

## DEUTERONOMY 32:31 THEIR ROCK IS NOT AS OUR ROCK

“Their rock is not as our Rock;  
our enemies are by themselves.”<sup>1</sup>

 Our world adulates success; however, the world defines success by a standard of its own making. To a far greater degree than we might ever imagine, the Faith has been infiltrated by the attitudes of this fallen world. We unconsciously adopt the ideals of the world, attempting to twist the Faith so that it will conform to the ideals of the world. Of course, any effort to accomplish that is doomed to failure; it can never succeed. The reason we cannot hope to make this effort succeed is that “Their rock is not as our Rock.”

Throughout the world, people have some position that they consider to be their security. This could be an idol before which they actually bow. Paul has written, “As to the eating of food offered to idols, we know that ‘an idol has no real existence,’ and that ‘there is no God but one’” [1 CORINTHIANS 8:4]. Though an idol is nothing, it represents demonic powers, and power does attract people. For this reason, Paul warned these Corinthians, “What pagans sacrifice they offer to demons and not to God” [1 CORINTHIANS 10:20].

In the Song of Moses, from which we draw the verse that is the focus of this message, Moses reminded Israel of their perfidy when he wrote,

“Jeshurun grew fat, and kicked;  
you grew fat, stout, and sleek;  
then he forsook God who made him  
and scoffed at the Rock of his salvation.  
They stirred him to jealousy with strange gods;  
with abominations they provoked him to anger.  
They sacrificed to demons that were no gods,  
to gods they had never known,  
to new gods that had come recently,  
whom your fathers had never dreaded.”

[DEUTERONOMY 32:15-17]

The people did not sacrifice to idols—in their ignorance they sacrificed to demons!

Though an individual may never bow down to an idol, it does not mean that he doesn't have a false hope as his rock. In our day, people trust in their wealth, labouring to accumulate a fortune; yet, they leave it all when they die. Others trust in their own strength, or in some semblance of power they obtain through position. There is no question but that many people trust in pleasure. There are few things more disgusting than to see a fifty-year-old woman trying to look as though she was twenty, (perhaps a sixty-year-old man who imagines that he is as strong and attractive as he was at twenty would qualify as more pitiful, but I digress). It is revolting to see a twenty-something babe hanging on the arm of her sugar daddy, a sixty-five-year-old man with thinning hair and a paunch, though he may have scads of money.

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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from **The Holy Bible: English Standard Version**. Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2016. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

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People may have any of a number of things—and even people—that qualify as their rock. However, in the day when pressure comes, and that day is inevitable, they will learn the reality of the words Moses wrote,

“Their rock is not as our Rock;  
our enemies are by themselves.”

[**DEUTERONOMY 32:31**]

**ROCK MUSIC** — Most of the **THIRTY-SECOND CHAPTER** is a recitation of what has become known as “The Song of Moses.” This song was, as it were, Moses’ Swan Song. This would be his final statement to Israel before the old man would be gathered to the LORD his God. Moses, the Great Law Giver, had been the LORD’s instrument to deliver the people from bondage. He had led them through the trackless desert to the border of the land which God had promised to give them. Moses had judged their sin when sinful behaviour had threatened to destroy them. He had pleaded with God for mercy when the people deserved judgement. He had called down food when the people were hungry and led them to water when they were parched and thirsty.

It was an incident concerning the provision of water that had served to exclude the aged servant from ever setting foot on the soil of the land that God had promised. This was yet another incident of the people complaining. This time, they complained that they didn’t have water. Whenever they complained, they had a habit of accusing their leaders. Nothing has really changed in this day. Is the church plateaued? It is the fault of the Pastor. Fire him! Hire someone who will do a better job!

This time, the whining and the whinging grated on Moses. Though he interceded for the congregation, there was bitterness in his heart. God spoke to Moses, telling him, “Take the staff, and assemble the congregation, you and Aaron your brother, and tell the rock before their eyes to yield its water. So you shall bring water out of the rock for them and give drink to the congregation and their cattle” [**NUMBERS 20:8**].

