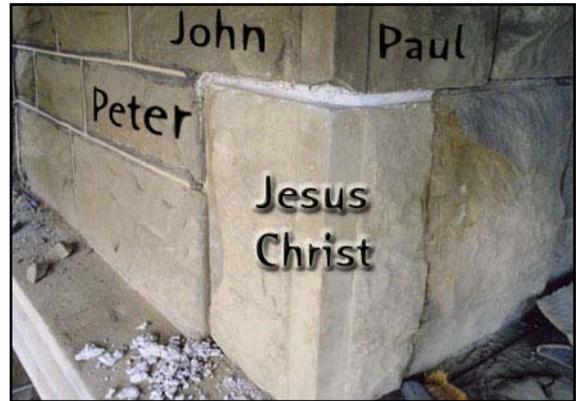


The Corner Stone

[Acts 4:1-12](#)



We see in the Gospels that Israel's leaders hated Jesus; they wanted nothing to do with Jesus or with His kingdom. And as the Gospels close we see that they succeeded in putting Him to death. They must have felt that was the last they would hear of Jesus. But it wasn't. First of all; there was the problem of the empty tomb. They knew that Jesus had promised He would rise from the dead ([Matthew 27:62-64](#)) and that this would be the "sign" which would prove He was who He claimed to be ([Matthew 12:39-42](#)). That had to be troubling to them, where did the body of Jesus go?



Then there was the problem of the apostles, transformed by Pentecost and preaching the resurrection of Jesus. And now, there was the problem of a well-known lame man, crippled for more than forty years, who was healed in the name of Jesus, the One the Jews of Jerusalem rejected and put to death. The harder they tried to put Jesus of Nazareth's claims and teachings, the more the matter multiplied. Think of the frustration that the leaders of Israel must have felt.

We left off last week as Peter finished his second sermon in the Temple. Peter had accused the crowd of Israelites of murder, they were guilty under their own Law. But Peter said they did it in ignorance and that forgiveness was available in Jesus. Peter's message was then interrupted when a party of temple guards came up and arrested them:

And as they were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple guard, and the Sadducees, came upon them, ² being greatly disturbed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. ³ And they laid hands on them, and put them in jail until the next day, for it was already evening. (Acts 4:1-3 NASB)

Something very significant is happening here, what is it? The church, the new Israel, began at Pentecost in chapter 2. That day 3,000 were saved and added to the Church. The chapter closes by saying that the Church was:

praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved. (Acts 2:47 NASB)

Then in chapter 3 Peter heals a lame man which draws a large crowd and Peter again preaches Jesus to them. But this message got him thrown in jail:

And they laid hands on them, and put them in jail until the next day, for it was already evening. (Acts 4:1-3 NASB)

This is the first opposition, the first antagonism that the early church experiences. From here on out things will be different; From Acts 4 until the end of the book, 28 chapters, there will only be three chapters that do not include persecution.

And as they were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple guard, and the Sadducees, came upon them, (Acts 4:1 NASB)

All those who gathered against them were Sadducees. The priests and other Sadducees probably reported what they had heard to the captain of the Temple who then came with them in order to deal with these troublemakers.

The captain of the temple guard was a highly placed member of the high priest's family charged with temple security. It was the duty of the Levites to keep guard at the gates of the temple, in order to prevent the unclean from entering. To them the duties of the temple police were entrusted, under the command of an official known in the New Testament as "the captain of the temple," but in Jewish writings chiefly as "the man of the temple mount." Josephus speaks of him as a person of such consequence as to be sent, along with the high-priest, prisoner to Rome.

being greatly disturbed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. (Acts 4:2 NASB)

Luke tells us that this group was "***greatly disturbed***". This is from one word in the Greek which is *diaponeo*, [dee-ap-on-eh'-o]. It is a strong word, and it means "***thoroughly pained.***" The group of men that wanted to stop Peter and John were in terrible mental anguish. Their anguish wasn't based on sorrow; it was based on indignation and wrath.

Why were they so upset? Our text says it was because, "***they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead.***" They were upset because they were Sadducees, and Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection:

Now there came to Him some of the Sadducees (who say that there is no resurrection), (Luke 20:27 NASB)

Their whole system was in danger by the preaching of the resurrection of Christ. It was recognized that the resurrection from the dead might be taught in the synagogues (by the Pharisees), but not, if they could help it, in the Temple. And it was they who had overall responsibility for the Temple.

Have you ever seen this type of anger when your doctrine goes against what others believe? People can get very hostile when you don't agree with them.

