

“Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby; If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious. TO WHOM COMING, AS UNTO A LIVING STONE, DISALLOWED INDEED OF MEN, BUT CHOSEN OF GOD, AND PRECIOUS.

Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious; and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious (or, there is honor); but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient; WHEREUNTO ALSO THEY WERE APPOINTED.” 1 Pet. 2:1-8.

This beautiful passage from 1st Peter crops up, again and again in the Scriptures, with the Lord Jesus Himself throwing much light upon the subject; to wit: *“Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner; this is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.”* Mat. 21:42-44. This general subject of the Cornerstone that the master builders totally and repeatedly rejected, but which was finally accepted and became the most important Stone in the glorious Temple of God – I say, this general subject runs in a somewhat strange or unusual manner throughout the Scriptures. For example, Psalm 118 has 29 verses; with no clearly or easily discernable context, and somewhere near the middle of the psalm, this subject of the Stone which the builders rejected pops up; to wit:

“I will praise thee; for thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation. (Bang!) THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REFUSED IS BECOME THE HEAD STONE OF THE CORNER. This is the Lord’s doing; it is marvellous in our eyes. (Bang!) This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.” (Psa. 118:21-24)

This is just a fundamental doctrine of the gospel, which meets us everywhere in the Bible, – that it is by the faith of the truth as it is in Jesus, that people obtain the blessings of salvation. Those to whom Peter wrote, had believed on, and come to, the Lord. WHAT they believed, and how they came to him, will appear very plain on examining the passages before us. WHAT they believed was that Jesus Christ was indeed *“a Living Stone, disallowed of men, but chosen of God, and precious; the chief cornerstone laid by God in Zion, elect, precious;”* (1 Pet. 2:4) and that every man thus believing may rest satisfied that he shall not be ashamed by the disappointment of his hopes. And, believing this, they had come to him as the divinely appointed and divinely qualified foundation; they had exercised hope and confidence in him; they had built their creed on him; they had rested their expectations of eternal life on him; they had submitted to him as their only Lord and King. In the principal figurative representation here used, Christ is compared to a stone, a living stone, a chief cornerstone, elect, precious. There can be no doubt that the apostle had before his mind the following passages of Scripture: to-wit:

“And have ye not read this scripture; The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner; This was the Lord’s doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?” (Mk. 12:10,11)

“Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a STONE OF STUMBLING AND FOR A ROCK OF OFFENSE to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken. Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples. And I will wait upon the Lord, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him.” (Isa. 8:13-17)

Notice here carefully, that our dear Lord Jesus shall be for an eternal SANCTUARY to all God’s Elect, making and keeping them absolutely and perfectly safe under all circumstances whatsoever. As to the Non-Elect, our dear Lord Jesus will be an everlasting STONE OF STUMBLING AND ROCK OF OFFENSE THAT WILL FALL UPON THE REPROBATE WITH DEVASTATING FORCE AND DESTRUCTION, THAT WILL GRIND HIM TO POWDER. Mat. 21:44; Lk. 20:18; to wit:

“And when they heard it, they said, God forbid. And he beheld them, and said, What is this then that is written, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner? Whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken; BUT ON WHOMSOEVER IT SHALL FALL, IT WILL GRIND HIM TO POWDER. And the chief priests and the scribes the same hour sought to lay hands on him; and they feared the people; for they perceived that he had spoken this parable against them. And they watched him, and sent forth spies, which should feign themselves just men, that they might take hold of his words, that so they might deliver him unto the power and authority of the governor.” (Lk. 20:16-20)

Beloved, this matter of the gigantic corner stone which was rejected by the master-builders is mysterious and glorious for us to consider and study UPON THROUGHOUT THE Scriptures. In a word, it symbolizes the whole of the doctrines of grace, the Calvinistic scheme of the gospel, it being the last and conclusive verse of chapter 9 of Romans; to wit: ***“As it is written, BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A STUMBLINGSTONE AND ROCK OF OFFENCE; AND WHOSOEVER BELIEVETH ON HIM SHALL NOT BE ASHAMED.”*** Rom. 9:33. I think that nobody acquainted the least bit with the Bible and Christian theology would deny the Calvinistic potency of the 9th chapter of Romans.

In a condensed form we prepare the good things of the 9th of Romans, ending the effort by glorifying the wonderful STUMBLINGSTONE (Jesus Christ), and declaring that whosoever finds it in his heart to exercise saving faith in Him will never be ashamed (i.e., he will go to Heaven when he dies). ***“And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even our father Isaac; (For the children being not yet born; neither having done either good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.”*** (See, Mal. 1:1-3.) ... (Then fast-forward to the whole summation of the entire matter, and there find Rom. 9:33; to wit: ***“As it is written, Behold, I LAY IN ZION A STUMBLINGSTONE AND ROCK OF OFFENCE; and whosoever believeth on HIM shall not be ashamed.”***) It should be noted here, that the expression ***“shall not be ashamed,”*** in this context, is the exact equivalent of saying, ***“shall not go to Hell when he dies and, thereafter, remain in Hell, forever.”***

“Open to me the gates of righteousness; I will go into them, and I will praise the Lord; This gate of the Lord, into which the righteous shall enter. I will praise thee; for thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation. THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REFUSED IS BECOME THE HEAD STONE OF THE CORNER. This is the Lord’s doing;

it is marvellous in our eyes. This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.” (Ps. 118:19-24)

