Isaiah 48:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

> 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.

Analysis

They thirsted not when he led them through the deserts (וְלֹא צָמְאוּ בַּחֲרָבוֹת
הוֹלִיכָם)—This recalls the first exodus when God provided water in wilderness. The
verb holiqam (led them) emphasizes divine guidance through charavot (desert
places, waste lands). Despite arid conditions, lo tsame'u (they thirsted not)—a
miracle of provision. **He caused the waters to flow out of the rock for them**—
The verb hizil (caused to flow) recalls both Exodus 17:6 (Horeb) and Numbers
20:11 (Kadesh) where Moses struck rocks and water gushed forth.

He clave the rock also, and the waters gushed out (וַיִּבְקַע־צוּר וַיָּזֻבוּ מָיִם)—The
verbs vayivqa (split, cleave) and vayazuvu (gushed, flowed) emphasize abundance.
Paul interprets this typologically: 'that Rock was Christ' (1 Corinthians 10:4). The
smitten rock represents Christ crucified, from whom living water flows to all who
believe (John 7:37-39). Isaiah promises the second exodus (from Babylon) will
mirror the first—God will supernaturally provide. This assures believers: God who
provided yesterday will provide today. The same grace that sustained wilderness
wanderings sustains present trials. Christ, the smitten Rock, eternally pours out
Spirit-water for thirsty souls.

Historical Context

The historical exodus included miraculous water provision at Rephidim (Exodus
17:1-7) and Kadesh (Numbers 20:1-13). The rock at Horeb became proverbial for

God's provision. When Isaiah prophesied Babylon's exile and return, he assured: just as God provided then, He'll provide now. The church fathers saw baptism and Eucharist prefigured here—water and blood from Christ's pierced side, spiritual provision for the New Covenant community.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does the rock producing water typologically point to Christ as source of living water for spiritual thirst?
2. What does God's past faithfulness (exodus provision) guarantee about His present and future faithfulness?
3. How should Christians 'drink from the Rock' today—what does this mean practically in terms of depending on Christ?

Interlinear Text

מָיִם:	הֹולִיכֵ ם	בַּחֳרָבֹות	צָמְא וּ	וְל א
also and the waters	**them through the deserts**		**And they thirsted**	
H4325	H1980	H2723	H6770	H3808

צ ור	לָ מֹו הִזָ יל	וַי בְקַע	צ ור	וַיֶ בו
out of the rock	**to flow**	**for them he clave**	**out of the rock**	**gushed out**
H6697	H5140	H0	H1234	H6697	H2100

מָיִם:
also and the waters
H4325

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.

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

Isaiah 30:25 (Parallel theme): And there shall be upon every high mountain, and upon every high hill, rivers and streams of waters in the day of the great slaughter, when the towers fall.

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?

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.

Isaiah 49:10 (Parallel theme): They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them.

Nehemiah 9:15 (Parallel theme): And gavest them bread from heaven for their hunger, and broughtest forth water for them out of the rock for their thirst, and promisedst them that they should go in to possess the land which thou hadst sworn to give them.