

MARK JENKINS MINISTRIES

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The Rod And The Rock

Dear Friend,

Over the past few months we have been looking at events that took place following the exodus of Moses and the children of Israel from Egypt. We have discovered by studying these natural events, that a spiritual picture emerges intended to assist us in comprehending what has been accomplished for us through the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. Let's take a look at another one of these events that I believe will add to our appreciation of what Jesus accomplished for us.

The spiritual image within the natural event described below should enable us to better understand how **complete** the change is in us once we are born again. No longer are we the spiritually dead people we were before coming to Jesus. Now we are new creations, born of the Spirit of God, as children of God. (II Corinthians 5:17)

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”

We are absolutely not the same people we were before being born again. Yet, even after hearing that as many times as we have, it's still not something most of us truly grasp. The words can seem like sand that quickly slips through our fingers. Somehow, we can hear them and say them and still envision ourselves as the same people we have always been.

The event we are looking at is in Exodus 17. We'll pick up after Israel pitched in Rephidim, where they could again find no water to drink and so returned to complaining to Moses about their plight. God gave the following instructions to Moses. (Exodus 17:5-7)

“And the Lord said unto Moses, ‘Go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel; and thy rod, wherewith thou smote the river, take in thine hand, and go. (6) Behold, 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. (7) And he called the name of the place Massah, and Mariah, because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the Lord, saying, ‘Is the Lord among us, or not?’ ”

Last month we observed how God’s earlier instructions to Moses to cast a tree into the bitter waters of Marah (Exodus 15:25) created a beautiful spiritual picture of mankind’s redemption. It shouldn’t be difficult for us to recognize the same kind of image taking shape here. There, the bitter waters representing sin and death were made sweet with life. Now, a rock is the source of life-giving water once Moses struck it with a rod. In both cases the message conveyed by each image describes redemption for mankind. The difference between the two images is in the specific aspect of their focus.

By discovering what each element in the natural event represents we will be able to understand the spiritual significance of the entire image, including why it was so important for Moses to be the one striking the rock with the rod. Here at the rock at Horeb, God told Moses to use the rod to strike the rock causing water to come forth, requiring Moses’ strength to accomplish the miracle. The rod itself was powerless without Moses.

Many times when **Moses** is identified as an active participant in these events, he represents the Law. So, Moses striking the rock with the rod symbolizes **the Law** striking the rock with the rod. In other words, it was the provisions outlined in **the Law** that gave meaning to the crucifixion of Jesus. Had there been no **Law** in place there would have been no meaning to Jesus’ death on the cross. **The Law** provided the meaning. Consequently, Jesus had no power to say, “I’m here to die for you and that’s the way it is.” It was as though God through **the Law** choreographed the event.

In our last letter we pointed to several instances in which a rod or a part of a tree was used to symbolize Jesus, the Redeemer, who hanged on a “wooden” cross to save mankind. **The rock** is another commonly recognized symbolism for Jesus. When **the rock** is struck and the water pours out it’s easy to see that it represents Jesus. The water pouring out of **the rock** is the water of the life of God being made available to humanity. (John 7:38)

“He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.”

We have identified **the rod** as a representation of Jesus and **the rock** as a representation of Jesus. Yet when we join the pieces together they don't appear to agree. Since Moses represents the Law, the rod represents Jesus, and the rock also represents Jesus, the picture we have at this point is that of the Law having hold of Jesus and striking Him upon Himself. How could Jesus be represented by two different objects in the same spiritual image?

The rod and the rock must both represent Jesus for the following reasons. Everything necessary to bring an end to the race of the first Adam is exemplified by **the rod**. Everything necessary to bring into existence the last Adam and His family is exemplified by **the rock**.

Within the natural event, Moses felt the impact as the rod he held struck the rock and the shock waves reverberated up the rod and across his body. Moses, the rod and the rock all experienced the force of that strike.

The moment of impact speaks to the fulfillment of the Law. The impact experienced by both **the rod** and **the rock** demonstrates the magnitude of the force exerted to end the race of the first Adam, and to birth the last Adam, Jesus, **“the first begotten of the dead”**, all of which took place in hell itself.

(Revelation 1:5)

“And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.”

