

THE SMITTEN ROCK

I CORINTHIANS 10:4, EXODUS 17

Introduction:

Israel would never forget their stop at Rephidim. While they had plenty of manna to satisfy their hunger, they were out of water again. Even heavenly bread is not enough if you have no water. Water is one of the basic essentials for the sustaining of life. As usual they responded to the need with complaints and grumbling.

As usual Moses took their complaints to the Lord. He gave some rather strange instructions to Moses. He was to take his special rod along with some of the elders of the nation. He was to approach a rock that God had indicated and was to smite the rock with the rod of God. When Moses smote the rock, water began to flow from the rock—a large stream of water. The people were suddenly supplied with all of the water they could ever need just as they had been supplied with the manna.

In his recounting of the Old Testament events and their implications for us, Paul says that the Rock is Christ. He is to us what the smitten rock was to

Israel in the Old Testament. The Jews developed a story that the rock actually traveled with Israel for the rest of the wilderness journey. While there is no indication of this in Scripture, there is plenty of evidence that as the Smitten Rock the Lord Jesus is with us for the whole of our journey.

As we come to the Lord's table tonight, I want us to reflect on Christ as our Smitten Rock.

I. THE ROCK.

The rock that Moses smote was probably just an ordinary looking wilderness rock. When you looked at the outside of it, there was nothing that would indicate that the potential was there for the refreshing of the people of Israel. But as the years went by, the Rock became one of the metaphors that were used for God. He was the Rock of His people. Jesus is to us what God was to Israel in the Old Covenant.

1. The strength of the Rock.

The Rock represented strength to the people in the wilderness. It was a strong thing behind which you could hide in a moment of danger. It was a thing that could provide shade from the hot wilderness sun in the summer months. God was such to His people, and the Lord Jesus is such to us. We should see Him as the One who has all strength in Himself.

2. The sufficiency of the Rock.

Who would have thought it? It looked like just another wilderness rock standing above the desert. But hidden away in that rock was a supply of water that could quench the thirst of the travelers

Most of the people who saw the Lord Jesus never guessed the sufficiency that was in Him. Outwardly there was nothing to indicate that he was anything more than just another Hebrew man was. But there was actually in Him all that could ever be needed to quench the thirst of the human family.

II. THE SMITTING.

It was not until the rock was smitten that the flow of water began. Standing by itself in the desert, it gave no water.

1. The will of God.

Moses smote the rock as an act of obedience to the Lord God. God said, “smite the rock!” So it was the will of God that the rock be smitten.

This is a beautiful reminder to us that it was the will of the Father that the Son is smitten at the Cross. While God did not say to the mob, “Smite my Son!” it was all according to His plan. He providentially arranged everything connected with the smiting of the Son at the Cross.

2. The work of the Son.

It was the role of the rock to be smitten! It was created and placed in the wilderness to be smitten. So it was the work of the Son to be smitten. He came into the world to provide the water of life to a world dying of thirst, but first He had to be smitten.

We must remember this as we commemorate the smiting of the Son at the Lord's Table. The Father planned all of this, and the Son carried out the Father's plan.

III. THE WATER.

O the Water! How welcome it was in Rephidim when it came out of the smitten rock. It was exactly what the travelers needed.

1. For cleansing.

How welcome water must be after you have gone days without any! They must have dipped their hands in it and washed their faces. Mothers would use it for the bathing of their children and themselves. Nothing can be more refreshing than a cleansing bath in the water when you have gone days without it.

When He was smitten at the Cross, a cleansing fountain was opened to the whole of the dirty human family. If you will come to Jesus, you can be cleansed.

2. For satisfaction.

Thirst is a terrible thing. Every cell in the body will seem to be crying out for water. O for just a cup of water! The people of Israel were able to bow beside the flowing stream and freely quench their thirst. They could drink and drink until they wanted no more.

But the flow from the true Smitten Rock is even greater. If you drank from the stream in the desert, you would thirst again. If you drink from the stream that flows from Calvary, you will never thirst again. Will you to come to the river of life and drink freely!

Truly the Lord Jesus in our Smitten Rock,

We celebrate it at the table of the Lord tonight.