

Title: Selahammahlekoth: Rock of Divisions

Text: 1 Sam 23:19-29

Date: June 10, 2021

Place: SGBC, NJ

In verse 28 we read “Therefore they called that place Sela-hammah-lekoth.” It means the Rock of Divisions. The Rock of Escape. The Rock of Safety. The Rock of Refuge. That is Christ to every believer. What caused David to need the Rock of Divisions?

1 Samuel 23: 19: Then came up the Ziphites to Saul to Gibeah, saying, Doth not David hide himself with us in strong holds in the wood, in the hill of Hachilah, which is on the south of Jeshimon? 20: Now therefore, O king, come down according to all the desire of thy soul to come down; and our part shall be to deliver him into the king’s hand. 21: And Saul said, Blessed be ye of the LORD; for ye have compassion on me. 22: Go, I pray you, prepare yet, and know and see his place where his haunt is, and who hath seen him there: for it is told me that he dealeth very subtilly. 23: See therefore, and take knowledge of all the lurking places where he hideth himself, and come ye again to me with the certainty, and I will go with you: and it shall come to pass, if he be in the land, that I will search him out throughout all the thousands of Judah.

Ziph was in Judah. These Ziphites were of the same tribe as David. They were his own countrymen and his own tribe. Yet they betrayed him to the enemy. Christ came unto his own and his own received him not. From his birth throughout his life, the devil used the Jewish Pharisees and Sadducees to relentlessly seek Christ’s life. But, like David, God delivered him not into their hand until the hour God appointed (1 Sam 23:14). Then the Ziphites betrayed David to Saul like Judas betrayed Christ to the Pharisee’s who then delivered him to the Romans. Both Jew and Gentile crucified our Substitute. But by his death Christ conquered every enemy for his people. He is our Rock of Divisions. Christ is our Rock of Separation, our Rock of Refuge from all our enemies. So we see in David a foreshadowing of Christ’s persecution. And we also see in David how Christ saves his people from all our enemies.

1 Samuel 23: 24: And they arose, and went to Ziph before Saul: but David and his men were in the wilderness of Maon, in the plain on the south of Jeshimon. 25: Saul also and his men went to seek him. And they told David: wherefore he came down into a rock, and abode in the wilderness of Maon [habitation]. And when Saul heard that, he pursued after David in the wilderness of Maon. 26: And Saul went on this side of the mountain, and David and his men on that side of the mountain: and David made haste to get away for fear of Saul; for Saul and his men compassed David and his men round about to take them.

This mountain—this rock or cliff—was between David and his men and Saul and his men. It caused three divisions.

First, this rock divided David from the enemy. Christ divides his people, separates us, from our enemies. He did so on the cross. He continues to do so.

Secondly, this rock made Saul divide his men. Saul sent one troop around one side and another troop around the other side to encompass David and his men to take them. That is another way this rock caused a division. It caused a division amongst the enemy forces themselves. When Christ walked this earth his enemies were continually divided amongst themselves over Christ.

John 7: 40: Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is the Prophet. 41: Others said, This is the Christ. But some said, Shall Christ come out of Galilee? 42: Hath not the scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was? 43: So there was a division among the people because of him.

John 9:16: Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them.

John 10:19: There was a division therefore again among the Jews for these sayings. 20: And many of them said, He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye him? 21: Others said, These are not the words of him that hath a devil. Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?

Then another division occurred. As the enemy was encompassing David, David had no way out. But God did something for David. Right when Saul thought he was about to take David, another division occurred found in verses 27-28.

1 Samuel 23: 27: But there came a messenger unto Saul, saying, Haste thee, and come; for the Philistines have invaded the land. 28: Wherefore Saul returned from pursuing after David, and went against the Philistines: therefore they called that place Sela-hammah-lekoth. 29: And David went up from thence, and dwelt in strong holds at Engedi.

Proposition: There is only one Rock who divides every enemy from his people, divides our enemies amongst themselves and for whose sake God's sovereign hand is continually turning back our enemies—that Rock is the Lord Jesus Christ. David said,

2 Samuel 22: 2: And he said, The LORD *is* my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; 3: The God of my rock; in him will I trust: *he is* my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and my refuge, my saviour; thou savest me from violence. 4: I will call on the LORD, *who is* worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies....32: For who *is* God, save the LORD? and who *is* a rock, save our God? 33: God *is* my strength *and* power: and he maketh my way perfect...47: The LORD liveth; and blessed *be* my rock; and exalted be the God of the rock of my salvation.

