

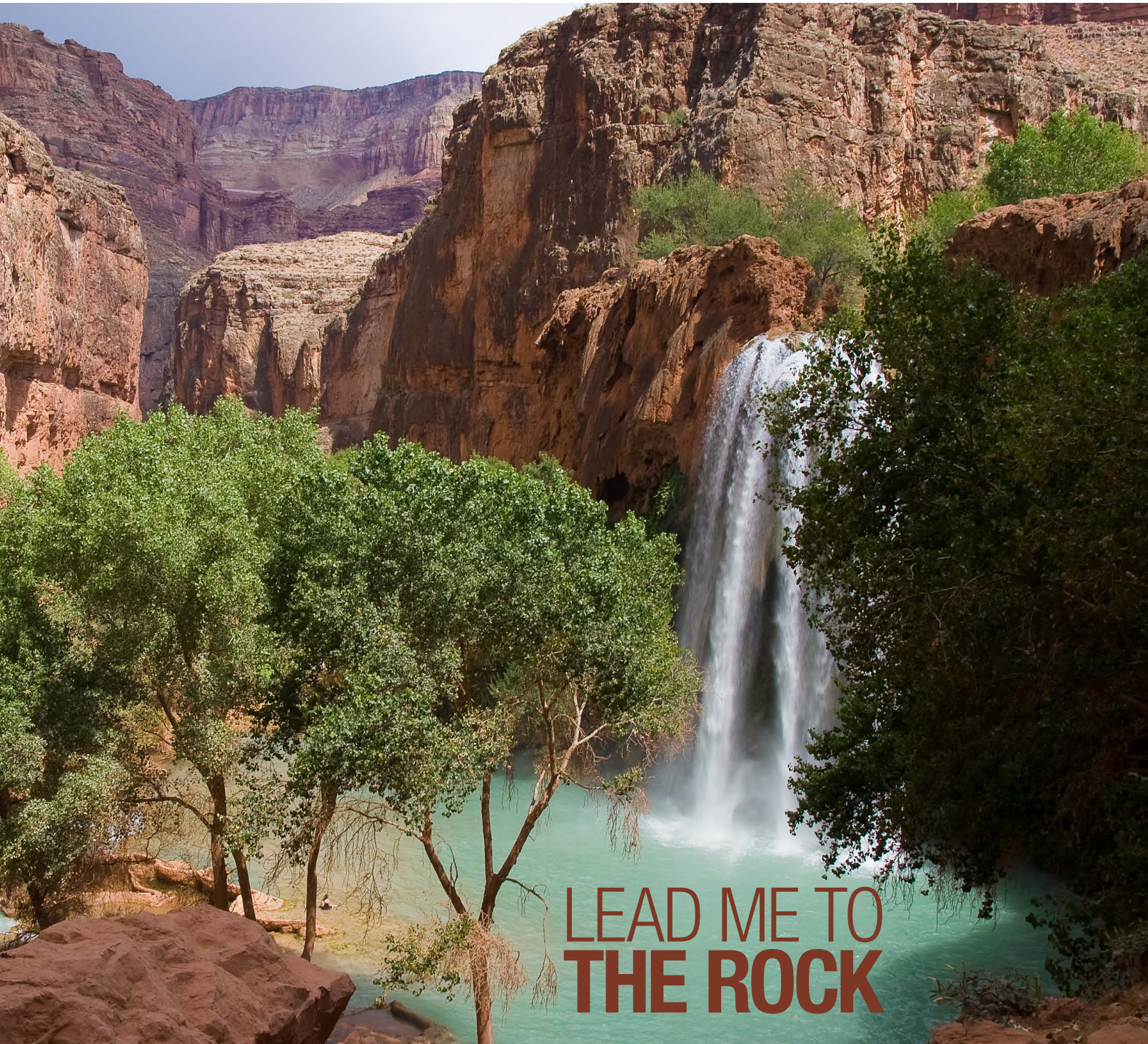
**Solid Articles
shared Online:**
Powered Youth

**Foundation
Stone**
Paul Campbell

**Messiah's Song
of the Stone**
H.R. Ghezzi

UPLOOK

September-October 2013 www.uplook.org



**LEAD ME TO
THE ROCK**

Lead Me to The Rock



One of the most widespread pictures of Christ that we find in the Bible is that of the rock. He is presented as such in a variety of ways in order to capture the many facets of His person and work. To Israel, He was the rock of provision (1 Cor. 10:3f); to the nations, He will be the rock that obliterates all their empires (Dan. 2:34f); to the church, He is the foundation stone (Eph. 2:20); to the Jewish leaders of Christ's day, He was the stone which the builders rejected (Ps. 118:22); to unbelievers, He is a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense (1 Pet. 2:8); to believers, He is the living stone (1 Pet. 2:4); and to the Father, He is the tested and precious stone (Isa. 28:16).

In all of these grand spheres—Jews, Gentiles, the church, believers, unbelievers—the Lord Jesus is the Rock.

But there is something very moving in the fact that Christ is also the rock to individuals. David called Him, *"The Rock of Israel"* (2 Sam. 23:3). Jacob knew Him as, *"the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel"* (Gen. 49:24). And Moses referred to Him four times as the Rock in Deuteronomy 32, speaking of His perfection (v.4), His role as Savior (v.15), His creatorial power (v.18), and His supremacy (v.31).

Do you notice anything else that these three passages have in common? They are the final words of each of these great men. *"These are the last words of David"* (2 Sam. 23:1). *"When Jacob finished charging his sons, he drew his feet into the bed and breathed his last, and was gathered to his people"* (Gen. 49:33). *"And the Lord spoke to Moses that very same day, saying, '...Then die on the mountain*

where you ascend, and be gathered to your people" (Dt. 32:48-50).

Is it merely a coincidence that each of these men spoke of the Lord as the Rock as they stood on the brink of eternity? I rather suspect that in that profound moment, as they looked back on their lives, they had a special appreciation of the one great constant that had been with them every step of the way. These men had all had their ups and downs. David had spent years on the run from Saul and then endured multiple rebellions. Jacob, after his own troubled wanderings, had spent years deceived into thinking that he had lost his beloved son. And Moses had endured both ill treatment with the people of God and the ill treatment of the people of God. What could these men have relied upon in life? Their circumstances? The people around them? They looked back and saw that towering over the capriciousness of men and uncertainty of circumstances was the solid, immovable Rock.

This whole world is busy building its life on sand. What a refreshing contrast to know the power, safety, and reliability of our Rock of refuge (Ps. 94:22). We can confidently call others to faith in Christ because He is utterly, uniquely, infinitely trustworthy.

Like David, Jacob, and Moses, we also face ups and downs, trials and heartaches. But if we know the Lord Jesus, we have Heaven's remedy for every trial: *"Hear my cry, O God; Give heed to my prayer. From the end of the earth I call to You, when my heart is faint; Lead me to the rock that is higher than I"* (Ps. 61:1f).

—James Martin editor@uplook.org

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There's No Rock Like Ours

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Shawn Abigail retells the story of Moses seeing God's afterglow while hidden in the cleft of the rock, then suggests some practical applications to us today.

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Do we believe what the Lord Jesus said when He introduced His plan to build the Church? asks Paul Campbell. Then let's give our all in working with Him.

12 The Living Stone

Malcolm Horlock in his careful and comprehensive style, points out the dramatic juxtaposing of "living" and "stone" then applies the lesson to our lives.

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Chase Boone writes in *The Precious Stone*: "In the end...man's opinions don't really matter....in God's sight Jesus is precious beyond calculation."

Conies in the rocks and Christians in the Rock: that's David Nicholson's theme in *A Resting Place* that discusses what it practically means to be "in Christ."

In *Christ the Rock*, Shane Mirabella uses a personal incident to drive home the importance of a good foundation.

In *A Famous Neglected Sermon*, Bruce Henning calls us to take the Sermon on the Mount as seriously as Christ meant it.

Are we offended by *The Rock of Offense*? Sharon Sax asks us to consider the honor of being identified with Christ in a world that found Him to be scandalous.

Messiah's Song of the Stone 22

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24 The Triumphant Rock

In days of political turmoil and social unrest, Peter Bolton reminds us that the final chapter has never been in question.

Earthquake: The Big One 28

Rending rocks are often part of epic events, says John E. Phelan as he explains the seismic shock to the world when her Creator arrives back on the planet to finally set everything right.



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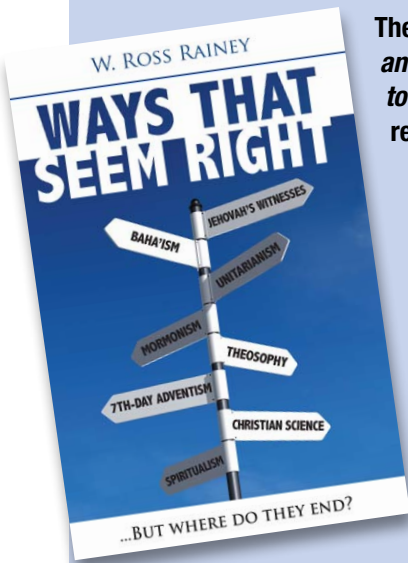
Quarried from Bedrock

front lines pray around the globe

Share the Way of Life

Ways That Seem Right by W. Ross Rainey

The Scriptures predict that, in these last days, false teachers will “grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.” This book will help you “be ready to give an answer for the hope that is in you.” This new version has been re-designed and expanded, and is a must-have resource for all students.



Test today's leading cults with the "Bible Filter"

Comparative chart of today's cults



Helpful charts and diagrams



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CONFERENCES, CAMPS & RETREATS

CONFERENCE IN CONNECTICUT

The annual fall Bible conference at Wellspring Bible Fellowship, 171 Candlewood Dr., Groton, CT 06340 is to be held Oct 18-20. The expected speaker is Gary McBride (ON). The conference begins Friday evening at 7 PM with four sessions on Saturday and lunch provided. Brother Gary will also speak Sunday morning. **Contact:** John Clifford ph: 860-445-0622 email: clifford.j@att.net

CMML REGIONAL CONFERENCE - TX

"The Challenge of Europe" is the theme of this conference planned for Oct 19 from 10 AM to 4 PM at Believer's Bible Chapel, 2116 Old Denton Road, Carrollton, TX 75006. The scheduled speakers are Tom Marinello (Netherlands) and Mark Swaim (Poland).

Children's program and nursery provided (ages 12 and under). Coffee and refreshments served at 9:30 AM. Lunch provided. Please RSVP by Oct 14 on website: www.cmml.us/dallasregistration or call 732-449-8880

BIBLE CONFERENCE IN PA

Grace Gospel Chapel, 1130 Mega Ln., Gilbertsville PA 19525, is hosting a conference on the Feasts of Jehovah Oct 19 from 10 AM to 4 PM. The expected speaker is Keith Keyser (PA), who will use a chart, powerpoint and handouts to teach the Lord's plan of the ages as depicted in these harvest festivals. Lunch provided. R.S.V.P. by Oct 14 to Keith at krkeyser@hotmail.com

FALL FAMILY CONFERENCE IN GA

Camp Hope will hold their conference Oct 25-27. Steve Price (KS) will minister

God's Word to the adults and Nate Thomas (SC) will minister to the children. The conference begins Friday with registration at 6:00 PM and ends Sunday with lunch. There will not be a set charge or suggested offering to the camp. From the outset, we realized that many young families would not be able to meet the expenses of such a camp weekend but that the Lord would move in the hearts of others to give above the cost of their coming in order to supply the needs of others. For a registration form, visit: www.camphopega.org **Contact:** Steve Roys, 7011 Pony Lake Rd., Dahlonge, GA 30533 ph: 770-536-4787 email: camphopega@gmail.com

ANNUAL MISSIONARY WEEKEND IN ON

The Greater Toronto Area Assembly Mission (GTAAM) in conjunction with MSC Canada will conduct their Annual Missionary Weekend on Nov 8-9.

front lines praise around the clock

A special Missionary Youth Rally will be held at Markham Bible Chapel on Friday 7:00-9:00 PM featuring reports and panel discussions from full time and short term missionaries. On Saturday morning, a Missionary Prayer Breakfast with reports from veteran and recently commended missionaries will be held at Rossland Ridge Bible Chapel in Ajax, ON starting at 8 AM. Visit www.GTAAM.ca