These same people had just a few months earlier rid the world of Jesus Christ. They thought that would stop the movement. Now here they are just two months from that execution and the movement of Jesus is exploding in ways they could never have imagined. And in their panic they arrest Peter and John and throw them in jail overnight. Jailing was probably in the Temple itself. Their system of justice was swift and the arraignment was to be the next morning.

But many of those who had heard the message believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand. (Acts 4:4 NASB)

The Sadducees were very upset by what they were hearing "but" there were many Israelites there that day who believed what Peter was preaching. They trusted Christ. The preaching of Jesus still has the same effect today some get angry and others believe.

Vincent's New Testament Word Studies, says, the words "***came to be***", Indicate the addition to the original number of the many that believed." Five thousand is probably not intended to be taken literally. It had in mind an increase from the "three thousand" on the day of Pentecost, and probably had in mind the "five thousand men" fed by Jesus when He broke the loaves, the picture of the covenant community. Five is the number of covenant and "five thousand" therefore signified the covenant community as a whole.

Later we will learn that it was because they were "***ordained to eternal life***" ([Acts 13:48](#)). As in so many incidents in Scripture God was carrying out his will, and human beings were of their own volition moving along in parallel with that will.

The church now numbered about five thousand men, most likely meaning heads of household. The city of Jerusalem probably had a permanent population of no more than eighty thousand at this time. The followers of Jesus were becoming hard to ignore.

This is the last time any numbers are given, because pretty much everybody agrees that the church grew at such a fast rate they could no longer even count the people.

And it came about on the next day, that their rulers and elders and scribes were gathered together in Jerusalem;⁶ and Annas the high priest was there, and Caiaphas and John and Alexander, and all who were of high-priestly descent.⁷ And when they had placed them in the center, they began to inquire, "By what power, or in what name, have you done this?" (Acts 4:5-7 NASB)

The group described here is the Sanhedrin, the highest Jewish authority and court. It was made up of around seventy men taken from among the rulers (chief priests), the elders (important lay persons) and the Scribes (mainly but not entirely teachers of the Pharisees). They included a number of close relatives of the High Priests. Annas was High Priest according to Jewish Law, but he had been replaced as High Priest by Caiaphas under Roman Law (in about A.D. 14). Many of the people thus still considered Annas to be the true High Priest and Luke may simply here be citing this popular designation.

Annas was a former high priest but because of his power, he still controlled things from behind the scenes. In fact, when Jesus was arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane, He was immediately taken to Annas because the former high priest was the most powerful man in Israel ([Jn. 18:12-13](#)). Annas was a Sadducee.

And when they had placed them in the center, they began to inquire, "By what power, or in what name, have you done this?" (Acts 4:7 NASB)

The Sanhedrin usually assembled in the precincts of the Temple, in a hall called "The Hall of Hewn Stone." They sat in a semicircle. The president of the Sanhedrin sat across from the semicircle, facing it. The prisoners were put in the middle.

The question that this group asks the disciples is: ***"By what power, or in what name, have you done this?"*** They recognized that a miracle had undoubtedly been done. The man, well known for what he had been, was standing before them. What they were trying to do was to learn the source of the miracle. The suspicion would be that evil forces and incantations had been at work, and those were illegal. They therefore asked the two disciples of Jesus by what power they had healed the man and in what name it was done. The reply would enable them to hear from the accused own lips any connection that they had with evil spirits or any connection that they had with "Him".

Notice that no charge was made of preaching the resurrection of the dead. That would simply have swung many of the members of the Sanhedrin, who did believe in the resurrection from the dead, onto the side of the Apostles.

They ask Peter and John, ***"By what power, or in what name, have you done this?"*** Their question was one of authority. Jesus was often challenged in the same way. As the highest religious body in the land, this group felt they should authorize all teaching and ministry in their midst, especially that which was done in the precincts of the temple. Just who did these two "nobody's" think they were, going into the temple as if they owned the place, doing and teaching whatever they wished?

Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers and elders of the people,⁹ if we are on trial today for a benefit done to a sick man, as to how this man has been made well,¹⁰ let it be known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead-- by this name this man stands here before you in good health. (Acts 4:8-10 NASB)

Before we examine their response remember that this is the same group that had had Jesus put to death just two months earlier. But Peter and John were not intimidated. Their boldness must have been alarming to the Sanhedrin.

