

Psalm 78:35

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And they remembered that God was their rock, and the high God their redeemer.

Analysis

And they remembered that God was their rock, and the high God their redeemer. The title *tzur* (צָר, "rock") emphasizes God's stability, protection, and permanence—used 73 times in the Psalms. *El Elyon* (אֵל עֶלְיוֹן, "high God") denotes supreme sovereignty, first used by Melchizedek (Genesis 14:18-20). *Gō'ēl* (גּוֹעֵל, "redeemer") is kinsman-redeemer language, pointing to God's covenant obligation to rescue His people.

Yet Asaph's irony is devastating—they "remembered" only under duress. True memory of God as Rock should produce unwavering trust, but theirs was selective amnesia cured temporarily by catastrophe. They knew the right theology—God as foundation, sovereign, and deliverer—yet this knowledge remained cerebral rather than transformative.

The tragedy intensifies in verse 36: their confession was lip-service. Modern believers face identical danger—orthodox theology without heart transformation, knowing God's attributes while living practically atheistic lives. Christ warned against calling Him "Lord, Lord" without obedience (Matthew 7:21).

Historical Context

Asaph references Israel's deliverance from Egypt, where God demonstrated all three roles: Rock providing stability through covenant, Most High God judging

Egypt's gods, and Redeemer purchasing Israel from slavery. These weren't abstract concepts but lived experiences the Exodus generation witnessed.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. What "rocks" (false foundations) do you turn to before remembering God is your true Rock?
2. How can you cultivate constant awareness of God as Redeemer, not just crisis-driven remembrance?
3. Does your theology inform your daily trust, or remain compartmentalized head-knowledge?

Interlinear Text

וְיִזְרְאֵל	כִּי	אֱלֹהִים	צָוֹק	כִּי	אֱלֹהִים	לְ	אֵין	בְּלִי	בְּלִי
And they remembered		that God	was their rock		God		and the high		
H2142	H3588	H430	H6697	H410	H5945				

אֶלְמָן:	
their redeemer	
H1350	

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 32:4 (References God): He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.

Exodus 15:13 (Redemption): Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed: thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation.

Isaiah 41:14 (Redemption): Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the LORD, and thy redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.

Deuteronomy 32:15 (References God): But Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked: thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered with fatness; then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation.

Titus 2:14 (Redemption): Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

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