

DWELLERS IN THE ROCK

"Let the...inhabitants of the rock sing, let them shout from the top of the mountains." (Lsa.42: 11-AV)

The words of this verse can certainly be applied to Christian believers today for they, too, "inhabit a Rock"; -in their case, THE ROCK, - CHRIST JESUS (1 Cor.10: 4). Their language is that of David, "The LORD is my rock,...in him will I trust" (2 Sam.22:2,3). We may therefore say that the verse in Isaiah 42 reminds us of some very important things which we do well to bear in mind. We suggest the following:

I. The verse tells us where our "ROCK" is. Isaiah mentions "the top of the mountains", and that, most certainly, is the position of Christ our Rock today! We are told that God "raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, FAR ABOVE ALL principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named" (Eph. 1: 20,21). We read that "...God also hath HIGHLY EXALTED HIM, and given him a name which is ABOVE EVERY NAME" (Phil.2: 9). Yes, He is a "High Rock" indeed!

We all need to realize that the early Christians were a people wholly taken up with the thought of their living and Highly Exalted Lord and Savior, and a glance at the early chapters of Acts makes that very clear. (See Acts 2:32-36; 3:13-15; 4:10, 11, etc.). We should be the same!

II. The verse tells us where we are, -as believers IN Christ.

If "Christ our Rock" is "FAR ABOVE ALL MOUNTAINS", and we are dwelling in Him, -we can only be WHERE HE IS! As "inhabitants" of That Rock we can "sing from the top of the mountains" (Isa.42: 11). Paul tells us that God has "...quickened us together with Christ... and hath RAISED US UP TOGETHER, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph.2:5, 6). In that sense, then, Christians have already "come unto Mount Zion, and unto...the heavenly Jerusalem" (Heb. 12:22). God has given us a new spiritual address; -we are "above only, and not beneath". (See Deut. 28:13). And it is all "in The Rock, Christ Jesus".

III. The verse tells us what our responsibilities are, -as "dwellers in the Rock", Two very important responsibilities are here mentioned. 1) We are to SING. Yes, indeed; -once we are within that Happy Place (Christ), we are to praise the Gracious God who put us there! The next verse puts it, -"Let them give glory unto the LORD" (Isa.42:12).

Here, of course, is the all-important MINISTRY OF WORSHIP, and we feel we should pause here to mention that, according to the Bible, there is an executive power associated with the worship of God's true people; -it has a "Judgmental effect" against Satan, and against his "hosts of darkness", -spirit -beings who have always coveted the worship that belongs to God only. We recommend a study of such passages as Isaiah 14:12-15, and Psalm 149:5-9, -and also our Lord's own word in John 4:23.-We know it is a big subject, but it may help to explain why the longest book in the Bible is a song-book, and God has placed it right at the center of the Bible. Indeed, indeed, "Let the inhabitants of The Rock SING"!

2) We are to SHOUT. Isaiah 42:11 says, "Let them SHOUT from the top of the mountains". There, perhaps, we have what we could call the associated MINISTRY OF EVANGELISM, -telling out God's glorious Gospel to others! Paul realized that, being saved himself, he was now a "debtor" to the whole wide world (Rom.1:14), and, in 1 Cor.9:16, he says, "...necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!" Surely no one could question that once we are sheltered in God's Rock, and are singing the praises of our Savior; we should not be slow in telling out the glorious Gospel to others! Billy Graham used to speak of the "sin of silence"; -may none of us be guilty of that! But we do need to realize that BOTH these ministries need to be fulfilled from WITHIN THE ROCK, and from our privileged position "at the top of the mountain"!

In conclusion, we would like to mention that The Rock is specially attractive to "feeble folk". In Prov.30:26 we read, "The conies are but a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks". We could even say that true Christian churches are actually "Colonies of Conies", -happy in The Rock Christ Jesus!

Well might we all sing:

Oh, safe to The Rock that is higher than I, My soul in its conflicts and sorrows would fly, So sinful, SO FEEBLE, Thine, Thine would I be, THOU BLEST ROCK OF AGES, I'm hiding in Thee.

May God help us all to find That Rock, -to shelter IN HIM; -and then to SING and SHOUT as we should, -all "from the top of the mountain". C.R.G.