

Faces like Flint

07 - Living the Simple Gospel: Philippians
Church on the Park I Sunday, 15 JAN 2017

Text: Philippians 1:12-14

Theme: Stay on course and let nothing sway you from your Father's call.

Intro: *Do you know what flint is?* There was a cartoon that I loved called 'The Flintstones'. The cartoon gives you a bit of the idea of what the word 'flint' means. Flint is a very hard and sharp stone. It was used in ancient times to make weapons and tools like knives, spearpoints, arrowheads, scrapers, axes and drills.¹ It's also used today in architecture, construction, firearms and jewelry. Today, I want to talk to you about how God wants to make you like flint. Last week we focused on how your Father in heaven is like a ROCK. In this message, we will see that when you are resting on the Rock, you become like that rock—strong, hard and tough.

1) Your Father wants to form you to be like flint—strong, solid and steadfast (1 Cor. 15:58).

- "The **people** who **know** their God shall **become strong** and do **exploits**" (Daniel 11:32, from Hebrew).
 - Sadly, many of the newer translations do not translate this verse literally. I think the King James is the best translation of this verse.
 - Notice the **key words**:
 - '**People**' - The Father has always been looking for a people. And not just any people but a people who know their God.
 - '**Know**' - Here is the crux of the matter. The Father wants you to know him. This does not mean head knowledge, but intimate and personal knowledge.
 - '**Strong**' - It is **through knowing God** that you become **strong** in God. There is no other way.
 - This is the word I want to focus on. In Hebrew it's **chazaq**. (Hiphil [causative], imperfect/incomplete)²
 - The whole idea behind this word is **strength** or **becoming strong**.
 - The **picture** is becoming **hard like a rock—strong** and **courageous**. I'm reminded of the movie '**Rocky**' when I think of this word.
 - This word is also used in **Nehemiah** for '**rebuilding**' the wall.
 - '**Do Exploits**' - It's from the inner strength that comes from knowing God that your mighty deeds in God come from.
 - *First, are you part of God's people? Second, are you growing in your knowledge of God?* If you are, you will become strong and do great exploits for God (great deeds).
 - You need to become like **flint** to make it in this **journey**.
 - **Paul** is an example of this.
 - He's thrown in **prison** but he does **not** allow that to **take him off course**. He continues to boldly preach the Gospel.
 - He's **perseverance** in the face of great opposition, causes the **other believers** to be even more **bold**.
 - **Boldness** is **contagious**.
 - The **church** today is too **wimpy**, **we need flint-like warriors**. Men and women who are like **arrows, swords and drills**.

¹ See www.geology.com for more on flint.

² See End Notes word study on *hazaq*.

- Did you know **Ezekiel's name** comes from this word **chazaq**? Ezekiel's name means **God strengthens**.³
- Let's look at what God says to Ezekiel.
 - **Ezekiel 3:4-10**
 - Your Father will make you **even harder than flint, like a diamond**.
 - He also says something similar to Jeremiah (Jer. 1:17-18).

2) Set your face like a flint to do the Father's will (Isa. 50:7).

- **Jesus** is also another example of being a **flint-like warrior**.
- **Isaiah 50:4-9** is a prophecy about Jesus, especially relating to his **cross**.
 - The Messiah says, "**I have set set my face like a flint.**"
 - Luke captures this in **Luke 9:51**: "When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he **set his face** to go to Jerusalem."
 - *sterizo* - "to **decide firmly**, to **resolve**, to make up **one's mind definitely**" (Louw-Nida)
- *Why is this important?*
 - I find **younger believers** are usually **tossed** about by the **wind**.
 - The **wind** will never take you to the place you need to go because it's **fickle**.
 - If their **circumstances** aren't good, they **change** their **direction**. If something **looks** better, they go where the **grass** is **greener**.
 - Here's the thing: as **Christian** we are not to be **led by circumstances**, but by **God**.
 - One **myth** that is very strong in Australia is that **if things aren't going good, I must not be in God's will. If things aren't easy, God's not in it**.
 - When you think like this you **experiment** to find God's will. You go **here** and **there** looking for the **Messiah**; here and there **looking** for the **perfect church**. You jump jobs, churches and cities looking for God. You never stay planted.
 - The truth is (if you are saved) that **Jesus is within**. If you are in his path, there is only **one direction: straight**. You will experience **significant resistance** on **God's way**.
 - Remember Moana :-).
 - But just as **Jesus set his face like a flint**, **you** need to **set your face like a flint**.
- The **old and the young prophet** in **1 Kings 13** is one of the most **fascinating** stories in the Bible
 - It begins with God speaking to a young prophet to take a **journey** from Judea and **denounce** Jeroboam's **altar** in **Bethel**.
 - The anonymous prophet arrives and cries against the altar
 - **King Jeroboam** is **furious** and stretches out his **hand**, saying, "Seize him!"
 - As Jeroboam does this, his hand shrivels up
 - The young man prays, at the king's request, and his hand is **restored**.
 - Jeroboam then has favor on the prophet and wants to **feed** and **reward him**.
 - And here's the critical part of the story. The young prophet says that he can't because the Lord told him at the beginning: "**You shall eat no bread, nor drink water, nor return by the way which you came**" (**1 Kings 13:9**).
 - Yet, next is the strangest part of the story and it has many lessons for us today...
 - The young prophet meets an **older prophet** and the older prophet tells him that an **angel** spoke to him that he should come and eat with him.
 - The young prophet **goes** with the old man and afterwards the young prophet gets **eaten by a lion** because he **disobeyed** the word of the Lord.
 - **He didn't stick to the call**.
 - *What are the lessons?*
 - **Never turn** from what God **first** spoke to you.
 - **No prophecy** can **substitute** what the Father has spoken to you.
 - Always **stick to your path** and don't turn to the left or the right.
 - **Complete** the mission the Father has for you.
 - You do this by **setting** your **face** like a **flint** to do **your Father's will**.