As Peter and John stand here before the Sanhedrin they must have remembered the words that Jesus had spoken to them:

and you shall even be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. ¹⁹ *"But when they deliver you up, do not become anxious about how or what you will speak; for it shall be given you in that hour what you are to speak."* ²⁰ *"For it is not you who speak, but it is the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you." (Matthew 10:18-20 NASB)*

This promise of Christ was now being fulfilled. Peter was not anxious because he was "*filled with the Holy Spirit*" our text tells us. This is an aorist passive in the Greek text. It indicates that Peter was ready for what was happening because he was already filled with the Spirit.

Peter addresses the Sanhedrin with due courtesy and then stresses that the deed that has been done is a "good" deed. It has no connection with evil forces. And by it a man, lame from birth, has been healed. The whole setting of this story centers on the healing of the lame beggar at the temple. The words at the end of verse 9, "*made well*" are from the Greek word *sozo*. By introducing the word *sozo*, which can refer to rescue from both physical dangers and afflictions ([Lk 7:50](#); [17:19](#); [23:35-37](#); [Acts 14:9](#)) and the spiritual danger of eternal death ([Lk 19:10](#); [Acts 2:21](#), [40](#), [47](#); [4:12](#); [11:14](#); [15:11](#); [16:31](#)), Luke initiates a wordplay that he will complete in verse 12. This story's physical healing is simply an illustration and demonstration of the greater spiritual healing.

let it be known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead-- by this name this man stands here before you in good health. (Acts 4:10 NASB)

Peter tells the Sanhedrin that this great miracle was done by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, the man whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead. Remember this is the Jewish high court, the one that had condemned Christ to death, and Peter says, "*Whom you crucified.*" What a contrast with that cringing disciple who was afraid of a little maid in the high priest's courtyard a few months earlier! When she asked if he were not part of the band of Galilean disciples of Jesus, he denied it, said he never knew the man. Three times he denied it before the cock crowed. Now there is a difference. He is filled with the Holy Spirit. He is bold, he is fearless, and he preaches the truth no matter what it may cost him.

When the Jewish religious leaders heard Peter say that, they must have been livid. They thought they walked with God. But Peter boldly informed them otherwise. You killed Him, God raised Him. You are at odds with the God you claim to worship. So, even in the presence of the Sanhedrin, Peter boldly indicted Israel for executing Christ. He persisted in preaching about Christ's resurrection.

In chapter 1 the Apostles had been told that they had to be witnesses "in Jerusalem". In chapters 2 and 3 they had done so at the spiritual heart of Jerusalem, in the Temple. Now they were being enabled to do it at the political heart of Jerusalem, in the Sanhedrin.

Peter goes on to say, "*by this name this man stands here before you in good health.*" Evidently the formerly lame man was right there with them, as well. In fact, later on the account says so. He was "Exhibit A" of the power and authority of the name of Jesus Christ.

It was "in Jesus" that this man had been made whole. If Jesus were not alive it could not have happened. Over and over again in these early chapters while they're still in Jerusalem, while it is still just a matter of days off of the burial and resurrection, the message continues to go to the religious leaders: *The tomb is empty* The fact that the Christian Church is thriving today is evidence that the religious leaders could not in any way demonstrate that Jesus was still in the grave. Peter continued to pose that to them: "*You crucified Him. The tomb is empty; He is alive.*"

And there was nothing they could say because they knew that was true.

Then to support his case Peter indirectly cites Scripture:

"He is the STONE WHICH WAS REJECTED by you, THE BUILDERS, but WHICH BECAME THE VERY CORNER stone. (Acts 4:11 NASB)

Peter sites here from Psalm 118:22 with a slight difference:

The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief corner stone. (Psalms 118:22 NASB)



Do you see what Peter adds? He adds “by you”. By their rejection and crucifixion of Jesus Christ, they fulfilled one of their own prophecies. And, as one part of this prophecy is now so literally fulfilled, they may rest assured, that so will be the other; and this rejected stone will crush those who stumble over it.

The rulers, the “builders” of Israel, have rejected Him and set Him at naught, because He did not seem to fit, but God has stepped in and made Him the cornerstone of the new Israel which holds the whole building together.

To those sitting on the Sanhedrin these words must have stung. They would have reminded them of an encounter Jesus had with some of His opponents in Jerusalem shortly before His crucifixion. In Matthew chapter 21, we read of Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem (verses 1-11), followed by His “cleansing of the temple” (verses 12-13) and His healing and teaching there (verse 14). This resulted in the opposition of the chief priests and scribes (verse 15). When later challenged as to the authority by which Jesus acted (verse 23), He responded with a question of His own, pertaining to the authority with which John baptized ([Matthew 21:23-32](#)). It was evident that the religious leaders refused to accept John’s authority (but were unwilling to publicly reject it, due to the masses). Jesus told a story of a man with two sons, the first of which promised to obey, but did not, and the second who rebelled, but later repented. Jesus then followed up with another parable.