CMML FALL CONFERENCE - NJ

"The Challenge of Europe" is the theme of this annual conference planned for Nov 9 from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM at 790 Newman Springs Road, Lincroft, NJ. The scheduled speakers are Ian Burness (Echoes of Service-UK) and George Sturm (Albania). Children's program and nursery provided (ages 12 and under). Coffee and refreshments served at 9:15 AM. Lunch provided. Please RSVP by Nov 4 on the website: www.cmml.us/fallconference or call 732-449-8880

MI LADIES MISSIONARY CONFERENCE

Dearborn Chapel, Dearborn Heights, MI will host the conference Nov 9 from 10 AM til 3 PM with lunch served. Speakers are Judy Coombs of Wycliff and Sara Stiles of Bear Lake Bible Camp with updates on other areas of ministries. **Contact:** Lillian Rainey ph: 734-453-8585 or Marge Meinzinger email: DulciMarge@att.net

OUTREACH WEEKEND IN TEXAS

A gospel outreach is planned for Thanksgiving Day weekend Nov 29-30 in Amarillo, TX. Join with other believers to talk with people about the Lord Jesus Christ by way of door to door evangelism. If you believe the Lord may have you join this

effort, contact Oliver as soon as possible. Hotel information will also be available. If you are not able to attend, they would earnestly appreciate prayer. **Contact:** Oliver John-Baptiste ph: 301-461-2418 email: obtljohnbaptiste@gmail.com

MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES

CAMP CARETAKER POSITION IN NM

The Board of Directors for Southwest Bible Camp is praying for a couple to join the ministry as caretakers at the camp in Glenwood, New Mexico. Service would include maintenance of building facilities, equipment, the pool, and grounds. Knowledge or skills related to those areas would most accommodate the camp's needs. A furnished residence in one of the most beautiful areas of southwest NM would be provided. All staff at SWBC are volunteers. Being commended by the assemblies or self-supporting would be most appreciated. If you are led of God to pursue this position, contact Alan Lennox at Alpilgrim@gmail.com web: www.southwestbiblecamp.com

CAMP POSITION AVAILABLE IN ON

The Board of Directors of Galilee Bible Camp, a year-round facility in the beautiful Ottawa Valley region of Ontario, is accepting applications for the full-time, faith-supported position of General Director. Contact Dave Reid, Harvey Pilgrim or Taffy Nahas via the camp office address or phone number found on the website at www.galileebiblecamp.on.ca

MINISTRY POSITIONS IN CALIFORNIA

High Desert Ministries is looking for an Assistant Director and a Caretaker who

can interact for Christ among students in their discipling center. Both positions require Bible knowledge and a mature Christian life to manifest the grace of God among men who are on probation or parole. For qualifications, visit the website. **Contact:** Doug Crabb email: ask@hdpn.info web: www.hdmca.org

COMMENDATIONS

KAREN CARTER

The elders at High Point Bible Chapel, Davenport, IA wish to announce that the commendation for Karen to the work of the Lord as a teacher at El Camino Academy in Colombia has ended. Karen is returning to Iowa to be married. She and her husband will be serving the Lord at High Point.

BRADY AND BECKY COLLIER

South Plains Bible Chapel, Lubbock, TX wishes to inform the change of status for Brady and Becky who have been serving in Honduras. With continuing full commendation, they will return to work with the assembly in varied ministries and be in a position to serve other assemblies in the "home field."

GEORGE FERRIER

The believers at Bridlewood Bible Chapel, Ottawa, Canada prayerfully commend George Ferrier to full-time service preaching and teaching the Word of God in the Ottawa Valley, Eastern and Southwestern Ontario, and the United States. George has been in fellowship at Bridlewood Bible Chapel since Jun 1993 and is a gifted teacher and preacher of God's word. During this time he has

taught and participated in children's, youth and adult ministries, at Bridlewood and throughout the region.

LAURA MESSERLY

The believers at Lake Country Bible Chapel, Ankeny, IA commend Laura to serve the Lord at Morning Star Children's Home and Strong Tower Christian School. The ministry is located in Pueblo Nuevo, Peru. She will be teaching and working with other missionaries for a 6 month commitment.

TIM SKILES

The believers and elders of Westside Bible Chapel, Wichita, KS have extended Tim's commendation to serve the Lord full time at The Ezekiel Project School of Evangelism until Sep 1, 2014.

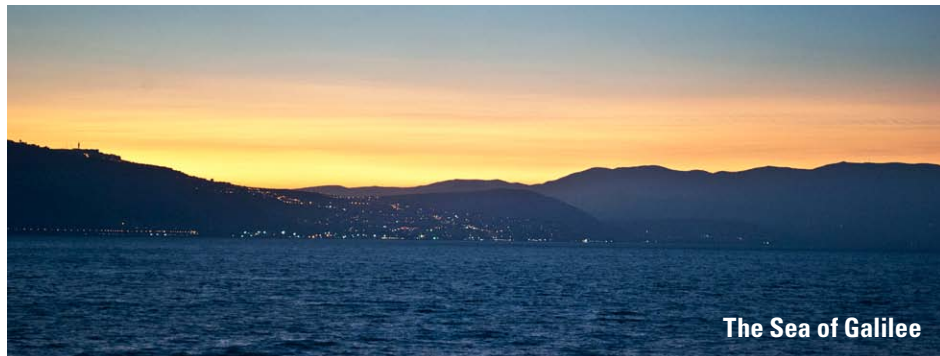
DANIELLE WILSON

Those meeting at Northeast Bible Chapel, Colorado Springs, CO commend Danielle to the work of the Lord at Immanuel Mission in Teec Nos Pos, AZ. Danielle has been in happy fellowship and serving the Lord at NEBC for many years.

GUIDED TOURS

ISRAEL TOUR WITH ROB SULLIVAN

Israel is a modern-day miracle that stands as a fulfillment of Bible prophecy. Consider joining Rob from Oct 31-Nov 10 on a tour that promises to have a profound impact and see the Holy Land with a unique Christian Evidences perspective. Download an itinerary and learn more at: www.christianevidences.org email: info@christianevidences.org



The Sea of Galilee

BEAUTY FIELD TOURS TO ISRAEL

Yeshua Gospel Ministries of Canada has scheduled a 16 day tour of Israel Nov 15-30. Departing from Winnipeg or Toronto, the tour begins in Tel Aviv, proceeds north to Mt. Hermon and down to the tip of Eilat, plus many sites familiar to Bible readers. The cost is approx. \$4200 plus insurance. **Contact:** John Plantz ph: 204-853-7786 email: shalomjohn@prairie.ca

ISRAEL TOUR 2014

A teaching tour of Israel is planned for Feb 24-Mar 6, 2014. Led by Dr. Steve Price (KS) and John Heller (AR), the trip will involve discussion of Biblical history and geography and will include visits with local believers. Visit www.turkeyhillranch.com and click on the Israel link.

Contact: turkeysteve@yahoo.com

JOURNEY TO THE LAND OF THE BIBLE

Visit the Holy Land with Emmaus Bible College March 6-16, 2014. Exceptional biblical insight and a proven itinerary make this a spectacular experience with eternal value. Join Dr. Steven H. Sanchez and President and Mrs. Philip Boom as they visit Israel's historic and beautiful locations with key biblical significance. Visit www.emmaus.edu/israel to learn more today about this opportunity.

ISRAEL TOUR WITH REX TROGDON

The Bible Lands Study Tour to Israel with Rex Trogdon has been postponed until Mar 17-27, 2014. If you would like to know more details and how you can go along on this trip of a lifetime, contact Rex at 704-843-9632 or email: RexTrogdon@me.com

MISCELLANY

CWF FUND—NEW CONTACT

Established in 1957, the Christian Workers Fellowship Fund is a tax-exempt corporation looking to the Lord to provide for the needs of assembly commended workers in the United States. After many years of faithful service as treasurer, Russ Farwell has retired. Ronald Spragg is the new treasurer. To utilize the services of CWF, the new address for contributions or reports is: CWF Inc., P.O. Box 12347 Kansas City, KS 66112 ph: 816-330-3512 mobile: 816-694-1294

NOTE: NEWS SUBMISSIONS

The news editor reserves the right to determine those items best suited for the magazine. Editorial decisions are final. Photos accepted. **Send news to:** frontlines@uplook.org

Rise Up CONFERENCE 2013

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. *2 Timothy 4:7*

Monday, December 30th to Thursday, January 2nd

Register now! Space is limited!

Check-in Starts: Monday, December 30th, 2013 at 2:00PM

First General Session: Monday, December 30th, 2013 at 7:30PM

Conference Closing: Thursday, January 2nd, 2014 at 11:00AM

24 seminars that deal with the practical issues of our day.

1 seminar exclusively for men.

3 seminars exclusively for women.

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Mr. Scott Degroff Topeka, Kansas, United States of America

Mr. Joe Reese Deacon, Ontario, Canada

Registration Rates

Single \$399.00

Double \$299.00

Triple \$269.00

Quad \$249.00

Family Rate 2 adults at Double Rate (\$299.00 each)

each child 5-12: \$99.00, children under 5 are free!

Commuter Plan A \$199.00 Complete conference without accommodation. Includes all meals and conference.

Commuter Plan B \$89.00 One full day without accommodation. Includes all meals and conference for one day.

Prices are per person. All prices are in US funds. All conference costs, taxes, and gratuities are included in price.

Hotel Accommodations: All deluxe rooms are 2 room suites. Upgraded ballroom(s), break-out rooms, and board rooms; large open (10 storey) atrium; indoor pool and spa, fitness room; casual dining and coffee shop in the atrium.

The Rise Up Conference is for all ages! Young adults, married couples with children, seniors, and everyone in between are welcome! The children can enjoy the Children's Program (ages 5-12), and their own menu planned just for them.

Save the date for the conference! To register go to www.riseupconference.com!

For more information, check out our website www.riseupconference.com,

e-mail riseupconference@gmail.com, or call (813) 995-7706.



MOSES *in the* ROCK

by SHAWN ABIGAIL

Throughout the Bible, the rock is a picture of Christ. Whether referring to the stone the builders rejected, the stone cut out without hands, the stone of stumbling and the rock of offense, the living stone, the cornerstone, or the choice and precious stone, the picture is of Christ. And this is why Exodus 33:17-23 is so beautiful.

Moses had just made intercession for the nation of Israel with the words, “*Consider too, that this nation is Your people*” (v. 13). He then asked the Lord to go before the nation, leading them. The Lord agreed to Moses’ request and told Moses that he had found favor in His sight. But then Moses asked for something most unusual: “*I pray You, show me Your glory!*” (v.18).

Moses was in the presence of God, but he wanted more of that presence. He wanted to be closer; he wanted deeper knowledge of who God is. It seems that Moses did not know exactly what he was asking, because the glory of God was a fearful thing. For example, in Exodus 24:17 we read, “*And to the eyes of the sons of Israel the appearance of the glory of the Lord was like a consuming fire on the mountain top.*”

Yet Moses made his request from the best of motives. He did not ask based on curiosity or mere religious impulse, but from a genuine desire to know God better. And so his request was granted. The Lord agreed to let Moses see him with one caveat: “*But He said, ‘You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live!’*” We do not fully understand the reasons why the face of God could not be seen, but it is likely that this is a reminder that some things belong to God and God alone.

Moses is not permitted to present his own ideas about how to resolve this problem, for God Himself has the answer. (This is a reminder to us that mankind could never have devised a means of salvation for himself. Only God Almighty could come up with the gospel.)

God’s solution to this problem is given in verse 22, “*I will put you in the cleft of the rock and cover you with My hand until I have passed by.*” To the unbeliever, it would seem a silly idea from a primitive religion that a man would need to hide among some rocks so that he would not see the face of God. But for the Christian, this concept makes perfect sense. Since

the rock is a picture of Christ, being hidden in the rock is consistent with the broad theme of Scripture.