³ See End Notes word study on Ezekiel (*Yechezkel*)

- The young prophet did not set his face like a flint.
- He was **deceived** by a **seductive spirituality**, by a lie spoken by another prophet.

3) When you are confused remember God's original call (*Acts 26:19; Acts 9:3-6, *11-12; 22:14-15; 26:14-19).

- Even though **Paul** was in **prison**, he set his face like flint to continue to preach the good news and make disciples.
 - He did **not** allow the **circumstances** to **dictate** him, instead it was his calling that oriented him.
- You don't **change direction** and **location** because your **circumstances** are not good.
 - As **Winston Churchill** said, "When you are going through hell, keep going."
- There's only **one direction** in the Christian life and that is **forward**.
- Remember what Jesus said when he sent out his disciples. "**Greet no one on the way...**" (Luke 10:4)
 - In other words, **don't get distracted—stick to the mission**.
 - You need to **know** where you are going and God's purpose for your life.
 - And that is found in **God's Word**.
 - It's also found in the first few years of your **salvation** and before he **sends** you out.
- As believers, you are **led by Jesus**, not circumstances. You **don't change with the wind**.
 - The **sailor** knows how to **use the wind** to get where he needs to go. The way finder.

Conclusion: Set your face like a flint to do your Father's will. When you are confused remember God's original call. Always complete your mission. Make your new year's resolution to be resolute.

END NOTES

'Strong' - Word Study

636 הָזַק (*hāzaq*) **be(come) strong, strengthen, prevail, harden, be courageous, be sore** (meaning be severe). (ASV and RSV similar.)

Derivatives

636a הָזְקָה (*hāzāq*) **strong**.

636b הֶזְקָה (*hezqâ*) **strength** (once in the masc. form הֶזְעָה (*hēzeq*)).

636c הֶזְעָה (*hōzeq*) **strength**.

636d הֶזְקָה (*hōzqâ*) **force**.

The basic meaning of this word in the Qal stem is “be(come) strong.” In general, the Piel is causative of the Qal, “make strong,” “strengthen.” **The Hiphil is “take hold of,” “seize,”** while the Hithpael stem is “strengthen oneself,” hence, “take courage.” The use of *hāzaq* is similar to *’āmēš* and *’āzaz* except for the Hiphil which is more like the Qal of *’āhaz*. This verb is used 291 times.

The Qal form, used eighty-two times, means to “be strong” or “become strong.” In most cases it can be so translated, but often the variety of contexts encourages or necessitates a variety of renditions. Most often the word is used for strength in battle (I Kgs 20:23). The admonition to be strong in combat may simply be an exhortation to be of good courage (and is so translated in II Sam 10:12).

In Gen 41:56 “strong” is used in the sense of “severe” (RSV; KJV and ASV “sore”) in reference to a famine. Similarly a battle may be “severe” (II Kgs 3:26). “To be stronger than” in context comes to mean “prevail,” as the word of David “prevailed” against Joab (II Sam 24:4), David against the Philistine (I Sam 17:50), and Jotham over the Ammonites (II Chr 27:5). When used of Pharaoh’s heart the meaning is “harden” (Ex 7:13f.).

