

Letters From A Fisherman
Week 9
1 Peter 2:6-10
“The Cornerstone”

Introduction

Whoever falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will shatter him. **Matthew 21:44**

As Peter continues his line of thought regarding Jesus as *The Living Stone* (**1 Peter 2:4**), he makes his way to a passage that is repeated several times in The Scriptures, which identifies The Christ as being The Chief Cornerstone. One *should* necessarily assume that a message The Spirit required to be repeated over and over again in God’s Word would bear greater significance. And the undeniable reality is to miss the meaning of this particular declaration is to miss the very essence of our salvation. Jesus is the only way to God, and what you choose to believe about Him will determine your eternal destiny.

God in His immutable character is often described as being a “rock” in Scripture. So as we see Christ described in like manner, we need to see Him as none other than God incarnate. He is the exact expression of God’s nature in human form (**Hebrews 1:1-4**). One has to know Who Christ *is* in order to receive Christ on a personal level. And as we have discussed previously, He can only be known to us by the revelation of The Spirit through The Word. But sadly, some may choose not to accept the truth when it is staring them in the face, as it were.

To find the origins of Jesus being The Chief Cornerstone, we must go all the way back to the *Old Testament* book of *Psalms*; **Psalm 118** to be exact which declares:

The Stone that the builders rejected has become the Cornerstone. This came from The LORD; it is wondrous in our sight. **Psalm 118:22-23**

To fully grasp the meaning of *The Cornerstone*, It is also important for us to understand the relationship between **Psalm 118** and The Passover. When the Israelites observe the Feast of Passover, they sing six particular songs every year. Those songs, known as The Egyptian Hallel (*The Egyptian Praises*), are **Psalms 113-118**. In fact, on the night before Jesus went to the cross, The Scriptures tell us that at the end of the Passover meal, they all sang a hymn and went out to the Mount of Olives (**Matthew 26:30**). We know, because of Passover tradition, that the hymn they all sang was **Psalm 118**, for it is always the final song sung during the Passover feast. Jesus sang this hymn before He went to the cross. He had been, as prophesied, “*rejected by the builders*” (The Jewish religious leaders) and was on His way to be crucified. The very next line of the song that comes after the famous rejected cornerstone line is quite telling:

This is the day that The LORD has made; let’s rejoice and be glad in it. **Psalm 118:24**

So you see, “the day” that this wondrous Scripture speaks of is the day that The Ultimate Passover Lamb would be rejected by His own and crucified for the sins of the world. It is truly a day in which all Believers rejoice, and it was God’s plan from before the foundation of the world (**Revelation 13:8**). So, just as The Egyptian Hallel looks back to the first Passover in Exodus, it also looks forward to the greatest Passover of all that took place when The Son of God made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem to be inspected and rejected by the priests, and sacrificed as The Spotless Lamb Who takes away the sin of the world (**John 1:29**). How wondrously meticulous is our God in all His plans for us!

Therefore, it is important for us to recognize the undeniable ties to The Passover, as we study Peter’s letter written to the Believers scattered by Nero’s persecution in the first century. He wanted to reassure them that they had been firmly secured upon The Rock of ages, and nothing could take away all that they had in Christ. To reject Him was to incur God’s wrath, but to accept Him was to never be ashamed (**vs. 6**). So, in order to fully understand this often repeated passage, it would serve us well to

examine Christ's "triumphal entry" into Jerusalem and see exactly how He came into His own, but His own received Him not, but to those who receive Him, He gave the right to be children of God (**John 1:11-12**). So let us look together in The Holy Scriptures to see the contrast between those who believe and those who would refuse Him, as we see those who are *Broken by The Stone*, and *Those Crushed by The Stone*.

Broken By The Stone (vs. 6)

For it stands in Scripture: See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and honored cornerstone, and the one who believes in Him will never be put to shame.

1 Peter 2:6

A good place to begin here is to discuss exactly what is the purpose of a cornerstone. In ancient times, buildings were constructed mainly of brick or stone. The cornerstone was a foundation stone that served as the most important part of every building. The entire weight of the structure rested upon this stone. And should it be removed, the building would immediately collapse.

