

1 Corinthians 10:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.

Analysis

And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ—Paul identifies the water-giving rock of Exodus 17:6 and Numbers 20:11 with Christ Himself. The adjective *pneumatikēs* (πνευματικῆς, "spiritual") again indicates supernatural provision and typological significance. The remarkable declaration **and that Rock was Christ** shows Christ's pre-incarnate presence and activity in Israel's history.

Rabbinic tradition held that the rock literally followed Israel through the wilderness, providing water continuously. Whether Paul affirms this tradition or speaks metaphorically, his point is theological: Christ was the source of Israel's sustenance. The *petra* (πέτρα, "rock") represents Christ's stability, provision, and presence. Just as Corinthians drink Christ's blood at communion, Israel drank from Christ in the wilderness.

This verse is crucial for Paul's argument: if Israel experienced Christ-centered provision yet fell into judgment, the Corinthians' participation in Christian sacraments offers no security apart from faithfulness. Christ was present with Israel, yet they perished. His presence at the Lord's table is both privilege and warning.

Historical Context

The rock-striking incidents at Massah/Meribah (Exodus 17) and Kadesh (Numbers 20) were pivotal in Israel's wilderness narrative. Water scarcity was constant threat in the Sinai desert. Paul's identification of the rock with Christ reflects apostolic Christological reading of the Old Testament—Christ is present throughout redemptive history, not just after the incarnation. This challenged both Jewish and pagan Corinthian readers.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How does recognizing Christ's presence in Old Testament history deepen your understanding of Scripture's unity?
2. In what ways do you "drink from Christ" daily as your source of spiritual sustenance?
3. If Israel experienced Christ's provision yet faced judgment, what does this teach about the relationship between privilege and perseverance?

Interlinear Text

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|-------|--------|-------------|--------------------|-------|-------------|--------|--------|
| καὶ | πάντες | τὸ | αὐτὸ | πόμα | πνευματικῆς | ἔπινον | ἔπινον |
| And | all | G3588 | the same | drink | spiritual | did | did |
| G2532 | G3956 | | G846 | G4188 | G4152 | G4095 | G4095 |
| γὰρ | ἐκ | πνευματικῆς | ἀκολουθούσης | πέτρα | ἡ | δὲ | πέτρα |
| for | of | spiritual | that followed them | Rock | G3588 | and | Rock |
| G1063 | G1537 | G4152 | G190 | G4073 | | G1161 | G4073 |
| ἦν | ό | Χριστός | | | | | |
| was | G3588 | Christ | | | | | |
| G2258 | | G5547 | | | | | |

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 17:6 (Parallel theme): 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.

John 7:37 (Parallel theme): 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.

Isaiah 48:21 (Parallel theme): And they thirsted not when he led them through the deserts: he caused the waters to flow out of the rock for them: he clave the rock also, and the waters gushed out.

Psalms 105:41 (Parallel theme): He opened the rock, and the waters gushed out; they ran in the dry places like a river.

John 4:14 (Parallel theme): But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

Numbers 20:11 (Parallel theme): And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also.

Psalms 78:20 (Parallel theme): Behold, he smote the rock, that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed; can he give bread also? can he provide flesh for his people?

Psalms 78:15 (Parallel theme): He clave the rocks in the wilderness, and gave them drink as out of the great depths.

John 4:10 (Parallel theme): Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewst the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

Isaiah 43:20 (Parallel theme): The beast of the field shall honour me, the dragons and the owls: because I give waters in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, to give drink to my people, my chosen.

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