

Jesus The Stone

There are two ways in which Jesus was likened to a stone. We will look at both of them. Both occasions are mentioned in 1 Peter 2:6-8: "For this is contained in Scripture, Behold, I lay in Zion a choice stone, a precious corner stone, And he who believes in Him shall not be disappointed. This precious value, then, is for you who believe, but for those who disbelieve, The stone which the builders rejected, This became the very corner stone, and, A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense; for they stumble because they were disobedient to the word, and to this doom they were also appointed." These are quotations taken from Isaiah 8:14; 28:16; Psalm 118:22.

A Stone Of Stumbling

Jesus was a stumbling stone to the unbelieving Jew (Rom. 9:32-33). The Jews believed that the Messiah would come. They had all the prophecies before them. Yet, they did not receive Jesus as the Messiah though "...all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled" (Lk. 24:44). "He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive him" (Jn. 1:11). One has said, "Because of the claims of Jesus, his teaching, and his life were distasteful to them, they rejected him; therefore, he was to them a rock of offense. Their disbelief is the cause of their stumbling" (Hamilton). It is often said that everything about Jesus was contrary to the expectations of the Jews. He did not fit their preconceived notions of the Messiah. Also, there was His death as a common criminal and the enormous pride of the Jews and you see where the problem lay. Hence, He was a "stone of stumbling." When the apostles were preaching Christ they found that His gospel was still a stumbling block to the Jews (1 Cor. 1:23).

The solution to the problem was explained very succinctly by Jesus when He said, "I said therefore to you, that you shall die in your sins: for unless you believe that I am He, you shall die in your sins" (Jn. 8:24).

A Chief Corner Stone

"The stone which the builders rejected, This became the very corner stone" (1 Peter 2:7, see also Acts 4:11). This is a quote from Psalm 118:22. This same stone of stumbling is now described as "very corner stone" or, as Paul said, "the corner stone" (Eph. 2:20). One has said, "In ancient times, the cornerstone was the primary foundation stone set in at the corner of the building. The architect fixed his standard for all other measurements of the building on this stone. There was not one single line or angle of the building which was not determined by and adjusts to the perfect symmetry of that stone. So it is with Christ in the church. Christians find their true place and usefulness in relation to him. We find our rule and order in him. No measurement of any item of faith or practice is true if it is not set by the standard of his authority revealed in His word. Rule was set by the cornerstone. In this word picture, the authority for setting the line and measurement of the temple is determined by Christ" (Caldwell).

The Jews simply missed it all when they rejected Christ. Yet those who do follow Him as the chief corner stone have it all. Therein is a great difference. There is guidance instead of confusion for He has all authority (Matt. 28:18). There is confidence instead of doubt because

He has given us truth to follow (Jn. 8:32; 17:17). The cornerstone is the part that causes all parts to come together and be acceptable to God (Eph. 2:21-22).

Christians are described as “lively (living, NKJV) stones” in God’s spiritual house (1 Peter 2:5). No building, no house can expect to stand unless it is built after the pattern begun by the chief cornerstone. Interesting isn’t it that the stone that the Jews rejected is the stone that all must have in order to stand? And isn’t it also interesting that right after calling Jesus “the head of the corner” (Acts 4:11), Peter says, “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). That’s right, nowhere else but Jesus.

~Terry~