Safe in the cleft

However, there is one detail we should note. Moses was not hidden behind the rock but was hidden in a cleft in the rock. That rock, as mighty as it was, had some sort of crack or fissure without which Moses could not be hidden. The cleft in the rock is essential to this story. There is a parallel for us. The Lord Jesus Christ, in all His might, beauties, and perfections, could not be the Savior until He went to the cross and was pierced for our sake, giving up His life. Just as the rock had been pierced by a cleft, so, too, the Lord Jesus Christ had His hands, feet, and side pierced.

Moses was given a great honor: he was allowed to see God and live. Isaiah understood what a privilege this was, for in Isaiah 6:5, we read his reaction to seeing the Lord: “*Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I live among a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.*” But there was



**“When You said,
‘Seek My face,’
My heart said to You,
‘Your face, Lord,
I will seek’” (Ps. 27:8).**

another great privilege that Moses would be granted, about 1500 years later. Each of the synoptic Gospels records that, on the Mount of Transfiguration, Moses spoke face to face with the Lord Jesus Christ. What Moses could not do when he represented the Old Testament Law he was enabled to do by the grace that Jesus Christ brings. So Moses was finally permitted to see the face of God!

More than Moses

In light of this, we might ask ourselves, how is this practical? We live in a different time with a very different set of dealings between God and man than what Moses experienced. True! But we should remind ourselves that the Lord Jesus Christ inaugurated a new dispensation, the defining characteristic of which is grace. The restrictions of the Old Testament Law were largely for the purpose of teaching us basic lessons (Heb. 6:1; Gal. 3:24). No longer do we have dietary restrictions, animal sacrifices, or a form of worship that depends on sights, sounds, and smells. What Moses could understand in an elementary way in the previous dispensation of Law, we can understand more fully in this present dispensation of Grace.

In particular, we have a greater and fuller revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the cleft in the rock was only a picture. The character, personality, and teachings of the Savior are given to us in

four Gospels. The nature of His saving work is portrayed for us in great clarity throughout the New Testament. We are presented with a person who appeals to both heart and mind. We’ve even been told His name! When Moses was hidden in the cleft of the rock, he could not have foreseen the scope of revelation given today to the humblest saint who is willing to sincerely open the Bible.

We are also reminded that God has His own ways of solving problems. Perhaps when we were first saved, we thought that we needed to devise our own answers to the problems of life. Our prayers consisted of informing God that we had come up with a wonderful answer to our problems, and we only needed God to make it happen. But as we mature in the Lord, we learn that God solves problems and answers prayers in ways we can’t anticipate. It is a beautiful thing to see a mature saint waiting patiently on the Lord.

This passage also presents the holiness of God in a powerful way. Christians today have free access to God through the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Indeed,

persistence and boldness in prayer are encouraged (Lk. 11:8). But we must not lose sight of the fact that God is God, and that He is infinitely holy. The Christian learns to enjoy fellowship without losing reverential fear for God. It seems that many today have lost that reverential fear of God.

What do you see in the cleft?

Perhaps the most beautiful practical comment on this passage comes from Moses’ exclamation, “*I pray You, show me Your glory!*” Moses wanted more of God, and so God granted his earnest request. Here we see that God will honor our desire to enjoy more of Him. God rejoices in us when we are rejoicing in Him. It satisfies Him when we are satisfied with Him. When we purpose in our hearts that we will settle for nothing less than seeing the glory of the Son of God, it pleases the heart of our Father. Indeed, the very core of worship is to take those truths we learn about the Lord Jesus Christ from the Bible, to meditate on them, and then present them back to the Father with a heart-felt cry, “Father, we see how beautiful your Son is! We join You in taking pleasure in Him.” ■

Sir William Henry Wills, in a letter dated June, 1898, writes, “[Augustus] Toplady was one day overtaken by a thunderstorm in Burrington Coombe, on the edge of my property, Blagdon, a rocky glen running up into the heart of the Mendip range, and there, taking shelter between two massive piers of our native limestone rock, he penned the hymn, “Rock of Ages, cleft for me, Let me hide myself in Thee.” There is a precipitous crag of limestone a hundred feet high, and right down its centre is the deep recess in which Toplady sheltered.”

The FOUNDATIONSTONE

PAUL CAMPBELL

Why do so many Christians cooperate with the devil? Are you shocked by such a question? Our Savior is doing the mighty work of building His church. He is actively opposed by the devil, the cunning serpent and roaring lion, who seeks to devour unprepared Christians. When we act in disobedience to our Lord we are, in fact, playing into the enemy's hand and joining forces with him—albeit without realizing it—to mar what God is building!

Shouldn't we instead focus on cooperating with the Lord who is building something of infinite and eternal value? We needn't fear that any such effort will be wasted. The church will endure the enemy's attacks because of the rock solid foundation on which it is built.

A sure foundation

The rocky peaks of Mount Hermon in northern Israel, surrounded by pagan temples, provide the backdrop for a fortifying truth. First, in Matthew 16:13, the Lord Jesus probed His disciples with the question, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" They answered that the consensus of the people was that He was a prophet of some sort. Next, He asked His closest disciples for their answer, "But who do you say that

I am?" Peter's response was a revelation from God Himself: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (v. 16).

Promise fulfilled

This declaration of who their Master was answered the question posed by the Samaritan woman in John 4:29: "Come, see a man who told me all the things that I have done; this is not the Christ, is it?" Yes, He was! The Christ, the Messiah, long anticipated by the Jews, had finally come! From the very first pages of recorded history, God had predicted His coming, in ever-increasing detail. Messiah would destroy Satan's power (Gen. 3:15); would be a prophet like Moses (Deut. 18:18-19); would rule as king (Jer. 23:5-6); and He would suffer for the sins of the people (Isa. 53).

In addition, He would be given the divine titles of Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace (Isa. 9:6), be eternal (Mic. 5:2), and have the seven-fold Spirit rest on Him (Isa. 11:1-2; Rev. 5:6). As with Peter, we can only realize who Jesus Christ is when God Himself opens our eyes. He is the Messiah whom God had promised would come to redeem and reign. He is God come in human flesh!

SUMMARY POINTS

- The church rests secure on the promised Messiah-God.
- Even Satan cannot conquer this mighty work of the Lord.
- Will I cooperate with the Lord as He builds His church?

Why did the Lord ask His disciples who they thought He was? Because what He was about to explain absolutely depended upon it! "I also say to you that you are Peter" (v. 18). Peter now understood who his Master was, the expected Savior and King. Now he needed to properly understand himself in two ways.

First, the Lord called him Peter, which means "a stone." Peter would be like Christ, the large rock, in that he would have the same nature or life, so he could later write that believers are now partakers of the divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4). We have within us the very life of God! Second, however, Peter was still just a small stone and was insufficient in himself to accomplish anything for God. Messiah would have to work through Peter, empowering him to serve effectively: "Without Me you can do nothing" (Jn. 15:5).



Sometimes called the Western Stone, the largest foundation stone under the temple site in Jerusalem has a length of 45 feet (13.6 m.), a height of 9.8 feet (3 m.), and an estimated width of between 11 and 15 feet (3.5-4.5 m.). Estimates place its weight at 570 tons (510 Imperial tons). It is the largest known object to be moved by man without powered machinery.

Nothing will stop Him

While Peter was the stone, his Master was the Rock of Ages: *“Upon this rock I will build My church”* (Mt. 16:18) Here, *rock* means large rock or bedrock. It is not Peter upon whom the church is being built, but Peter’s confession of who Jesus is: the Christ, the Son of the living God. The church is being built on the rock solid character and work of Messiah. He died to purchase her as a bride for Himself. Now He lives in the power of an endless life to sustain and cause her to grow.

The words *“I will build”* express a certainty and confidence that the church is on a solid footing. When God says *“I will,”* we have no doubt whatsoever. And He is building it! Today, the church of the living God is being built, one living stone at a time. Every day, hundreds, perhaps thousands, are added to this called-out group of people purchased by the blood of the Lamb, brought from spiritual death to resurrection life, destined to forever live with, serve, be like, and adore the Head of the church, our Lord Jesus Christ!

Even before the church began, the Lord promised it would be victorious: *“the gates of Hades will not overpower it”* (v. 18). Put another way, *“all the powers of hell will not conquer it”* (NLT). No human resistance

to the church’s progress is mentioned. This tells us that the real threat to the growth of the church is not human, but spiritual. Satan and his unseen forces would like nothing better than to destroy the work of God. Yet not even satanic powers can conquer the church of the Firstborn! Satan will try to use people, even believers, to weaken and damage the church, yet even he can be resisted when believers first submit themselves to God (Jas. 4:7). The solid foundation of the church is infinitely more powerful than anything the devil can do. Praise the Lord for the Rock of our salvation!

Let’s get practical

A number of practical implications arise from the truths we have just examined. First, God is doing an important work and He is leaving it to no other. The success of the church depends not on me (a stone), but on Him (the Rock). The work of creation took six days, but the work of building His church has taken our Lord almost 2000 years to date. And He will not stop until it is accomplished! He is faithful. We can trust Him.

Second, the church is being irresistibly built on an absolutely solid foundation. The church will one day be complete, perfect, and holy, as a bride ready for her

bridegroom (Rev. 21:2). Each believer will one day be totally transformed to be like our Savior: *“He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus”* (Php. 1:6).

Third, even Satan’s power cannot overcome the Lord’s building of His church. Satan is already defeated and he knows it (Gen. 3:15; Rev. 20:20). The Lord wants each local church to flourish and grow. There are always difficulties and discouragements, but the bottom line is this: will I cooperate with Satan in bringing down the church by my disobedience or will I trust the Lord’s promise to build His church and cooperate with Him?

Think of the example of the Israelites about to enter the promised land (Num. 13-14). Before Moses sent the spies out, God had already assured them possession of the land: *“so that they may spy out the land of Canaan, which I am going to give to the sons of Israel”* (Num. 13:2). Sure, there were giants and well-fortified cities, but God said they would have the land. It was a done deal, as long as they trusted Him. The same principle applies to us. He has promised the church will be victorious, even over the forces of hell. Will we believe Him? When a whole local church trusts in this promise from the God who cannot lie, there is no telling what the Lord will do in and through His people for the blessing of others! ■

THE LIVING STONE

1 PETER 2:4

MALCOLM HORLOCK

The title *living stone* occurs in only this one place in Scripture. Speaking of the Lord Jesus, the apostle Peter writes, “*To whom coming, a living stone...you yourselves also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house*” (literal translation).

As is well known, our Lord bestowed on Simon the son of Jonah a new name, that of Cephas, which was interpreted as “*the rock*” (Jn. 1:42). But while freely using the name given to him by Jesus (1 Pet. 1:1; 2 Pet. 1:1), the apostle is careful to point his readers not to himself, but to the Lord Jesus as both the rock and the stone (1 Pet. 2:4-8).

It is hardly surprising that Peter speaks first of our Lord as the living stone, before ever he does of Him as (i) the rejected stone, (ii) as the divinely chosen and precious stone, (iii) as the chief cornerstone, or (iv) as the stone of stumbling (1 Pet. 2:4-8). The apostle clearly enjoyed using the word *living*. His divinely revealed confession concerning our Lord at Caesarea Philippi had been, “*You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.*” Indeed, his description there of our Lord as the Son of the living God has no parallel in the New Testament.¹

Other witnesses in the Gospels, whether human beings, angels, or demons, confessed Him simply as the Son of God.²

Now, in his epistle, the apostle speaks of the Lord Jesus not only as the living stone (1 Pet. 2:4), but also of the hope of the Christian as a living hope (1 Pet. 1:3), and of the Word of God as that which lives and abides forever (1 Pet. 1:23). We could perhaps summarize Peter’s teaching by saying that the living stone is none other than the Son of the living God, who has given us a living hope through the living Word of God.

THE CONTEXT

It is important to observe the context in which the title *living stone* is found. Looking backwards first, we find that the apostle employed this title immediately after he had urged his readers to crave pure spiritual milk on the ground that they had already “*tasted that the Lord is good*” (1 Pet. 2:3).³ These words were a direct quotation from Psalm 34:8, where David exhorted others to “*taste and see that Jehovah is good.*” We note from the way in which Peter added the words *to whom coming* with reference to the Lord Jesus that, along with

other writers in the New Testament, he had no hesitation in identifying the Lord Jesus with Jehovah.⁴

But the title *living stone* also points forward, anticipating three Old Testament texts which Peter straightaway quotes, each of which speaks of the Savior as a stone.⁵ Interestingly, this is the only place in the New Testament where all three stone references are pulled together. Although Peter was doubtless aware that his Jewish brethren would have readily understood the stone as a messianic title,⁶ he almost certainly had something else in mind. How could he ever forget that occasion when, only a few days before His death, the Lord Jesus had applied that very metaphor to Himself (see Mk. 12:10)?