Hannah declared the same thing:

1 Samuel 2: 1: And Hannah prayed, and said, My heart rejoiceth in the LORD, mine horn is exalted in the LORD: my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies; because I rejoice in thy salvation. 2 *There is* none holy as the LORD: for *there is* none beside thee: neither *is there* any rock like our God.

Is Christ your Rock? Do you rest all on him? Is Christ the only one you flee to at all times?

Subject: The Rock of Divisions

DIVISION FROM THE CURSE

1 Samuel 23: 25: Saul also and his men went to seek *him*. And they told David: wherefore he came down into a rock, and abode in the wilderness of Maon.

Christ is our rock who saves us from the curse and condemnation of the law.

They told David

God sends his messenger and his Holy Spirit makes his child hear the gospel. We continually must hear. This is how we are continually saved in Christ our Rock. God makes his child behold our enemies: due to our sin the law declared us guilty. We are made to see that it is not only the multitude of our sins but that our very nature is sin. From the worst sin to the best work all is sin because our sin-nature is sin. Like as Saul's men encompassed David so that there was nothing David could do to save himself so God brings us to see that we can do nothing to deliver ourselves from our sin and the curse of the law.

Christ the Rock

The Spirit of God makes us behold Christ on the cross. Like this mountain came between David and the enemy so Christ interposed himself between his people and the wrath of God. He stepped in between holy God and guilty sinners. The blows of God's vengeance which would have fallen upon us fell on our Substitute. Christ is the smitten Rock. As Moses rod smote the rock so the law of God's justice fell on Christ in place of his people. Christ our Rock justified his people. He put away God's fury forever. He divided God's fury from his people.

He came down into a rock and abode in the wilderness of Maon

What happens when God makes us behold our sins born by Christ our Rock of salvation? God humbles us. At this time David was humbled, weak, crying on God to save him. So God humbles us. He makes us cease trusting ourselves. The Spirit of God makes us come down and enter Christ the Rock. Maon means habitation. Christ is our habitation in whom the believer abides.

Oh, how the pride of our sin-nature puffs us up. We need God to continually keeps us humbled to trust Christ alone. As believers we have no personal righteousness in and of ourselves due to our sin-nature. Our righteousness is Christ alone. He is our perfection. Christ alone presents us holy and without spot to God. Our faith is so mixed with unbelief. The love the Spirit produces in his child has the sin of the old man mingled with it. Our most generous giving has covetousness mixed with it. Therefore, God keeps his child lowly needing Christ continually!

We see David physically coming down into a rock. But how does a sinner enter Christ spiritually? David wrote Psalm 54 when the Ziphims betrayed him. Listen to his cry.

Psalm 54: 1: Save me, O God, by thy name, and judge me by thy strength. 2: Hear my prayer, O God; give ear to the words of my mouth.

2 Samuel 22: 4: I will call on the LORD, *who is* worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies.

God gives true repentance by making us behold Christ bearing our sin in his own body on the tree. This is what breaks the heart of a believer. We confess our sins to God. We confess our inability and our continual need of Christ. True faith cries for God to have mercy for Christ's sake. This is how we enter THE Rock. It is by confession to God from the new heart, from

the very depths of our soul. This is how we continually resort to him and abide in Maon—our Habitation.

Psalm 71: 1: In thee, O LORD, do I put my trust: let me never be put to confusion.

Christ bore our shame on the cross. Therefore our gracious God will never let those who trust Christ be put to shame.

Psalm 71: 2: Deliver me in THY righteousness, and CAUSE ME to ESCAPE: incline thine ear unto me, and save me.

Our escape is a person—Christ Jesus our only Righteousness.

Psalm 71: 3: Be THOU my strong habitation [Maon], whereunto I may CONTINUALLY resort: THOU hast given commandment to save me; for THOU *art* MY ROCK and MY FORTRESS.

That is what God did for David. The Lord turned the enemy away. It was God who saved David. David had no strength. The Lord delivered David. In Psalm 54, David wrote

Psalm 54: 7: For HE hath delivered me out of all trouble: and mine eye hath seen *his desire* upon mine enemies.

