

The Rock – Jesus Christ

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The prophecies in the Old Testament about Jesus Christ spelled out all of the qualities that he would exemplify and be. In summary, God had promised a coming Branch, Heb. *tsemach*, who would have four major characteristics. He would be (1) a king (Jeremiah 23:5), (2) a servant (Zechariah 3:8), (3) a man (Zechariah 6:12), and (4) the Son of God (Isaiah 4:2). While every Gospel encompasses all four of these characteristics of Jesus Christ, each Gospel specifically emphasizes one of them.

In all that God described the characteristics and realities of the **Righteous Branch**, He also characterizes the Messiah as representative of God Himself. Not that the Messiah would *Be* God on earth, but that he would literally do what God asked him to do, and show forth all that God would do for mankind; willingly, lovingly and faithfully. That the Messiah would heal and restore people back to healthy lives; unencumbered, free or restraint. That he would speak the truth in every situation. That he would rightly divide God's Word and teach others how to rightly divide it.

Jesus Christ is referred to as the **Red Thread**, which is the common subject throughout the Word... from **Gen 3:15 – Rev 22:21**. These records signify what the Savior, the Messiah would do. These were signposts that ultimately pointed to the person, Jesus Christ. Because of time restraints, we will not be able to cover this subject of all of the **Red Thread** today, but are going to look at one aspect that God established regarding the Messiah.

To begin with, God describes Himself in the Old Testament as the solid, unmovable foundational source for the people to stand upon and to trust in daily living.

Deuteronomy 32:4 He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.

This is God describing Himself as **the Rock**, and his work is perfect. It describes how the things of God are perfect. His actions are perfect. His nature is perfect. His Word is perfect. His judgement is perfect without iniquity, without perverseness and without wickedness. This means that God, **the Rock**, could be trusted and relied upon, without fear.

Additionally, when the Messiah would come, God would set him as the solid, an unmovable foundation on which people could trust and stand upon. It would be the work of God, not the work of man.

Isaiah 28:16 Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.

This verse is specific. It states that “I lay in Zion...” the **LORD GOD** Himself would lay a foundation stone in Zion. A tried stone, which means a tested stone. God will lay this stone among the people of Israel. It will not be something imaginative, but a stone that people could build upon, a sure foundation. Then this verse closes with, “**he that believeth shall not make haste.**” “To make haste” means quite literally, that he that believes on him shall not be ashamed. This portion of this verse will be seen again in the New Testament a little later on.

God stated in Deuteronomy that **He** is the Rock, the unmoveable foundation. However, Isaiah states that **GOD will lay a foundation stone**, a ROCK. God will make it easier for the people to believe. Jesus Christ was this Righteous Branch, this Rock that God would provide for the children of Israel.

Psalms 118:22 The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner.

In all that God prepared for the children of Israel when He would lay down this corner stone, this foundation, that the leaders of Israel would reject him, but as it turned out, God made him the cornerstone of the new covenant. This chief cornerstone, this keystone, this foundation would be Jesus Christ.

And when Jesus Christ came, he personally addressed this issue of the leadership of Israel rejecting him. In this verse, Jesus himself applies **Psalm 118:22** to himself:

Matthew 21:42 Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes?

Notice: Jesus doesn't claim to be God here. He points back to what God was doing through him. Jesus Christ is the one and only. He is the Rock upon which they could now stand. Yet, he was rejected of men. In the book of Acts, chapter 4, after he and John healed the man lame from his mother's womb, Peter also makes this declaration directly to the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees.

Acts 4:10–11 Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner.

Peter identifies Jesus as the promised cornerstone, fulfilling Scriptural prophesy of what we read in **Psalm 118:22**. Jesus taught Peter well! And now he speaks this great truth in the Temple area.

As Jesus taught his disciples about who he was, he emphasized his teachings at times with this truth about being the Rock, the solid, unmoveable foundational source for people to stand upon and to trust.