THE PARADOX

When Peter describes the Lord Jesus as a living stone, the combination of words immediately alert the reader to the fact that the apostle was speaking figuratively; for nothing is more devoid of life than a natural, physical stone.⁷ I suspect that, at some time or other, most of us have referred to



View the vast building, see it rise:
The work how great! the plan how wise!
O wondrous fabric! pow'r unknown:
That rests it on the "Living Stone."
—Samuel Medley

something or someone as being “stone dead.” Indeed, Scripture itself contrasts lifeless stones both with God (Acts 17:29) and with men (Lk. 3:8; 19:40). But, paradoxically, the stone of which Peter writes is living! Our Lord Jesus can be termed a living stone for at least three reasons:

1. He has life in Himself: “*for as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself*” (Jn. 5:26). Unlike every created being, whose life is derived from God, our Savior’s life resides within Himself.

2. He has been raised from the dead, now to live forevermore (Rom. 6:9; Heb. 7:16, 25; Rev. 1:18). “Living from eternity, alive from the dead.”⁸ When mocking the building efforts of the returning exiles, Sanballat asked derisively, “*Will they revive the stones?*” (Neh. 4:2) Well, we know of a stone who revived (Rom. 14:9)!

3. He is the source and communicator of all life, whether natural life to all His creatures, or spiritual and eternal life to all His people (Jn. 1:4; 5:21; 6:51; 1 Cor. 15:45). But I cannot help observing that, before He ever gave my life *to me* (in either sense), He first gave His life *for me*! Praise Him!

THE RESULT

Then we read, “*you yourselves also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house*” (literal translation). There can be no doubt that when we first came to Christ we were, as living stones, built into that spiritual house which is the church as a whole. That is, when we came to the living stone, we became living stones.

But the tense which Peter uses points to something different.⁹ The apostle has in mind, not our coming in an initial act of faith, but our continual and repeated coming—our constant, personal, and intimate communion with the Lord. It is not that we are built into that spiritual house, but, as living stones already forming part of that spiritual house, we are built up.

Because the Lord Jesus is the source and spring of the church’s life and growth, fellowship with Him is essential if the people of God are to develop spiritually.

So, in coming to Him, we not only find rest (Mt. 11:28), refreshment (Jn. 7:37), sustenance (Jn. 21:12), and company (Jn. 1:39), but also receive edification.

It is this direct approach to the living Lord which, in part, distinguishes Christianity from all other so-called faiths; for no other so-called faith can boast a founder who, having died, has risen triumphantly and who is ever available for fellowship with each one of His followers.

THE CONTRAST

In speaking of our Lord as a living stone, it is possible that Peter intends to strike a contrast, not only between Christ and the Gentile gods of stone (Acts 17:29), but also between Him and the imposing (yet inanimate) stones of the temple at Jerusalem. For it was concerning the forthcoming destruction of that temple that Peter had once heard the Lord Jesus say, “*Not one stone shall be left upon another, that shall not be thrown down*” (Mk. 13:2). But now the apostle can speak of one stone which shall never be thrown down!

Concerning the massive and magnificent stones of Herod’s temple to which many Jews came on their regular pilgrimages, their days were numbered. But concerning the living stone to whom we come repeatedly, His years will have no end (see Ps. 102:27). ■

ENDNOTES

1 This is one of the fourteen occurrences of the title “*living God*” in the New Testament, a statistic which, rather surprisingly, comes close to matching the fifteen occurrences of the same title in the Old Testament. (The weight of manuscript evidence for Jn. 6:69 is heavily in favor of the rendering “*the holy one of God.*”)

2 See (i) The demons (Mt. 8:29; Mk. 3:11; 5:7; Lk. 4:41); (ii) the disciples collectively (Mt. 14:33); (iii) the centurion at the cross (Mt. 27:54; Mk. 15:39); (iv) the angel Gabriel (Lk. 1:35); (v) the Gadarene demoniac (Lk. 8:28); (vi) John the Baptist (Jn. 1:34); (vii) Nathanael (Jn. 1:49); (viii) the man born blind (Jn. 9:35-38); and (ix) Martha of Bethany (Jn. 11:27).

3 As noted by J. A. Bengel in his *Gnomon of the New Testament*, “A taste excites the appetite,” Vol. V, p 53.

4 Compare 1 Pet. 2:8 and 1 Pet. 3:15 with Isa. 8:12-14.

5 Isa. 28:16; Ps. 118:22; Isa. 8:14.

6 J. Jeremias, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1974), Vol. IV, pp 272-273.

7 “In nature no object lies more obviously void of life than a stone,” William Kelly, *First Epistle of Peter*, commenting on 1 Pet. 2:4.

8 John Wesley, *Notes on the Bible*, commenting on 1 Pet. 2:4.

9 The participle “coming” is in the present tense.



powered
YOUTH

HIS LIFE OUR LIGHT

Powered Youth [www.poweredyouth.com] is a website for and by serious young believers, encouraging Christ-focused thinking and Christ-centered living. Their theme this month matches Uplook's theme, and they have graciously agreed to let us include some of their articles in our publication for your encouragement and prayers.

The Precious Stone

"Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious..." (1 Peter 2:4)

THE BUILDING PROGRAM

Why is Christ this precious stone? Scripture calls our Lord Jesus the precious Cornerstone. The cornerstone is the first stone to be set in a foundation, and it determines the position of the entire structure. We are like living stones, growing and being built up. Jesus is central to this construction and our growth, so we come to Him. As William McDonald says, "Our only suitability to be building materials is derived from our identification with Him." He is the unique, precious stone, central to God's plans.

TRIED AND TRUE

Christ was rejected by men His whole life. When He was born, there was no room in the inn. There were many times in His ministry when no one would believe Him. They ar-

rested Him, beat Him, and put Him to death. Even today, men and women can find no room for Him in their lives and reject Him. He truly is a tried Stone, but proven to be true. He went through every form of suffering, yet proved Himself worthy. He never forced His will on those who rejected Him, and He gave Himself up for those who hated Him.

PRECIOUS IN GOD'S SIGHT

In the end, though, man's opinions don't really matter. They rejected Him, but in God's sight Jesus is precious beyond calculation. Any attempt would fail to describe the love in the relationship between the Father and the Son (in the bond of the Spirit of love). But Jesus is also precious because He brings us to the Father, whose love for us is so great. Through Christ we are declared right in God's eyes. Through Christ we have reconciliation with the Father. And to see this pleases the Father. Christ is chosen, and precious to God. May He occupy such a place in our hearts as well! —CHASE BOONE



The KJV Bible uses “coney” to translate the original Hebrew word *shaphan* (meaning “the hider”), referring to the Syria hyrax, or rock badger (NKJV) whose appearance is similar to a cross between a rabbit and a woodchuck. However, they do not have the digging capabilities of either rabbits or woodchucks, and so find refuge in the clefts of the rocks.

A Resting Place

A LOWLY EXAMPLE

“There be four things which are little upon the earth, but they are exceeding wise... The conies are but a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks” (Prov. 30:24, 26, KJV).

Here is a scripture that has often been on my mind. There are four small creatures in this chapter that, by instinct, do things which carry important messages for our lives. The rock badger or a coney, mentioned in this verse, has the build of a prairie dog or a small rabbit. It is a creature without bristles, fangs, or dangerous claws. It is vulnerable and seems to be defenseless.

However, we should take time to observe the coney’s instinctive response to danger and then apply the lessons to our lives. This predator-vulnerable animal knows enough to run into the rocks and find a place of safety. The little creature, knowing its own limitations, does not try to outsmart or overpower an enemy. It simply lives where it will be secure, beyond the reach of danger.

A SURE RESTING PLACE

“I will love You, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; My God, my strength, in whom I will trust; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised; so shall I be saved from my enemies” (Psalm 18:1-3).

“The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous run to it and are safe” (Prov. 18:10).

Here is the a life principle for us: Jesus Christ is our Rock. As our Rock, He should be where we make our home, just as the conies made their home in the rock. We should not make our homes in this world and then go searching for our stronghold when a tragedy strikes or when we get overwhelmed by this

life. We should just be able to go home! Making Jesus our regular resting place is a crucial aspect to living the Christian life if we are to live in the enjoyment of what the Savior provides for us. Making the Lord Jesus our regular resting place is crucial for our daily survival.

Notice that the verse does *not* say, “The scaredy-cat people run to it and are safe.” It says that the *righteous* are the ones who run there. This is most surely a retreat. A rock badger doesn’t need to learn that it is vulnerable; but we do. While we can’t always handle things, our Rock is one that can weather the storm and take the attacks of others. We simply need to rest in Him, as we dwell “in Christ.”

A LIFE PRINCIPLE

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ...Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love...In Him we have redemption through His blood...In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will” (Eph. 1:3, 4, 7, 11).

Here are a few of the many references to the believer being “in Christ” in Ephesians 1. As you read the New Testament, it should become obvious that the life we live is lived “in Him.” This does not mean that your life will be devoid of all troubles and sadness. What it means is that, if you are in Him when these things come, you can rest assured that every circumstance has been permitted to reach you. What peace it is to know that everything that happens to you has already gone through the loving mind of our Savior before it ever touched you. He is our security and rest, and nothing will get through to us unless He lets it come in, since He knows it will ultimately work for our benefit. —DAVID NICHOLSON

Christ the Rock

WARNING: UNEVEN GROUND

Before buying a house, many people hire a realtor. The realtor helps them to find a house that matches their needs. I can remember the day when my wife and I first looked at the house that we would buy. In a way, seeing different things about the house reminded me of Christ.

There we were, walking up to the house and I could not help but noticing the two concrete steps that led to the front door. The two steps and the small area where you stand just before the door had sunk down into the ground at a great slope away from the house. The realtor had mentioned that

this was quite normal for the entire county because the ground in the area all has a base of clay.

We bought the house despite the condition of the small slanting porch. But, if I were in a position to build a house and choose the plot to build on, it definitely would not be on clay. In fact,

Jesus shared an illustration about this very thing. Let's take a look at the story He told in Matthew 7:

"Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock" (vv. 24-25).

Notice, Jesus is speaking about a characteristic of a wise person; a wise man always builds his house on the rock. Why? Because, without a doubt, rain is going to come, floods will rise, and winds will increase. The house that is built on the rock will not fall because its foundation is a solid and the firm ground underneath can stand against any storm.



CHRIST THE FIRM FOUNDATION

The Lord Jesus is our Rock. He is that very secure foundation for the house that is built on it. The house is a picture of our life. We are building a house with every moment we live. If we focus on the Rock, there are a few things we can notice and take to heart about Him.

Unlike my concrete steps in front of my house, the Lord Jesus is the only sure and true foundation. We can rest assured that putting our faith in Christ no matter what the storm, will prove to build a solid house here and for all eternity. He is unchanging and faithful.

Also, we can be thankful that the Lord gives us a chance and urges us with welcoming arms to build on the only true foundation. He wants us to take advantage of the security that He offers.

—SHANE MIRABELLA

*How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
Is laid for your faith in His excellent Word!
What more can He say than to you He hath said,
You, who unto Jesus for refuge have fled?
In every condition, in sickness, in health;
In poverty's vale, or abounding in wealth;
At home and abroad, on the land, on the sea,
As thy days may demand, shall thy strength ever be.
When through the deep waters I call thee to go,
The rivers of woe shall not thee overflow;
For I will be with thee, thy troubles to bless,
And sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.
When through fiery trials thy pathways shall lie,
My grace, all sufficient, shall be thy supply;
The flame shall not hurt thee; I only design
Thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine.
The soul that on Jesus has leaned for repose,
I will not, I will not desert to its foes;
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I'll never, no never, no never forsake. (JOHN KEENE)*



A Famous Neglected Sermon

Nothing like the Sermon on the Mount has produced so much interest in study and yet so much apathy in practice. There we find famous sayings like, “*Blessed are the poor in spirit,*” “*You are the salt of the earth,*” “*Love your enemies,*” “*Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name,*” “*You cannot serve two masters,*” “*Consider the lilies of the field,*” and “*Judge not, that you be not judged*”—to name only a few. These sayings are rightfully famous.