All which is to say, that our dear Lord Jesus is the Stone which the great mass of mankind rejected, and is now become the Head Stone upon which His Church is built. Something mysterious, and profound, and wonderful is wrapped up in the doctrine of the Chief Corner Stone; e.g., to wit:

“Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the CHIEF CORNER STONE; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord; In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.” (Eph. 2:19-22)

The 28th chapter of Isaiah contains a powerful oracle which addresses itself to every political ruler who has ever lived, and, particularly, every living American political ruler from the lowliest mayor to the president of the United States. It is a message of sheer terror and warning to every such ruler, from the Great God in Heaven. And, right in the big middle of the amazing message of God’s fiery wrath headed directly for each and every such political ruler – with no exceptions – the animating force for such divine destruction upon every political ruler, is seen to be ***“a foundation stone, a tried stone, a precious stone, a CORNER STONE.” Isa. 28:16.***

No more scathing denunciation was ever made by God Almighty than that delivered by the prophet Isaiah to earth’s political rulers here; to wit: ***“Wherefore hear the word of the Lord, ye scornful men, that rule this people which is in Jerusalem. Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with Hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us; for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves. Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I LAY IN ZION FOR A FOUNDATION A STONE, A TRIED STONE, A PRECIOUS CORNER STONE, A SURE FOUNDATION; he that believeth shall not make haste (i.e., or be impatient for the fulfillment of this prophesy, but will patiently wait for it, knowing that it is for an appointed time, and knowing that there is salvation in Him, and in no other). Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet; and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place. And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with Hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it. From the time that it goeth forth it shall take you; for morning by morning shall it pass over, by day and by night; and it shall be a VEXATION ONLY TO UNDERSTAND THE REPORT.” Isa. 28:14-19.***

John Brown, Presbyterian Minister of 18th Century in Scotland, wrote what is probably the definitive exposition of First Peter. At Note A, p. 255, of Vol. 1 of the 3-Vol. set, Brown provides his readers with some wonderful information I have never seen elsewhere, on cornerstones in the Bible, in general, by one J.D. Michaelis, furnished by a Dr. Pye Smith. I give you these details so if anybody wants to inquire further into this fascinating subject, this info might help.

“It appears that probably at the building of Solomon’s temple, one of those stones which David had taken care to get provided, and made ready for use, was found fault with by the builders, and declared to be useless; and that God, for altogether different reasons, commanded, by a prophet, that this stone should be made the corner-stone. The Orientals regard the corner-stone as the one peculiarly holy stone in a temple, and that it confers sanctity on the whole edifice. It is therefore the more probable, that either by the Urim and Thummim (the sacred lot of the Jews), or by a prophet, God was consulted what stone He would direct to be taken for the Corner-Stone. The answer was, That which they had perseveringly rejected and declared to be quite

unservicable. Certainly it must have been for a very important reason that God positively appointed this stone to be the Corner-Stone. But the New Testament discloses it to us in Mat. 21:42 and 1 Pet. 2:7 ('Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner; this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?') and 'Unto you therefore which believe he is precious; but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner.') The Jewish nation would conduct themselves towards the Messiah precisely as the builders did towards this stone, and would reject Him; but God would select him to be the Corner-Stone, which should support and sanctify the whole church."

"For he will be a holy stone for refuge, and a stone of stumbling over and falling to both the nations of Israel." (Isa. 8:14)

"*Holy Stone,*" literally a sanctuary; but under this expression denoting an object over which persons may stumble, a temple cannot be understood. The following connection shows that a Holy Stone is intended. Such sacred stones were very frequent among the Eastern nations of antiquity. Jacob, for instance, erected one, Gen. 28:18:

"And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it. And he called the name of the place Bethel; but the name of that city was called Luz at the first. And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, So that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God; And THIS STONE, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house; and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee." (Gen. 28:18-22)

"These holy or consecrated stones were also usually employed for corner-stones of temples. Sanctuaries, or holy places, temples, altars, and holy stones, possessed the right of an inviolable asylum, and death. In this passage God (the Messiah) is represented as a Holy Stone, to which those who trust in Him flee, and through whom they are safe; but he who desponds, and puts not his confidence in Him, is compared to a person full of terror, who runs blindly forward, sees not the stone that lies in his way, falls over it, and is severely hurt." – J.D. Michaelis.

Dr. Smith most justly remarks, that we are not to form our ideas of the corner-stone from modern or classical architecture. We are to "*imagine a massive stone, like one of those at Stonehenge (in England), laid in the building, so that its two sides, forming the right angle, should lie along the two walls, thus binding them together in such a way that neither weather nor force could dis sever or dislodge them.*" Now for some spiritual application:

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? ... for the temple of God is holy, WHICH TEMPLE YE ARE." (1 Cor. 3:16,17)

Beloved, Westboro Baptist Church believes that the evidence is good for it, that we are Mt. Zion, the Temple of the Living God, Jesus Christ Himself being the Chief Corner Stone, Elect, Precious (1 Pet. 2:6); and those who stumble at our Word (Christ in us) shall be eternally broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. This is the Lord's doing, and is marvellous to us. Mat. 21:42.

I love you.

Amen.