[The hardening of Pharaoh’s heart is an old problem, one that is more theological than linguistic. The verb *hāzaq* is used twelve times in the narrative (Ex 4–14), mostly with the Lord as the agent, but four times in the passive or stative sense (“Pharaoh’s heart was hardened”). Also, the verb *kāhēd* is used five times, both with the Lord as the agent, with Pharaoh as the agent, and in the passive sense. The verb *qāšā* is used once with the Lord as the agent. There is no discernible difference here in the usage of these words. It is clear that Pharaoh was an unrepentant sinner at the start (chapter 5). It is perhaps enough to point this out and remark that all of God’s hardening of an obstinate sinner was judicial and done that God’s deliverance should be the more memorable. And this, too, was in God’s plan (Ex 9:16), though it is also inexplicably true that Pharaoh sinned freely and was therefore terribly guilty (cf. Acts 4:25–28). r.l.h.]

Other resultant meanings include “be sure” (Deut 12:23), “be steadfast” (Josh 23:6, RSV), “catch hold” (II Sam 18:9, Absalom’s head in the oak; the causative of this is common usage in the Hiphil), “recover” (Isa 39:1, Hezekiah from sickness), “stout,” (of peoples’ words against God, Mal 3:13).

The Qal form of the verb is used twice (II Chr 28:20; Isa 28:22) in the Piel sense of “strengthen.”

The basic meaning of the Piel stem (used sixty-four times) is causative of the Qal, to “make strong,” “strengthen.” As with the Qal it is used often in the context of battle or combat. Often the object of the verb is the hands or the arms of an individual. “To strengthen the hands” may mean “to aid” (Ezra 1:6), or, more often, “to encourage” (I Sam

23:16). The person encouraged may be the object of the verb (II Sam 11:25; Isa 41:7). Strengthen may be translated simply “help” (II Chr 29:34).

The Piel is used sixteen times in the sense of “repair” (II Kgs 12:5f.). As in the Qal, when the object of the verb is the heart (ten times), the verb is translated “harden” (Ex 4:21f.). It is used twice in the sense of “fasten” (or “support”) as with nails (Isa 41:7; Jer 10:4).

The Hiphil frequently (sixty-three times) means “take hold,” i.e. “grasp,” “seize.” It is used thirty-four times in Neh in the sense of “repair,” referring to the rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem. Other uses are varied: “prevail” (Dan 11:7), “support” (Lev 25:35), “receive” (II Chr 4:5), “retain” (Jud 7:8), “constrain” or “urge” (II Kgs 4:8), “confirm” (Dan 11:1), “strengthen” (II Sam 11:25), “aid”, i.e. “strengthen the hand” (Ezk 16:49), “join” (Neh 10:29), “hold” (Neh 5:16).

The Hithpael (used twenty-seven times) is translated in a variety of ways but is usually reflexive of some use of the Qal stem, i.e. “strengthen oneself,” “encourage oneself.”

קָזַח (*hāzāq*). **Strong, mighty, hard.** This adjective means “strong” in the sense of “powerful” (including the power to resist). Of its fifty-seven occurrences, twenty-three refer to a “strong hand,” most often to God’s power, as in the Exodus. The word refers also to the strength of a man (Caleb, Josh 14:11), the wind (Ex 10:19; I Kgs 19:11), and a sword (figurative, Isa 27:1). Although the word often refers to God’s powerful hand it does not seem to be used as a substitute for deity (as *‘elyôn* is).

It is translated variously because it occurs in many different contexts. Applied to the blast of a trumpet the word is translated “loud” (Ex 19:16). When applied to sickness (I Kgs 17:17) or famine (I Kgs 18:2), it is appropriately translated “severe” (RSV; the ASV reads “sore”). The KJV also refers to “sore war” (I Sam 14:52), but translates a similar phrase “hottest battle” (II Sam 11:15). The RSV uses “hard(est) fighting” in both references.

When referring the face, forehead, or heart *hāzāq* implies an unyielding stubbornness or strong resistance (Ezk 2:4; 3:7–8, variously translated: “stiffhearted,” “stubborn,” “impudent,” etc.). It is also used as a substantive, “mighty one,” “strong one” (Ezk 34:16; Job 5:15).

קָזַחַת (*hezqâ*). **Strength, strengthen self, strong, was strong.** (ASV and RSV similar.) A noun, used four times meaning “strength,” but translated as a verb in some contexts.

קָזַחַת (*hōzeq*). **Strength.** (ASV and RSV the same.) The noun, used five times, means “strength,” always in the sense of “military prowess.”

קָזַחַת (*hōzqâ*). **Force, mightily, repair, sharply.** (ASV similar, but RSV “violently.”)

C.P.W.

Weber, C. P. (1999). 636 קָזַחַת. R. L. Harris, G. L. Archer Jr., & B. K. Waltke (Eds.), *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (electronic ed., pp. 276–277). Chicago: Moody Press.