Yet though they are held aloft as noble ideals, they are so often explained away. In the words of Oliver Wendell Holmes, “Most people are willing to take the Sermon on the Mount as a flag to sail under, but few will use it as a rudder by which to steer.”

As the listeners heard this radical sermon by someone their leaders considered an extremist, they were astonished. “It sounds good,” they must have thought, “but does it work?” People today continue to doubt the sermon by questioning its practicality. Turn the other cheek? Give to him who asks of you? Take no thought for tomorrow? Really? What will happen if I actually do that? To address these hesitations, the Lord Jesus forcefully closes His sermon with the parable of choosing either to build on a rock or on the sand.

AN ANSWER BY PARABLE

While the rock metaphor often refers to the Lord Jesus Himself, here it refers primarily to His teachings. Just as a foundation of rock ensures stability and permanence, so too this sermon comes with an unlimited performance guarantee. Building on the rock symbolizes obeying it: “*He who hears these sayings of Mine and does them.*” Although difficult, the wise will live by this sermon because it alone provides real stability in a shifting and unstable world.

The fool, on the other hand, “*hears these sayings of Mine*

and does not do them.” When a disciple fails to be the salt of the earth, to love his enemies, to pray for God’s kingdom, to trust God with tomorrow, to judge with righteous judgment, and so on, this neglect is both foolish and dangerous. The floods will come. The winds will blow. While so many rationalize their disobedience, the Lord Jesus couldn’t have been clearer about the inevitable outcome of their actions: “*and great was its fall.*” As He said earlier, we will be like salt, “*good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.*” Our testimony will be shot and our significance as an influence for God will be forfeited.

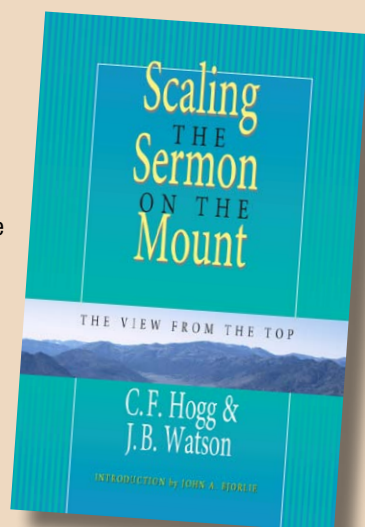
AN ANSWER BY PRACTICE

But we have more than this solemn warning to assure us of the importance of actually obeying the sermon. We can look back and see the result of the One who laid down this foundation. The Lord Jesus Christ practiced what He preached. He always lived in accordance with these principles—being the light of the world, loving His enemies, not laying up treasure on earth. For almost two millennia the storms of criticism and opposition have beat against the house of His life. “*But the house on the rock stood firm.*” —BRUCE HENNING

HELP FOR THE CLIMB

Here’s what we consider the best book on the Sermon. “The sayings are hard, not to the understanding but to the will...At bottom the question is...Do we desire fellowship with Christ more than anything else that life has to offer us?” Includes an excellent chart showing where each truth in the Sermon is found in the epistles.

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The Rock of Offense

“Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, ‘The stone which the builders rejected has become...a rock of offense’ (1 Pet. 2:8).

Jesus defines the word *skandalon*, translated in 1 Peter 2:8 as *offense*, in Matthew 16:23: *“But He turned and said to Peter, ‘Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance (skandalon) to Me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.’”* Peter did not understand the heavenly mission of the Messiah. His mind was grounded here on earth, and he could not understand why the Savior had to die in order to bless the whole world. Perhaps years later, Peter was thinking back to this incident while writing his first epistle. He could see that both the Jews and Gentiles found Jesus a Rock of Offense because their eyes were not on the things of God.



JESUS OFFENDED IN HIS TIME ON EARTH

Throughout the life of Christ we see that every aspect of His incarnation — His birth, ministry, and especially His death — was offensive to those around Him. They gossiped about His questionable parentage. Some of His own disciples initially expressed disgust when they heard the ‘zip code’ where the Messiah was raised. During His ministry, we see that people tried to kill Him many times. What type of Savior was this, sharing meals with sinners and prostitutes?

His message was so offensive that it led two conflicting people groups to be tripped up (*skandalon*) and to eventually conspire in His execution. The Jews, through barred teeth, proclaimed that their only king was Caesar, and the Gentiles hung the Lord on a shameful tree. What message could cause self-righteous, law-keeping Jews, and science- and knowledge-driven Gentiles to come together and plot the murder of the Messiah? It is, in fact, the same message that offends and trips up the world today; a message that didn’t stand a chance of success unless it was supernatural.

PLAYING OFFENSE

Jesus said, *“Blessed is the one who is not offended by Me”* (Mt. 11:6). As believers, we are reminded to keep our minds on the things of God. Too often we find ourselves caught up in our careers, our favorite TV show, or any other trivial thing that Satan will use to ground our minds down here on earth. But oh, the wonderful truth that we are a heavenly people, a vital part of a building made of living stones, which will survive when all other things made by men are destroyed. Let our focus remain on winning souls for that day and always endeavor to keep our minds on the things of God.

THE FINAL ROCK OF OFFENSE

One day the final Rock of Offense will loom out of the earth like a great mountain. There will be no way around or over Him. Every eye will see Him and every tongue confess that He is Lord. The Rock of Offense will be on display once more, not for execution but for exaltation. Not to be vilified but to be glorified. How will you live in light of that day?

—SHARON SAX

“One grain of this faith [in Christ] is worth more than a diamond the size of the world—yes, though you should thread such jewels together, as many as the stars of heaven for number, they would be worth nothing compared with the smallest atom of faith in Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God!”

—Charles Haddon Spurgeon

2 new Mirror Image booklets

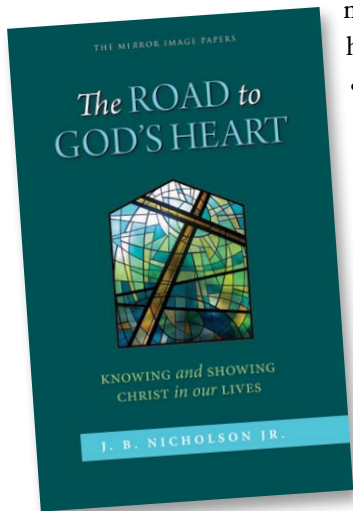
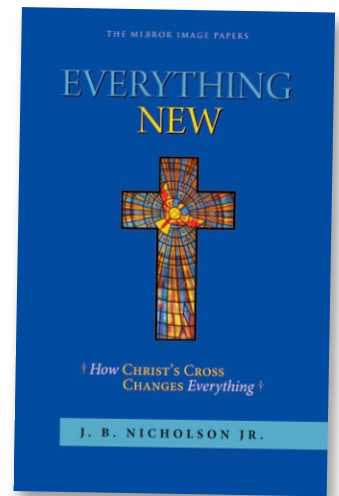
Uplook has added two more booklets to the *Mirror Image* series by Jabe Nicholson. Just 12 pages long, and digest size, they are designed to encourage people to think about the Lord Jesus, especially as a real person, and to think about “the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus” (Eph. 2:7).

The Road to God’s Heart: Knowing and Showing Christ in Our Lives: Millions of people in the West claim to be Christians. Are they? What does it mean to be a real Christian according to the Bible? • There are some who say you can’t *know* if you’re ready to meet God, but they do their best to *show* how a Christian should live.

• Others say you can *know* you’re ready but then never *show* it in their lives. Who is telling the truth, and what does God’s Word say about this? If forever is at stake, it seems we ought to check it out. Using the two sides of the heart, the author explains the two essentials of Christianity: Christ’s substitutionary death *for* us and His resurrection life *in* us. Much of Christendom has only one half or the other. Discover the Bible’s cure to fatal half-heartedness. 12 pp.

Everything New: How Christ’s Cross Changes Everything: The cross was not a decoration on a steeple or a piece of jewelry. It was an instrument of painful death. So why would anyone say they “glory in the cross”? Especially a Jew like Paul who believed that a person on a cross was under the curse of God.

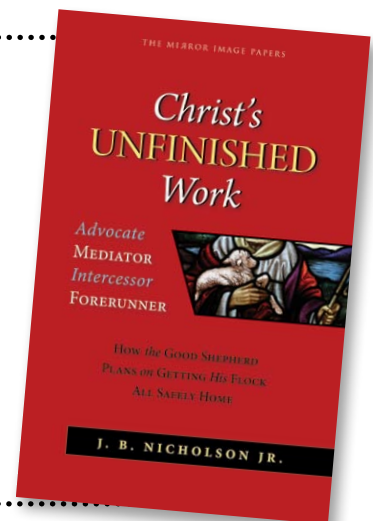
Only one person could be beautiful enough, powerful enough, wise enough, to change the worst day in history into the best day that ever was. Only one person could be crucified in weakness and at the same time defeat sin, death and hell. Only one person could confound the brightest minds on earth with the seeming foolishness of the cross. The cross of Christ changes everything. The author, in a series of short paragraphs, describes what happens the moment someone trusts Christ—from death to life, lost to found, far to near, slaves to free, aliens to citizens, etc. 12 pp.



Christ’s Unfinished Work is the first in the series of short booklets on the person and work of the Lord Jesus written by Jabe Nicholson. It is the author’s conviction that what believers and unbelievers both need is a clear glimpse of the uplifted Christ. The booklets are intended to be reasonably priced, simply written, and Bible-based, encouraging people to set their minds on Christ.

This booklet focuses on the four great ministries of our Great High Priest as Advocate, Mediator, Intercessor, and Forerunner. It’s subtitle gives the purpose of the booklet: “How the Good Shepherd Plans on Getting His Flock All Safely Home.”

These booklets, called *The Mirror Image Papers*, can be easily read in an evening, and offer the opportunity to have a clear look at the One who offers transforming truth to those who behold His glory.



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you shall be witnesses

Do you love Him?

Jabe Nicholson



I was having a Bible teaching series in Vancouver, BC, and was staying at Scott and Ruth Banford's home. One morning, I was out enjoying their beautiful gardens. They had an old Japanese gardener who kept the place picture-perfect, including a greenhouse filled with exotic orchids. Just then, I saw two men approaching. I guessed they were Mormons.

As we engaged in conversation, I felt led to ask the older of the two, who was carrying the bulk of the discussion, if he could definitely say that he loved the Lord Jesus. "I don't know what you mean," he replied. "Do you mean, do I admire him?"

"No," I insisted, "do you love Him?"

"I'm sorry, I don't understand what you mean," he repeated.

"Are you married?" I asked.

"Yes, I am."

"And do you love your wife?"

"Yes, I do," he said with a smile.

"Ah, so you *do* know what I mean! Let me ask you again, Do you love the Lord Jesus?"

"No, I can't say that I do," he replied honestly.

I then turned to those solemn words: "*If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed*" (1 Cor. 16:22). I explained to him his options by turning to Galatians 3 and reading from verses 10 and 13, "*Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.*" But, I continued, the good news is that "*Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree').*"

"That's why," I concluded, "if you *won't* love Him, you are rejecting His curse-bearing work for you at the cross, so you must bear it yourself forever. But if you *don't* love Him, if you haven't loved Him up till now, then *do* love Him! And you will love Him if you, as a poor sinner, meet Him as your Savior at the cross."

When they left, I had some hope that a little ray of light had broken through the darkness into their hearts.

By the way, on another occasion I used the same approach, and the so-called Jehovah's Witness I was speaking to said he *did* love the Lord Jesus! That set me back for a second, but then I continued, "So the obvious next question is: Where did you meet Him? You can't love someone you haven't met."

He didn't know what to say, of course, because JW's don't believe in the bodily res-

urrection of Christ. But I tried to explain the simple words of promise, "*the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out*" (Jn. 6:37). Yes, Jesus is alive, and is still seeking and saving those who are lost.

