**FAVORITE HYMNS**

***Rock of Ages***

The year was 1776. To Americans that is a landmark year, for it was the time in which our young nation broke from the shackles of England’s rule with our *Declaration of Independence*. It was also a famous year in England, but for another reason. It was in that year that Augustus Toplady, a young man out walking in a village near his home, suddenly found himself in a violent thunderstorm. He became very terrified, unable to find any shelter to escape the lightening strikes and ear-piercing thunderclaps. Fearing death he suddenly spotted a cliff running down a large mass of rock beside the road. Taking shelter under that cliff he escaped the downpour and electrical strikes.

Later, when home and still traumatized by his near-death experience, he sat down and penned a poem, comparing his experience to that of Jesus in his life. He titled it *Rock of Ages*. He meditated on Paul’s statement “…*for they drank of that spiritual* ***Rock*** *that followed them, and that* ***Rock*** *was Christ*” (I Cor. 10:4). This poem became a famous hymn, perhaps the most famous in the English language over the past two centuries.

Have you ever just sat down and thought through the scriptural connections to the lines in that song? It is a worthy pursuit. Let me do that with you now. Read each line, then stop and read the scriptural reference below. I pray this blesses you with a deeper meaning the next time you sing this favorite hymn.

Rock of Ages, cleft for me (read Psalm 62:5-8).

Let me hide myself in Thee (read Exodus 33:22)

Let the water and the blood (read John 5:6)

From Thy rivin side which flowed (read John 19:34)

Be of sin the double cure (read 2 Kings 2:9-10)

Cleanse me from its guilt and power (read Isaiah 1:18)

Not the labor of my hands (read Psalm 69:6)

Can fulfill the law’s demands (read Matthew 5:17-18)

Could my zeal no respite know (read Psalm 69:6)

Could my tears forever flow (read Psalm 6:6)

All for sin could not atone (read Hebrews 10:5-6)]

Thou must save and Thou alone (read Hebrews 10:8-10)

Nothing in my hand I bring (read Isaiah 4:1)

Simply to Thy cross I cling (read Galatians 6:14)

Naked come to Thee for dress (read Romans 13:14)

Helpless look to Thee for grace (read Philippians 4:13)

Vile I to the fountain fly (read Psalm 51:7)

Wash me Savior or I die (read John 13:8)

While I draw this fleeting breath (read Psalm 103:15-16)

When mine eyes are closed in death (read Ecclesiastes 12:7)

When I soar to worlds unknown (read John 14:2-3)

See Thee on Thy judgment throne (read Matthew 25:31)

Rock of Ages, cleft for me (read I Corinthians 10:4)

Let me hide myself in Thee (read Psalm 17:3)

**Scriptural References:**

**Vs. 1 Psa. 62:5-8**My soul, wait silently for God alone, For my expectation is from Him. He only is my rock and my salvation; He is my defense; I shall not be moved. In God is my salvation and my glory; The rock of my strength, And my refuge, is in God. Trust in Him at all times, you people; Pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us.

**Exo. 33:22**  “So it shall be, while My glory passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand while I pass by.

**John 5:6** When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he already had been in that condition a long time, He said to him, “Do you want to be made well?”

**John 19:34** But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out.

**2 Kgs. 2:9-10** And so it was, when they had crossed over, that Elijah said to Elisha, “Ask! What may I do for you, before I am taken away from you?” Elisha said, “Please let a double portion of your spirit be upon me.” So he said, “You have asked a hard thing. Nevertheless, if you see me when I am taken from you, it shall be so for you; but if not, it shall not be so.”

**Isa. 1:18** “Come now, and let us reason together,” Says the LORD, “Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool.

**Vs. 2 Psalm 69:6** Let not those who wait for You, O Lord GOD of hosts, be ashamed because of me; Let not those who seek You be confounded because of me, O God of Israel.

**Matthew 5:17-18** “Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.

**Psalm 69:6** Let not those who wait for You, O Lord GOD of hosts, be ashamed because of me; Let not those who seek You be confounded because of me, O God of Israel.

**Psalm 6:6** I am weary with my groaning; All night I make my bed swim; I drench my couch with my tears.

**Hebrews 10:5-6** Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: “Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, But a body You have prepared for Me. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure.

**Hebrews 10:8-10** Previously saying, “Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and offerings for sin You did not desire, nor had pleasure in them” (which are offered according to the law), then He said, “Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God.” He takes away the first that He may establish the second. By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

**Vs. 3 Isaiah 4:1** And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, “We will eat our own food and wear our own apparel; Only let us be called by your name, To take away our reproach.”

**Galatians 6:14** But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

**Romans 13:14** But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.

**Philippians 4:13** I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

**Psalm 51:7** Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

**John 13:8** Peter said to Him, “You shall never wash my feet!” Jesus answered him, “If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me.”

**Vs. 4 Psalm 103:15-16** As for man, his days are like grass; As a flower of the field, so he flourishes. For the wind passes over it, and it is gone, And its place remembers it no more.

**Ecclesiastes 12:7** Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, And the spirit will return to God who gave it.

**John 14:2-3** In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.

**Matthew 25:31** When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory.

**I Corinthians 10:4** and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.

**Psalm 17:3** You have tested my heart; You have visited me in the night; You have tried me and have found nothing; I have purposed that my mouth shall not transgress.

Augustus Toplady. Funny name, huh? Probably made fun of by his peers as a child. But he grew up to give the world an *august* song, a *top* 10 hymn.

Many have been brought to tears, and closer to Christ, by his words. I’m one of them. – Rick