

# The Rock

By Ben Townsend

I started out something special, made by God, looking up to the heavens each day, proudly proclaiming the creation of the world. There was I, part of the largest boulder on earth. Why, I felt like that if God could make a boulder He couldn't pick up, as silly as that sounds, it would've been mine. I was strong, mighty, unmovable, jutting out from the side of a mountain, fulfilling the purpose which God made me: a silent witness to His greatness. Over a thousand years I stood, stoically and strong.

One day something seemed wrong. Clouds gathered to block my view to the universe. Loud noises banged and boomed over the earth; flashes of light kept making me wonder what was going on. It wasn't long before something cold and wet hit me in the face; a drop of a liquid. Another drop, then another. Soon I had to close my eyes because of all the drops hitting me in the face. I didn't see what happened next. I can only guess because it all happened so fast. I think one of the flashes of light struck my boulder. The next thing I remember was tumbling down the hillside. Glancing around as I tumbled, I saw what was left of the giant boulder and hundreds and thousands of pieces of it to my right and left rolling along beside me.

I soon stopped and gathered my thoughts. "What is happening to me?" I asked myself. I really didn't know. Looking around, I noticed a river flowing down the side of the mountain where I had just been. I tried to swim, but I was too heavy. The huge amounts of water were pushing me and my friends to the bottom of the mountain and were covering us once we got there. A whole year I saw nothing but water around me. And I couldn't swim. I couldn't even float! A whole year! Not much time to a rock that has been around for over fifteen hundred of them, but a lot of time for someone who was used to looking out at God's creation each evening and morning.

Finally, over a year and I can see the sun shining and feel its warmth. Evaluating my circumstances, I notice that I am no longer part of a great boulder, but I am an ugly little jagged rock lying here in what is now a river bed. Each fall the rainy season comes, and I don't like this time at all. The river fills and the water again pushes against me and seems to be wearing me away. I think that soon there won't be enough of me left to even be a grain of sand. All winter and spring the river flows over me. I can't do a thing. I can't swim. I can't float. The only respite comes in the summer when the river bed dries up and I can finally have some peace and quiet. Well, here I lie; an insignificant ugly little jagged rock...that can't swim or even float.

A few thousand more years pass by and here I am. Oh, I moved downstream maybe two-hundred cubits or so. My body's a little more slim and trim. It seemed like each hundred years wore off another jagged edge. I don't have any jagged edges left. Now I guess I'll just get smaller and smaller and go to nothing. Here I sit, an insignificant little ugly unjagged rock; so round that I roll downstream a lot easier than I used to roll.

Ah, summertime, my favorite time of the year. No water running over my head. My only source of irritation is having to listen to this babbling little brook next to me. Oh, there's a young boy. "Get away from my riverbed! You don't need to get a drink today! Hey, don't step on my head!" He's stooping down, looking for something. I sure hope he doesn't pick me up and throw me. I'll see if I can scrunch down between these other

rocks. He picked up a couple of my friends...and then another...and another. Now he's looking right at me. He's reaching his hand out. I can't look. I was so satisfied with being an insignificant ugly little unjagged rock in the riverbed. He got me! He kissed me on the head (bleecch!) and said to me, "You're the smoothest and roundest of them all." If I could have spoken back I would have said, "Look Buddy Boy, thousands of years and a lot of water under the bridge caused me to look this goofy; and if you don't like it..." But then he said to me, "You are the most perfect stone I have ever seen." What!? Wow! If I could smile, all my fossils would be showing. I tried to tell him, "Well, you see, God, a lot of determination, much humility, and frequent bathing caused me to be so handsome." I was feeling good about myself when he put me in his bag with the other four.

It wasn't long, just a short chat in rock years, before he took me out again. Sitting there in his hand I looked around. Behind me I saw a lot of men dressed in armor looking awfully scared. In front of me I saw a huge terrifying army in the distance with the biggest soldier I had ever seen standing only fifty feet from us. Here I was in the midst of a great battle. But what could I do? I'm just an insignificant little ugly unjagged rock who happens to be extremely smooth and perfect. But after all, this big guy could crush me with one of his size 26 sandals. So much for being smooth and perfect if that happens. I heard the boy whisper something I heard him shout a few minutes ago: "...that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel." He placed me in his sling. Round and round I went. Everything was a complete blur. I thought, "It's a good thing rocks don't have stomachs." Suddenly, I was soaring through the air faster than I had ever moved before. I looked down at the ground. Forget not having a stomach, I was feeling a little queasy on the inside. I looked up and was headed straight toward the giant. I tried to yell, "Look out!" THUMP!!!