Not only was the cornerstone perfectly placed to support the weight of the structure, it was also perfectly chiseled to be a square corner, thus it served to enable the builders to keep the walls and corners straight and perfectly square. Apart from the cornerstone, the structure would be flawed and weak, and therefore, unable to hold itself together. So, in essence, without the cornerstone there can be no building. The writers of the *New Testament* realized that apart from Christ, there could be no church. For He, and only He, is the foundation of our very existence. To try and come to God by any other means would be an attempt to construct a house upon the sand.

Therefore, everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house upon the rock. The rain fell, the rivers rose, and the winds blew and pounded that house. Yet it didn't collapse, because its foundation was on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of Mine and doesn't act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. The rain fell, the rivers rose, the winds blew and pounded that house, and it collapsed. It collapsed with a great crash.

Matthew 7:24-27

Peter reminded his readers that they had indeed come to Christ, The Living Stone, and therefore, they were like the wise man, whose house was built upon the rock. For it was God Himself, Who placed His Son as the very foundation stone. And those who put their trust in Him will "never be put to shame." (**vs. 6**).

The *Old Testament* quotation that Peter uses here is from **Isaiah 28:16**, which is yet another Messianic reference to the Cornerstone. The quotation is actually from the Septuagint (Greek version of *The Old Testament*) where the last line is translated, "the one who believes in Him will never be put to shame." The actual Hebrew version renders it "will never be in haste", which is a reference to the steady, unwavering actions of those who trust in God for guidance and not in their own rash judgment. It is an unassailable fact that those who rely on Christ are kept safe and secure by His leading.

Trust in The LORD with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding; in all your ways know Him, and He will make your paths straight.

Proverbs 3:5-6

So when your life is built upon The Rock, The Chief Cornerstone, you will never be put to shame. You will be guided in paths of righteousness, for His Name's sake (**Psalm 23:3**).

Jesus promised that those who fall upon the stone, namely Himself, would be broken (**Matthew 21:44**). He said this to the Pharisees in the Temple when He made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem. What He was saying was that those who would throw themselves upon Him would be broken (humbled),

realizing they were sinners in need of a Savior. And for those who were broken upon Him, the same would find forgiveness and everlasting life. They, as Peter so eloquently has stated, will become living stones, built upon The Chief Cornerstone, and thereby never need feel ashamed. The message is so very simple: Fall on Jesus, and live, for He is the only way to God. He is the Chief Foundation Stone, placed by God Himself. Apart from Him, there is no hope, for there is no other foundation by which God's holy temple can be established. Or as Peter himself preached when he was arrested by the religious leaders in Jerusalem:

This Jesus is The Stone rejected by you builders, which has become the cornerstone. There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to people by which we must be saved. ***Acts 4:11-12***

Crushed By The Stone (vs.7-8)

So honor will come to you who believe, but for the unbelieving. The Stone that the builders rejected — this one has become the cornerstone,

and

A stone to stumble over, and a rock to trip over. They stumble because they disobey The Word: they were destined for this. ***1 Peter 2:7-8***

Now let's take a journey back to Passover week in Jerusalem in A.D. 33. Jesus rode into the city on a donkey's colt, fulfilling the prophecies of Isaiah and Zechariah (***Isaiah 62:11, Zechariah 9:9***). This public presentation of The Messiah was hailed by the cheering crowd, who shouted, "***Hosanna to the Son of David, blessed is He Who comes in the Name of The LORD!***" (***Matthew 21:9***). These people were actually shouting the lyrics to ***Psalms 118***, the last hymn of The Passover songs. They were crying out to the one whom they assumed would come to overthrow the government of Rome. They wanted a deliverer to come and save them, hence the cry "***Hosannah***," meaning "***save us now***". They wanted a Savior, but not one who would save them from their sins, but rather, one who would usher in an independent Israel with peace and prosperity for all its citizenry. When they discovered that Jesus had not come to do as *they* wanted, they quickly turned on Him.

