

# The Smitten Rock

by Henry Law

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*Henry Law's sermon 'The Smitten Rock' explores the significance of Christ as the source of grace and strength amidst life's trials and the sufficiency of His sacrifice for salvation.*

**Scripture:** Exodus 17:6, Psalm 62:7, Isaiah 53:4, John 4:14, 1 Corinthians 10:4

**Topics:** "The Cross", "Salvation"

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## Description

Henry Law preaches about the trials and temptations believers face in their faith journey, emphasizing the cyclical nature of afflictions and the need to find refuge in God during times of trouble. He highlights the significance of Christ as the Rock of salvation, symbolizing strength, love, and grace, and encourages believers to cast their cares and sins upon Him. Law delves into the concept of Christ being smitten for our sins, portraying the cross as the ultimate symbol of redemption and salvation. He urges readers to seek refuge in the wounds of Christ, where they are safe from all harm and guilt.

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## Transcript

"I will meet you by the rock at Mount Sinai. Strike the rock, and water will come pouring out. Then the people will be able to drink." Moses did just as he was told; and as the leaders looked on, water gushed out. Exodus 17:6

It was a bitter trial when Marah's bitter spring mocked the parched lip. But sweet relief was near. The sweetened draught soon changed vexation into joy. After a little pause the same dark trial re-appears in darker form. The multitude advance into the desert's depths. And here all streams quite fail. They thirst and search, but search in vain. The scene is universal drought. Thus troubles die and live again.

This is a common circumstance in faith's march. Afflictions clear away; but soon the self-same shadows grow thick. Joseph escapes the pit, and then the dungeon binds him fast. David, safe from Adullam's cave, must seek a refuge in Engedi's wilds. Troops, also, of lusts which seemed through grace, quite slain in former days, with mustered force will re-assail old age. The weeds of evil, long plucked up, will rear again their noxious head. Satan lays Abraham low in Egypt, and shoots an arrow from the same shaft in Gerar. The falling spoke of the revolving wheel soon re-ascends. The ebbing tide rolls in again tomorrow.

Believer, do not think of undisturbed repose until the flesh is forever dropped. There is a ceaseless cycle of sorrow and temptation here in this world. But do not despise the scourge. It has a teaching voice. It is held by a loving Father's hand. Hence the command, 'Hear the rod, and Him who has appointed it.' This

school of trial best discloses the hidden vileness of the heart, and the vast riches of a Savior's grace. It is so in the case before us. The hard repinings of the chosen race betray poor human nature's sinful bias. But on rebellion's base a lovely pillar rises, on which all ages read the golden glories of the Lord.

The people chide, and tempt their God. Moses seeks the open refuge of a mercy-seat. How precious is this spot! A gracious answer soon allays all fears, and soon supplies all need. The Lord said to Moses, "Take your shepherd's staff, the one you used when you struck the water of the Nile. Then call some of the leaders of Israel and walk on ahead of the people. I will meet you by the rock at Mount Sinai. Strike the rock, and water will come pouring out. Then the people will be able to drink." Moses did just as he was told; and as the leaders looked on, water gushed out. Exodus 17:5-6

Reader! draw near in reverence. The ground is holy. That Rock is Christ! That gash is His wounded side! Those streams are His abundant grace!

First sift the foremost thoughts which the idea of ROCK presents. It is a mass of mighty strength. The lashing billows lash in vain. The raging storm stirs not its fixed repose. All changing ages find it still unchanged. These properties exhibit Christ. Mark His decrees. Eternal love arranged salvation's scheme. The hand of sovereign grace drew the wise record of His wondrous kingdom. This chart is framed forever. To blinded reason, chance may seem to rule, and man's wild will to hold the helm. But all things serve the counsels of His plan. The falling sparrow and the tottering throne, the fading leaf, and the declining empire, obey a fixed resolve. His purpose cannot be moved. He is a Rock.

Survey His wondrous love. It yearns over a vast multitude of ruined souls. It calls them to His knowledge. It gives them pledges of His zeal to save. How is this love requited? Alas! what cold indifference, what harsh ingratitude, what proud contempt, what daring rebellion, what ceaseless provocations, concur to shut up His loving-kindness in displeasure! But still, He loves unto the end of endless ages. And why? He is a Rock.

When He sought earth on mercy's wings, all powers of evil met Him with their deadliest force. The might of Satan is the united might of fallen spirits. With what ease he sweeps his crowds from earth to hell! With what resistless power he forges chains to bind men in the fiery lake! He put forth all his efforts to lay Jesus low. But every aim recoiled. The battering blows were death-blows to himself. Jesus stands as a Rock.

Reader! this Rock is near, your one support, your only refuge. Be wise, and lay your every sin on Him. The weight indeed would weigh down worlds. But He can bear all. He can bear all away.

Be wise, and cast your every care on Him. Cares come indeed with rapid tide, and threaten to overwhelm. But let them waft you to the mercy-seat, where Jesus waits to take them. In faith and prayer roll them on Him. They cannot over-burden Him. He is a Rock.

Moses must SMITE the Rock. And do not blows fall heavily on Christ? He comes to undergo all penalties of sin. The holy Law has spoken from its holy throne. In all the majesty of God it has denounced unutterable and immeasurable woe on every breach of its most glorious code. Transgression is an inevitable curse. The statutes of heaven would be a trifler's jest, the threats of God would be an unmeaning tale, unless this vengeance in its utmost fury fall. Who can pass heaven's gate by trampling on heaven's edicts? The Word, severe in righteousness and righteous in severity, must reign inviolate.