Moses was to speak to the rock, telling it to provide water. However, in a white-hot rage, Moses disobeyed God’s command. The text reads, “Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together before the rock, and he said to them, ‘Hear now, you rebels: shall we bring water for you out of this rock?’ And Moses lifted up his hand and struck the rock with his staff twice, and water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their livestock. And the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, ‘Because you did not believe in me, to uphold me as holy in the eyes of the people of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land that I have given them’” [**NUMBERS 20:10-12**]. His anger cost him the opportunity to lead the people into the land that God had promised to give Israel.

Earlier in Deuteronomy, we read, “I pleaded with the LORD at that time, saying, ‘O Lord GOD, you have only begun to show your servant your greatness and your mighty hand. For what god is there in heaven or on earth who can do such works and mighty acts as yours? Please let me go over and see the good land beyond the Jordan, that good hill country and Lebanon.’ But the LORD was angry with me because of you and would not listen to me. And the LORD said to me, ‘Enough from you; do not speak to me of this matter again. Go up to the top of Pisgah and lift up your eyes westward and northward and southward and eastward, and look at it with your eyes, for you shall not go over this Jordan. But charge Joshua, and encourage and strengthen him, for he shall go over at the head of this people, and he shall put them in possession of the land that you shall see’” [**DEUTERONOMY 3:23-28**].

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God now commissioned Joshua to lead the people into the land rather than Moses. Near the end of this book, we read that Moses said to the people, “I am 120 years old today. I am no longer able to go out and come in. The LORD has said to me, ‘You shall not go over this Jordan.’ The LORD your God himself will go over before you. He will destroy these nations before you, so that you shall dispossess them, and Joshua will go over at your head, as the LORD has spoken. And the LORD will do to them as he did to Sihon and Og, the kings of the Amorites, and to their land, when he destroyed them. And the LORD will give them over to you, and you shall do to them according to the whole commandment that I have commanded you. Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them, for it is the LORD your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you” [DEUTERONOMY 31:2-6].

After saying this, “Moses summoned Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel, ‘Be strong and courageous, for you shall go with this people into the land that the LORD has sworn to their fathers to give them, and you shall put them in possession of it. It is the LORD who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not leave you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed’” [DEUTERONOMY 31:7-8].

Moses had one final piece of instruction for the Levites. We read, “When Moses had finished writing the words of this law in a book to the very end, Moses commanded the Levites who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD, ‘Take this Book of the Law and put it by the side of the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may be there for a witness against you. For I know how rebellious and stubborn you are. Behold, even today while I am yet alive with you, you have been rebellious against the LORD. How much more after my death! Assemble to me all the elders of your tribes and your officers, that I may speak these words in their ears and call heaven and earth to witness against them. For I know that after my death you will surely act corruptly and turn aside from the way that I have commanded you. And in the days to come evil will befall you, because you will do what is evil in the sight of the LORD, provoking him to anger through the work of your hands’” [DEUTERONOMY 31:24-29].

Moses had one final task. He was to write a song—a song that had been necessitated by the folly of the people. The LORD God commanded Moses, “Behold, you are about to lie down with your fathers. Then this people will rise and whore after the foreign gods among them in the land that they are entering, and they will forsake me and break my covenant that I have made with them. Then my anger will be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them and hide my face from them, and they will be devoured. And many evils and troubles will come upon them, so that they will say in that day, ‘Have not these evils come upon us because our God is not among us?’ And I will surely hide my face in that day because of all the evil that they have done, because they have turned to other gods.

“Now therefore write this song and teach it to the people of Israel. Put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for me against the people of Israel. For when I have brought them into the land flowing with milk and honey, which I swore to give to their fathers, and they have eaten and are full and grown fat, they will turn to other gods and serve them, and despise me and break my covenant. And when many evils and troubles have come upon them, this song shall confront them as a witness (for it will live unforgotten in the mouths of their offspring). For I know what they are inclined to do even today, before I have brought them into the land that I swore to give” [DEUTERONOMY 31:16-21].

This passage of the Word, known as The Song of Moses, points to “The Rock.” Take special note of how “The Rock” becomes the theme of this song. Here are a few examples.

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“The Rock, his work is perfect,  
for all his ways are justice.  
A God of faithfulness and without iniquity,  
just and upright is he.”