In this parable, the vineyard is Israel, the owner is God, the tenant farmers are the Jewish leaders, the slaves are the prophets that are sprinkled throughout Israel’s history that the leadership has always rejected, and the only son is of course Jesus. Here we have a veiled prediction that Jesus would be killed by the religious leadership of His day.

"Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who PLANTED A VINEYARD AND PUT A WALL AROUND IT AND DUG A WINE PRESS IN IT, AND BUILT A TOWER, and rented it out to vine-growers, and went on a journey. ³⁴ "And when the harvest time approached, he sent his slaves to the vine-growers to receive his produce. ³⁵ "And the vine-growers took his slaves and beat one, and killed another, and stoned a third. ³⁶ "Again he sent another group of slaves larger than the first; and they did the same thing to them. ³⁷ "But afterward he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' ³⁸ "But when the vine-growers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and seize his inheritance.' ³⁹ "And they took him, and threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. ⁴⁰ "Therefore when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vine-growers?" ⁴¹ They said to Him, "He will bring those wretches to a wretched end, and will rent out the vineyard to other vine-growers, who will pay him the proceeds at the proper seasons.'" (Matthew 21:33-41NASB)

Jesus' authority comes from His Father who sent Him just as the son in the parable received his authority from his father. Thus Jesus was claiming higher authority than those in the Sanhedrin, who were mere renters in the unfolding plan of God. The claim of any one man to have authority greater than the Sanhedrin would have shocked a first century Jew.

Jesus then applied the lesson of the parable by an appeal to the Scriptures in typical Rabbinic manner. This method

of finishing off a parable with a Scripture quotation is regularly found among the Rabbis.

Jesus said to them, "Did you never read in the Scriptures, 'THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE CHIEF CORNER stone; THIS CAME ABOUT FROM THE LORD, AND IT IS MARVELOUS IN OUR EYES'?" (Matthew 21:42 NASB)

Jesus questioned whether or not these religious leaders in Israel had even read the Scriptures' teaching on Messiah! That was quite a dig aimed at the chief biblical scholars of Jesus' day. He is saying, "This very Son that you are rejecting will become the cornerstone of the new temple, of the New Covenant—of a whole new way of life."

Notice who it is that rejects this stone: it's the ***"builders!"*** Peter adds, "You the builders". Who should have known a good stone when they saw one? The builders! This referred to the religious leaders, those who should have understood the Scriptures. Yet due to their spinning of God's Word to create a religion of self-dependence in legalism, they rejected Jesus Christ.

"THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED"— the word "rejected" is [*apodokimazo*](#), [ap-od-ok-ee-mad'-zo] which means: ***"to reject (after scrutiny), declare useless."*** The rulers didn't just make a quick judgment error on the spur of the moment. This word indicates that they had a chance to examine the "stone" carefully and then reject it after reflection.

The word Peter uses in [Acts 4:11](#) is [*exoutheneo*](#), [ex-oo-then-eh'-o] which means ***"to despise"***. They were like a bunch of stonemasons, Jesus says, who thought a stone was useless. They studied it and decided that it was the wrong size and the wrong shape and the wrong materials: "Discard it!" they said, and they turned their backs on it, but it turned out to be the cornerstone, the most important stone in the building, but they could never see that. They put a big stamp on it, "REJECTED." They scrutinized Jesus Christ. They saw His holy life and miraculous works. They witnessed His power over demons. They heard His life-giving words. Yet because Jesus Christ did not fit the pattern they had in mind for a Savior, they rejected Him.

They look at this Galilean rabbi, and they think that He is merely in the way. A stone to be rejected and cast aside. What they cannot realize is that this stone is to become the foundation stone for God's covenant people.

"THIS BECAME THE CHIEF CORNER STONE"— When we think of modern day builders laying a corner stone, it is generally a small concrete box that contains current newspapers and other documents for future generations to break open and read about what took place during the era of construction. But it didn't have that idea in Jesus time. The corner stone was the key to the rest of the structure. The appropriate stone in size and shape would be placed strategically so that the rest of the building might take its alignment and form based on the corner stone.

