



“FINDING CHRIST IN THE SHADOWS”
Col 2:17 *“Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.”*
A SERIES BY DR. EDGAR PIERCE PASTOR
PARIS FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH



SHADOW: The Rock of God’s Provision

Ex 17:1-6

During certainly events and seasons our thoughts are more naturally turned toward thanksgiving. A tragedy in life, a near tragedy perhaps, a special blessing both expected and unexpected such as the birth of a child. Many things move us to inventory our blessings. Sayings such as, “You know which side your bread is buttered on” remind us that someone else supplies provision of our needs.

By the same token we take a lot of things for granted. We talk in children’s sermons about being thankful for the birds and flowers. We mention smelling and hearing and the ability to see to them and encourage them to be thankful when we adults many times take them for granted. Remember the old saying that we don’t miss something until its gone.

Today the shadow that we look at reminds us of the provision of God in our life. The provision of God is a thread that runs throughout the Word of God. Matthew records for us the words of Christ that said it so well. *“Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? ²⁶Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? ²⁷Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? ²⁸And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin.”* Matthew 6:25-28

So, we can conclude that we have a God who cares for the needs of His children.

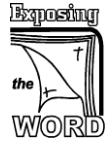
I- The Rock of Provision:

Exodus 17:1-6 “And all the congregation of the children of Israel journeyed from the wilderness of Sin, after their journeys, according to the commandment of the LORD, and pitched in Rephidim: and there was no water for the people to drink. ²Wherefore the people did chide with Moses, and said, Give us water that we may drink. And Moses said unto them, Why chide ye with me? wherefore do ye tempt the LORD? ³And the people thirsted there for water; and the people murmured against Moses, and said, Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst? ⁴And Moses cried unto the LORD, saying, What shall I do unto this people? they be almost ready to stone me. ⁵And the LORD said unto Moses, Go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel; and thy rod, wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thine hand, and go. ⁶Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.

There are many legends that have come to life concerning this event in the history of Israel. Let me give us a quote that describes some of these.



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a rabbinic tradition that there was a well formed out of the spring in Horeb, which gathered itself up into a rock like a swarm of bees, and followed the people for forty years; sometimes rolling itself, sometimes carried by Miriam, and always addressed by the elders, when they encamped, with the words, “Spring up, O well!” Num 21:17. Stanley says: “In accordance with this notion, the Rock of Moses, as pointed out by the local tradition of Mt. Sinai, is not a cleft in the mountain, but a detached fragment of rock about fifteen feet high, with twelve or more fissures in its surface, from which the water is said to have gushed out for the twelve tribes...” (Vincent Word Studies of 1 Cor 10:4)

The children of Israel continued to abide in the area for almost a year after the water began to come from the rock. Albert Barnes in *Barnes Notes* says the water would flow toward the Red Sea and that for the next almost 40 years they wandered in the area of this watershed and would have been provided for by this river from the rock.

Regardless of what all might or might not have happened we know that God provided for His people from a rock that spouted a river.

We can go to the New Testament and find indisputable evidence that this was a foreshadow of Christ. *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.***”

II- Some Observations of Life:

1- Life if full of deserts. Life has its ups and downs, good times and bad times. Life is full of dry times or deserts. It kinds reminds me of a goldfish I read about.

Imagine you are on holiday and you have an apartment overlooking the sand and surf. Sitting on the table in your room is a fishbowl, and inside the bowl is a small goldfish. Each day you swim and sun-bake and enjoy soaking up the delights of vacationing. Before long, however, you begin to feel sorry for little Goldie who is all alone in his bowl while you go out having fun in the sun. To make up for this injustice, you promise Goldie a little of the action. "Tomorrow," you tell the goldfish, "you will begin to enjoy life, too."

The next day you take a washcloth, lift the fish from the bowl, place it in the cloth, wrap it up, and put the living bundle into your pocket before leaving for the beach. As you reach the spot where you are accustomed to spending your day, you can feel the sun's heat beating down upon your back. Excitedly you take your gilled companion from your pocket, lay out the washcloth on the sand, place the fish on the cloth, stand back, and say, "Now this is the life, Goldie; live it up!"

