

WEEK 5 — OUTLINE

Christ as the Stone-Savior

Producing Living Stones for God's Building

Scripture Reading: Acts 4:10-12; Psa. 118:22, 24; 1 Pet. 2:4-8

« DAY 1 »

I. In Acts 4:10-12 we see that as the cornerstone Christ was despised and crucified by the Jewish leaders, the builders, but raised from the dead by God, becoming the cornerstone of God's building with God's salvation being uniquely in Him.

II. Psalm 118 speaks of Christ as the cornerstone for God's building:

A. "The stone which the builders rejected / Has become the head of the corner" (v. 22):

1. The Lord Jesus quoted this verse in Matthew 21:42, where He was indicating that He is the stone for God's building.
2. Christ is the cornerstone for the building up of the church in the New Testament age (16:18).
3. From the Lord's word in Matthew 21:42, Peter came to know the Lord as the precious stone held in honor by God (1 Pet. 2:4, 6).

B. On the day of His resurrection the Lord Jesus was made the cornerstone by God (Psa. 118:24):

1. Christ was chosen by God in eternity past to be the cornerstone for God's

spiritual building (1 Pet. 1:20; 2:4).

2. The Jewish leaders as the builders rejected Him to the uttermost, to such an extent that they put Him on the cross (Matt. 21:38-42).
3. God chose Christ as the cornerstone a second time in Christ's resurrection, thereby confirming His initial choosing of Christ in eternity past (Acts 4:10-11).
4. After God resurrected Christ, He uplifted Him to the heavens (Luke 24:51; Acts 1:9):
 - a. Christ's ascension to Zion in the heavens is a further confirmation that God had chosen Him to be the cornerstone (Rev. 14:1; Isa. 28:16; 1 Pet. 2:6).
 - b. Both Christ's resurrection and His ascension prove and confirm that He is the One whom God has chosen to be the head of the corner for God's building (Psa. 118:22; Acts 4:11).

« DAY 2 »

C. As the all-inclusive stone, Christ is the centrality of God's move for the building up of His eternal habitation (Matt. 21:42, 44; Zech. 3:9; Eph. 2:19-22):

1. Everything Christ is, everything He has done, and everything He is doing are due to the fact that He is the cornerstone.
2. It is by His being the cornerstone that He could die for us, that we could be crucified with Him, made alive with Him, resurrected with Him, and seated with Him in the heavenlies, and that He could save us, transform us into precious stones, and build us together to be God's habitation, God's unique temple in the universe (Gal. 2:20; Eph. 2:5-6, 20-22).

« DAY 3 »

III. In Acts 4:10-12 Peter proclaimed Christ as the Stone-Savior:

A. Peter's quoting Psalm 118 indicates that he preached Christ not only as the Savior for the salvation of sinners but also as the stone for God's building (Acts 4:11-12):

1. It is such a Christ who is the unique salvation to sinners.
2. It is in His unique name under heaven, a name despised and rejected by the Jewish leaders but honored by God, that sinners must be saved not only from sin but also to participate in God's building (v. 12; Phil. 2:9-10; Matt. 1:21; 1 Pet. 2:5).

B. Christ is not only the holy One, the righteous One, the Author of life, and the Servant; He is also the stone for God's building:

1. This stone is the unique One in whom we can be saved (Acts 4:11-12).
2. Christ is the Stone-Savior; as the Stone-Savior, He is solid, strong, and reliable.
3. We can be saved only in the name of Jesus, and Jesus is the stone; this means that we have a Stone-Savior.

C. In Christ God came in incarnation to be a stone for the building of God's universal habitation (John 1:1, 14; Matt. 21:42):

1. At first, Christ was a common stone, and the Jewish leaders rejected Him by killing Him.
2. God honored Him by raising Him from the dead and making Him a cornerstone, the prominent stone, that joins the walls of a building.
3. As the cornerstone of God's habitation, Christ joins the wall of the Jewish believers and the wall of the Gentile believers (Eph. 2:22).

« DAY 4 »

IV. Christ as the Stone-Savior is producing living stones for God's building, God's spiritual house (1 Pet. 2:4-8):

A. For us as believers, the resurrected Christ is the propagating

stone and the building stone (vv. 4-5):

1. First, we became His propagation, and now He is building us up together into God's dwelling place (v. 5).
2. As the Stone-Savior in God's economy, Christ is both the Builder and the material for God's building (Matt. 16:18; 1 Pet. 2:4-5).

