

SWEETNESS OF THE SMITTEN ROCK
EXODUS 17:6; JUDGES 6:21; DEUT. 32:13; PSALM 81:16

There are many symbols and types used in Scripture to set forth certain truths which enable us to better understand what God is teaching us. In this study we will seek to discover some of the truths found in symbol and in type.

(1) Holy Spirit as water from the rock.

Exodus 17:6, "Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel."

The first thing we must consider is that this is typical of Christ being smitten on the cross with the Father's rod of judgment. Before any blessing could flow forth to man the Rock must be smitten. The Scriptures are clear that Christ is the Rock. "Because I will publish the name of the LORD: ascribe ye greatness unto our God. He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he" (Deut. 32:3,4, also see vs.15,18,30, 31). "And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ" (1 Corinthians 10:4).

The smitten rock typified the crucifixion. Christ must descend from heaven as the manna (incarnation), if He was to be the Bread of Life to His people, but He must be smitten by Divine judgment if He was to be the Water of life to them. We find the Lord saying, "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified)". This living water was the the promise of the Holy Ghost. He was not yet given because at this time Jesus had not yet been crucified, buried. and risen again. The Lord Jesus Christ was God's love gift to His people in redemption, and the Holy Ghost was the love gift of the crucified, and now ascended and glorified Lord, to His people. The Holy Spirit was shed forth as the fruit of Christ's sacrifice.

It was grace acting on a righteous basis for not until the rock was smitten did the waters flow forth. It was not until our Saviour was bruised that the Gospel of His grace was sent out to man. For such rich and marvelous grace as this our response should be, "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift" (2 Corinthians 9:15). Israel was not worshipping when the water was given, but murmuring in unbelief. The giving of the water was God acting according to His matchless grace. "Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" (Romans 5:21). Streams of spiritual refreshment flow to us on the account of accomplished redemption and Christ's present mediatorial work. The rock was smitten by the very rod of judgment that smote the land of Egypt in wrath. So Christ when smitten by God bore the wrath of God for His people.

The water which came out of the rock is called "honey and oil" (Deut. 32:13). Because of the people's thirst it made it doubly pleasant. (1) It quenched their thirst, (2) it brought satisfaction and pleasure to them. If we are not thirsty water has no real purpose for us, and yet we can be thirsty, drink water, and still find no satisfaction or pleasure from it. This is to say that we can read the Word, or listen to it preached, and not having any real thirst for it find no real pleasure in it. The graces and comforts of the Spirit are compared to rivers of living waters. They flow from Christ who is the Rock smitten by the law of Moses for Christ was made under the law. Nothing will supply the needs and

satisfy the desires of a soul, except water out of this Rock, the fountain opened.

When Moses smote the rock the second time (Numbers 20:8-11), "the water came out abundantly." "Which turned the rock into a standing water, the flint into a fountain of waters" (Psalm 114:8). The water came out without measure. "For whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him" (John 3:34). Spiritual delights are pure, clear, and refreshing rivers of water. "They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and shall drink of the river of thy pleasures" (Psalm 36:8). "Then will I make their waters deep, and cause their rivers to run like oil, saith the Lord GOD" (Ezekiel 32:14). "He opened the rock, and the waters gushed out: they ran in the dry places like a river" (Psalm 105:42). "And did all drink" is recorded of the Israelites, and we know that all God's people receive the Holy Spirit. "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Galatians 4:6).

(2) Holy Spirit as fire from the rock.

"Then the angel of the LORD put forth the end of the staff that was in his hand, and touched the flesh and the unleavened cakes; and there rose up fire out of the rock, and consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes. Then the angel of the LORD departed out of his sight" (Judges 6:21).

Fire is a symbol of the Holy Spirit. The fire came out of the rock to consume the sacrifice. By this it was a sign that Gideon had found grace in God's sight. This acceptance of his sacrifice evidenced the acceptance of his person, confirmed that he would not die, and was his commission to do what God gave him to do. The Holy Spirit in us confirms our acceptance in the sacrifice of Christ and enables us to do His will. After the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, God shewed His approval by raising Him from the dead. The resurrection is the equivalent of the fire consuming the sacrifices in the O.T. "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit" (1 Peter 3:18). He died in our place and through His grace we will not have to die for our sin.

". . . but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." (Matthew 3:11). "But ye shall receive power, after the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses . . ." (Acts 1:8). "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues of fire, and it sat upon each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:1-4). The flaming fire (Holy Spirit) of Sinai was in the giving of the law, and the fire of Pentecost was in the giving of the gospel of the kingdom. By His Spirit Christ gave the twelve a power to publish and proclaim the truth they knew. The fire sat upon them and they had the gift of the Holy Spirit, though the sign we may suppose, soon disappeared. The actual gifts and the results themselves became the sign.

It is fire that proves a man's works (1 Corinthians 3:12-15). Fire also purifies the believer. It is the Spirit who applies the cleansing Word to our hearts, reproves, corrects, and instructs us. The Spirit like fire melts the heart, burns up the dross, and kindles the devout affections in the soul. This is the fire which Christ came to send upon the earth after His ascension. "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment" (John 16:7,8).

