the storm and the wind. He will refresh her as a river in the desert and as the cool shadow of a large rock in a hot and weary land.

**Comment:** The NLT paraphrase (which I highly recommend because it is usually very accurate in rendering the "sense" of the passage) leaves little doubt that Isaiah is describing the future return of the Messiah as the King of kings (Rev 19:16). Indeed, Christ the Rock (by raising up righteous rulers under Him) will be "as the cool shadow of a large rock in a hot and weary land" for all who take refuge in Christ. John MacArthur agrees (As do William MacDonald, Henry Morris, Charles Ryrie, et al) writing that "During the millennial reign of Christ, leaders will provide protection like "the shade of a huge rock in a parched land," instead of posing threats to the people's well-being." (MacArthur Study Bible)

The hymn writer **Elizabeth C Clephane** (1830-1869) took the words "**huge** (mighty) **rock**" and used them in her beautiful hymn (notice that she parallels the shadow of a mighty rock with "the Cross of Jesus" as the place to abide. Have you done likewise?)...

**[Beneath the Cross of Jesus](#)** I fain would take my stand,  
The shadow of a **mighty rock** within a weary land;  
A home within the wilderness, a rest upon the way

From the burning of the noon day heat and the burden of the day.

**Isaiah 33:16** He will dwell on the heights, His refuge will be the impregnable **Rock**; His bread will be given him, His water will be sure.

**Comment:** We must examine the context to determine the identity of "**He**" - Isaiah 33:15 says "**He** who walks righteously...shuts his eyes from looking upon evil." The only sinner who would fit this description is one declared righteous by faith in Christ, the Righteous Branch (cp Jer 23:5, 2Cor 5:21). It follows that his "impregnable rock" ultimately is Christ the Rock of His salvation.

**Isaiah 42:11** Let the wilderness and its cities lift up their voices, The settlements where Kedar inhabits. Let the inhabitants of **Sela** sing aloud, Let them shout for joy from the tops of the mountains.

**Isaiah 57:5** Who inflame yourselves among the oaks, Under every luxuriant tree, Who slaughter the children in the ravines, Under the clefts of the **crag**s?

**Jeremiah 5:3** O LORD, do not Your eyes look for truth? You have smitten them, But they did not weaken; You have consumed them, But they refused to take correction. They have made their faces harder than **rock**; They have refused to repent.

**Jeremiah 13:4** "Take the waistband that you have bought, which is around your waist, and arise, go to the Euphrates and hide it there in a crevice of the **rock**."

**Jeremiah 16:16** "Behold, I am going to send for many fishermen," declares the LORD, "and they will fish for them; and afterwards I will send for many hunters, and they will hunt them from every mountain and every hill and from the clefts of the **rocks**."

**Jeremiah 23:29** "Is not My word like fire?" declares the LORD, "and like a hammer which shatters **arock**?"

**Jeremiah 48:28** "Leave the cities and dwell among the **crag**s, O inhabitants of Moab, And be like a dove that nests Beyond the mouth of the chasm.

**Jeremiah 49:16** "As for the terror of you, The arrogance of your heart has deceived you, O you who live in the clefts of the **rock**, Who occupy the height of the hill. Though you make your nest as high as an eagle's, I will bring you down from there," declares the LORD.

**Jeremiah 51:25** "Behold, I am against you, O destroying mountain, Who destroys the whole earth," declares the LORD, "And I will stretch out My hand against you, And roll you down from the **crag**s, And I will make you a burnt out mountain.

**Ezekiel 24:7** "For her blood is in her midst; She placed it on the bare **rock**; She did not pour it on the ground To cover it with dust. 8 "That it may cause wrath to come up to take vengeance, I have put her blood on the



bare **rock**, That it may not be covered."

**Ezekiel 26:4** "They will destroy the walls of Tyre and break down her towers; and I will scrape her debris from her and make her a bare **rock**....<sup>14</sup> "I will make you a bare **rock**; you will be a place for the spreading of nets. You will be built no more, for I the LORD have spoken," declares the Lord GOD.

**Comment:** This prophecy (as do all of God's prophecies) was literally fulfilled when Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the walls and towers of Tyre during the period 585-572 B.C. However, many of her people escaped to an island near the coast, where their city continued strong and prosperous for another 250 years. Alexander the Great, in expanding his empire, was finally able to reach and conquer the island city of Tyre in 332 B.C., by building a causeway to it out of the ruins of the old mainland city, literally "scraping the dust" from her, leaving it "like the top of a rock."