With this metaphor, the biblical writers established that the kingdom God built would be founded upon Jesus Christ. Every detail in its dimensions, shape, size, and form relates directly to Jesus. Without the corner stone, the building has no value.

After quoting from Psalm 118 Matthew adds this:

"Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you, and be given to a nation producing the fruit of it. ⁴⁴ "And he who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will scatter him like dust." (Matthew 21:43-44 NASB)

Having established [Psalm 118:22](#) as messianic, Jesus connects it with two other messianic verses about the stone: [Isaiah 8:14-15](#) refers to stumbling on that Stone and [Daniel 2:34-35, 44-45](#) refers to being crushed by it. The Son is on the one hand, a "stone of stumbling," a cause of stumbling to the Jews. Jesus was a stumbling block to men who refused to acknowledge their sin and their need of a Savior. But this passive "stone of stumbling," whom the builders (the leaders of the nation) rejected, will also be an active agent in their destruction. Now, He is viewed as a moving

stone, a falling stone that crushes and grinds His enemies.

For Peter to have brought up this passage from Psalm 118 was to remind these leaders of that unpleasant confrontation with Jesus. It was to say, in effect, "Jesus told you so." How this citation must have stung in the ears of the Sanhedrin. The One they thought they had rid themselves of was still speaking to them, through the apostles.

God has already placed Christ as the cornerstone of this living temple, and now anyone who would come to God for salvation must build on Christ:

***"And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved."* (Acts 4:12 NASB)**

There is salvation in no one but Jesus. Jesus is God's cornerstone. There is no other name under heaven, given among men, by which we must be saved. Eternal life and eternal forgiveness is only available through Him. The question had been in what name the lame man had been healed. This reply states that it is only in that Name that any of mankind can be healed.

"Salvation" if from the Greek word [soteria](#). This would have a Messianic ring to his listeners, especially when connected with Psalm 118. In the scrolls from Qumran "Salvation" and "God's Salvation" are designations of the Messiah. This is also true in other [intertestamental](#) Jewish literature, and it appears later in the Rabbinic writings. In their view the Messiah was to be God's means of salvation. He was to be Salvation. Thus Peter's words are a further claim of Jesus' Messiahship, linked with the salvation which will bring men into the everlasting kingdom. Furthermore the name Jesus means 'Yahweh is salvation'. Salvation is thus closely paralleled with the name of Jesus in all its senses.

These leaders know from the Scriptures that the God of Israel is the only Savior ([Is 43:11](#); [45:21](#); [Hos 13:4](#)). Now Peter claims this role for Jesus Christ. Peter was in effect saying, "If you don't turn to Jesus, you will be damned. There is no other way to become saved."

We need to feel the force of this universal claim in our pluralistic age. "There is salvation in no one else!" Do you really mean no one, Peter? Or are you just speaking in a limited Jewish context—only among the Jews there is no other way to heaven than their true Messiah? No, he says, the reason there is salvation in no one else is that "there is no other name under heaven [not just no other name in Israel, but no other name under heaven, including the heaven over Iraq and the heaven over America] given among men [not just among Jews, but among humans] by which we must be saved."

What is the purpose of laying the cornerstone? To build the New Temple upon. Peter's addition of the personal pronoun "you" tells us that the first century Jewish leaders were the ones spoken of in the Psalms and Isaiah. The New Temple was NOW being built and they were the ones who would be crushed by the stone.

Many Bible teachers today want to hold a distinction between Israel and the Church, but when you understand Biblical types and their fulfillment you realize that the Church is the New Israel, and inherits all Israel's promises. These prophecies that we have seen about the corner stone were given to Israel, ([Isaiah 8:14](#) and [28:16](#) and Psalm 118) but they were fulfilled in the Church, the true Israel.

I shall give thanks to Thee, for Thou hast answered me; and Thou hast become my salvation. ²² The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief corner stone. ²³ This is the LORD'S doing; It is marvelous in our eyes. ²⁴ This is the day which the LORD has made; Let us rejoice and be glad in it. ²⁵ O LORD, do save, we beseech Thee; O LORD, we beseech Thee, do send prosperity! (Psalms 118:21-25 NASB)

This tells us about the salvation of the Lord who is to be "*the chief corner stone.*" This corner stone is also spoken

of in [Isaiah 8](#) and [28](#). All these prophecies about the corner stone are spoken to Israel. Now notice what Paul said when writing to the Church in Ephesus:

Therefore remember, that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called "Uncircumcision" by the so-called "Circumcision," which is performed in the flesh by human hands--¹² remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. (Ephesians 2:11-12 NASB)

Notice that Paul says they are "Gentiles", and "excluded from the commonwealth of Israel," without hope and without God.

