

Ha'azinu
Deuteronomy 32:1-52

In this portion we find a beautiful song that Moses sings to the people. The people would have learned the song and that is how it would have been preserved for the generations to come. This is one of the simplest and oldest ways that the Hebrews learned and maintained the scriptures; since the common person did not have a copy of the Holy Writings.

When reading this song, we find that the word “Rock” is used many times to define YHVH (God) and what He, The Rock, meant to the Children of Israel. Consider these scriptures:

“For I will proclaim the name of Adonai.
Come, declare the greatness of our God!
The Rock! His work is perfect,
for all his ways are just.
A trustworthy God who does no wrong,
he is righteous and straight.” (Deuteronomy 32:3-4)

“But Yeshurun grew fat and kicked
(you grew fat, thick, gross!).
He abandoned God his Maker;
he scorned the Rock, his salvation. (Deuteronomy 32:15)

Why would Moses refer to God as “The Rock”? This understanding comes from the book of Genesis when Jacob, their Father, had an encounter with the God of His Fathers; Abraham and Isaac. (Genesis 28:18) It is here at Bethel that Jacob met the God who would literally change His life forever. He set up a “rock” as a memorial to the event. Hebrew tradition states that this “rock” was carried with them during their 40 years of wandering in the wilderness, and then it was carried into the promised land with them. Most believe that it was from this rock that water flowed in the wilderness.

In Genesis 49:22-26 we can read about the blessing that Jacob speaks over his son Joseph. In verse 24 it reads:

“but his bow remained taut; and his arms were made nimble by the hands of the Mighty One of Ya'akov (Jacob), from there, from the Shepherd, the Stone of Isra'el.”

Jacob identified the God that he served as the one that he met at Bethel. The Rock he set up was a memorial to him and his descendants, the children of Israel, that He was the only God; not “a” rock, but “The Rock”.

There are many, many scriptures throughout both testaments alluding to this “Rock”, the God of Jacob!

Shalom!

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