[DEUTERONOMY 32:4]

“But Jeshurun grew fat, and kicked;  
you grew fat, stout, and sleek;  
then he forsook God who made him  
and scoffed at the Rock of his salvation.”

[DEUTERONOMY 32:15]

“They sacrificed to demons that were no gods,  
to gods they had never known,  
to new gods that had come recently,  
whom your fathers had never dreaded.  
You were unmindful of the Rock that bore you,  
and you forgot the God who gave you birth.”

[DEUTERONOMY 32:17-18]

“How could one have chased a thousand,  
and two have put ten thousand to flight,  
unless their Rock had sold them,  
and the LORD had given them up?”

[DEUTERONOMY 32:30]

And, at last Moses wrote the words of the verse that forms our text this day.

“Their rock is not as our Rock;  
our enemies are by themselves.”

[DEUTERONOMY 32:31]

This is, if you will, real Rock Music. Moses isn't speaking of Dwayne Johnson! Johnson may appear to be strong—he may have massive biceps and he may be a movie star, but he cannot do what God does. In this song, Moses is exalting the Living God, the LORD Almighty.

We who accept the Word of God as true and accurate should naturally ask, “Who is ‘The Rock’ of whom Moses is speaking?” Perhaps we are prone to say that Moses is speaking of the LORD. That would be an appropriate supposition; and factually, it wouldn't be in error. However, I believe we can refine that answer through appeal to the Word of God. Writing the saints in the Church of God in Corinth, Paul pens a rather enigmatic statement. In order to fully understand what the Apostle said, let's get the background as well as the statement.

Paul wrote, “I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ” [1 CORINTHIANS 10:1-4]. Note this affirmation from the pen of the Apostle: “The Rock was Christ.”

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The theme of Moses' Song is "The Rock." I suppose constitutes the first example of Rock Music—only this is true Rock Music. This is music that stands the test of time because it is not dependent upon a syncopated rhythm, a steady beat or a driving bass. This is music that stands the test of time because of the theme of the song. The focus of the song is to remind those who would serve the Living God that they must always look to Christ, the Rock!

**"OUR ROCK CONTRASTED WITH THEIR ROCK"** — Eight times in this song, Moses spoke of "the Rock" or of "their rock." Difficult though it may be for us to admit, the world does have their own "rocks." To be certain, the rocks to whom earth dwellers resort will vary, depending upon the particular individual. For some individuals in our nation, the rock to which they look is *popularity*. These individuals count the number of "likes" on Facebook, the number of followers on Twitter who affirm them, the number of hits on their web site as the rock on which they stand. Of course, popularity is fickle at best, changing at a moment and often for no discernable reason.

The grave danger in worshipping popularity is that the worshipper will be inclined to compromise the Faith in order to gain approval of the world. Moses warned, "You are not to follow the majority in doing wrong" [EXODUS 23:2 ISV]. Anyone who thinks to honour the Son of God must heed Jesus' warning, "Woe to you, when all people speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the false prophets" [LUKE 6:26].

Others have adopted *possessions*, wealth, as their rock. The Wise Man observed,

"A rich man's wealth is his strong city."

[PROVERBS 10:15]

Solomon has written a humorous warning against the accumulation of possessions.

"Do not toil to acquire wealth;  
be discerning enough to desist.  
When your eyes light on it, it is gone,  
for suddenly it sprouts wings,  
flying like an eagle toward heaven."

[PROVERBS 23:4-5]

That is quite the picture! You struggle and labour to acquire wealth, but you don't dare look at what you have gained because it will sprout wings and fly away! An old saw reminds us that "Money talks—it says 'Bye, bye!'" The old saying that there are no pockets in a death shroud may not be entirely accurate, but it is correct to say that you can't take it with you.

Perhaps you have heard the story of the greedy man who thought that he could take it with him. He had loaned money to three men with the proviso that they would have to pay it back with interest. If they had not paid back what they had received at the time of his death, they agreed that they would put what they owed into his coffin before he was interred. One man stood weeping at the graveside because he had gathered all his stocks and bonds and dutifully put the appropriate financial instruments into the coffin before it was sealed. Another man likewise stood weeping; he had sold his house and had dutifully placed the proceeds from that sale in the coffin before it was sealed. The third man stood smiling broadly. Asked how he was able to be so cavalier about surrendering his money, the man said, "Well, I wrote a cheque in the amount of the loan plus the interest and put that cheque in the coffin."

