

## Foundation on the Rock

A resolution is “a firm decision to do or not to do something. It is an act of will. But the big question is: Who’s Will?

### The New Year(s).

The New Year is, indeed special in the Bible. In Exodus 12: 1 God spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt; he said, **2 “This month shall be the beginning of months for you; it is to be the first month of the year for you.** Chodesh HaAviv,<sup>1</sup> the Month of Spring. It was for the express purpose of commemorating God liberating the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. Then there is also the "civil year", the point in the year from which the years are counted. Yom Teruah "day of shouting/blasting", or the Feast of Trumpets, also called Rosh Hashanah, the “Head of the Year”. It commemorates God’s Creation and our need for repentance and forgiveness. God is big on commemoration.

### Memorial Stones

Memorial stones are stones that are used to commemorate God's acts or promises in the Bible. They serve as reminders of God's goodness, faithfulness, and power for the people of Israel and for Christians. They’re stones, because stone lasts forever, which is why the 10 commandments were written on stones by God Himself.

**Bethel**-The first Biblical reference to memorial stones comes in Genesis 28: 10-22, when Jacob set a pillar in Bethel to commemorate a powerful vision of God that he experienced while sleeping there. The experience was so striking that Jacob felt that it must be commemorated, so he erected the stone upon which he slept. Jacob did not want to forget what God had given him. Bethel, meaning ‘House of God’, then became an important center for worship.

**Gilgal**-In Joshua 4:1-8 God commands the Israelites to cross the Jordan River which He has stopped miraculously. Joshua leads the 12 tribes to remove boulders from the riverbed, which they erect in the Promised Land in a place called Gilgal. These 12 stones of Jordan were a memorial to God’s love and miraculous assistance. Joshua 4:21-22 explains that ‘In the future your children will ask, “What do these stones mean?” Then you can tell them, “This is where the Israelites crossed the Jordan on dry ground.”’ God longs for us to proclaim His goodness to future generations.

**Ebenezer**-1 Samuel 7:7-12 depicts the Israelites under imminent attack from the Philistines. God leads them to victory, so Samuel erects a large stone and names it Ebenezer, meaning ‘the stone of help’. Samuel recognized the source of their victory and publicly declared it. By commemorating God’s goodness in a permanent way, it ensured that the Israelites would not forget God’s grace. To everyone else, the stones were just a heap of rubble, but to the people of God, they were a constant reminder that Yahweh was a personal and powerful God, working wonders on behalf of His people.

**God, the Rock of Strength, Stability, Refuge**-God, as the Rock is a common theme in the Old Testament. In the song of Moses, we read in Deut 32:3-4 **For I proclaim the name of the Lord; Ascribe greatness to our God! 4 The Rock! His work is perfect, For all His ways are just; A God of faithfulness and without injustice, Righteous and just is He.** He is the The Rock because of God’s perfection and justice, flawless in His works. And this reassures us, because we can rely on God’s character as unchanging, truthful, just, and incapable of failure. Quite a foundation. And, when we are in trouble, we can say along with David, **Psalm 18:1-2 “I love You, Lord, my strength.” 2 The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my savior, My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.** God is the ultimate refuge and strength for believers in Him. He is a fortress and a rock, emphasizing His role as a protector and deliverer. He reminds us to turn to God in times of trouble, trusting in His unshakable strength and steadfast presence that can’t be moved. And those who put their faith in Him are anchored to Him, so we won’t be moved. **Psalm 62:5-7 5 My soul, wait in silence for God alone, For my hope is from Him. 6 He alone is my rock and my salvation, My refuge; I will not be shaken. 7 My salvation and my glory rest on God; The rock of my strength, my refuge is in God.**

**Jesus, the Rock of Salvation**-- We must choose to be saved, and decide to repent, instead of continuing in our rebellion against God. We see this in how God brought water to the thirsty and contentious Israelites Exodus 17:2-7. **2 So the people quarreled with Moses and said, "Give us water so that we may drink!" And Moses said to them, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the Lord?" 3 But the people were thirsty for water there; and they grumbled against Moses and said, "Why is it that you have brought us up from Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?" 4 So Moses cried out to the Lord, saying, "What am I to do with this people? A little more and they will stone me!" 5 Then the Lord said to Moses, "Pass before the people and take with you some of the elders of Israel; and take in your hand your staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. 6 Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, so that the people may drink."** And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. And then, in Numbers 20:2-12, the people are again grumbling **2 There was no water for the congregation, and they assembled against Moses and Aaron.** God told Moses to speak to the rock in front of the congregation, but instead, we read in verses 10-12 **10 and Moses and Aaron summoned the assembly in front of the rock. And he said to them, "Listen now, you rebels; shall we bring water for you out of this rock?" 11 Then Moses raised his hand and struck the rock twice with his staff; and water came out abundantly, and the congregation and their livestock drank. 12 But the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, "Since you did not trust in Me, to treat Me as holy in the sight of the sons of Israel, for that reason you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them.** God wanted the Rock portrait to illustrate the wonder-working power of Christ's once-for-all sacrifice. Compare these two Old Testament stories with Jesus' sacrifice. In the Exodus passage while Moses was alone with the elders, he was told to strike the rock and water would gush forth. He was not to strike the rock in front of the entire congregation. Because the Sanhedrin, the Jewish elders, feared Jesus' popularity, they arrested him in the middle of the night. In a secret trial, away from the eyes of the congregation they beat him and condemned Jesus to die. At Miribah, in the 2nd passage in Numbers, Moses was supposed to speak to the Rock in front of the entire congregation and water would flow. By speaking instead of striking the Rock this second event in Israel's history was to prophetically point to the power of Jesus' atoning sacrifice on the cross, and that to experience the living water that Jesus has to offer, we just need to pray to the Lord, the Rock of Salvation, speak to Him, repent of our rebellion, and believe in His one-time sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins. Now, in prayer we need only to speak to the Rock of our salvation. Moses stubbornly sinned.

What is God asking of you that seems like a trial instead of an opportunity?

Where are you refusing to trust Him, and wanting to do things your own way? We all have defense mechanisms that we have to fight against if we want to do God's will for our lives. And if we succeed, the result is opportunities to see God's power at work. As we allow God to change our hearts to see others as He sees them, and to cry with them, even as we share their joys, He molds our heart to be more like Him. And this is a choice, just as choosing Jesus is always a choice.

We must build our lives on the foundation of Jesus, as the most important fact of our lives. Matthew 7:24-27 **24 "Therefore, everyone who hears these words of Mine, and acts on them, will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25 And the rain fell and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock. 26 And everyone who hears these words of Mine, and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. 27 And the rain fell and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell—and its collapse was great."** So, it's not just coming to church and hearing the word of God that is important. We must then put what we hear into practice in our lives. This is what building our lives on the foundation of Jesus is all about. We must truly build our life on the foundation of Jesus, the Rock, the only foundation that will withstand the winds and the rains if we expect to survive the storms of life. He will renew us day by day, if we will let Him.