« DAY 5 »

B. Through the Lord's speaking in John 1:42 and Matthew 16:18, Peter received the revelation that both Christ and the believers are living stones for God's building and eventually realized that God's goal is to have a spiritual house built up with living stones (1 Pet. 2:4-8):

1. First Peter 2:4 speaks of Christ as a living stone:
 - a. A living stone is one that not only possesses life but also grows in life; this is Christ for God's building.
 - b. As life to us, Christ is the seed; for God's building, He is the stone.
 - c. After receiving Him as the seed of life, we need to grow so that we may experience Him as the stone living in us (1:23; 2:2, 4).
 - d. In this way He makes us living stones, transformed with His divine nature, so that we may be built up together with others as a spiritual house upon Him as both the foundation and the cornerstone (1 Cor. 3:10; Eph. 2:20).
2. In Christ and through Christ we, as believers, become living stones to be built up as a spiritual house (1 Pet. 2:5):
 - a. We are living stones through regeneration and transformation (John 3:6; 2 Cor. 3:18).
 - b. We were created of clay (Rom. 9:21), but at regeneration we received the seed of life, which by its growth in us transforms us into living stones (1 Pet. 2:2, 5).

« DAY 6 »

3. The spiritual house into which we are being built up is God's building (Eph. 2:21-22):
 - a. Eventually, this building will consummate in the New Jerusalem, the stone city (Rev. 21:2).
 - b. We are becoming the precious stones that will be built up into the New Jerusalem.
 - c. This process takes place as we daily contact Christ, the living stone for God's building, and are transformed (1 Pet. 2:4-5; Rom. 12:2).

« WEEK 5 — DAY 1 »

Morning Nourishment

Psa. 118:22-24 The stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner. This is from Jehovah; it is wonderful in our sight. This is the day that Jehovah has made; let us exult and rejoice in it.

We come to the hardest point in the Bible—Christ as the cornerstone. Who would think that Christ would be the cornerstone? Prior to the Psalms there is not a verse which speaks of Christ as the cornerstone. Then, all of a sudden, Psalm 118:22 says, “The stone which the builders rejected / Has become the head of the corner.” (Life-study of the Psalms, p. 439)

In Acts 4:10-12 we see that as the cornerstone Christ was despised and crucified by the Jewish leaders, the builders, but raised from the dead by God, becoming the cornerstone of God’s building with God’s salvation being uniquely in Him. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, p. 2984)

Today’s Reading

Peter testifies to the Jewish leaders in Acts 4:10-12: “Let it be known to you all and to all the people of Israel that in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified and whom God has raised from the dead, in this name this man stands before you in good health. This is the stone which was considered as nothing by you, the builders, which has become the head of the corner. And there is salvation in no other, for neither is there another name under heaven given among men in which we must be saved.” The word Nazarene indicates the One despised by the Jewish leaders (John 1:45-46; Acts 22:8; 24:5). In 4:11 the Greek word translated “considered as nothing” also means “rejected” (Matt. 21:42). In Acts 4:10, you is emphatic. Here Peter emphasizes the fact that the Jewish leaders crucified the Lord Jesus, but God raised Him from the dead.

The stone despised, rejected, by the builders has become the cornerstone. Literally, the Greek words rendered “cornerstone” [in some versions] mean the

“head of the corner.” Verse 11 is a quotation from Psalm 118:22. The Lord Jesus also quoted this verse in Matthew 21:42, where He was indicating that He is the stone for God’s building (Isa. 28:16; Zech. 3:9; 1 Pet. 2:4) and that the “builders” were the Jewish leaders, who were supposed to work on God’s building. His word unveiled the Jewish leaders’ rejection of Him and God’s honoring of Him for the building of His habitation among His people on earth. By this word Peter learned to know the Lord as the precious stone held in honor by God, as he expounded concerning Him in his first Epistle (vv. 4-7). (The Conclusion of the New Testament, pp. 2984-2985)

Christ as the cornerstone is for the building up of the church in the New Testament age. In God’s New Testament economy Christ as the cornerstone, in His saving us (Acts 4:11-12), first makes us living stones for the building up of God’s spiritual house (Matt. 16:16-18; John 1:42; 1 Pet. 2:2-6), and then, in the process of His transforming us (Rom. 12:2a; 2 Cor. 3:18), builds us up into a dwelling place of God (Eph. 2:19-22), that He may carry out God’s eternal economy for God’s good pleasure (Eph. 1:9; 3:9-11). (Psa. 118:22, footnote 2)