Christ is our Rock of Refuge. He alone is our Rock of Escape. By his precious blood Christ turned back the curse of the law from his people. God says fury is not in me. Believing sinners are accepted sons of God in Christ our Righteousness.

Also, the Spirit divides our sin-nature from our new man in regeneration and continues to do so throughout the life of faith. Every believer has two natures. We have in us a Saul and a David, an Esau and a Jacob, an Ishmael and an Isaac. Within a believer that old nature born after the flesh persecutes our new self that is born after the Spirit even as Saul persecuted David, as Ishmael persecuted Isaac. Christ is the Rock of Division who turns back our old man of sin, subduing our sin-nature, even as he turned Saul away from David. When we put away some outward sin or some sinful thought it is to God's glory and praise. It is God's deliverance—his continued deliverance—that makes us willing to worship and praise God alone, freely, from our new spirit.

Psalm 54: 6: I will freely sacrifice unto thee: I will praise thy name, O LORD; for *it is* good.

DIVISION FROM ALL OTHER ENEMIES

Christ our Rock of division saves his children from every other enemy as we pass through this wilderness.

The cares of this world

Luke 12: 30...[Christ speaks effectually to the believer]....your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. 31: But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you. 32: Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

The wiles of the devil

We are no match for the great accuser of the brethren. The wiles of the devil are far too much for a child of God to overcome ourselves. Resisting the devil by faith is fleeing to Christ. He alone conquered the old serpent and Christ alone saves us when the devil would come upon us with his wiles. The devil can do nothing but what Christ permits. But Christ will save his child from the oppression of the devil.

Psalm 12: 5: For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the LORD; I will set *him* in safety *from him that* puffeth at him.

Christ divided his accusers amongst themselves as he did Saul and his men. Then the Lord turned Saul against the Philistines—enemy against enemy. Brethren, all the division in the world today is the Rock of Division keeping the world turned from you who are his! He makes the potsherds strive against the potsherds. Christ makes the earth swallow up the flood that would destroy his people

Revelation 12: 15: And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. 16: And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth.

When the enemy came upon Christ's people our Lord commanded his people what he commands us in the midst of all our enemies.

Isaiah 26:20: Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.

Isaiah 32: 2: 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.

All our trials

God sends trials to cause us to flee into Christ as David fled into the rock. Think of the trials the Lord delivered David through just from Saul. When Saul told his servants they should kill David, Jonathan arose to take David's side and stopped Saul. Then when Saul hurled a javelin at David, God made him miss his target. Micah, Saul's daughter, David's wife, let David down through a window thus God saved David from Saul. Saul's messengers came to arrest David and were filled with the Spirit of God at Samuel's preaching and for a time praised God instead of arresting David; when Saul was angered at this and went to take David himself, the Lord made the same thing happen to Saul. In Keilah David was forewarned the men of Keilah would betray him to Saul and he escaped. Now, David escapes Saul by the rock of division.

Proverbs 18:10: The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.

Psalm 91:1: He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

Within the cleft of his dear side
There all his saints in safety dwell

And what from Jesus shall divide?
Not all the rage of earth and hell

Psalm 62: 1: «To the chief Musician, to Jeduthun, A Psalm of David.» Truly my soul waiteth upon God: from him *cometh* my salvation. 2: He only *is* my rock and my salvation; *he is* my defence; I shall not be greatly moved...[he spoke to his own soul] 5: My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation *is* from him. 6: He only *is* my rock and my salvation: *he is* my defence; I shall not be moved. 7: In God *is* my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength, *and* my refuge, *is* in God. 8: Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him: God *is* a refuge for us. Selah.

Christ Jesus is the solid Rock for his people. We sing it often:

My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus blood and righteousness
I dare not trust the sweetest frame
But wholly lean on Jesus name
On Christ the Solid Rock I stand
All other ground is sinking sand

When darkness veils his lovely face
I rest on his unchanging grace
In every high and stormy gale
My anchor holds within the veil
On Christ the Solid Rock I stand
All other ground is sinking sand

His oath, his covenant, his blood
Support me in the whelming flood
When all around my soul gives way
He then is all my hope and stay
On Christ the Solid Rock I stand
All other ground is sinking sand

When He shall come with trumpet sound
O may I then in him be found
Dressed in his righteousness alone
Faultless to stand before the throne
On Christ the Solid Rock I stand
All other ground is sinking sand

Amen!