On another occasion, I was working in my study at our first home in St. Catharines, ON, studying for an upcoming conference on how to reach the cults for Christ. Just then the doorbell rang and my wife said, "I think it's Jehovah's Witnesses."

I had no time right then, and thought we just wouldn't answer the door. Stay out of sight and they'll go away. After all, they aren't interested in the gospel anyway.

HEY, WAIT A MINUTE! I'm preparing a message on reaching the cults, and two of them are at my door, and...

So I went and answered it. And who was there? The brother of a lady in our local fellowship, Leona Denisko. I found out later that she was praying frantically that some Christian somewhere would reach out to her brother with the gospel. And I almost missed my opportunity.

Remember, we're the contact point between earth and heaven, between earth's desperate need and heaven's unlimited supply. And it's not just Christians praying that someone will speak to their loved ones. The rich man in hell, as Jesus told the story in Luke 16:27-28, also wanted the same thing! ■

Purity (Part 2)

“Turn away my eyes from looking at worthless things,
and revive me in Your way” (Ps. 119:37).

In our last article, Scott Thomson looked briefly at the main points relating to online purity. In this article, we will focus on some tools that can help us to avoid and resist pornography.

A CAUTION

There is a danger in relying on tools too much so that when we are left without them, we have no strength to stand. Ephesians 6 gives us the spiritual armor we are to use to fight against the attacks of Satan. We must build a strong relationship with the Lord Jesus and surrender our lives to Him. That is where the key to avoiding sin is found. Having a love relationship with Him is vital to spiritual strength. But on top of that, we have a number of tools that will help us.

ACCOUNTABILITY

This is an essential tool in our fight against pornography and sexual sin. Accountability to others will come on various levels. These are people in our lives who will be able to hear the hard things we share, love us all the same, and make an effort to help us in our walk. Complete trust and confidentiality is a key component to these relationships. First, we should seek out close friends we can confide in and share our struggles with. These friends know us well, love us, and want the very best for us. Next, church leaders such as elders or youth leaders are great resources to help us. These accountability partners can give us spiritual

guidance and help us to overcome sin in our lives. They should be trustworthy and keep our discussions private and confidential. Finally, online accountability partners can be a tremendous help to us as we navigate the internet. By using software such as *Covenant Eyes*, *SafeEyes*, or *X3watch*, these partners will know what is going on (the software automatically sends them regular reports of our online activity) and can address concerns as needed.

FILTERING

Online filtering software can be a tremendous help in preventing access to pornography and other types of content that could be tempting for us. This software will block websites that contain specific kinds of content. There are dozens of apps available, but one that we have used and can recommend is *Safe Eyes*. This very powerful tool has many features such as time limits, application limits, category limits, and more. You set up this tool with an account for each user that uses a device. For example, you might have five accounts: one for each parent and three for your children. Then you can customize each account based on the needs. You might want to regulate the internet use to only one hour per day for each child. Each account can be fine-tuned to allow just the right access level.

One suggestion is to have your accounts set up initially and then have a friend,

accountability partner, or elder manage the accounts and password. That way there is no temptation to log in, change the settings, and bypass the filtering for your account.

ORGANIZATIONS

One last resource I would like to mention is that there are a few organizations that provide excellent help for those who are struggling. These organizations cover many addictions and can give specialized help when needed. *Setting Captives Free* is a well-known, Bible-based, Christ-centered organization that helps with addictions. *Pure Life Ministries* also provides excellent help and resources.

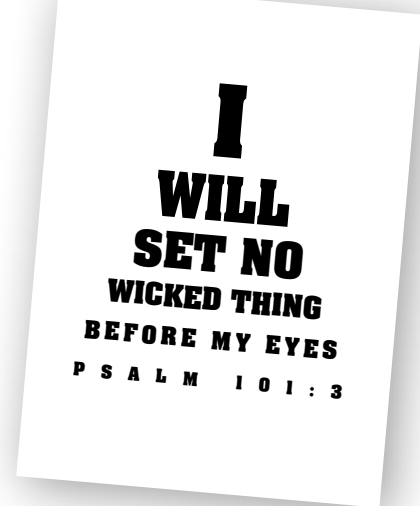
As we strive for purity in our lives, a dedicated and vibrant relationship with the Lord coupled with the use of tools available to us can help us be free from sexual sin or other addictions. Bring people into your life who can help you in your walk and can keep you accountable before the Lord. —CRAWFORD PAUL



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Messiah's Song OF THE Stone

H.R. Ghezzi

"This is the 'stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone'." ACTS 4:11

Imagine if you were told that there was a song written about you centuries before you were even born? To add mystery and intrigue, this song discloses intimate details surrounding your death. In the last night of the life of the Lord Jesus, we find Him likely singing the song written about His approaching death.

Psalm 118 is the last messianic psalm, referred to on no fewer than four occasions in the final week of the Lord's earthly ministry.

- His triumphal entry (Mt. 21:1-11);
- The parable of the wicked vinedressers (Mt. 21:33-46);
- His final visit to the temple (Mt. 23:39);
- His hymn in the upper room (Mt. 26:30).

Matthew 26:30 is the only record we have in the Gospels of the Lord singing. The setting is the Last Supper. Six psalms comprise the Egyptian Hallel which was sung at the three central feasts of Israel, including the Passover. Psalms 113-114 were sung by pilgrims before the Passover meal and Psalms 115-118 were sung after the meal. Therefore, it is almost certain that Psalm 118 was included in

the hymn cited in Matthew. As they sang, only the Lord knew what every word meant! Let us highlight some of His objectives found in the closing verses of the psalm.

MESSIAH AS SOVEREIGN

"Open to Me the gates of righteousness; I will go through them, and I will praise the Lord. This is the gate of the Lord, through which the righteous shall enter" (Ps. 118:19-20).

Upon the Lord's final entry into Jerusalem, the multitude recited Psalm 118:25, crying out, "Hosanna!" But this reception was short-lived and fell short of embracing His divine sovereignty, failing to acknowledge Him beyond "Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth" (Mt. 21:11).

In recent years, a rich young man in the UK, who happened to be the patron of a charity for the homeless, decided to see what it was like to be homeless. He wore the bare essentials and slept outdoors in a homeless district in London. The next morning, he announced that he couldn't imagine living under those conditions every day after spending just one night in

those circumstances. What was more remarkable was the identity of this rich, young man. Officially designated the Duke of Cambridge, he is popularly known as Prince William. How heartwarming that the one who is second in line to the British throne would identify with the lowest segment of his future kingdom! Even more remarkable is that the King of Kings, "the High and Lofty One who inhabits eternity" (Isa. 57:15), spent a lifetime of 33 years identifying with humanity. Tragically, humanity, by and large, didn't wish to identify with Him.

Imagine you were given the opportunity to commission a house built in your honor, for which you submitted the blueprints. Every item of furniture was crafted to fit you. Everything in the house was for you and about you. Once built, you leased this house to tenants, promising to return to claim it. But upon your return, the tenants let you know in no uncertain terms that you were not welcome there. This is what happened to the Lord Jesus with respect to the house of Israel. The call to "open...the gates of righteousness"



Engraving by Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld (1794-1872). David composing psalms. This illustration was published in *Die Bibel in Bildern* (1860).

went unfulfilled. In Matthew 23, the Lord is on the outside looking in, declaring His house (the temple) to be desolate until the nation sincerely quotes Psalm 118:26, “*Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.*”

MESSIAH AS A SCANDAL

“The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This was the Lord’s doing; it is marvelous in our eyes” (Ps. 118:22-23).

The holy construction site of Solomon’s temple forbade the sound of hammers or chisels, so stones were transferred there from a quarry (1 Ki. 6:7). According to tradition, the builders received a uniquely-shaped stone, deemed it unfit, and cast it aside into the Kidron Valley where it was abandoned and overgrown. When the time came for the final stone to be placed, the builders asked the quarrymen where it was. The quarrymen answered that it had already been delivered. It was then that the rejected stone was recalled and set in its rightful place where it was celebrated. Likewise, at His first advent, the Lord Jesus had *“no form or comeliness...no beauty that we should desire Him”* (Isa. 53:2).

After His fateful entrance into Jerusalem, the Lord Jesus presented the parable of the wicked vinedressers in which the vinedressers rejected and even killed the servants of the absent vineyard owner until they ultimately killed his son, for which

they were judged accordingly. The Lord applied the parable to the Jewish leaders by quoting Psalm 118:22-23, further elaborating that *“whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder”* (Mt. 21:44).

In light of this psalm, Peter divided society into two camps: the believers and the disobedient: *“...to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, the stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone and a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense”* (1 Pet. 2:7-8). The rock of offense to which Peter refers is the Greek word *skandalon* (also rendered as *“stumbling block”*), from which we get the word scandal.

Unbelievers find Christ offensive, to their own detriment (Isa. 8:14). Make no mistake; if you refuse the Savior’s call, you have sealed your own fate. Until I was saved, I found the hymns of the faith and the believers who sang them to be particularly grating, even provocative. This was nobody’s fault but my own. However, when I obeyed the call of the gospel, the One I had rejected became so precious!

MESSIAH AS THE SACRIFICE

“Bind the sacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar” (Ps. 118:27).

The Lord knew the true weight of the lyrics to this psalm as He sang it with His disciples in that upper room. The altar stood between the Sovereign and His throne. The Lord didn’t need to be bound because of resistance or flight risk. Isaac’s dutiful submission to Abraham’s binding (Gen. 22:9) typified Christ’s submission

to His Father. Rather, He is linked to the horns of the altar for what they represent. The horns of the altar were symbolic of refuge and strength. We can only find true refuge and protection in the Lamb of God, slain before the foundation of the world. How could it be that this apparent “victim” could be the source for strength and refuge? Because this was the Lord’s doing!

Until I was saved at age 17, I claimed to respect—and even believe—the Scriptures. There was only one problem: I didn’t want to get on the altar. I remember sitting in the audience witnessing all my peers get baptized. As far as I was concerned, they were like lambs being led to the slaughter. Until the Lord brought about unavoidable circumstances in my life that caused me to surrender my life to Him, the altar was enemy territory. I wonder if somebody reading this is struggling with the same thing. Is your all on the altar (Rom. 12:1-2)?

Thank God the story of the Savior does not end in sacrifice. By God’s design, suffering precedes glory. There could be no triumphal return for the King without His glorious resurrection. In a day to come, the gates will be open for the Son of God (Ps. 24:9-10)! ■

*Our Lord is now rejected and by the world disowned
By the many still neglected and by the few enthroned.
But soon He’ll come in glory, the hour is drawing nigh,
For the crowning day is coming by and by!*
—DANIEL W. WHITTLE

THE

TRIUMPHANT

ROCK PETER BOLTON

There will never be an overthrow of Christ's kingdom. The stone will smash all opposition to His rule.

He was the most powerful leader of the world at the time, but he couldn't sleep. So Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, was willing to hear from one of his conquered captives: a man named Daniel. Daniel was enabled by God to both know and interpret the king's dream about a startling, human-like image. He said,

"This image's head was of fine gold; his breast and his arms were of silver; his belly and his thighs were of bronze; his legs were of iron; his feet were part of iron and part of clay. You watched until a rock was cut out without hands, which struck the image upon its feet which were of iron and clay, and broke them to pieces. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were broken to pieces together. And they became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors. And the wind carried them away, so that no place was found for them. And the rock that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth" (Dan. 2:32-35).

Even though Babylon (the gold section of the image) was great and mighty, it

would not last; the Medo-Persians (the silver section) would take over. But they would not last either; the Greeks (the bronze section) would succeed them. Yet that powerful and extensive kingdom would also be replaced; the Romans (the iron section) would dominate them. All of these nations had control over the people of God and the land of Israel from Daniel's day forward. There was also a "foot" part to that image, which has not yet come into effect. It will be a collection of peoples and kingdoms that have only partial cohesiveness (represented by iron and clay). In keeping with the rest of the image, this empire will also have dominance over Jerusalem and Israel.¹

The Lord Jesus validated that this was God's will, but He also stated that this period of Gentile dominion would come to an end: *"And they shall fall by the sword's edge. And shall be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem shall be trodden down by the nations until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled"* (Lk. 21:24). How would the times of the Gentiles come to an end? We return to

Daniel's interpretation for the answer:

"And in the days of these kings, the God of heaven shall set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed. And the kingdom shall not be left to other peoples, but it shall crush and destroy all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. Because you saw that the rock was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it crushes the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold, the great God has made known to the king what shall occur after this. And the dream is certain, and its meaning is sure" (Dan. 2:44-45).