Fire is the judgment of the unbeliever. "Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire" (Matthew 3:12). "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (Revelation 20:15).

(3) Holy Spirit as oil out of the rock.

"He made him to ride on the high places of the earth, that he might eat the increase of the fields; and he made him to suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock" (Deut. 32:13).

In the pattern for the tabernacle which God gave to Moses we find the anointing oil mentioned several times. This oil speaks of the Holy Spirit and its purpose of consecrating the priests. "Then shalt thou take the anointing oil, and pour it upon his head, and anoint him. And thou shalt take of the blood that is upon the altar, and of the anointing oil, and sprinkle it upon Aaron, and upon his garments: and upon his sons, and upon the garments of his sons with him: and he shall be hallowed, and his garments, and his sons, and his sons' garments with him" (Exodus 29:7,21).

We find a description of God's Beloved Son in this passage. "And thou shalt anoint the tabernacle of the congregation therewith, and the ark of the testimony, And the table and all his vessels, and the candlestick and his vessels, and the altar of incense, And the altar of burnt offering with all its vessels, and the laver and his foot. And thou shalt sanctify them, that they may be most holy: whatsoever toucheth them shall be holy" (Exodus 30:26-29). It's fulfillment is seen in the Lord Jesus Christ. "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him. And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:16,17).

The same is seen in the anointing of the lesser David. "Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. . ." (1 Samuel 16:13). "I have found David my servant: with my holy oil have I anointed him" (Psalm 89:20).

In the parable of the ten virgins we have a good example of oil representing the Holy Spirit. "Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps" (Matthew 25:1-4). The wise virgins symbolically had the Holy Spirit and the foolish virgins did not. Thus we learn that you can be moral and look like a believer, and yet be void of the Holy Spirit. Paul states it, "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away" (2 Timothy 3:5).

(4) Holy Spirit as honey out of the rock.

"He should have fed them also with the finest of the wheat: and with honey out of the rock should I have satisfied thee" (Psalm 81:16).

While honey may not be an exact emblem of the Holy Spirit, it is the Holy Spirit who takes the truth of God and opens it to our understanding so that it becomes sweet to our taste. "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you" (John 16:13-15).

Many times in the O.T. we read of Israel going into "a land flowing with milk and

honey." These were both very good and are filled with meaning. Milk is good for all ages and enables growth to take place. Honey is a natural sweet and filled with nutritious energy. When eaten both maintain good health. "O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him" (Psalm 34:8). "Pleasant words are as an honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones" (Proverbs 16:24). "My meditation of him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the LORD" (Psalm 104:34). Israel was not satisfied with God's provision for them and complained. "The full soul loatheth an honeycomb; but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet" (Proverbs 27:7). How are we compared to Israel? Is the Word of God sweet to us because we are hungry for it?

The Spirit enlightens our minds to the truth of God. "And when the people were come into the wood, behold, the honey dropped; but no man put his hand to his mouth: for the people feared the oath. But Jonathan heard not when his father charged the people with the oath: wherefore he put forth the end of the rod that was in his hand, and dipped it in the honeycomb, and put his hand to his mouth; and his eyes were enlightened" (1 Samuel 14:26,27). "But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" (1 Corinthians 2:10). "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; . . ." (Ephesians 1:17,18).

This enlightenment of the truth of God to our soul is sweet to our soul. Whatever the Holy Spirit teaches us of the Lord Jesus Christ and His person and work should be sweet to our souls. "How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth" (Psalm 119:103). "More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb" (Psalm 19:10). "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts" (Jeremiah 15:16). "My son, eat thou honey, because it is good; and the honeycomb, which is sweet to thy taste: So shall the knowledge of wisdom be unto thy soul: when thou hast found it, then there shall be a reward, and thy expectation shall not be cut off" (Proverbs 24:13,14).

". . . and he made him to suck honey out of the rock, . . ." This tells us that we must labour to know the Word of God. Sucking has both action and labour involved, as does study which Paul states thus, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15). Study the Word to gain its truth and knowledge which are able to make thee wise unto salvation and to grow in grace. To discover the heavenly comforts and to know that which pleases God.

Conclusion or summary.

When we think of the honey out of the rock and its sweetness as opened to us by the Holy Spirit, what are the sweet things that are "to be desired more than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb?" Are they not the very truths which the Holy Spirit reveals to us concerning Christ? I believe they include every truth concerning the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. What are some of these sweet truths which are sweeter than honey and the honeycomb? I will only list some of the Scriptures which we will look up.

1 Corinthians 15:3,4; Romans 5:8-10; 2 Corinthians 4:6

Romans 3:24-26; 4:25; 5:19-21; Romans 8:1,31-39

2 Corinthians 5:19,21; Ephesians 2:14; Colossians 1:20

Ephesians 1-2:10; Ch.3; 4:31

Philippians 1:6; 2:13

Colossians 1:21,22,27; 3:3,4; 2 Timothy 4:8; Titus 1:1,2; 2:11-14; 3:4-7

Much more can be added and I am sure that you have some which are very sweet to

you as well. Study them, meditate on them, and believe them.