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Governments love it when people earn money; it means that the politicians can seize more of what is not theirs to buy votes from others who don't work. Have you ever noted that whatever government has seized is never enough? The more you have, the more the politicians take; and many of your fellow citizens agree with that action because they have bought into the socialist lie that the wealthy should pay for whatever largesse government wants to dispense.

Many people have transformed *pleasure* into a rock on which they attempt to stand. Feeling good about themselves, regardless of how despicable their behaviour, is their greatest desire. Perhaps they pursue sledding during the winter months and the summer months are consumed with working on the snowmobile to ensure that it is ready to go into the high country when winter at last arrives. Other people are just as ardent about pursuing fishing or hunting or boating. They ensure that they have the latest gear and make life all about pursuing their recreation. Don't expect to see these folks as regulars at church. They'll be there if something keeps them from the stream, or from the woods, or from their favourite lake; otherwise, they whimper that they work hard all week long and simply must have the time to relax.

We are aware of others who may not be quite as physical, but they can't help it that the best shows are all scheduled for Sunday evening. They just have to see the latest episode of whatever the current hit may be. I must confess that I'm greatly amused by those dear souls who have allowed themselves to be physically inactive for so long that they can no longer walk to the fridge without losing their breath, who would never miss a football game or a hockey game. They are appropriately apologetic about not making it to church, but the services just run too long and bite into the start of the game of their favourite team. Let's be honest about this—such people have made pleasure into their rock.

One need not look far to discover people who have made *power* a rock to which they resort for safety and security. I am not referring to power that permits an individual to accomplish deeds that honour God, I am speaking of power to compel others to do their bidding. Whenever an individual determines that he or that she will coerce others into doing their will, they have made that power over others the *summum bonum* of life. Effectively, such people have begun to worship power over others. Let's call this what it is—idolatry. Power becomes the rock to which these individuals resort.

The exchange between Pilate and Jesus demonstrated the illusion of power that drives so much of this dying world. Let's read the account. “[Pilate] went back into the headquarters and asked Jesus, ‘Where are you from?’ But Jesus did not give him an answer. So, Pilate said to him, ‘Do you refuse to speak to me? Don't you know that I have the authority to release you and the authority to crucify you?’

“‘You would have no authority over me at all,’ Jesus answered him, ‘if it hadn't been given you from above. This is why the one who handed me over to you has the greater sin’” [JOHN 19:9-11].

Pilate's authority, as is true of all authority wielded by any mere mortal, is authority that is permitted by the One in whom all authority rests. The Risen Saviour testified to His disciples, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me” [MATTHEW 28:18]. All authority is given to the Risen Son of God. Would you dare challenge Him?

Again, Jesus testified of Himself, “Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. And he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man” [JOHN 5:25-27]. God's Son has authority to execute judgement. Would you dare challenge Him?

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One must surely tremble at the thought of facing Him who has authority to banish an individual from Heaven for all eternity. We can't begin to imagine what it means to never experience mercy, never know kindness, never be loved or accepted. Yet, the Master warned, "Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell" [MATTHEW 10:28]. God alone has authority, and He has given that authority to the Son. What is fascinating about this conferred authority is that we who follow the Master have received authority in a measure.

I need to qualify that statement by noting what is entailed in the authority we are given. Whenever we think of authority, of power, I suspect that we think in terms of imposing our will through force on another person or group. We who follow the Saviour have no authority to do harm, and we have no authority to impose our will on anyone or on any group. Reading through Scripture, we discover that Jesus conferred authority on the Twelve—"authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out and to heal every disease and every affliction" [MATTHEW 10:1].

Later, the Master gave authority to the seventy-two. These were disciples who followed Jesus; and though they were His disciples, they did not enjoy the closeness with the Master which the Apostles enjoyed. To these disciples, Jesus said, "I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you" [LUKE 10:19]. It does no violence to this passage to note that the authority which the seventy-two were granted is the possession of all who follow the Master inasmuch that we have power over the enemy.