**Amos 6:12** Do horses run on **rocks**? Or does one plow them with oxen? Yet you have turned justice into poison And the fruit of righteousness into wormwood,

**Obadiah 1:3** "The arrogance of your heart has deceived you, You who live in the clefts of the **rock**, In the loftiness of your dwelling place, Who say in your heart, 'Who will bring me down to earth?'

**Comment:** The Edomites thought they had a completely safe fortress, almost impregnable because some of the surrounding cliffs which were 2,000 ft high and because of the very narrow gorges which were its only access routes. Pride is blind to the matter of God's all-seeing eye which judges righteously and has the omnipotence to carry out righteous judgment. Edom's pride also stemmed from the fact that they controlled the chief trade routes between Asia and Egypt (in close proximity to the King's Highway) resulting in material (but not spiritual) prosperity!

**A E Phillips has these devotional thoughts on...**

#### **GOD MY ROCK**

IN A WORLD of uncertainty and instability, nothing can be more precious than knowing and believing that God is one's Rock. He only is the Rock, Ps. 18:31; 62:2. No other foundation is laid, 1 Cor. 3:11, for our souls' salvation, and for faith to build upon, Mt 7:24. The world has its bogus rock-foundations, but "their rock is not as our Rock"; eventually this will be admitted by our enemies, Dt. 32:31. On their rock is the subtle serpent who can persuade his dupes that incohesive sand is solid rock, Pr. 30:19, but God will lay bare such a foundation, Mic. 1:6.

Our Rock is our fortress, saving us from the assaults of our enemies, Ps 18:2–3, and causing us to stand upon the Rock while He makes all His goodness panoramically to pass before our souls, Ex 33:19–23. This is mercy from first to last. In the fearsome gales, we hide in the cleft of the rock, His hand covering us with warmth and tenderness, Ex. 33:22. In perplexity, it is well to utter our questionings to God, who is the Rock higher than we, Ps 42:9; 61:2. Then our hearts will confess, "He only is my Rock ... I shall not be greatly moved", Ps 62:2.

Paul sees the Rock smitten in the wilderness as prefiguring Christ: "that Rock was Christ", 1Cor. 10:4; Ex 17:6. It was consequent on the Lord's being smitten for our sins, and being glorified, that the streams of the Spirit's blessing came to us, John 7:39. Of the wilderness rock it is testified that "He opened the rock, and waters gushed out" as streams, Ps 105:41; 78:16. Of the Spirit's effusion, it is asserted that He was poured forth, Acts 2:17–18, 33; 10:45; Titus 3:6. What fruitfulness is brought into the life, when the Spirit is allowed to minister Christ to the heart, Gal. 5:22. Yea, what sweetness is found in the Rock which is Christ, Ps 81:16. On the Rock, the Son of the living God, confessed by those who believe in Him, His church is founded, Matt. 16:16–18, so "Unto you therefore which believe he (the Stone) is precious", 1 Pet. 2:7. (Day by Day in the Psalms)

### **Christ, a Rock!**

**William Nicholson, 1862**

"I will stand there before you by the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it for the people to drink. So Moses did this in the sight of the elders of Israel." Exodus 17:6+

"They all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ!" 1 Corinthians 10:3-4+

Christ is the chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely! How numerous and delightful are his excellencies as the Redeemer of

men! To represent them, the sacred writers have adopted the choicest and most expressive figures which human language can furnish. Such figures are calculated . . .

to assist our understanding,  
to impress our memory,  
and to constrain our love.

Hence he is called . . .

- the Sun of Righteousness,
- the Bright and the Morning Star,
- the Manna and Living Bread,
- the Refiner,
- the Light of the World,
- the City of Refuge,
- the Living Stone,
- the Foundation, or Rock.

To this last figure, Christ is compared in the text. The rock of Horeb was a type of Christ.

#### **OBSERVE:**

I. A Rock is distinguished for firmness and stability. Hence rock makes the firmest foundation. It is the emblem of strength. "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock!" Matthew 7:24. When the storm comes, the violence of the wind, the roaring torrent, etc., do not affect a structure founded on a rock.

