

He Hideth My Soul in the Cleft of the Rock

The beautiful and comforting hymn, “He Hideth My Soul,” (#545 in our book) penned by the prolific hymnwriter Fanny J. Crosby, finds its inspiration in a significant passage from the book of Exodus. Specifically, the imagery of God hiding Moses in the “cleft of the rock” is drawn from Exodus 33:22.

Before this encounter, Moses had been on Mount Sinai receiving the 10 commandments from God. However, upon his return, he found the Israelites engaged in idolatry, having created a golden calf to worship. This grave sin had angered God, and Moses had been interceding for the people, pleading for God’s forgiveness and continued presence with them.

Following this difficult situation, Moses expressed a desire to know God more closely, asking to see His glory. While God granted his request, He also knew that a direct encounter with His full glory would be overwhelming for Moses in his earthly state. So God provided a way for Moses to experience His presence without being consumed by it.

God instructed Moses to stand on a rock. As God’s glory passed, He would place Moses in a cleft (a crack or opening) within the rock and then He would cover him with His hand. This act of divine protection allowed Moses to see God’s “back” but not His face, as God stated, *“You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live.”* (Exodus 33:20)

The imagery of the cleft of the rock offers profound spiritual applications for Christians:

- **Protection and Refuge:** Just as God hid Moses in the cleft of the rock, Christ is the ultimate place of refuge (John 10:28-29) and protection (Romans 8:31-39) in a world filled with difficulties. Safety can be found by running to Him when feeling overwhelmed or threatened.
- **Intimacy with God:** Moses was protected from the full intensity of God’s glory, yet he still experienced God’s presence. Through Christ, a deep relationship with God can be experienced (John 14:21), even though His divine essence may not be fully grasped.
- **Salvation and Redemption:** The “cleft of the rock” is related to the pierced side of Christ on the cross. As Moses was hidden in the rock, Christians are hidden (Colossians 3:3) and made righteous (2 Corinthians 5:21) in Christ.
- **Seeing God in Christ:** Jesus, as God incarnate, reveals the Father (John 14:9). Through Christ, God’s glory and grace can be seen (John 1:14).

The hymn “He Hideth My Soul in the Cleft of the Rock” captures God’s protection and provision in Christ. As Moses was hidden from God’s glory, refuge and safety can be found in Jesus. Run to Him in times of need and trust in His protective hand.

~Ron Josselet (AI Assisted)