This understanding is consistent with Paul's teaching to believers, "The weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God and take every thought captive to obey Christ" [2 CORINTHIANS 10:4-5]. Soon after writing this, Paul wrote of his authority which the Lord had given for building up the Corinthians. This authority was never meant to be used to destroy [see 2 CORINTHIANS 10:8].

When the Risen Saviour said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me" [MATTHEW 28:18], He transferred that authority to those who follow Him in the words that followed. Christ the Lord charged, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age" [MATTHEW 28:19-20]. We who follow the Master have authority to make disciples, to incorporate those disciples into the fellowship of the Body and to instruct them in all that Jesus has taught. We are not commanded to engage in a task that requires years of study and long periods of preparation—we who follow Him have authority to fulfil the charge that He gave. In fact, only we who follow the Master have that authority. There is no authority in government, in denominations or in councils to make disciples—this divine authority is conferred on Christians, collectively and individually.

Each of us has a rock to which we resort for security. However, just because we *feel* secure does not mean that we *are* secure. Perhaps you will remember a parable that Jesus once related. Jesus said, "Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it" [MATTHEW 7:24-27].

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Perhaps you will remember another parable Jesus told after someone asked the Master to intervene to compel a brother to divide the inheritance the individual had anticipated receiving. The Master's response to that anguished plea was in the form of a parable. See if you remember this parable. Jesus said, "The land of a rich man produced plentifully, and he thought to himself, 'What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?' And he said, 'I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.'" But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?' So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God" [LUKE 12:16-21].

If you remember that parable, you will remember why Jesus chose to tell it. Jesus said, "Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions" [LUKE 12:15]. Focus on what the Master said; it will stand each of us in good stead. Jesus said, "One's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions." This teaching flies in the face of modern sensibilities.

Government has replaced God in the modern consciousness; governmental largess has become our security in the contemporary world. We have the Canada Pension Plan, Old Age Security, government health insurance, Pharmacare—we no longer need to plead with God for our daily bread; we have been taught that all we need is provided by government! I sometimes feel as if we have been conditioned to pray, "Our prime minister who art in Ottawa, give us..."

I caution each one who hears me today, ***their rock must not become our rock***. Neither popularity, nor possessions, nor pleasure, nor power will last. You must not fall into the trap of thinking that you are able to secure your future in your own strength. You must not begin to imagine that you can plan your future without thought of your relationship to the Living God.

**THEIR ROCK IS NOT AS OUR ROCK!** We who are called by the Name of the Risen Saviour have tiptoed around the issue of discrimination quite long enough. No, I'm not speaking of racial discrimination or of sexual discrimination, either of which is wicked, especially when we are deterred from sharing the Message of Life. Rather, I'm speaking of divine discrimination. We do not discriminate in our witness, but God discriminates in who is saved. People want to believe that everyone goes to Heaven; however, the Word of God pointedly demolishes that idea.

God warns in His Word, "Whoever believes in [the Son of God] is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God" [JOHN 3:18-21].

Again, we read the commentary that the Apostle of Love provided when he wrote, "Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him" [JOHN 3:36]. It is important to emphasise a distinction for all who listen today—people do not go to hell because they are trusting in the things of which I have spoken; ***people go to hell because they have not trusted Christ the Lord***. That is the clear declaration we just saw. "Whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God." "Whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him." Those statements must not be ignored.

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Failure to believe, refusal to receive the Christ as Master, condemns a person to separation from God and from His love. To be sure, if we do not believe on the Risen Son of God, we bear our sins, standing condemned for our own acts; and no individual can stand on his or her own merits, hoping to somehow match the perfection of the Master.

John paints a dark picture when he writes in the Apocalypse, “I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire” [REVELATION 20:11-15].

“The dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done.” Whenever someone imagines that they can stand before the Great Assize over which Christ shall preside, presenting their own efforts as sufficient to compel the Living God to accept them, they are fools, they are deceived. The fact that we are subject to death reveals that we lack perfection—if we were perfect, we would never die! What we need is a substitute, one who will take our punishment upon Himself so that we do not need to attempt to stand on our own merits, which are always insufficient. In fact, our understanding compels us to confess,

“We are all like one who is unclean,  
all our so-called righteous acts are like a menstrual rag in your sight.  
We all wither like a leaf;  
our sins carry us away like the wind.”

