

Jesus Rocked the World

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May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer. Psalm 19:14

For many years now I have had this rock on my desk here at church. It is a dark, gray rock with black stripes running through it. Before I had it, it sat on my father's desk in his office for many years. Before that, it was in a **creek near his boyhood home in Tennessee** for who knows how long. This rock was worn smooth by having water run over it for centuries. I like to pick it up and hold it, feeling how smooth and cool it is to touch. It is fairly heavy, and it is certainly solid. While it makes a great paperweight, that is not the only reason I keep it on my desk. It tells me some things. It is a reminder of my father, to be sure. But it is also a reminder of the Biblical references to God as our Rock.

I am by no means what anyone would call a "rock hound," but I have a few other rocks that I have picked up over the years to serve as reminders of a certain time or place. Other rocks that sit on my desk are ones that I picked up on the beaches of Cancun and Cozumel. They are rather plain, ugly rocks that looked a lot prettier lying on the beach with the waves were running over them. But I wanted reminder of those trip, so I picked them up. **And just to be sure** I would remember, I wrote on them: "Cancun 1999", "Cozumel 2004", "Eagle Creek Resort 2002."

I've have other rocks from the Petrified Forest, The Grand Canyon, Yosemite, the Oregon Coast, Yellowstone, Colorado. Cheryl picked up a souvenir rock on the side of the road in Utah where we had a blowout. All kinds of rocks from all kinds of places.

Rocks can tell you things. They come in all shapes and sizes. Rocks can be big enough to hide behind or small enough to throw at an enemy. And they have stories to tell. They may not speak to you in words, but they can still tell you things. There is a story in the strata of the **Grand Canyon**. Geologists and Petroleum engineers learn all kinds of things from rocks. Rocks can be monuments, often times with words engraved on them, like you might find in a battle field or a cemetery. Rocks have a message.

Much of the holy land is **rocky or stony ground**. And rocks were used quite a bit to tell the story of faith. For example, we are told Noah built an **altar** to offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving after the flood. Abram built an altar on which to sacrifice Isaac, as well as other altars. No doubt these were made from stones.

Jacob made a stone his pillow when he was running away from his brother, Esau, after he had cheated him out of his birthright. And the story tells us that after his dream that night, he made that stone an monument to remind him that God was in that place. Later, when Jacob was blessing his sons, he came to Joseph and referred to God as a Rock, calling him “...*the Mighty One of Jacob, ... the Shepherd, the Rock of Israel.*” (Genesis 49:24) Jacob knew that God was a firm source of stability for those who follow and trust in Him.

When Moses stood on the brink of the Promised Land, he offered a song of praise, and he also makes reference to God as a rock: “*He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he.*” (Deuteronomy 32: 4) Just Think of all the rocks that the children of Israel had seen in their 40 years of wandering in the desert.

Joshua remembered the crossing of the Jordan, the entrance into the promised land, with twelve stones (Joshua 4). In his showdown with the prophets of Baal, Elijah used twelve rough stones for his altar on Mt. Carmel (1 Kings 18:31).

David gathered five smooth stones from the brook as he went forth to do battle with Goliath. And years later, when He was King David, He spoke of God this way: “*The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation. He is my stronghold, my refuge and my savior.*” 2 Samuel 22:2-3

This imagery was repeated in the worship life of the Israelites. From Psalm 95 we find a passage that is still found in liturgies in use today: *Come, let us sing for joy to the LORD; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation.* (Ps. 95:1) All through Isaiah we find references to God as the Rock, such as this one in *Trust in the LORD forever, for the LORD, the LORD, is the Rock eternal* (Isaiah 26:4).

God was thought of as a **ROCK** because He is steadfast and firm. It is little wonder, then, that when our Lord Jesus appeared on the scene, he was called the ROCK! He is the Chief Cornerstone, the rock of our salvation. He is strong and mighty to save. Jesus is the Rock!

As you arrived today, **you should have received a Rock.** I'd like to thank you first of all for not throwing them at me today, or thinking that we would be reenacting David and Goliath. I gave you these rocks so that they would speak to you. They have a specific message for you.

First of all, there is a cross engraved on your rock. I want you to remember Jesus, the rock of your salvation, when you see this rock with the cross on it. I want you to remember that He is the Son of God who laid aside His power as God to come down here as one of us, live among us, go through everything we go through, and do it all without sin. He then offered His perfect life on a different kind of altar – the cross. The Rock of your salvation let Himself be sacrificed to pay for your sin. That is the first thing I want this rock to say to you.

But I also want this rock to remind you of perhaps the most significant rock mentioned in Scripture. I'm not talking about the one that gushed water in the desert, or any of the monuments that were set up, or even the altars that were made. I want this rock to remind you of the stone mentioned in the Gospels. After Jesus died, we are told that Joseph of Arimathea secured permission to take His body from the cross and bury Him.

Matthew 27:59-60 Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and placed it in his own new tomb that he had cut out of the rock. He rolled a big stone in front of the entrance to the tomb and went away.

That should have been the end. That was how life ended. With a burial. And Jesus had declared on Friday, "It is finished." The price for sin had been paid by Jesus, the Rock of your salvation. It is finished. The stone sealed the tomb. That was it. But wait ... there's more. **Jesus rocked the world -- the stone was rolled away!** Death could not hold Him. He burst from the tomb to announce life everlasting for all who believe in Him.

I guess you could say that in one sense we are living in the Stone Age. We have monuments and headstones that speak to us and go back way back, but that is not what I mean. Our stone age is all about the stone that was rolled away. That rocked the world. That changes everything. We have peace with God through Him. Death and sin no longer control us. Death is no longer the end for those who are in Christ Jesus. That is why today is a time to celebrate life, the life that Jesus gives, life everlasting that He earned and offers freely to everyone.

Jesus rocked the World when the stone was rolled away. That's why I gave you those stones today. Keep yours handy. Put in on your desk or the kitchen counter or a windowsill or in the extra cupholder in your car. Let it "converse" with you. Let it speak to you of the Rock of Your salvation, what He has done, how He rocked the world when the Stone was rolled away.