

## THE SHADOW OF A GREAT ROCK

"And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." Isaiah 32:2.

In this striking and interesting verse is a picture of those desolating windstorms in the East that wilt and destroy. When these blighting winds are sweeping across the plain all take to some friendly shelter. Fortunate indeed is the man who can find a hiding place, and a covert from their power and fury, from their scorching and blinding heat, or, if it be in winter, from their icy and chilling blast. Unfortunate indeed is the man who in such an hour cannot find a covert from the beating, driving wind.

Isaiah says that a man shall be as an hiding place from such winds, and as a covert from such tempests as that. What a vivid, magnificent figure to picture human helplessness. There are other biting winds besides those of Palestine. There are other storms which beat down upon the heads of men. I have seen men driven by the winds of disaster, hard pressed, forced hither and thither. I have seen others crowded down the hill by some awful tempest of passion or sin. I have seen others tossed hither and thither by the power of circumstances. It is most pathetic to see how many men there are who cannot stand up against the wind of misfortune and adversity, the chilling blast of failure, or the scorching wind of sickness, or the driving storm of passion and sin. Just then some strong friend appeared, and these poor lives have found a place to stand, a place where they are shielded for the moment from the cruel wind of their fate. They found protection and help and strength in the presence of a friend.

Haven't you seen illustrations of this in real life? Haven't you seen a great and strong Christian standing up against the winds of life, holding his head aloft and defying those things which are making for the undoing of others?

It is easy to see that people are assailed by the winds and the driving storms of life. How many men fall when the winds of misfortune hit them! It is hard to stand up against the constant wind of misfortune. One can bear up before a heavy wind for an hour or two, but, if it still continues and there is no relief, it becomes almost unbearable. God pity the man who faces the awful blast of misfortune week after week and year after year.

One of the damaging winds which blows against us is that of indifference to the highest interests of living. It is shown in individuals who, like Esau, do not have any sense of supreme values.

In this verse our Lord Jesus Christ is wonderfully described as "the shadow (or shade) of a great rock in a weary land." His tender, compassionate ministry is described in various ways throughout the Bible that we, as Christians, may know and fully appreciate how good and how great He is. His ministry enters into every realm of human need.

Each of the healing miracles of our Lord was a redemptive act and never for a mere display of power. Statements regarding salvation accompany most of the miracles;

for instance, "Son thy sins are forgiven thee," "Go and sin no more," "And be thou clean." He cast out demons and enabled the dumb to speak. Not only sickness, but all other human problems have been met and solved by His mighty power. Here Christ is set before us as the Shade or the Shadow, the resting place for the weary pilgrim as he journeys through the waste places of this world.

Christ is the Rock, literally the Towering Cliff, the Mountain casting its shadow upon the hot sands where the wayfarer may sit down and find rest and peace. This reminds us of the sweet invitation which fell from His lips, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." When we choose that better part and sit down at His blessed feet we find rest for our souls.

"Yes, Jesus is the rock in a weary land,  
A weary land, a weary land,  
Yes, Jesus is the rock in a weary land,  
A shelter in the time of storm."

Our government officials have been seeking desperately to discover, if possible, a means of protection for the people of the United States, a means of safety and security from the hideous weapons of modern warfare, such as devastating missiles and horrible hydrogen bombs. These officials have come to the conclusion that there is no real protection from it. Therefore, they tell us, we must build up a war machine so big and strong that any other Nations will be deterred from starting war with us. They tell us that, if we neglect to do this, there is nothing less than annihilation before us. They tell us that our physical protection is right here. But I am here to point you to a place of absolute security, and to a Person Who provides perfect protection. Whether we live or whether we die, we are absolutely safe forever if we are in Christ Jesus the Lord.

#### I. Christ Is The Rock Of Refuge.

v Isaiah wrote that "He is the hiding place from the wind." What a marvelous description of Christ's wonderful ministry! The desert winds blowing across the land of Palestine were so dangerous. They would scorch, blister and burn. They would dry up all the moisture from the human body. When the winds howl with fury over the desert sands, the weary traveler must find a shelter, or a rock of refuge. Isaiah applies this to our everyday experiences. There are many winds of affliction which blow. They blow strongly against each of us. There are winds of grief and of sorrow. Often grief and sorrow sweep like howling hurricanes and terrible tempests round about us.

But don't you recall that beautiful picture of our dear Lord standing that dark night in the midst of a howling tempest and roaring waves and commanding the winds and waves to be still, and "there was a great calm?"