Luke 20:1-18 And it came to pass, *that* on one of those days, as he taught the people in the temple, and preached the gospel, the chief priests and the scribes came upon *him* with the elders, 2 And spake unto him, saying, Tell us, by what authority doest thou these things? or who is he that gave thee this authority? 3 And he answered and said unto them, I will also ask you one thing; and answer me: 4 The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men? 5 And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say, Why then believed ye him not? 6 But and if we say, Of men; all the people will stone us: for they be persuaded that John was a prophet. 7 And they answered, that they could not tell whence *it* was. 8 And Jesus said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things. 9 Then began he to speak to the people this parable; A certain man planted a vineyard, and let it forth to husbandmen, and went into a far country for a long time. 10 And at the season he sent a servant to the husbandmen, that they should give him of the fruit of the vineyard: but the husbandmen beat him, and sent *him* away empty. 11 And again he sent another servant: and they beat him also, and entreated *him* shamefully, and sent *him* away empty. 12 And again he sent a third: and they wounded him also, and cast *him* out. 13 Then said the lord of the vineyard, What shall I do? I will send my beloved son: it may be they will reverence *him* when they see him. 14 But when the husbandmen saw him, they reasoned among themselves, saying, This is the heir: come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours. 15 So they cast him out of the vineyard, and killed *him*. What therefore shall the lord of the vineyard do unto them? 16 He shall come and destroy these husbandmen, and shall give the vineyard to others. And when they heard *it*, they said, God forbid.

17 And he beheld them, and said, What is this then that is written, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner?

18 Whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.

Jesus spoke this parable of things that would come to pass, not only as that moment, but more importantly in the future.

Romans 10:9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. 11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

Remember that we read earlier that whoever would believe on “this precious stone” in **Isaiah 28:16** that **“whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.”** This means that those who believe on Jesus Christ **“will not be disappointed in their expectations.”**

The leadership of Israel was confronting Jesus in Luke 20, thinking that they could outsmart him. They thought that their “Power and authority” would supersede anything that Jesus could do or teach. They found out otherwise. This parable was so significant to those in the Temple that day. Jesus **was The Rock** that he was referring to. Those who did not or would not believe on him, would suffer damage.

1 Corinthians 10:4 And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.

Paul, by revelation from God writes this, and makes the connection from the Old Testament to the New Testament. It states that **that Rock was Christ**: This is a figure of speech called a metaphor, by which the rock of which they drank represented the Christ to come. You can read this record in **Ex 17:1-7**.

When Jesus and his disciples traveled far north of Galilee to the city of **Caesarea Philippi**, (not the city of Caesarea or the city of Philippi), Jesus had just learned that his cousin, John the Baptist had just been executed. This was a turning point in the ministry of Jesus Christ.

Matthew 16:13,15-16 When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? 15 He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? 16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Although others thought that Jesus was another of prophets, either Elijah, Jeremiah or John the Baptist that was risen from the dead. Peter had declared that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Verse 17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. 18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter [petros – small stone], and [but] upon this rock [petra – unmovable rock, i.e. cliff or stone] I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. 19 And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

The rock upon which Jesus was to build his church was not Peter, but Christ, **The Rock**. The term “keys” is used in Scripture of those things that lock and unlock, open and shut, bind and loose. Jesus told Peter

that he would give him keys of the kingdom of heaven and that “*whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.*”

These keys that Jesus was instructing Peter about, (and later the disciples) were keys that he would need in the future reality regarding the Kingdom of Heaven.

I believe that we were taught these very keys to unlock the truths about the Kingdom of Heaven. For instance, keys on how the Word of God interprets itself in the verse, context or used elsewhere. Keys on how the Word of God does not contradict itself. Keys on how the structure of the Word includes seven Administrations. Yes, we didn't learn them directly from Peter, but we have learned them. As a result, the Word of God grows as Christ is building his church. But if we refuse to teach these keys, then those who are bound on earth will be bound in heaven. If people are not born again, then they remain unsaved, or the knowledge of the Word remains bound in their lives. We teach them how to unlock the Scriptures. This is the spiritual perspective.

Ephesians 2:19-22 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; ²⁰ And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; ²¹ In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: ²² In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

These words reveal the full scope of God's plan. Through Christ, the Rock, God has taken people who were once outsiders — strangers and foreigners — and made them fellowcitizens in His household. The apostles and prophets laid the groundwork, the foundation, faithfully declaring God's Word, but the chief cornerstone that holds the whole structure together is Jesus Christ himself; the Chief Cornerstone!

Just as a cornerstone in ancient building practices was the first and most important stone — the one by which the entire building was measured, aligned, and held in place — so Christ is the chief cornerstone of the household of God. Without him, the building could not stand. With him, every believer is joined together, “fitly framed,” into one holy temple in the Lord.

And this temple is not made of stone or mortar, it is a spiritual habitation, built of living stones — men and women who believe on the Son of God. Together, they form a dwelling place for God through the Spirit. This is the great reality of the Church: not a man-made institution, but the very household of God, built on **The Rock, Jesus Christ**.

God bless you