Jesus Christ is a firm foundation. Matthew 16:18. He is a sure foundation. Isaiah 28:16. The power of Satan, the influence of error, the scoffs of infidelity, may be defied by him who rests upon Christ, the Rock of ages. Romans 8:31, etc.

II. Some rocks are distinguished for elevation. Though their base may be low in the ground — yet their tops surmount surrounding objects, and have a lofty and commanding prominence.

Christ our rock is high in the dignity of his person — high in his exaltation. Philippians 2:9-11. "In all things he has the pre-eminence." He is higher than angels, King of kings, and Lord of lords. He has absolute dominion over worlds, visible and invisible. Colossians 1:17, 18.

III. Rocks in ancient times were used for habitations. People dwelt in them, as well as built upon them. They hewed out houses in rocks. Isaiah 22:16; Jeremiah 48:28.

God in Christ, is a believer's spiritual habitation. Like the dove, he dwells in the cleft of the rock. Psalm 90:1; 91:9. "He who dwells in love dwells in God." 1 John 4:16.

IV. Rocks were used for refuge and defense. This was the case when pursued by enemies. 1 Samuel 13:6. They were secure from the missiles of their enemies.

God in Christ, is the refuge and defense of his people. Hebrews 6:18. Thus the Psalmist triumphed, Psalm 46. Christ is the defense of his Church. Isaiah 4:5. His gracious presence shall never be lacking. See Psalm 27:5; 143:9.

V. Rocks in oriental countries yield honey. See Psalm 81:16; Deuteronomy 32:13.

All sweet peace and precious comfort proceed from the Rock, Christ. 2 Peter 1:4. His promises are sweeter than honey or the honeycomb. Psalm 19:10.

VI. Rocks yield the purest water. Exhilarating springs proceed from them. No water is so clear as that which comes in crystal streams from the rock. Hence Moses was commanded to smite the rock. Exodus 17:5, 6.

Christ the Rock was smitten by Divine Justice for sinners. He was stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. The curse of the law subjected him to the ignominious cross, and the Divine wrath. "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was pierced for our iniquities." From that smitten Rock proceeded Divine refreshing streams . . .

- of pardon,
- of justification,
- of sanctification,

- of glorification, etc.

Hence Gospel blessings are thus predicted, Isaiah 41:17, 18; and Christ said, John 7:37-39; Isaiah 55:1. When Moses smote the rock, the water flowed abundantly. So when Christ was smitten, "Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life!" Revelation 22:17.

The water that flowed from the Rock in Horeb, was not only sufficient for their needs at that particular time, but it followed them in the way for some considerable time after the rock was smitten.

Christ imparted the blessed fruits of his death, not only to the first ages of Christianity, but to the most distant ages of the world. Those streams of grace shall never cease to follow his Church, until mortality shall be swallowed up of life, until the wilderness is exchanged for the Canaan above!

VII. Rocks afford a very delightful and refreshing shadow in hot countries to weary travelers.

So Christ is as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land, Isaiah 4:6; 25:4; 32:2. "If any man sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous one." Here the accusations of conscience, the charges of the law, etc., are silenced. Here we hide from the wrath of God.

VIII. Rocks are very durable and lasting. They are difficult to remove. It takes a long time to impair them. They continue from one generation to another.

The Lord Jesus has the stability of a rock in him. He is the Rock of Ages, the same yesterday, today and forever! He never grows weak — the riches of his grace will never be impoverished. Mark his immutability, "In the beginning, O Lord, you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment. You will roll them up like a robe; like a garment they will be changed. But you remain the same, and your years will never end!" Hebrews 1:10-12

IX. Rocks, by their altitude, afford a good and delightful prospect of the distant country. From them objects afar off may be seen. "From the rocky peaks I see them, from the heights I view them." Numbers 23:9.

He who by faith ascends to the top of this spiritual Rock, may take a better prospect and survey of Heaven than Moses could of Canaan, when he stood upon the rock of Pisgah. The Christian rests upon the Rock Christ, and "looks for that blessed hope — the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ!" Titus 2:13. "He sees the king in his beauty, and the land that is afar off."

#### **APPLICATION.**

1. Are you upon this Rock?
2. Let the firmness and durability of this Rock be an antidote to all fear.
3. Take heed that Christ is not a Stumbling-stone and Rock of Offence to you!