But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. (Ephesians 2:13 NASB)

When is the "now"? In the first century when Paul originally wrote this. Now because of Christ they have been brought near. Brought near what? The promises that God made to Israel.

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, (Ephesians 2:19 NASB)

"The saints" here is referring to true Israel. The saints of the church are joined with the saints of Israel to become the true Israel. Notice carefully what Paul says next:

having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, (Ephesians 2:20 NASB)

What was the Church built on? The "corner stone"! Who is the corner stone? It is Jesus the Christ. The anti-type of Israel's temple was the New Temple that was built on the corner stone, Jesus Christ, and the apostle and prophets. The New Temple is spiritual, it is the Church.

in whom the whole building, being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord;²² in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit. (Ephesians 2:21-22 NASB)

God told Israel that He was going to set up a corner stone, that they would reject, but to those who received Him became part of the New and Living Temple. This prophecy was given to Israel but fulfilled in the Church because the Church is Israel the true people of God. Believers, all the promises of God are ours in Christ!

Peter also talks about this corner stone:

And coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected by men, but choice and precious in the sight of God, (1 Peter 2:4 NASB)

"Living stone"—Peter is making a contrast between the inanimate temple of Jerusalem and the living temple that is the church. Peter says that, though he is rejected by men, he is "chosen by God and precious to him." God has made Christ the defining factor of his living temple, and every person who would come to God must find his place in relation to Jesus the Christ.

you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 2:5 NASB)

Just as Christ is the living Stone, which God has made the cornerstone, believers in Christ are like living stones that are being built upon him. These stones are being built into a "spiritual house" – that is, the temple of God. This is no

ordinary building. What is special about this temple is that it is not made of non-living objects like bricks and stones, and neither is it confined to a geographical location—It is a spiritual house.

The presence of God now dwells in this spiritual temple, and not a temple made with hands. For this reason, no physical temple – Jewish or otherwise – can claim to provide access to God. The Spirit of God dwells with and within his people:

Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE." (2 Corinthians 6:16 NASB)

God's temple is not a physical building, and never again will be, but it is an organic body that is spiritually built on Christ.

you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 2:5 NASB)

As living stones in this spiritual temple we are to offer "spiritual sacrifices" to him. These sacrifices consist of, the "sacrifice of praise", ([Hebrews 13:15](#)) doing good and sharing with others are also sacrifices that are pleasing to God (v. 16). In his letter to the Philippians, Paul refers to their financial donations as "*a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God*" ([Phil 4:18](#)).

Peter boldly proclaims of Jesus, "*And there is salvation in no one else.*" So how does one today build on this Cornerstone of Christ or what must a person do to be saved? They need to believe that Jesus Christ has done for them what they could never do for themselves. He has paid their sin debt in full. The Gospel is substitutional; Jesus became sin for us and then died for us.

I think that many people who say they are Christian are not, they're just religious. And I think that the greatest enemy of the Gospel is religion. Christianity is not a religion, it is a relationship. Let me tell you the difference between religion and Christianity. Religion is about what you do for God. Christianity is about what God has done for you. Religion says, "If you obey, God will love you." Christianity says, "Because God loves you, you can now obey." The Gospel is not: If you are good, God will love you. The Gospel is: You are bad, and God loves you anyway! Christ didn't die for good people; there aren't any. He died for sinners. Are you a sinner?

Religion is all about what I do or don't do! "I don't drink, smoke, use bad language; I go to church, I don't cheat on my spouse." You can list what ever it is that you do that you think gives you favor with God. The Gospel is not about what you do for God; it is about what Jesus has done for you:

So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men. ¹⁹ For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous. (Romans 5:18-19 NASB)

It is not about what I do, it is about what He has done for me! It's not about my works, it's about His. God accepts Jesus' sinless life and substitutionary death on my behalf. Religion is about me, the Gospel is about Jesus.

If people believe that all roads lead to heaven and all religions eventually get you to God, then it is acceptable to say, "Let's just live and let live. Let's just everybody have their own spiritual experience." And that is primarily where we are at as a culture.

But we don't believe that as a church. Therefore, we have to live consistent with our belief. Our belief is there is *one* way to God and that is through Jesus Christ. Therefore, the most loving, kind thing I could ever do for someone else

is to proclaim to them the message of Jesus. If I believe Jesus is the only way to God, and I keep that message to myself, that is the ultimate act of selfishness.

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