Gentile empires will have their time. But, in the end, a Rock will obliterate them all. Messiah will come, and once He has crushed and blown away all competing powers, the Rock will become a great mountain that fills the earth, never to be replaced or rolled away. All peoples will be subject to Him, and His glory will be the only glory (Zech. 14:9). *"Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low...and the glory of Je-*



And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!” Revelation 11:15

hovah shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of Jehovah has spoken” (Isa. 40:4-5; cf. Mt. 25:31-34 & Rev. 19:11-16).

Two responses

How did Nebuchadnezzar respond to such an authoritative pronouncement of his kingdom’s destruction?

“I blessed the Most High, and I praised and honored Him who lives forever, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and His rule is from generation to generation. And all the people of the earth are counted as nothing; and He does according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the people of the earth. And none can strike His hand, or say to Him, ‘What are You doing?’” (Dan 4:34-35).

His grandson, Belshazzar, would later be reminded that his grandfather “knew that the Most High God rules in the kingdom of men, and that He appoints over it whomever He will” (Dan. 5:21). That statement was made by the elderly Daniel who pronounced the end of the Babylonian empire that very night, as a result of the pride and blasphemies of King Belshazzar: “you have lifted up yourself against the Lord of Heaven.... And you have not glorified the God in whose hand is your breath and all your ways” (Dan. 5:22-23).

Whether humble or proud, the rulers of this world are all mere mortals—no

matter how much power and influence they exert in their transient lives. Every breath they breathe is from God, whether they acknowledge Him or not. And God has declared from the beginning that their rule is temporary, and He will have His day!

The last Gentile empire

The foot stage of Nebuchadnezzar’s vision is still future. It will be headed up by a man known as the “beast,” who will be supernaturally empowered by Satan himself (Rev. 13:2). The devil will be enraged because he has lost the war in Heaven and no longer has a place there (Rev. 12:9). So desperate and deluded are the rulers of this world that they will not repent when God shows His mighty hand during the Tribulation period (Mt. 24:21; Dan. 12:1; 9:27; Rev. 16); rather, they will trade their authority to the devil, like Adam did. But they will lose as certainly as Satan will, and they will no longer have a place on earth.

“And the ten horns which you saw are ten kings, who have received no kingdom yet, but will receive authority as kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the beast. These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them. For He is Lord of lords and King of kings” (Rev. 17:12-14).

Then “the times of the Gentiles” will be

over in an instant (Dan. 2:35)!

In this interim period, the Lord has given us a message to declare about His will: “Now He strictly commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day in which He is going to judge the world in righteousness by a Man whom He appointed, having given proof to all by raising Him from the dead” (Acts 17:30-31).

Let us not fret about the nations and their rulers (though we should pray for them, 1 Tim. 2:1-4); their time is nearly at an end. Christ is coming back soon for His Bride and will subsequently bring the crushing blow to the kingdoms and systems of this world. While we wait, may we each echo Deuteronomy 32:3-4: “I will proclaim the name of Jehovah, ascribe greatness to our God. He is the Rock; His work is perfect. For all His ways are just, a God of faithfulness, and without evil; just and upright is He.” ■

Endnote

1 The five stages of the vision are five empires which have control over Jerusalem. For this reason, it is perfectly valid that there be no gap between the leg and foot stages of the vision. No empire conquered the Romans, and since then, there has not been an empire that has perpetually dominated Israel. So the next such empire chronologically is the one under the leadership of the beast of Revelation 12, fulfilling Daniel chapters 2 and 9.

Missions AND THE

COLUMN

OF HUMAN PROGRESS

Most people might not realize just how much the efforts of missionaries have governed the column of human progress. Whether it is hospitals and good health, schools and better education, or sound doctrine and civil liberty—those who carry the gospel to distant lands have left their mark on history. Missionary work has done more for the advancement of civilization than any other human endeavor!

Literacy is one of the finest demonstrations of this truth. Everyone reading this article (or, for that matter, anything written in either English or German) owes a debt of gratitude to a missionary. His name was Ulfilas (311-382 AD). Historians are a little unclear on all the particulars of his life. However, the best evidence would suggest that he came out of Cappadocia (in modern-day Turkey).¹ During the 4th century, the Goths were a warlike people who regularly raided territory in the Roman Empire. This included jaunts into Central Anatolia, where Cappadocia was located.

At some point, Ulfilas and his family relocated to the region north of the Danube River and the home of the Goths.² It is uncertain as to whether or not they initially went there as refugees. It is clear, however, that Ulfilas developed a heart for the Gothic tribe and set about the task of translating the Bible into their language. There was one

enormous problem, though: they did not have a developed written form of their language. At best, they used some Runic characters (*i.e.* symbols) that provided a limited written style to the language.

Ulfilas needed to create a Gothic alphabet—and he did exactly that. Borrowing letters from both Greek and Latin, he constructed an alphabet that closely aligned with sounds from this early Germanic tongue.³ For the first time in history, the Gothic language was placed into a written character-based form.⁴

It is this language that largely served as the foundation for what would eventually become the German that is spoken in the world today.⁵ As a Germanic language in its own right, English is considered a descendant tongue from that which was spoken by the Goths along the Danube.⁶

Ulfilas translated most of the Bible into Goth. Evidence exists that he placed much of the New Testament and huge portions of the Old Testament in written form.⁷ Imagine that! The first time the parent tongue of both German and English was placed in written form was as a result of Bible translation work.⁸

Here is where the story gets even more interesting. Did you know that the early church considered Ulfilas a heretic? Historians will note that he was an Arian.⁹ In other words, he believed that

the Lord Jesus Christ was a created being and not the Lord God Himself. Yet within a short period of time, the Goths were accepting the Bible as God's Word, but rejecting Ulfilas's beliefs regarding Christ—based on what they were reading in the Scriptures.¹⁰ They clearly saw a Bible that presented Jesus Christ as "*God manifested in the flesh*" (1 Tim. 3:16). Talk about an illustration of Hebrews 4:12 in action: "*The Word of God is living and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword.*"

It is not just English and German that owe their written form to the work of missionaries. This same story could be told many times regarding numerous languages.¹¹

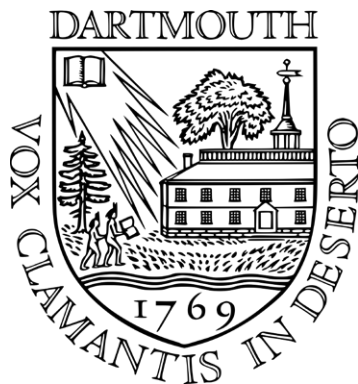
Have you ever heard of the Cyrillic alphabet? It is the one used by the Slavic peoples, including the Russians. It is named after Cyril (827-869 AD). He and his brother, Methodius (815-884 AD), were missionaries from Thessalonica who went to Moravia (located in the Czech Republic today). Their hope was to reach the Southern Slavs with the gospel. They encountered much the same problem as Ulfilas: a language with limited written characteristics. In response, Cyril devised a new alphabet based heavily on Greek characters.¹² The Bible was the first book ever penned using the Cyrillic alphabet. Once again, a huge swath of the world's population owes its



Ulfilas (311-382) saw the Visigoths, or West Goths, needed the Bible in their own tongue, “to speak to their hearts.” First, he had to make an alphabet. He knew that neither the Greek nor the Roman alphabet would fit a Germanic language. He chose from these alphabets only the letters that corresponded to the speech sounds of Visigoth. For sounds for which there were no letters, he used runes, an early Germanic alphabet of limited use. With this, he translated the Bible.

literacy to missions and Bible translation efforts. How ironic is it that at the height of the Soviet Union’s power, the atheistic state was using an alphabet crafted to share the gospel of Christ?

Beyond literacy, the same could be said of education in general. The world has been educated on the backs of and from the books of missionaries. Many of the first schools and colleges were founded by missionaries and their societies as they brought forth the message of Christ. Most of the Ivy League colleges within the United States had their founding as a seminary or Bible school.¹³ Dartmouth College was founded by Eleazar Wheelock, a Puritan minister, as a mission station for reaching and training Native Americans.¹⁴ If there were any doubts about this, just take a look at the Dartmouth Shield.¹⁵



In the seal, the Word of God shines down on the school as it reaches Native American children with the gospel

truth. The Latin motto *Vox Clamantis in Deserto* means, “the voice of one crying in the wilderness.” This is taken straight from John the Baptist’s quotation in John 1:23.

The earliest modern colleges and universities founded in India, China, Japan, Korea, the Middle East, and Africa were invariably the products of 19th century educational missions.¹⁶ Lucknow Women’s College of India was the first women’s college in all of Asia. It was founded by Isabella Thoburn, a Methodist missionary from Ohio.¹⁷

You could make a strong case that the entire field of cultural anthropology would not exist if it weren’t for British Missionary Societies in the 17th and 18th centuries. But that is a subject for another time.

In Isaiah 55:11, God makes this declaration: “So shall My Word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.” As missionaries have gone forth bringing the Scriptures to a lost and dying world, they have been used by the Lord to transform the eternal destinies of men and women, boys and girls. But in so doing, they have also been used by the Lord to drive the advancement of all human society. Our very language and education prove it! — ROB SULLIVAN

ENDNOTES

- 1 www.newadvent.org/cathen/15120c.htm
 - 2 www.earlychurch.org.uk/ulfilas.php
 - 3 <http://bit.ly/17Xfngn>
 - 4 <http://bit.ly/1gT1XnE>
 - 5 www.anglik.net/englishlanguagehistory.htm
 - 6 Ibid
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 - 8 <http://bit.ly/1gT1XnE>
 - 9 www.newadvent.org/cathen/15120c.htm
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 - 11 D. James Kennedy, *What if Jesus Had Never Been Born?* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1994), p. 41.
 - 12 <http://bit.ly/15mgok3>
 - 13 <http://bit.ly/1aZiMMR>
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- See also, Dana L. Robert, *Christian Mission: How Christianity Became a World Religion*; (Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), p. 50.
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- See also, Ibid, p. 37.



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EARTHQUAKE

The Big One is still coming

by John E. Phelan, Sr.

It was just another day at the office, in the classroom, in the home, and at the neighborhood grocery. Nothing out of the ordinary, that is, until the office began to shake, and the employees began to jump and run for the door; books fell from the library shelves in the classroom. In the home, pictures were falling off the walls, dishes were dropping, and the chandeliers were swinging erratically. In the grocery store, cans and bottles were filling the aisles as employees were desperately reaching to grab the breakable items. For those who had never before experienced an earthquake, it was an especially frightening experience. To those who live in earthquake-prone areas, every such experience is unnerving.

It is estimated that a large earthquake may release energy that is equal to the explosion caused by 200 million tons of TNT—10,000 times as great as the first atomic bomb dropped during World War II.

Secular history

History is filled with records of the many devastating times when the shifting of underground rocks or plates resulted in great destruction. In 1556, a quake

in China caused an estimated 830,000 deaths. In Calcutta, India, some 300,000 died in a 1737 earthquake. Again in China, in 1976, there was a loss of 240,000 lives.

It was about 2 AM on December 16, 1811, when the trembling began in what is now called the New Madrid Earthquake. The tremors continued until February 7, 1812 with as many as 1,874 different tremors taking place, the greatest measuring 7.5 on the Richter scale. The earthquake affected over 50,000 square miles. Many previously mapped islands on the Mississippi River simply vanished, and some observers reported seeing the river actually flowing backwards. It was at this point that the popular 15,000 acre Reelfoot Lake in west Tennessee was created.

More recently, in June of 1990, a 7.4 earthquake in Iran killed an estimated 40 to 50 thousand individuals. On the island of Haiti in 2010, estimated deaths approached 230,000. In addition, the property destruction was beyond description, leaving multitudes homeless for years. Japan and the northwest

Pacific area were inundated on March 11, 2011, when an earthquake that measured 9.0 on the Richter scale caused waves estimated at 133 feet high to smash into that island nation. The local nuclear industry was damaged by as much as 34 billion dollars. By one count, 15,861 people were swept into eternity.

