

The Rock

The “Following Rock” of
1 Corinthians 10.4

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ἔπινον γὰρ
ἐκ πνευματικῆς ἀκολουθούσης πέτρας,
ἡ πέτρα δὲ ἦν ὁ Χριστός.

For they were all drinking
from the spiritual rock that followed them,
and the rock was Christ.

- How was the rock “following” the Israelites?
- How can Paul claim that the rock was Christ?

What strategies can we use to discern Paul’s logic?

- What OT texts is Paul citing? Is there anything notable in the various ancient versions of these texts?
- Is there anywhere else in the Bible (OT and NT) where this Rock is the focus of reflection?
- Where else is this Rock described outside the OT in pre-NT writings?
- What do early Xn (post-NT) authors say about this Rock?
- What do the rabbinic texts say about this Rock?

What strategies can we use to discern Paul’s logic?

- Search for πέτρας in Bible or check TSK/margin/study notes - Check MT, LXX, Tgs
- Do word searches, use TSK/margin/study notes for both 1 Cor and OT texts
- Check Philo and Josephus; also check OTP scripture index online
- Check Fathers, NT Apocrypha
- Check Ginzberg’s *Legends*, check Midrash Rabbah index

Exodus 17.6 & Numbers 20.8

Exodus 17.6

Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock <06697> at Horeb; and you shall strike the rock <06697>, and water will come out of it,

ὁδε ἐγὼ ἕστηκα πρὸ τοῦ σέ ἐκεῖ ἐπὶ τῆς πέτρας ἐν Χωρηβ καὶ πατάξεις τὴν πέτραν καὶ ἐξελεύσεται ἐξ αὐτῆς ὕδωρ...

Numbers 20.8

... You shall thus bring forth water for them out of the rock <05553> ...

ἐξοίσετε αὐτοῖς ὕδωρ ἐκ τῆς πέτρας

One rock? Two rocks? (and both are πέτρα?)

A rock/ <06697> ἡ τsur and a rock/ <05553> ἡ sela ?

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Wisdom Solomon 11:4 (cf. Ps 114/3.8)

When they were thirsty, they called upon you, and water was given them out of flinty rock, and from hard stone a remedy for their thirst. ἐδίψησαν καὶ ἐπεκαλέσαντό σε καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτοῖς ἐκ πέτρας ἀκροτόμου ὕδωρ καὶ ἴαμα δίψης ἐκ λίθου σκληροῦ

Psalm 78 (LXX 77): 15f.

¹⁵
NAU He split the **rocks** <06697> in the wilderness And gave them abundant drink like the ocean depths.
LXE he clave a rock in the wilderness, and made them drink as in a great deep.
διέρρηξεν **πέτραν** ἐν ἐρήμῳ καὶ ἐπότισεν αὐτοὺς ὡς ἐν ἄβυσσῳ πολλῇ

¹⁶
NAU He brought forth streams also from the **rock** <05553> And caused waters to run down like rivers.
LXE And he brought water out of the rock, and caused waters to flow down as rivers.

ἐξήγαγεν ὕδωρ ἐκ **πέτρας** καὶ κατήγαγεν ὡς ποταμούς ὕδατα
What two changes has the LXX made?
rocks > rock (v15) and two Hebrew terms rendered with **πέτρα**

Targum PsJon Num 21.17ff

Then, behold, Israel sang the thanksgiving of this song, at the time that the well which had been hidden was restored to them through the merit of Miriam: Spring up, O well, spring up, O well! sang they to it, and it sprang up: ¹⁸ the well which the fathers of the world, Abraham Izhak, and Jakob digged: the princes who were of old digged it, the chiefs of the people: Mosheh and Aharon, the scribes of Israel, found it with their rods; and from the desert it was given to them for a gift. ¹⁹ And from thence it was given to them in Mattana; turning, it went up with them to the high mountains, and from the high mountains it went down with them to the hills surrounding all the camp of Israel, and giving them drink, every one at the door of his tent. ²⁰ And from the high mountains it descended with them to the lower hills, but was hidden from them on the borders of Moab, at the summit of the hill looking toward Bethjeshimon, because there they neglected the words of the Law.

Pseudo-Philo 10.7

... But as for his own people, he led them forth into the wilderness: forty years did he rain bread from heaven for them, and he brought them quails from the sea, and a well of water following them.

Philo – Leg 2.86

and the thirst, which is that of the passions, seizes on it until God sends forth upon it the stream of his own accurate wisdom, and causes the changed soul to drink of unchangeable health; for the sharp rock is the wisdom of God, which being both sublime and the first of things he quarried out of his own powers, and of it he gives drink to the souls that love God;

γὰρ ἀκρότομος πέτρα ἡ σοφία τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστίν,

In Early Christianity

Tertullian on Baptism 9.1

Note the combination of stories drawn together, united by the water theme, to discuss Baptism

Origen, Second Book of Commentary on Matthew, 12.10

And if we too have said like Peter, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," ... we become a Peter, and to us there might be said by the Word, "Thou art Peter," etc. For a rock is every disciple of Christ of whom those drank who drank of the spiritual rock which followed them, and upon every such rock is built every word of the church, ...

What do we discover?

- The water rock incidents are mentioned in Exodus 17.6 and Numbers 20.7-11 and another incident in Numbers 21.16-20. >> How many water rocks can there be!?
- The LXX of Ps 78 (LXX 77).15f. could be taken as understanding that there was only one rock. The Targums of Num 21.19 also envision the rock/well "springing" up and accompanying Israel as well as PsPhilo 10.7.
- There are traditions which clearly envision two separate rocks/incidents: Ps 114/3.8 and WisSol 11.4.
- Philo seems embarrassed by the incidents and minimizes or *allegorizes*. Leg.2.86: "... the sharp rock is the **σοφία** / wisdom of God"
- The early Xn Fathers (eg, Tertullian, Baptism 9.1) affirm the Pauline reading and beginning combining with other OT/NT