The key to understanding this image is in the realization that it is **the reverse** of what took place in the Garden when the first Adam committed sin and was “reborn” into spiritual death. Since it was a man who fell the cost of redemption could only be paid by a man. The satisfying of man's debt was prophesied the moment the rod impacted the rock representing the payment made by Jesus, the son of man, for Adam's fall and the end of the race of the descendants of Adam. (I Corinthians 15:21-22)

“For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. (22) For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.”

Think of it, the devil wormed his way into God's creation and seduced the first Adam into committing high treason against God, his Father, ensuing in a “rebirth” from life to death. In so doing, the devil became the illegitimate father of this spiritually dead man. (John 8:44) In the same manner that a “rebirth” took place from life to death in the Garden, this image of the rod struck against the rock

foretold the rebirth that took place in the belly of the earth, from death to life, culminating in the birth of the last Adam. (I Corinthians 15:45)

“And so it is written, the first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.”

“The last Adam was made a quickening spirit” describes the life that flowed out of Jesus, **“the first begotten of the dead”**, providing the life of God to humanity.

But, unlike satan, who wormed his way into the garden and seduced Adam, God the Father went boldly into hell and birthed this new creation. God birthed Jesus from death to life, something that had never before happened. The “rebirth” that took place due to the transgression in the Garden was successfully reversed in hell when God birthed a new creation.

The message we are to receive from this image is the understanding of how completely unique **the rod** is from **the rock**. In other words, as unique as **the rod** is from **the rock** so is the **“only Begotten Son of God”** unique from **“the first begotten of the dead”**. The existence of the first Adam and all his descendants came to an end once the price was paid for sin. Jesus paid the price for all of humanity as the **“only Begotten Son of God”**. When Jesus was raised to life He **was not** raised as the **“only Begotten Son of God”**. He was raised **“the first begotten of the dead”**. (Revelation 1:5)

“And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.”

Jesus’ rebirth from death to life originated an entirely new creation that had never before existed. We also become new creations the instant we are born again. The person we used to be was crucified on the cross in Jesus, **“the only Begotten Son of God”**. The born again children of God that we have become received our life in Jesus, **“the first begotten of the dead”**. (Colossians 1:14-15)

“In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: (15) Who is the image of the invisible God, the first born of every creature.”

The water pouring out of the rock symbolizes the life of God pouring out of the **“first begotten of the dead”**, giving life to those who make Him Lord.

Thank God for Jesus, **the only begotten Son of God**, the rod in the hand of Moses. Thank God for Jesus, **the first begotten of the dead**, the rock through whom the water of life pours out to all mankind. This verse should hold more meaning to us now. (II Corinthians 5:17)

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”

See how completely different we were made the moment we were born again. We are as different as **the rod** is different from **the rock**. As we drink of the water pouring out of our Rock, Jesus, the **“first begotten of the dead”**, we too are begotten from the dead as sons of God. I believe God wants us to know what truly new creatures we have become now that we are born again. Jesus, as the perfect sacrifice for sin fulfilled the law, bringing to an end the first Adam and paving the way for the birth of the Last Adam. Praise God!

Perhaps your mind has already fast forwarded to the next time Israel was faced with no water and Moses was told to **speak** to the rock (Numbers 20:8). However, because of Moses’ anger with the people he disobeyed God and struck the rock twice with the rod and water came out. (Numbers 20:11) This act of disobedience cost Moses his entry into the Promised Land. (Numbers 20:12)

“And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, ‘Because you believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.’ ”

We should be able to apply the same understanding we gained from the first event of water from a rock to the second event when Moses was commanded to only speak to the rock. The difference in the second event has to do with the fact that it is the shadow of what would come once the price for man’s redemption was paid.

God told Moses to speak to the rock the second time because Jesus would only have to suffer once for mankind, not twice. By having Moses speak to the rock, Moses was to represent the Jews, as well as all humanity, confessing the Lordship of Jesus over their lives and the water of life pours out. Because Moses struck the rock the second time, he presented a picture of man trying to choose his own way to heaven. No person will ever be able to save himself which is why Moses was not allowed to enter into the Promised Land.

In conclusion, when we make Jesus Christ the Lord of our lives we die the death of the cross in the **“only Begotten Son of God”** and are raised to life in the

“first begotten of the dead”. We too are born again as sons of God just like Jesus. Praise God. What a picture the striking of the rod on the rock foretold how the Life of God was made available to humanity. Thank God for the rod. Thank God for the rock.

~ Grace be with you

Mark Jenkins