

El Cether – God My Hiding Place

You are my hiding place; You protect me from trouble. You surround me with joyful shouts of deliverance. Selah – Psalm 32:7 HCSB

A young boy ran, ducking and dodging, trying desperately to avoid the hail of rocks that flew through the air. His persecutors yelled instructions to each other in their hunting language as they tried to head him off. He cried as he ran, though he despised himself for the weakness. A couple of the rocks had landed hard, leaving bleeding gashes on his shoulders and head.

He was used to running and hiding, and soon was able to elude his tormentors. He cut down one path that ran by a small ledge overlooking a creek. Instead of continuing to run on the path, he jumped through a small opening in the vines and landed in the creek. He immediately doubled back and threw himself under the ledge.

A small cave had been cut by centuries of water flow and he hid there with his hand clamped over his mouth so that his ragged breaths would not betray him. Soon enough, his enemies' footsteps could be heard pounding along as they went right by his secret hiding place.

That small cave is what I think of whenever I meditate on God's name, El Cether. It's pronounced "say-there" and means "hiding place." David knew well what it meant to be pursued by enemies. He spent a lot of time in dark caves, eluding those who would do him harm and it was a natural step to begin thinking of his God as El Cether (God My Hiding Place).

But "cether" also means secret. It is used when someone tries to secretly whisper into your ear¹ or when someone tries to sin in secret.² Jonathan advised David to meet him in a secret hiding place to determine King Saul's intent.³ Abigail used the covering of a hill to meet David secretly in order to avoid a disastrous slaughter.⁴

God does not promise to keep all trouble from us. But He does promise to be our secret hiding place.⁵ That hiding place is found in our private devotional encounter with El Cether⁶ Our faith in His abiding strength and provision is both our hiding place and our shield from the darts of the enemy.⁷

Through His Word and His Spirit, He feeds and strengthens us in the midst of our conflict – often right in front of our enemies.⁸ All we have to do is abide in His presence, clinging to His mighty hand as the world rages around us.

Someday, we will hear His voice calling, *"My dove, in the clefts of the rock, in the crevices of the cliff, let me see your face, let me hear your voice; for your voice is sweet, and your face is lovely."*⁹ The next thing you know we will be home – safe, warm and with no further need to hide.

¹ With the exception of Ephesians, and Psalm 23:5 "cether" appears in all of the following passages:
Deuteronomy 13:6

² Deuteronomy 27:15, 24; 28:57; 2 Samuel 12:12; Psalm 101:5

³ 1 Samuel 19:2

⁴ 1 Samuel 25:20

⁵ Psalm 27:5; 31:20; 32:7; 61:4; 81:7

⁶ Psalm 91:1

⁷ Psalm 119:14; Ephesians 6:16

⁸ Psalm 23:5

⁹ Song of Solomon 2:14 HCSB