So, you see, rather than falling upon Him in brokenness and crying out for mercy, they stumbled over Him, for He was not what they were looking for. In all their religious zeal, they completely missed the fruition of all the prophet's claims concerning the coming Messiah.

That same week, Jesus saw a fig tree that was full of green leaves, but bore no fruit (***Matthew 21:18-20***). He cursed the tree for its barrenness, causing it to wither and die. The disciples were amazed at this. But that tree represented Israel with all its green leaves (symbolizing its religious piety), and yet, it still bore no fruit. This is what empty religion does. It has the pretense of truth, but in the end, nothing comes of it. There were many worshippers in the city that day (estimates of over two million), but for all their religious study and training, they stumbled over the very foundation stone!

The Passover Lamb in ***Exodus 12*** was to be brought into the house on *Nissan 10th* and closely inspected. It was then to be slaughtered on *Nissan 14th*, and its blood placed upon the doorposts of the house, so that the angel of death would pass over the children of Israel. Christ, The Lamb of God, came into Jerusalem and the Temple, the house of God, on *Nissan 10th 33 A.D.* and was examined and tested by the priests. They could find no fault in Him, but rejected Him nonetheless. Little did they know that their decision to have Him crucified was the fulfillment of God's plan for His Only Son to be sacrificed as the spotless and ultimate Passover Lamb. He was sacrificed on Friday, *Nissan 14th* according to God's perfect plan. He is The Chief Cornerstone placed by God Himself in Zion (***Isaiah 28:16***).

The Prophet Daniel had even predicted the time when the Messiah would come into the capital city to be rejected and cut off from His people (***Daniel 9:20-26***). His prophecy of the "69 weeks" (sixty nine seven year periods) spoke of a 483 year time period between Artaxerxes' decree to rebuild

Jerusalem (**Nehemiah 2:6**) and The Messiah's triumphal entry (**Matthew 21**). The prophecy was spot on, and yet the "builders" sill managed to stumble over the stone!

As The Christ was being interrogated by the priests in the temple during that famous holy week, He gave them this parable:

...There was a landowner, who planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a winepress in it, and built a watchtower. He leased it to tenant farmers and went away. When the time came to harvest fruit, he sent his servants to the farmers to collect his fruit. The farmers took his servants, beat one, killed another, and stoned a third. Again, he sent other servants, more than the first group, and they did the same to them. Finally, he sent his son to them. 'They will respect my son,' he said. But when the tenant farmers saw the son, they said to each other, 'This is the heir. Come, let's kill him and take his inheritance. So they seized him, threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those farmers?'
Matthew 21:33b-40

Upon hearing this parable, the self-righteous Pharisees could not wait to demonstrate their overinflated sense of moral superiority. They replied, "He will destroy those terrible men, and lease his vineyard to other farmers who will give him his fruit at the harvest." Little did they know that by answering thusly, they were calling a curse down upon themselves. Jesus answered them saying:

Have you never read in the Scriptures: The Stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. This is what The LORD has done and it is wonderful in our eyes? Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruit. Whoever falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will shatter him.
Matthew 21:42-44

Israel's "builders", as it were, those religious leaders of Jerusalem's highest court, stumbled upon the Chief Cornerstone and were ultimately crushed by it. As Peter says, their choice to reject the chief cornerstone sealed their own fate (**vs. 8**). And God has raised up for himself a "new people," other farmers to tend His vineyard. Those people are The Church of The LORD Jesus Christ. And Peter describes this "new people" in the most eloquent manner imaginable:

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His possession, so that you may proclaim the praises of the One Who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.
1 Peter 2:9-10

So fall upon the rock and be broken. For:

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the humble, for they will inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they will be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called the sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs.
Matthew 5:3-10

Fall upon Christ, the Rock, and be broken in humility. Recognize your own wretchedness and need for a Savior. Then fall, fall upon Christ... and live! For:

The sacrifice pleasing to God is a broken spirit. You will not despise a broken and humbled heart, God.
Psalms 51:17

And let the Believer, broken by The Living Stone say... TRUTH!!!