On the day of His resurrection the Lord Jesus was made the cornerstone by God. Christ was chosen by God in eternity past to be the cornerstone for God’s spiritual building (1 Pet. 1:20; 2:4). Then, the Jewish leaders as the builders rejected Him to the uttermost, to such an extent that they put Him on the cross (Matt. 21:38-42a). God chose Christ as the cornerstone a second time in Christ’s resurrection (Acts 4:10-11), thereby confirming His initial choosing of Christ in eternity past. After God resurrected Christ, He uplifted Him to the heavens (Luke 24:51; Acts 1:9). Christ’s ascension to Zion in the heavens (Rev. 14:1) was a further confirmation that God had chosen Him to be the cornerstone (Isa. 28:16; 1 Pet. 2:6). Both Christ’s resurrection and His ascension prove and confirm that He is the One whom God has chosen to be the head of the corner for God’s building. (Psa. 118:24, footnote 1)

Further Reading: The Conclusion of the New Testament, msg. 291

« WEEK 5 — DAY 2 »

Morning Nourishment

Matt. 21:42 Jesus said to them, Have you never read in the Scriptures, “The stone which the builders rejected, this has become the head of the corner. This was from the Lord, and it is marvelous in our eyes”?

Eph. 2:20 Being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone.

As the all-inclusive stone Christ is the centrality of God’s move for the building up of His eternal habitation (Matt. 21:42, 44; Zech. 3:9; cf. Rev. 5:5-6; Acts 4:10-12; Isa. 28:16; Eph. 2:19-22; 1 Pet. 2:4-8; Dan. 2:34-35; Zech. 4:7; Rev. 21:11, cf. 4:3). Everything Christ is, everything He has done, and everything He is doing is due to the fact that He is the cornerstone. It is by His being the cornerstone that He could die for us, that we could be crucified with Him, made alive with Him, resurrected with Him, and seated with Him in the heavenlies, and that He could save us, transform us into precious stones, and build us together to be God’s habitation, God’s unique temple in the universe. (Psa. 118:24, footnote 1)

Today’s Reading

According to Psalm 118:22-26, thanksgiving of God’s elect for God’s bountiful goodness and everlasting lovingkindness leads to Christ as the cornerstone for God’s building.

Concerning Christ as the cornerstone, Acts 4:10-12 says, “Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified and whom God has raised from the dead,...this is the stone which was considered as nothing by you, the builders, which has become the head of the corner. And there is salvation in no other, for neither is there another name under heaven given among men in which we must be saved.” The word in verse 12 about there not being another name in which we must be saved is often quoted by evangelists, but who ever points out that the Savior is the cornerstone? If Christ had not been made the cornerstone, He could not be the Savior.

In Ephesians 2:19-22 we have Paul's word regarding Christ as the cornerstone. "So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone; in whom all the building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in spirit."...As the cornerstone Christ is everything; He is all-inclusive. Do you know what we are doing in all our meetings? We are building up God's building by Christ as the cornerstone.

This revelation concerning Christ as the cornerstone is unveiled in the praises of the psalmist. Often, while the psalmists were expressing their complex sentiments, something suddenly came forth as a revelation concerning Christ. This is the way the revelations of Christ are presented to us in the Psalms.

Have you ever thanked the Lord for being the cornerstone or praised Him for His being the cornerstone? I doubt that many among us have done this. We need to pray, saying, "Lord Jesus, I thank You that You are the cornerstone as my Savior and as my salvation. I praise You that You are the cornerstone for God's building. Without You we do not have any element or factor to be built up as God's temple."

I am concerned that even after you have heard that Christ is the cornerstone, you may have no interest in thanking and praising Him for this. Instead, you may prefer to pray in an old way regarding the Lord's mercy and lovingkindness. I would encourage you to pray like this: "Lord, I thank You for unveiling to me that You are the cornerstone to be my salvation and to be the element and factor for me to be transformed and built up into Your habitation." (Life-study of the Psalms, pp. 444-447)

Further Reading: Life-study of the Psalms, msg. 39

« WEEK 5 — DAY 3 »

Morning Nourishment

Acts 4:11-12 This is the stone which was considered as nothing by you, the builders, which has become the head of the corner. And there is salvation in no other, for neither is there another name under heaven given among men in which we must be saved.