The stricken Jesus is proof that it is so. The Surety-God meets the violated law. Can it spare Him? To spare Him is to make salvation void. It spares Him not. The command is, "Smite the Rock!" The antitype is the smitten Jesus. He gives His back to the relentless vengeance, until by His stripes His people are all freed. He is smitten for them. They are smitten in Him. He dies for them. They die in Him. The Rock receives fast-falling blows. Thus it is shelter, and the sheltered are unharmed.

These sufferings of the bleeding Lamb are the brightness and the glory of our Bible. Let the cross vanish, let the agony be put aside, let the dying cry be no more heard, and what is the Gospel message? Its promises deceive. Its hope is wild despair. Its peace is torture. Its life is endless death. Its freedom rivets stronger chains. They who trust in it lean on a piercing reed. They who plead it plead a betraying plea. It is an atonement which atones not. It is expiation which removes no guilt. It is satisfaction which answers no demand. It is redemption which pays no price. It is salvation which saves no soul. But blessed be the gracious God of all grace! the cross erects its heaven-high head throughout the Scriptures. A bruised God-man bleeds thereon. In his heart the sword of justice is hidden to its very hilt. Jehovah's fellow exhausts Jehovah's wrath.

Reader! mark well the smitten Rock. Behold these clefts. They gape to screen offenders from pursuing rage. Flee to them. Enter in. Hide yourself, your soul, your sins, in those deep wounds. Secreted there, you are safe, safe from all foes, safe for all ages. No curse can touch you. No wrath can find you. Satan cannot reach you. Guilt cannot ruin you. The pierced side is a God-wrought, a God-strong refuge.

The host needs water. But can the hard stone melt into running streams? Yes! All things can change their nature at their Maker's will. To serve His people the sea congeals, the flint dissolves. Believer, this is a marvel which your own heart knows. It once was as the nether-millstone. But struck by the Spirit's rod, it flows a rivulet of faith, and gratitude, and praise, and love. When Jesus is uplifted, scorn may demand, Can blessings break forth from that pierced side? Yes! By those stripes the heaven of heavens opens, all hindrances remove, and a wide channel spreads for grace upon grace to flow. The wounds of Jesus are the Spirit's avenue. They send forth blood indeed to purchase pardon. They give forth water, also, the sparkling emblem of the power of grace.

Sweet was this blessing to the pilgrims of the desert. It allayed all thirst, it cleansed all stains, it cooled when heat oppressed. But sweeter far are spiritual supplies from the true Rock to the true sons of God. Gracious souls are as the parched soil. They thirst, they daily thirst for clearer views of God, for deeper knowledge of redeeming love, for brighter light on Gospel-hopes. And they thirst not in vain. The Spirit gives deep cups of glorious truth. They drink with gladness, and their hearts rejoice. He is most happy who lives the nearest to this stream.

Gracious souls need constant cleansing. They mourn corruptions which still live within them. With hateful wing their thoughts and feelings hover over evil's mire. They pant for inward purity. For this the Spirit's help is near. He sprinkles clean water on their wills and ways, and thus preserves them from the hated filth. He is most holy who draws most water from this fount.

Gracious souls are often pierced with fiery darts. The flames of passion irritate and scorch. Nothing in self, nothing of earth can give the cooling ease. They long, with David, 'Oh! that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem.' The Spirit hears, and calming promises are soon applied. He is most peaceful whom sheltering wings protect and soothing streams refresh.

Through the long way, the supply was ever near. When Israel stirred and stayed, the water babbled by their side. So neither place nor time nor state can check the mighty Spirit's flow. All praying lips shall always quaff, 'If you, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him.'

The gift was free. The wealthy and the poor alike required and alike received. So, also, the call of grace is wide as earth and long as time. 'Whoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.' Do any fear lest the pure stream may flee the touch of unclean lips? The type forbids the doubt. The hardest murmurer in the camp partook. The Spirit scorns not a poor sinner's heart.

Reader! would you be blessed, and a blessing? Drink often, drink more of this inspiring stream. The grace-receiving are the grace-diffusing. They who live near to heaven attract to heaven. At Kadesh, Miriam's praising lips were closed in death. And then the flowing blessing seemed checked. What shall be done? The heavenly Teacher wisely teaches, 'Speak unto the rock, and it shall give forth its waters.' It is forever true, 'Ask, and you shall have.'

Moses in haste again uplifts the rod. Where was his faith? Was his eye dim to the full light of this clear Gospel type? The rock was smitten once for all. No further stroke was needed or allowed. Christ suffers once. His one grand sacrifice is sin's one death. The wound once given buys remission of all guilt forever. Believe, delight, and glory in the one cross. It is enough. It is an all-sufficient price. The thought of repetition is ignorance, distrust, and blasphemy. O blessed Jesus! Your one offering is all salvation. I would pray unto You with every breath, but woe unto me, if I bid You die again.

Worldling, you rest not on this Rock, but on the sand. Your hope fast crumbles. Flee from it, before it sink into perdition. You drink not of these healthful waters, but of a poisoned puddle. The present taste is bitter--you thirst again, and thirst in vain. Beware, lest soon, in hopeless thirst, you wail for one drop to cool a tongue tormented in the flame.

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