Everything was quiet. I got him right between the eyes. My first thought was, "I wonder if he was ever rocked to sleep *before*?" He fell to the earth face first. KAWHUMP!!! As he hit the ground, I jarred loose and rolled off a few cubits. There I was in the field, dodging soldiers as one group was chasing the other group. Several soldiers kicked me accidentally down the field. I ended up in some grass. There I was, after the most exciting time in my life, being used by God and a shepherd boy to win a great battle. All those years in the stream was worth it; being broken off from the boulder, having the jagged edges worn down by being washed in the stream daily, being in the right place at the right time. I was even glad for the first time in my life that I couldn't swim... or even float, because then I wouldn't have been where God wanted me.

Another thousand years of so pass by. I was used several times by hunters and soldiers after that great battle. I was carried for many years in bags, packs, and belts. After a while though, I had been used so much and had hit so many hard objects that all the smoothness I had was chipped off. One soldier tossed me onto the ground one day and my battle days were over. But ah, the memories. Used by God to win a great battle. I found out later that boy became king. So much fuss was made about David being such a young boy when he killed Goliath. People forget he used an old, mature, hard-headed rock. I guess my life is about over now. Here I lie, an insignificant little ugly unjagged pebble all chipped up from being used, who at one time in my life was perfect and oh-so smooth. But who would believe me now? Who would use me now? Who would want a nearly four-thousand year old rock for anything?

Someone else is coming. Pick me up! Use me! I'm still good for fighting! Please?  
What is that they are saying?

"But whom say ye that I am?"

"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Why, I recognize the one on the right. That's the one who made me. He's the one who made everything. I hope he doesn't see me. I don't look so good after being all used up. I'm so small now; nothing of my former self either as a boulder or a glorious warrior stone.

"Blessed be thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father Which is in heaven."

He's reaching down. He's picking me up. He doesn't need to use me as a sling stone. Why is He doing this?

"And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter.."

Wow, that's what I am. Peter is the word for a worthless little pebble that had been kicked around; a loose, moveable stone. He's showing the other man my scars. Why, I still can be used as an example to others.

"...and upon this rock..."

That certainly can't be me. That is the word for a huge boulder like I used to be; unmovable, unshakeable. He is that rock.

"...I will build my church.."

He tossed me back down. There they go. There goes my Creator. He not only created me as a boulder, and spent a long time making me a useable stone for battle, but He also used my worn-out, scarred condition to teach others what they can do for Him. I guess you never get too old to be used by God.

Another two thousand years have gone by. I stopped wanting to swim...or even float. I finally realized that I swim like a rock. I love sitting around and hearing God's people praise Him. Some of my favorite songs are "Rock of Ages," "The Rock that is Higher than I," "Honey in the Rock," and my personal, all-time favorite, "Shale We Gather at the River."

I'll never be placed in a museum, have my name in the paper, or be in Who's Who in Geological formations. Even archeologists toss me aside while looking for treasures. I guess I'm just a plain and simple, ordinary rock.

There is something that I haven't told you. God placed inside me at the very beginning of creation a promise. He said that if people hold their peace and do not praise Him in their lives and with their mouths, then I would get to cry out. I can hardly wait for that time. That's what I look forward to doing. Even an insignificant little ugly, scarred pebble has much to praise God about. I want to shout out so badly how grateful I am for all God has done for me in the last six thousand years. He has always been concerned with helping me fulfill my purpose in life so that He can use me. Call me what you want: I'm just a chip off the old boulder, so to speak. So, Christians, don't be as dumb as a box of rocks. Remember, if you stop praising Him, that's the time that I can start praising Him. Praising Him for all He's done for me.

*"And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out (Luke 19:40)."*