

The Rock  
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Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense; and whoever believes in Him will not be put to shame. Romans 9:33

There is the old Navy story about the captain of a battleship. He decided to take the night watch to see how his crew worked on nighttime maneuvers.

In the middle of the watch, the ensign on the starboard lookout called, "light off the starboard bow!"

The captain replied, "Is it heading steady or moving astern?"

"Steady, captain!"

This meant they were on a collision course.

The captain ordered, "Signal that light and tell them we are on a collision course and to change course by 20 degrees."

A short time later the response came back. "Sir, he tells us to change our course by 20 degrees."

The captain, miffed, said, "You tell him that I'm a captain in the United States Navy and I *order* him to change course by 20 degrees!"

The reply came back, "I'm a seaman first class and *you* are to change *your* course by 20 degrees!"

The captain, outraged, ordered, "I am the captain of a battleship and I order you to change course!"

The reply came back, "I'm a lighthouse...."

This story, while probably not true, is a good illustration of how Romans 9:33 is true.

In Romans 9 St. Paul tells us that faith in Jesus Christ is a "stone of stumbling" and a "rock of offense." This is a rather unusual way to describe faith, isn't it? Offense, stumbling? But it is true many times.

Our sinful human condition causes an ungodly arrogance to make us think that we are on the right course and it is God that needs to change and not us. God is the Rock that cannot be moved. Repentance, to which we are all called by God's Word, means that our minds, our hearts, and all we are need to be changed.

The Good News is that the Holy Spirit does just that through the Law of God, which is good and perfect. He changes our hearts, giving us a godly repentance that opens the door to the Gospel that saves us and puts us on the right course. Whether captains, admirals, generals, CEO's, pastors, teachers, shop foremen, stay-at-home moms, or students, no matter who we are or what rank or station we have in life, Jesus Christ died to save us from our sins. God, the immovable Rock, moved heaven and earth to save us from eternal death and sets our feet on that immovable Rock forever.

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