Can anything be more ridiculous or more foolish? Being in the sun on the hot beach is no environment for a goldfish--or any fish! It will die there, not live. It was never intended to be in that environment. For people, a relationship with God as Father is the only correct environment for life. -- Peter W. Law in *A Portrait of My Father. Leadership, Vol. 7, no. 3.*



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2- There is a continual need of daily supply. Few of us have provisions that would last over a few days lain in store. God provides daily for us. We must continually find provision. *Phi 4:19 “But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”* Let us not take the small things even for granted. Martin Luther, the great reformer said:

God's wonderful works which happen daily are lightly esteemed, not because they are of no import but because they happen so constantly and without interruption. Man is used to the miracle that God rules the world and upholds all creation, and because things daily run their appointed course, it seems insignificant, and no man thinks it worth his while to meditate upon it and to regard it as God's wonderful work, and yet it is a greater wonder than that Christ fed five thousand men with five loaves and made wine from water. -- Martin Luther in Day by Day We Magnify Thee. Christianity Today, Vol. 33, no. 15.

Many times the continual daily supply is more than bread and water. It is safety and many other things.

One night I went into my 8-year-old daughter's bedroom to pray with her before she went to sleep. In the course of her prayer she said, "Jesus, please lock the doors if they haven't been locked." I held back a chuckle at her unexpected request and thought nothing more about it. The next morning I opened the front door to find the keys outside in the lock. I stood amazed at how the Lord led my little girl to pray--and thanked him for his protection. -- Susan Starnes, Louisville, KY. "Heart to Heart," Today's Christian Woman.

3- The Lord Jesus cannot be fully explained, nor can the rock.

A few moments ago we looked at some of the legends that have come about surrounding this rock in the desert. The rock was on the mountain yet a stream ensued from it. How did it provide for the people day after day? Men have tried to figure it out but all attempts have come up short of a total airtight answer. The blessing of God cannot be fully explained.

4- We as God's People must be quick to recognize His blessings. One of the things that was a constant problem with the children of Israel was their grumbling. Notice a psalm related to this period of history.

Psalms 78:15-22 “He clave the rocks in the wilderness, and gave them drink as out of the great depths. ¹⁶He brought streams also out of the rock, and caused waters to run down like rivers. ¹⁷And they sinned yet more against him by provoking the most High in the wilderness. ¹⁸And they tempted God in their heart by asking meat for their lust. ¹⁹Yea, they spake against God; they said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness? ²⁰Behold, he smote the rock, that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed; can he give bread also? can he provide flesh for his people? ²¹Therefore the LORD heard this, and was wrath: so a fire was kindled against Jacob, and anger also came up against Israel. ²²Because they believed not in God, and trusted not in his salvation.



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His greatest blessing is certainly the provision for our soul. The provision of reconciliation back to God of men and women who were alienated in the fall of man and by their actions.

III- The Rock as a Shadow:

1- Provision by Grace- They did not deserve the provision because of their sweet demeanor or anything of the such.

2- Vital for Life- Water is essential for life. They tell us we can live a lot more days without food than we can water.

3- The world does not meet needs. The world around the Jewish people as they traveled did not meet their needs. The resources were simply not there for their needs. There had to be a supernatural moving of God to provide.

The world around us may provide a lot of things but it simply does not nor cannot in fact meet the spiritual needs of individuals. It took God to provide the plan for mans redemption not some man made religion.

4- The continuing provision. The water provided from the rock eventually ceased. But Christ will never cease to provide.

John 6:35 And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

John 4:13-15 “Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: ¹⁴But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. ¹⁵The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.”

5- As the Rock was Smitten- Moses 40 years later was told to speak to another rock to provide water. He in his anger toward the people struck the rock again. God did not let him enter the promised land because of that. The Rock is a picture of Christ and need only be struck one time. Christ was crucified only one time. *Heb 10:12 “But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God.”*

IV- Our Challenge and Hope:

We as children of God have a challenge that this rock of provision that God provided that was a foreshadow of Christ brings to mind. We need to be allowing God to refresh the world and use us to help humanity. *Joh 7:38 He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.*

Because of Christ we have the hope of heaven. We have the hope of a time when thirst will no longer be part of our experience. Notice *Revelation 7:16 “They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.”*