Old Testament earthquakes

The biblical record is filled with instances of earthquakes in both the Old and New Testaments. God in His sovereignty has chosen over the years to use earthquakes for His own purposes, but they can always be seen as a demonstration of His power. In Genesis 7:11, even though it is not identified as an earthquake, we read that *“all the fountains of the great deep were broken up.”* At the giving of the Law, the whole mountain *“quaked greatly”* (Ex. 19:18). The Lord used an earthquake to get Elijah’s attention but spoke to him in a still small voice (1 Ki. 19:11f). God warned Jerusalem, *“You will be punished by the Lord of hosts with thunder and earthquakes and great noise...”* (Isa. 29:6). The



Heavily damaged school in Yingxiu, Sichuan, China, where 77 percent of the population of Yingxiu was believed to be killed by an earthquake that hit the province of Sichuan on May 12, 2008, causing 68,858 deaths.

prophet Amos identified his own writing as taking place “two years before THE earthquake,” which, according to archaeological evidence, was about 760 BC. God’s awesome power is described: “The Lord has His way in the whirlwind and the storm, and the clouds are the dust of His feet...the mountains quake before Him, the hills melt, and the rocks are thrown down by Him” (Nah. 1:3, 5). What was it but an earthquake that caused the earth to open and swallow the rebels in Numbers 16?

New Testament earthquakes

We see the Lord’s power manifested the same way in the New Testament, for there we read that He used an earthquake to release Paul and Silas from the Philippian jail (Acts 16). There was, however, a dual purpose in this particular earthquake. The jailer assumed that the prisoners had escaped and realized he would be executed for allowing it. He was on the verge of committing suicide when Paul called with a loud voice saying, “Do yourself no harm, we are all here.” Trembling, the jailer fell before Paul and Silas and got right to the point, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” God used the earthquake not only to release Paul and Silas from their cells, but to bring a jailer and his family to salvation as they turned in faith to the Lord Jesus Christ. The Scriptures note, “they rejoiced, believing in God with all their heart.”

During the final days of the ministry of the Lord Jesus, there was considerable

earthquake activity. On the cross, Jesus cried with a loud voice and yielded up His spirit. As He did, an earthquake split the rocks, and many who had died came forth from their graves and appeared to many in the holy city. Once more, an earthquake caused the ungodly to turn in believing faith to the Savior. The centurion and those with him at the cross were also moved. As with the Philippian jailer, God used an earthquake to get His message to those in need.

And, on resurrection morning, there was a great earthquake involved in the rolling away of the stone at the tomb (Mt. 28:2). However, the earthquake was not needed to release the body of the Lord Jesus Christ from the tomb, but simply to let the disciples inside that they might see that “He is risen.”

The Lord is not finished with using earthquakes to accomplish His purposes. The “big one” is yet to come. The three synoptic Gospels all tell us that, as Jesus sat on the Mount of Olives, He warned His disciples, “there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places,” all a part of coming judgment. John has much to say regarding earthquakes in the book of the Revelation. As a part of the sixth seal judgment, “I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold there was a great earthquake and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair and the moon became as blood” (Rev. 6:12). In Revelation 8:5, he wrote, “Then the angel

took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar and threw it to the earth. And there were thundering, lightning and an earthquake.” Later, “...there was a great earthquake and a tenth of the city fell... seven thousand people were killed and the rest were afraid and gave glory to God” (Rev. 11:13). This culminates in chapter 16: “and a loud voice came out of the temple from the throne, saying, ‘It is done.’ And there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder; and there was a great earthquake, such as there had not been since man came to be upon the earth, so great an earthquake was it, and so mighty. And the great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. ... And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.” For those of us in Christ today, we can praise God that we will have been long gone and with Him in glory before this earthquake rocks the world.

The Lord speaks in different ways. He spoke to Adam in the cool of the day, and He spoke to Elijah with a still, small voice. At other times, He used earthquakes to get people’s attention—sometimes to bring individuals to faith in Christ, sometimes to demonstrate His wrath against sin. May there be no need for an earthquake experience in my life or yours. Rather, may we be so attuned to the Lord that we hear Him speak through His Word. And may we reply, “Here I am, Lord. Use me until You return.” ■

Beyond the Obvious

"The earth yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head." Mark 4:28

Things are sometimes more than they appear, and they tell us more than what is obvious. A caterpillar is not a worm but an immature butterfly. A tadpole is not a fish but an immature frog. And an acorn is not just a nut but an immature oak tree. Both the caterpillar



and tadpole are active stages of life. But the acorn is altogether different because it is a seed—a dormant stage of life. To hold a seed in your

hand is to hold the future. That much is obvious. But what can a seed tell us that is not obvious?

Seeds are not yet what they will be. An acorn is genetically an oak tree but only a fraction of the size and mass of the mature tree. Like all seeds, the job of the acorn is simply to survive. But to do that, a seed must be dry. And dry means

metabolically inactive. Seeds kept dry can harbor life for years, waiting for



the right conditions of temperature and moisture to encourage germination. Seeds stored in the tombs of Egyptian pharaohs for thousands of years were eagerly tested to see if they would germinate. Alas, the seeds were too dry and the life within had expired. Seeds need at least 10% moisture to maintain the enzymes which repair DNA at the start of germination. Without these critical enzymes, the seed dies.

Annual grasses must produce seeds each year or the link to the future is broken. In the case of grasses like wheat or barley, a single plant produces dozens and dozens of seeds, dramatically illustrating another function of seeds: the multiplication of life. A single corn plant might produce a handful of ears but each ear contains hundreds of individual corn seeds. There is truly a sense in which the seed form may die by germination but, in doing so, brings forth an abundance of fruit.

Cotton-covered seeds, like those of the cottonwood tree, are sometimes blown by the wind hundreds—or even thousands—of miles, spreading new life where they land. Cocklebur seeds hook onto the hair of animals, traveling until they drop off and start the cycle again. And, of course, the seeds within fruit go with the animals that consume them until they are deposited—sometimes far from the original plant's location.

A seed is an ark of life which, while

dormant, can resist heat, cold, and dryness that would wither an active

plant. And seeds provide many unique ways for life to spread since the plant itself is tied to one spot. But what do seeds tell us? They tell us that life was meant to survive. That life was meant to multiply and flourish. And that life was meant to move and fill the earth. It seems that if

we would listen to what even a single seed is telling us, we could still hear the echo of God's original design for life to multiply and fill the earth.



"Then God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth'" (Gen. 1:28).

— MICHAEL G. WINDHEUSER, PH.D.

Quarried from Bedrock



“Solomon had 70,000 carriers and 80,000 stonecutters in the hills, as well as 3,300 foremen who supervised the project and directed the workmen. At the king’s command they removed from the quarry large blocks of quality stone to provide a foundation of dressed stone for the temple” (1 Kings 5:15-17).

Curious visitors to the Old City of Jerusalem will find an unadorned opening in the northern wall about 500 feet east of the Damascus Gate. The low entry leads to a massive series of caverns, approximately 330 feet wide and 650 feet deep. You have entered what is often called Solomon’s Quarries.

What is this place?

As you move gingerly from the northwest towards the southeast, avoiding large holes where stone has been removed, you are making your way towards the Temple Mount, about 30 feet under the surface of the Moslem Quarter. In fact, you are traversing the massive limestone base of Mount Moriah.

A careful observer will notice two or three different kinds of limestone here. Most is white limestone, locally known as malaky (*melech*), or “royal stone.” Less common is the the harder and beautiful *mizzi-ahmar* or red limestone, due to its iron content. A third, called “sweet stone,” is too soft to mine for large blocks, although limestone does harden when exposed to sun and weather.



Breaking stones loose

Along the quarry walls can be seen shallow indentations where the workmen placed their oil lamps, the black soot staining the rock to this day. And the method of removing the stones is obvious. Channels were cut to mark off the size of the rough-cut stone. Then wooden wedges were cut to fit in the channel. When the wood was soaked, it expanded and cracked the rock quite evenly due to the very regular grain.

In places, large stones can be seen, already shaped for the temple that was being build above. They have evidently been influenced by the workman’s hammer and chisel. But one day as the stone masons toiled, suddenly the call came from the foreman above, “The building is all finished. It’s time to come home.” And picking up his tools and lamp, the mason left the stone where it lay in the darkness, still attached to the bedrock.

Could it be that there are those today, influenced by the hammer of God’s Word (Jer. 23:29), who look like the stones in the living temple (Eph. 2:21), but are still attached to the bedrock of this world? What a tragedy to be left in the darkness when the project is completed without them. *Today* is the day of salvation.

Preparing the ashlars

Aslars are the finished or dressed stones used in building. Normally rough-cut stones are brought to the building site,

then finished to fit there. But that was not the case with Solomon’s temple:

The temple, when it was being built, was built with stone finished at the quarry, so that no hammer or chisel or any iron tool was heard in the temple while it was being built (1 Ki. 6:7).

So it was that, deep under the city, unheard and unnoticed by the the inhabitants occupied with their busy lives, the work of God carried on. Each stone was shaped and prepared for its unique place in the habitation of God. And then noiselessly each was added. It’s that way with the Church today, as well.

Deep in unfathomable mines
Of never failing skill
God treasures up His bright designs
And works His sovereign will.

—WILLIAM COWPER

The evening news gives no report on the number saved today. The morning paper never tells us of the progress being made as “*the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit*” (Eph. 2:21-22). Silently, the building rises. May we yield to the shaping of His Word in our lives as He prepares His precious stones to be reflectors of His own glory. And may we also see in God’s people now the polished perfection that by grace will be their eternal joy. —JBN

The channels for the wooden wedges can be clearly seen in this photo.

The Thirst-Quencher

BY GEORGE LANSING TAYLOR

*And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires,
let him take the water of life freely.* REVELATION 22:17



Water! No water! rock and sand,
A weary, parched and burning land;
The springs all gone, the torrents dry,
The clouds all perished from the sky.

Zin seemed on fire, and Kadesh lay
Blasted beneath the torrid ray;
No shadowy palms, no herb nor grass;
Earth, glowing iron; sky, blazing brass.

The goat-skins, all their moisture spent,
Hung shrunk and cracking in each tent;
And ghastly bands of frantic men
Searched vainly every cave and glen.

Then hoarse and deep along the plain
Gathered a sound of wrath and pain;
And loud the angry murmur burst
From millions mad with torturing thirst:

"Is this the land our seers foretold,
Whose streams in milk and honey rolled?
Whose woods and groves drip balm and oil?
Whose harvests load the heaven-drenched soil?"

"Would God that when His instant ire
Wrapped Korah's host in sheeted fire,
We, too, had shared their pangless doom,
Or filled with them the earthquake tomb!"

So raved the ingrates God had fed
With one long miracle of bread!
In prostrate agony of woe
God's seer held back Heaven's righteous blow.

Then flashed God's glory, peeled His word,
While awe-struck thousands trembling heard
Jehovah's mandate, echoing wide,
Till listening caves and crags replied:

"Take thou the rod! The nation call!
Ascend that cliff before them all:
And springs shall rise and streams shall burst
Till man and nature slake their thirst."

Now forth before the expectant throng,
Humble, but in God's mercy strong,
Lifting to heaven the mystic rod,
Stands he who once dread Sinai trod.

He smites! The prophet's arm descends
The conscious granite groans and rends,
And, lo! a fountain, silver fair,
Mounts flashing through the burning air!

Wide through the camp glad voices cry,
And "Water!" "Water!" fills the sky;
While rapturous thousands mingling rush
Where glittering rivulets foam and gush.

The mother, in her thirst half wild,
First satisfies her youngest child;
The old man, trembling, bowed with years,
Thanks God, and drinks with reverent tears.

O Thou, the Rock of truth and grace,
Once cleft to save a dying race!
Thy streams of mercy, full and free,
Still flow for all mankind, and me.

Oh may we, like Thy flock of old,
Drink deep of all Thy springs untold;
Nor e'er, like Israel, doubt the plan
Of God's unfailing love for man.