

God is the rock – Pt 2 Christ the rock

This is our second study on the topic – God is the Rock. In our previous teaching we established three points– (1) After Moses gave a charge to Joshua he spoke a song to Israel – God is the Rock of Israel, the Rock of our salvation, (2) After God delivered David out of the hand of his enemies he spoke a song – God is my rock, blessed is my rock, and (3) David elsewhere in the scriptures spoke of God as the Rock, my rock, our rock, and the rock of my salvation.

In this teaching we establish four points – (1) In the Gospels a rock is a strong, sure foundation, (2) Christ will build His church upon a rock, (3) Christ is the stumblingstone and rock of offence, and (4) Israel drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.

Our four points established from the scriptures –

1. In the Gospels a “rock” is a strong sure foundation

“Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock” (Matt.7:24 & 25).

“He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock” (Lk.6: 48).

2. Christ will build His **church upon a rock**

“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” (Matt.16: 18).

Let us remember that a rock is a sure foundation, so given that the Lord Jesus later on in the chapter called Peter – Satan, was Peter the rock?

“But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men” (Matt.16: 23).

3, Christ is the stumblingstone and **rock of offence**

“Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed” (Rom 9:32 & 33).

A stone of stumbling and rock of offence to them which stumble at the word of God
“And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed” (1 Pet.2: 8).

Is.8: 14– “And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.”

Jesus Christ is clearly identified as the chief corner stone

“And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone” (Eph.2: 20).

4. Israel drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them and that Rock was Christ.

“And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ” (1 Cor.10: 4).

“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...” (Num.20: 11) – Christ!

“And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel” (Ex 14:19 – Christ!

Illustration

According to the Roman Catholic Catechism **881** The Lord made Simon alone, whom he named Peter, the "rock" of his Church. He gave him the keys of his Church and instituted him shepherd of the whole flock”.

According to the Ignatius study bible a) 16: 18 – Word study Peter (Petros– Greek). “A masculine noun meaning “rock” or “stone”. Although a common word in Greek, there is no evidence that Peter was ever a proper name before Jesus renamed Simon. This accentuates the symbolism of the name: Simon is himself the rock upon which Jesus builds the Church. Further NT evidence suggests that Jesus’ words to Peter were actually written in Aramaic. In this language, the word kepha is the equivalent to Peter and denotes a “sizeable rock” – one suitable for a building foundation....At another level, Simon’s name change recalls the OT episodes where God renamed Abram as Abraham (Gen.17: 5) and Jacob as Israel (Gen.32; 28). Peter now stands in this biblical tradition where new names signify new God–given roles in salvation history. In Peter’s case, Jesus designates him the foundation stone of the New Covenant Church. Just as the OT temples were built upon a great stone (1 Kings 5: 17; Ezra 3: 10), so Jesus builds his NT Church upon the foundational rock of Peter.”

Question to think about.

Is Peter the rock that Christ promised to build His church upon?

Answer from the scriptures

Let us consider the context of Matt.16: 18 and compare other scriptures – “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” (Matt.16: 18).

Clearly the Lord Jesus was talking to Peter, where he says “That thou art Peter”. But when Christ says – “upon this rock” – the “this” is a different person to the “thou”. Hence Jesus is pointing to someone different to Peter (He affirmed Peter’s words – “Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God” v 16) which is confirmed when we search the scriptures to establish to whom is the “rock” that He is pointing:–

- i) “And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ” (1Cor.10: 4).
 - ii) “As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed” (Rom.9: 33).
 - iii) “And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed” (1 Pet.2: 8).
- We see from these scriptures that “ the rock” in scripture IS Christ. Therefore, the Lord Jesus was pointing to Himself – the Christ, the Son of the Living God – who will be the foundation of the church –“For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Cor 3:11), the sure foundation, the cornerstone, which He establishes after His resurrection through the apostle Paul (1 Cor.3: 10).

Hence, just as God, in the scriptures is the Rock, my rock, and a rock, so is Christ. Which affirms that Jesus Christ is God Almighty. Let us rejoice in Christ the Rock!