

## Minister's Message – September 2006

### God the Rock

Some years ago I was taken on a short sight seeing tour around Bristol. Out on a country road we stopped to see a large rock on the side of the road. On the face of the rock was a crack large enough for a person to hide in. Over 250 years ago during a fierce storm a Mr. Toplady did just that. He later wrote the famous hymn 'Rock of Ages cleft for me'. He likened that rock to the shelter the believer finds in the Cross of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Toplady was not the first person to picture the Lord as a rock. Moses called God 'the Rock' in a famous song which he wrote –

*Ascribe greatness to our God the Rock.*

*His work is perfect, and all his ways are just.*

*A God of truth and without injustice*

*Righteous and upright is he. (Deuteronomy 32:4)*

The Lord gave Moses the words of this song, and told the people to teach it to each succeeding generation.

God is *the Rock*. This epithet is used seven times in this song. What do you think of when you think of a rock? Unless you have been hit on the head by a falling rock, you probably think of something firm and solid – something immovable. Rocks make up much of our coastline. They stand firm against the incessant pounding of the waves. If you were to build your house by the sea you would build on the rocks – not on the sand.

Such is the image of God portrayed in the Bible. God is the Rock. He is steadfast and unchanging. The apostle Paul refers to Jesus as the spiritual rock that accompanied Israel through the wilderness. They drank life-giving water from the rock, and that rock was Christ (I Corinthians 10:4).

*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever* (Hebrews 13:8). These words were a great comfort to first century Christians as they faced opposition and persecution. The authorities had arrested some and put them in prison. Others were challenged by false teachers.

What about today? Do you find comfort in these words about Jesus? We live in a fast changing world and are assailed by wickedness constantly. Many get blown this way and that by different doctrines. Remember Jesus Christ is unchanging. You can stand firm in him.

'The wise man built his house upon the rock' said Jesus as he concluded his sermon on the mount. He was referring to those who heard his words and did them. The person whose life is established upon the Lord Jesus Christ and his teaching will not fall in the day of trouble and distress. God is the Rock. Jesus is the Rock of salvation. Are you standing on this rock? Do you ascribe greatness to your God the Rock, whose work is perfect and whose ways are just?

*Rev. Dr. Dennis K. Muldoon*