[ISAIAH 64:6 NET BIBLE]

A flawed perception among some professed followers of the Lord is that sincere people will go to Heaven, despite their refusal to receive Jesus as Master over life. Though popular, such universalism is foreign to the Word. Before the religious leaders of the Jews, Peter and John testified, “There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” [ACTS 4:12]. No other Name! Salvation in no one else!

John informs readers that he wrote the Gospel account that bears his name for one signal purpose, when he testifies, “Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but *these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name*” [JOHN 20:30-31].

Lost people are outside the precincts of grace because they have rejected God. Consequently, lost people have rejected the One whom God sent to secure salvation for all who believe. This becomes obvious as we read those dark words Paul wrote in his letter to Roman Christians. Paul wrote, “What can be known about God is plain to [to all], because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So, they are without excuse. For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things” [ROMANS 1:19-23].

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Throughout Scripture, God is spoken of as the Rock of the redeemed. Listen to a few of the Psalms. The **EIGHTEENTH PSALM** identifies the LORD as the Rock of salvation for the saved.

“The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer,  
my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge,  
my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.  
I call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised,  
and I am saved from my enemies.”

[PSALM 18:2-3]

As the Psalmist moves forward through that Psalm, he raises and answer the central question:

“Who is God, but the LORD?  
And who is a rock, except our God?—  
the God who equipped me with strength  
and made my way blameless.  
He made my feet like the feet of a deer  
and set me secure on the heights.  
He trains my hands for war,  
so that my arms can bend a bow of bronze.  
You have given me the shield of your salvation,  
and your right hand supported me,  
and your gentleness made me great.”

[PSALM 18:31-35]

The Psalmist continues calling upon God as his Rock.<sup>2</sup> He exults in God as the mighty Rock to Whom he resorts in time of trial, when he writes,

“For God alone my soul waits in silence;  
from him comes my salvation.  
He alone is my rock and my salvation,  
my fortress; I shall not be greatly shaken.”

[PSALM 62:1-2]

Elsewhere, he writes in a more positive vein still,

“For God alone, O my soul, wait in silence,  
for my hope is from him.  
He only is my rock and my salvation,  
my fortress; I shall not be shaken.  
On God rests my salvation and my glory;  
my mighty rock, my refuge is God.”

[PSALM 62:5-7]

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<sup>2</sup> PSALM 19:14; 28:1; 31:3; 42:9; etc.

**DEUTERONOMY 32:31**  
**THEIR ROCK IS NOT AS OUR ROCK**

This is by no means an exhaustive review of the instances where the Psalmists confessed the Living God is the Rock for His redeemed people. Whenever an individual reveals that his or her trust is in something or someone other than the Holy Son of God, that person positions himself or herself as condemned. Even when that trust is exercised because of ignorance of the salvation God has provided, the individual is condemned. We don't like to think of this, but the fact that we feel somewhat "icky" about that situation doesn't change the consequences. We must be careful not to attempt to apply our own distorted view of "fairness" to God's provision and His demands of those whom He has created. God is righteous, and He is sovereign; therefore, what He does is just and there is no appeal on our part.

The Apostle to the Gentiles responds to this argument when he writes, "It is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel, and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring, but 'Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.' This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring. For this is what the promise said: 'About this time next year I will return, and Sarah shall have a son.' And not only so, but also when Rebekah had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac, though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad—in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of him who calls—she was told, 'The older will serve the younger.' As it is written, 'Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.'

"What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God's part? By no means! For he says to Moses, 'I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.' So, then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy. For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, 'For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.' So, then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills.

"You will say to me then, 'Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?' But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, 'Why have you made me like this?' Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use? What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory—even us whom he has called, not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles" [**ROMANS 9:6-24**]?

Do you now sense the drawing of God's Spirit? Is He speaking to your heart? Why would you delay responding? The Master is calling you to the Rock that is a sure foundation, to Jesus who is the Christ. He has taken your punishment on Himself and now offers life as you place your trust in Him. The Lord tasted death for you so you need never succumb to separation from the life God offers to those who love Him. Amen.