

THE STONES THAT TALK

Matthew 27:62-65; Mark 15:42-47; Luke 23:50-56; John 19:38-42

One day I made an off-the-cuff remark. I referred to a certain instance in my life that made me appear “*about as dumb as a box of rocks.*” A kind Christian gentleman verbally chastised me, noting that in the Bible even the rocks know Jesus, and probably better than we know Him. Thinking that through for a little while I confessed the error of my foolish statement! Rocks DO talk, and they say A LOT!

These lifeless pieces of granite seem to be hard and uninviting. But in Scripture they are often the focal point of praise and honor to God, and many of them have powerful messages. On our Road to Easter we will confront one extraordinary stone. It talks! It cries out! Its message is powerful!

In Genesis 31:49 Laban and Jacob built a heap of stones, and they called it ***Mizpah***, signifying the covenant between them, meaning: “*May the LORD watch between you and me when we are absent one from another.*” He is the trustworthy God who faithfully keeps His covenants with His people.

After the Israelites crossed the Jordan River into the Promised Land, “*Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of the Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests who bore the ark of the covenant stood* (Joshua 4:9). He said these stones would “*be for a Memorial to the children of Israel forever* (Joshua 4:7).

The Bible recounts an event in the life of Samuel, when he “*took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen, and called its name Ebenezer, saying, ‘Thus far the LORD has helped us* (1 Samuel 7:12).

On our Road to Easter we watch as Jesus entered Jerusalem in what we call *The Triumphal Entry*, or *Palm Sunday*. The crowd cried out “*Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the LORD!*” (Luke 19:38) The Pharisees were offended and asked Jesus to rebuke his followers. He replied: “*I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out.* (Luke 19:40).

Joseph of Arimathea received permission from Pilate and took the dead body of Jesus, “*wrapped [it] in a clean linen cloth*” (Matthew 27:59), and laid in the tomb that was “*hewn out of the rock*” (Mark 15:46). Joseph of Arimathea “*rolled a large stone against the door of the tomb* (Matthew 27:60). Pilate’s instructions were carried out, for “*they went and made the tomb secure, sealing the stone and setting the guard* (Matthew 27:66). Sunday morning came! “*There was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it*” (Matthew 28:2). We can join Mary Magdalene as she “*... went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb*” (John 20:1). We too can hear the angel from heaven sitting on that huge stone, saying: “*Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for He is risen as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead.* (Matthew 28:5-7). Never again would anyone need to ask: “*Who will roll away the stone from the door of the tomb for us?* (Mark 16:3)

That stone that covered the tomb’s entry cries out, declaring: **HE IS RISEN!** And it is Simon Peter, fully reconciled to Jesus, accepting Jesus’ commission to preach the Gospel, who declares to all:

“As you come to Him, the living Stone – rejected by human beings but chosen by God and precious to Him - you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For in Scripture it says: ‘See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in Him will never be put to shame.’ Now to you who believe, this stone is precious.” (1 Peter 2:4-7; TNIV)

God’s Word declares that we as believers are like “*living stones,*” who like the stone guarding Jesus’ tomb, are to proclaim by lip and by life that “**HE IS RISEN AS HE SAID ... GO QUICKLY AND TELL.**”

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