‘Ezekiel’ - Word Study

3168 יְחֶזְקֵאל [*Yâchezqe’l /yekh-ez·kale*] n pr m. From **2388** and 410; GK 3489; Three occurrences; AV translates as “Ezekiel” twice, and “Jehezekel” once. **1** son of Buzi and a priest and prophet; author of the book by his name; taken captive with Jehoiachin and exiled in Babylon where he prophesied for the next 22 years. **2** a priest in charge of the 20th course in the time of David. *Additional Information:* Ezekiel or Jehezekel = “God strengthens”.

Strong, J. (1995). *Enhanced Strong's Lexicon*. Woodside Bible Fellowship.

2388 חָזַק [*chazaq* /*khaw-zak*/] v. A primitive root; TWOT 636; GK 2616; 290 occurrences; AV translates as “strong” 48 times, “repair” 47 times, “hold” 37 times, “strengthened” 28 times, “strengthen” 14 times, “harden” 13 times, “prevail” 10 times, “encourage” nine times, “take” nine times, “courage” eight times, “caught” five times, “stronger” five times, “hold” five times, and translated miscellaneously 52 times. 1 to strengthen, prevail, harden, be strong, become strong, be courageous, be firm, grow firm, be resolute, be sore. 1a (Qal). 1a1 to be strong, grow strong. 1a1a to prevail, prevail upon. 1a1b to be firm, be caught fast, be secure. 1a1c to press, be urgent. 1a1d to grow stout, grow rigid, grow hard (bad sense). 1a1e to be severe, be grievous. 1a2 to strengthen. 1b (Piel). 1b1 to make strong. 1b2 to restore to strength, give strength. 1b3 to strengthen, sustain, encourage. 1b4 to make strong, make bold, encourage. 1b5 to make firm. 1b6 to make rigid, make hard. 1c (Hiphil). 1c1 to make strong, strengthen. 1c2 to make firm. 1c3 to display strength. 1c4 to make severe. 1c5 to support. 1c6 to repair. 1c7 to prevail, prevail upon. 1c8 to have or take or keep hold of, retain, hold up, sustain, support. 1c9 to hold, contain. 1d (Hithpael). 1d1 to strengthen oneself. 1d2 to put forth strength, use one’s strength. 1d3 to withstand. 1d4 to hold strongly with.

Strong, J. (1995). *Enhanced Strong's Lexicon*. Woodside Bible Fellowship.

‘Emery/Diamond’ - Word Study

8068 שָׁמִיר, שְׁמִיר [*shamiyr* /*shaw-meer*/] n m. From 8104 in the original sense of pricking; TWOT 2416a; GK 9031 and 9032; 11 occurrences; AV translates as “brier” eight times, “adamant” once, “adamant stone” once, and “**diamond**” once. 1 thorn(s), adamant, flint. 1a thorns, thorn-bushes. 1b adamant (as sharp). 1c a sharp stone, flint. 1c1 perhaps a diamond.

Strong, J. (1995). *Enhanced Strong's Lexicon*. Woodside Bible Fellowship.

שָׁמִיר m.—(1) *a sharp point* (see שָׁמַר No. II.), hence *thorn*, collect. *thorns*, Isa. 5:6; 7:23, 24, 25; 9:17; 32:13; metaph. used of enemies, Isa. 10:17; 27:4 (Arab. سَمْرَةٌ coll. سَمْرٌ is the Egyptian thorn, a thorn-tree).

(2) **diamond**, so called from its cutting and perforating (as the point of a stylus was made of diamonds Jer. 17:1), **Eze. 3:9**; Zec. 7:12. (Arab. سَامُورٌ id. We may, perhaps, compare Gr. σμίρις, σμύρις, i.e. diamond dust, which was used in polishing. Bohlen considers the word to be of Indian origin, comparing *asmîra*, a stone which eats away, used of gems, iron.)

(3) [*Shamir*] pr.n.—(a) of a town in the tribe of Judah, Josh. 15:48.—(b) of a town in mount Ephraim, Jud. 10:1, 2.—(c) 1 Ch. 24:24; קרי where the כתיב has שָׁמִיר.

Gesenius, W., & Tregelles, S. P. (2003). *Gesenius' Hebrew and Chaldee lexicon to the Old Testament Scriptures* (p. 834). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

‘Praetorian Guard’ - IVP Background Commentary

“Others, taking “Caesar’s household” (4:22) literally, think that “praetorium” here refers to a Roman imprisonment by the “praetorian guard” (NASB), as in Acts 28:16; the centrality of Rome in the Empire attracted many people, which could account for the presence of the ministers in Colossians 4:10–15. No army was allowed in Italy, but the Praetorian Guard

consisted of about thirteen to fourteen thousand free Italian soldiers. They were the emperor's elite bodyguard under the praetorian prefect. Viewed as clients of the emperor (thus part of his household), they were kept loyal with the highest pay in the Roman military; they were also kept loyal by the leadership of a prefect who could never legally become emperor (being a knight rather than a senator).”