

THE ROCK AND THE PIT

Isaiah 51:1 *Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the LORD: look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged.*

Isaiah prophesied during the 8th century BCE in Judah, a time marked by political instability due to threats from neighboring nations and the expanding Assyrian Empire, alongside social injustices and a decline in faithfulness to Yahweh. His messages called for repentance and warned of impending judgment, while also providing hope through prophecies of a future Messiah. If you are born again believer, baptized in Jesus name and filled with the holy Spirit, you have the most powerful identity in the universe. Such individuals are hewn or cut out of a rock. This rock is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. “And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:8).

Peter (Petros) is a small stone that was cut out of the massive rock (Petra) which is Jesus. Once we believe that Jesus is the Son of God, that his body is begotten of the rock that is God, or salvation is certain – our salvation as immovable as God our rock. We are born of this rock. “Of the Rock that begat thee thou art unmindful, and hast forgotten God that formed thee” (Deut 32:18). Let us proudly say together, “The Lord is my rock”. We need to remember our origin; we need to remember what we are made of. A rock of flint (see image) has hardened over thousands of years. It has stood still and firm and weathered storms, earthquakes and the heat and remains immovable.

Psalms 18:2 *The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.*

Psalms 18:31 *For who is God save the LORD? or who is a rock save our God?*

Psalms 18:46 *The LORD liveth; and blessed be my rock; and let the God of my salvation be exalted.*

What was so powerful that Moses forfeited his right to enter the Holy Land? It was because in his anger he forgot that the rock pointed to the Lord Jesus Christ. “And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock? And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank,

and their beasts also” (Numbers 20: 10,11). God told Moses to speak to the rock only, not strike it. We cannot command the Lord our rock to do anything for us by force. We can only speak; we can only pray and plead to the rock. There was a reason God took the children of Israel to Mount Sinai or Horeb. For many months they looked up at the heights of this majestic mountain – this rock from where the 10 Commandments were cut. When everything around him seemed to collapse, Elijah went to Horeb. He looked to the rock from whence he was hewn. When you are discouraged, look to the rock from whence you are cut. The rock is still standing there. The rock will empower you again to go back and do battle against Jezebel. “For their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges” (Deut 32:31). Finally, one of these days, our rock, Jesus Christ, will return and destroy the kingdom of the antichrist. Note how he is described in the Book of Daniel:

Dan 2:34 *Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces.*

Their rock is indeed not like our rock. But now let us look at the second part of the message.

Isaiah 51:1 *Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the LORD: look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged.*

While we look to the rock that is above, we should also simultaneously remember the pit of sin from which the Lord dug us out. Do you remember how you were stuck in the filth of the miry pit? God had mercy on us as had mercy on Joseph. “Then there passed by Midianites merchantmen; and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmeelites for twenty pieces of silver: and they brought Joseph into Egypt” (Gen 37:28). Ishmael we remember was sent away from Abraham. Now, God used their descendants to take the great grandson of Abraham out of the pit and sell him to Egypt. Even our enemies become the servants of God who dig us out of the pit – but we will not remain in the pit. “He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings” (Psalm 40:2).

Sins can be compared to a dark, deep pit from which one cannot escape without assistance, as they entrap individuals in a cycle of despair and moral degradation. Just as a pit isolates and holds someone captive, sin isolates a person from God and others, creating an environment of confusion, shame, and hopelessness. When one finds themselves ensnared by

personal sins, social injustices, or even the grips of addiction, it can feel impossible to climb out alone. However, the hope of rescue shines through as God extends His hand, much like a caring figure reaching down to pull someone from the pit, offering mercy, forgiveness, and strength. By acknowledging our fallen state and seeking divine assistance, we are lifted from the mire of our sins, restored to solid ground, and given a new path to walk, demonstrating the transformative power of grace in our lives.

After committing adultery with Bathsheba and orchestrating the death of her husband Uriah, King David fell into a deep pit of sin and guilt. God used the prophet Nathan to dig David out of this deep pit. It wasn't until the prophet Nathan confronted him that David acknowledged his wrongdoing, leading to his repentance and God's forgiveness, beautifully expressed in Psalm 51. The Apostle Peter experienced shame and despair after denying Jesus three times during His trial. God used the rooster to help dig Peter out of the pit of shame. However, after the resurrection, Jesus forgave Peter and reinstated him, affirming his mission, demonstrating the profound truth that God can lift us from the depths of our failures. Indeed, Isaiah 51:1 ... look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged". By looking both up to the rock and the pit, our salvation will be secure. We need both to keep us walking on the straight and narrow path of salvation.