You need not fear the winds when Christ is with you. Remember the words of the poem,

"Ye faithful saints, Fresh courage take  
The clouds you so much dread  
Are big with mercy and shall break  
In blessings on your head."

Winds in the Bible are also symbolic of all the judgments of God. The first Psalm says, "The ungodly are like the chaff which the wind driveth away." Christ is seen as the Rock of Refuge from winds of judgement. Christ came into the world to provide a hiding place not only from sin but also from judgment. He has made reconciliation. He has bought peace by the blood of His cross. Open your mind and heart to Him, and let Him have possession of you.

It has been truly said, "I do not know what the future holds, but I do know Who holds the future." The future is in His hands. And whether it means sorrow or song, tempest or triumph, He is the hiding place, the Rock of Refuge, and you are safe when you are hiding in Him.

## II. Christ Is The Rock Of Relief.

The prophet said, "He shall be a covert (or a covering) from the tempest." Now the tempest is much stronger than a mere wind. No matter how strong the wind may be—whether a howling gale or a terrible tempest—He is the Rock of Relief. There cannot be any freedom from fear except in Christ Jesus. He alone is the Rock of Relief. He is able to take away the anxieties, the tensions and the fears. He is the covert, or covering from the tempest.

Shortly before they took Christ and put Him to death, Christ said: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stoneth them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, but ye would not!" The mother hen sees the danger long before the little chicks do. When she makes the calling sound, they rush to her and hide beneath her wings. Soon you see them peeking out through the feathers. As soon as the danger is past they come out. Here Christ is representing Himself as the covering. He would bring us to the shelter beneath His wings. He would overshadow us for He is the Rock of Relief.

Truly tempests howl round about us every day. He is able to still the tempest. There are tempests of sore and bitter disappointments. There is disappointment with ourselves, and disappointment with others. There is also disappointment with conditions. There are the tempests of great and overwhelming sorrows, due to the loss of loved ones. There are the tempests of sickness when the body is broken down with disease. There is also the tempest of persecution. Our Lord said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation." No matter what may come in the future, Christ is the Rock of Relief.

"Come ye disconsolate, where'er ye languish;  
Come to the mercy seat, fervently kneel;  
Here bring your wounded hearts, here tell your anguish;  
Earth has no sorrow that heaven cannot heal."

## III. Christ Is The Rock Of Refreshing.

He is as rivers of water in a dry place. This is exactly why our Lord came into this world. He came to give to a people who were dreadfully thirsty the water of life. The very last appeal that God makes to humanity is found in Revelation 22, the last chapter in the Bible. God would not close the Holy Scriptures until

He had sent forth one more tender invitation to come and to drink freely. Listen to the words, "The Spirit and the bride say come, and let him that heareth say come, and let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will let him take the water of life freely."

Thirst is far more terrible than hunger. It is so acute, so keen, and so insistent. Men are able to do without food for many days, but men cannot do without water. Death will come quickly and horribly, especially out in the desert if there is nothing to drink. Christ, our blessed Saviour, is the stream in the desert of life. He is the refreshing fountain in a weary land. He is the well by the wayside. He refreshes the soul. He alone can sustain life.

This world does not have anything to offer which will really satisfy the inner man. We drink frequently from earthly fountains and we thirst again. To the Samaritan woman Christ said, "But 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" (John 4:14). A great crowd of worshipers had gathered in the city of Jerusalem on the great day of the feast, and they were indeed thirsty and could not get lasting satisfaction from their religious ceremonies, and to them Christ said: "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink" (John 7:37).

#### IV. Christ Is The Rock Of Repose.

Isaiah tells us that "He is the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." Surely, you will admit that this world is indeed a weary land. There is so much weariness as we journey over these hills of time. How weary we grow! There is weariness of body, of mind, and of soul. Many times, I am sure, you have longed to get away from it all. You have longed to go to some place where you could find real rest. Isaiah is revealing to us how we may escape this weary land. He tells us that Christ is the Rock of Repose to which we can go.

As the weary traveler finds the shade beneath the over-towering cliff and sits down to rest in peace, and as he finds refreshment for body, mind and soul, we, too, may sit down in the presence of our dear Lord and find rest in Him.

Won't you right now believe in all the provisions God has made for you in Christ Jesus? Won't you come sincerely to Him, and believingly accept all that He has done for you? Remember that Christ "shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."