

A Higher Place

ASCENDING THE STAIRWAY TO THE HEAVEN

BY VICTORIA SARVADI, TH.D.

Hear my cry, O God; listen to my prayer. From the ends of the earth I call to you, I call as my heart grows faint; *lead me to the rock that is higher than I* (Psalm 61:2, NIV).

What is the rock that is higher than you or me? Can we be lifted to such a high place by our own actions or efforts? And why should we desire to be led up to a *stone* in the first place? This intriguing experience with a very curious “Rock” is recorded in Genesis 28 with Jacob, who like the Psalmist, was growing faint and running from his problems.

“[Jacob] reached a certain place, he stopped for the night because the sun had set. Taking one of the *stones* there, he put it under his head and lay down to sleep. He had a dream in which he saw a stairway resting on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending [in Hebrew, *aliyah*] and descending on it.”

The text supplies us with vivid imagery of holy angels *going up* to the resplendent and majestic God in heaven. At the top of the marvelous staircase, Jacob beheld the Glorious Lord, face to face as did his father Isaac and his grandfather Abraham. God spoke to Jacob exclaiming: “I am the Lord, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac.”

This personal introduction was God’s first



to Jacob. and it so impacted him that when he awakened from the magnificent dream and took in his surroundings, he dared place his eyes on a most exceptional and extraordinary rock where he had laid his head to sleep—a rock that took him to a higher place.

When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he thought, “Surely the Lord is in this place, and I was not aware of it.” He was afraid and said, “How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God; this is the *gate of heaven*.” Early the next morning, Jacob took the **stone** he had placed under his head and set it up as a pillar and poured oil on top of it. Then Jacob made a vow, saying, “If God will be with me and will watch over me on this journey I am taking . . . so that I return safely to my father’s household, then *the Lord will be my God* and this **stone** that I have set up as a pillar will be *God’s house [where his Presence would reside]*” (Genesis 28:16–22, NIV).

Can you imagine Jacob staring down at the rock, pondering his dream while he stroked the stone gently with his fingers? What was this mysterious rock that brought him up to such a lofty and elevated place, where the Lord resided, and angels descended to minister to man and then made *aliyah* to ascend before the Presence of God once again? What an impression the dream must have made as Jacob proclaimed with a vow that the One he encountered would be his God. Isn’t it astonishing that Jacob declared that the rock itself held within it the *Shekinah* Presence of God?

From the time of the extraordinary encounter with Jacob, the remarkable rock continues to appear throughout the Word of God. It is even assumed that the rock accompanied Jacob and was passed on to his descendants.

We first notice a prophecy concerning the rock that Jacob pronounces over his son Joseph: “But his bow abode strong, and the hands of his arms were strengthened, by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob, of whom was the feeder appointed by the *stone of Israel*” (Genesis 49:24 GNV).

Then, according to the Talmud *Sotah* 13a, two arks came up out of the land of Egypt with Israel. *One containing the shekinah stone and the other the body of Joseph*.

With this valuable piece of ancient history from the Talmud concerning this “*shekinah* stone,” we can now connect several instances with the stone and the Hebrew people in the desert. The most familiar occasion was when the Lord proclaimed to Moses: “I will stand in front of you there on the rock in Horev. You are to strike *the rock*, and water will come

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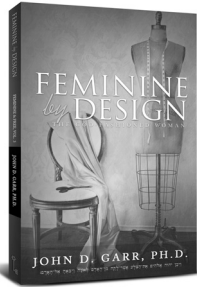
out of it, so the people can drink. . . .” (Exodus 17:6, CJB).

Maybe not so familiar is when the Israelites became fearful of the bad report given by the ten spies, Moses warned them, “You deserted *the Rock*, who fathered you; you forgot the God who gave you birth” (Deuteronomy 32:8, NIV). Perhaps the spies were supposed to have taken the blessed rock with them when they ventured out. It is quite possible that the rock was endeared and respected as from it came life refreshing, comfort and protection. And once again, just before the Israelites were about to enter the promised land God instructs: “Moses, get your walking stick. Then you and Aaron call the people together and *command that rock* to give you water” (Numbers 20:8, CEV). Notice the instruction was not *to strike* this time—but instead *to command*.

The apostle Paul finally discloses the identity of the rock when he posits: They all drank the

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same spiritual drink, for they drank from the spiritual rock *that went with them*. That rock was the *Messiah*” (1 Corinthians 10:4, ISV).


Since man is unable to stand before the all-powerful God of Creation in his Glory and live, God used a simple stone to connect with his people. The stone became an agent of God’s manifest Presence. The Hebrew word to describe this agent is *mishkan* from which the word *Shekinah* is derived. The Lord Yeshua was with his people in the desert. He was their *Rock of Salvation*, providing life-giving water and supernatural refuge and strength. The Messiah was the very same corner stone who made a way for Jacob.

King Nebuchadnezzar also dreamed of a powerful stone and the circumstances surrounding it. Because he recognized that the dream was quite unusual, it weighed heavy upon the king. He was desperate for its interpretation. The prophet Daniel was able to interpret the terrifying dream that still to this day has perplexed readers and astounded historians and Bible scholars for centuries. History has proven the prophetic world events have unfolded, just as Daniel said they would. The prophecy continues to advance as end-time events are coming to pass before our eyes. The king saw a statue whose feet were crushed by a *stone* that became a *great mountain*. That mountain will soon fill the whole earth in the end of days as we read:

“In the last days the mountain of the Lord’s temple will be established as the highest of the mountains; it will be exalted above the hills, and nations will stream to it. Many peoples will come and say, ‘Come, let us go up (*aliya*) to the mountain of the Lord, to the temple of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths’” (Micah 4:1–2, NIV).

We are coming to a day when all prophecy concerning Jacob’s people and those from the nations who are connected to him will see God move mightily. Amid much distress, there will be a physical regathering of Israel to make *aliyah* to the physical land and soon after the *Tikkun Olam* (the Restoration of All Things) will occur. The *Tikkun Olam* is the spiritual marriage of the mountain of God in heaven coming down to combine with the holy land of Israel on the earth. The Lord himself will crush the toes of the hybrid global government system as he comes down with his government on his shoulders. He will usher in the Millennial Reign of True Peace and Righteousness.

So then, the question becomes how can we, God’s people, ascend to this supernatural mountain that Jacob saw in his dreams that will one day manifest on Earth? Can all of God’s people from every end of the earth call out as their hearts grow faint: *Lead me to the rock that is higher than I?* The Psalmist answers us: “Who may ascend the mountain of the LORD? Who may stand in his holy place? The one who has clean hands and a pure heart” (Psalm 24:4–5, NIV).

Those who are consecrated through true repentance and contrition and return (make *teshuvah*) to God will be welcomed to make the highest *aliyah* of all. May the Lord God purify your heart and cleanse you who trust in him from all unrighteousness. As 1 Peter 2:6 declares, “Yeshua is the Rock of our salvation, a sure and eternal refuge, the foundation on which rests the hope of heaven.” Or as Jacob prophetically declared, “How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God; this is the *gate of heaven*.” 

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