Peter's quoting [Psalm 118] indicates that he preached Christ not only as the Savior for the salvation of sinners but also as the stone for God's building. The fact that Christ our Savior is a stone reveals that God's salvation is for God's building. It is such a Christ who is the unique salvation to sinners, and it is in His unique name under heaven, a name despised and rejected by the Jewish leaders but honored and exalted by God (Phil. 2:9-10), that sinners must be saved (Acts 4:12) not only from sin (Matt. 1:21) but also to participate in God's building (1 Pet. 2:5). (The Conclusion of the New Testament, p. 2985)

Today's Reading

In Christ God came in incarnation to be a stone for the building up of His universal habitation, but the Jewish leaders, who should have been the builders, despised this stone, Jesus Christ. However, God made Him the cornerstone. The more the Jewish leaders rejected Him, the more God used Him. At first, He was a common stone. Then the Jewish leaders rejected Him by killing Him. But God honored Him by raising Him up from among the dead and making Him a particular stone, the cornerstone, the prominent stone that joins the walls of a building. As the cornerstone of God's habitation, Christ joins the wall of the Jewish believers and the wall of the Gentile believers.

Christ is not only the holy One, the righteous One, the Author of life, and the Servant; He is also a stone for God's building. According to Acts 4:12, this stone is the unique One in whom we can be saved. Hence, He is the Stone-Savior. As the Stone-Savior, He is solid, strong, and reliable. We can rely on Him and stand on

Him. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, pp. 2985-2986)

When Peter and John were asked by what power or in what name they healed the lame man, Peter took the opportunity to say more concerning Christ as the Healer. Acts 4, therefore, is actually the continuation of Peter's presentation of the Healer...All [the] aspects of the Healer [in chapter 3] are for our benefit. But in chapter 4 Peter presented an aspect of the Healer that is especially for God; he presented Christ as the stone for God's building.

Acts 4:12 says, "And there is salvation in no other, for neither is there another name under heaven given among men in which we must be saved." This verse is often used in the preaching of the gospel. But have you ever heard it used in relation to verse 11? Acts 4:11 says, "This is the stone which was considered as nothing by you, the builders, which has become the head of the corner." These verses indicate that the stone in verse 11 is the Savior. The stone despised by the builders has become the head of the corner, and there is no salvation in any other name. We can be saved only in the name of Jesus, and Jesus is the stone. This means that we have a Stone-Savior. In the four Gospels we have the King-Savior in Matthew, the Slave-Savior in Mark, the Man-Savior in Luke, and the God-Savior in John. Now in the book of Acts we have the Stone-Savior. Our Savior is not only the King, a Slave, a Man, and God—He is also a stone for God's building.

In 4:7 Peter and John were asked by what power or in what name they had healed the lame man. Then in verse 10 Peter said, "Let it be known to you all and to all the people of Israel that in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified and whom God has raised from the dead, in this name this man stands before you in good health." Here Peter spoke boldly concerning the name of Jesus Christ. Then in verse 11 he said that this name is the stone that was considered as nothing by the builders. Although Peter was uneducated and unlearned (v. 13), he could nevertheless declare that Jesus Christ is the stone despised, considered as nothing, by the builders. (Life-study of Acts, pp. 122-123)

Further Reading: Life-study of Acts, msg. 15

« WEEK 5 — DAY 4 »

Morning Nourishment

John 1:42 He led him to Jesus. Looking at him, Jesus said, You are Simon, the son of John; you shall be called Cephas (which is interpreted, Peter).

Matt. 16:18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

In John 1 we see that Andrew brought his brother, Simon Peter, to the Lord Jesus. “Looking at him, Jesus said, You are Simon, the son of John; you shall be called Cephas (which is interpreted, Peter)” (v. 42). Later, in Caesarea Philippi, the Lord Jesus asked His disciples, “But you, who do you say that I am?” (Matt. 16:15). Peter took the lead to declare, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (v. 16). In His response to Peter, the Lord said, “I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church” (v. 18). Here the name Peter means “a stone,” which is material for God’s building. The Lord Jesus seemed to be saying, “You are Peter, a stone. I will build My church with stones.” (Life-study of Acts, p. 128)

Today’s Reading

No doubt, the Lord’s word [in Matthew 16:18] must have made a deep impression on Peter, even though it is not likely that he understood it at the time. However, after the life-giving Spirit had been breathed into him and after the economical Spirit had blown upon him, Peter became a man of Spirit, a man with the essential Spirit within him and the economical Spirit upon him. As such a man, he surely began to understand the Lord’s word concerning him being a stone. Peter might have said to himself, “I recall that when I first met the Lord, He said that He would give me a new name, a name that means ‘stone.’ Later He called me Peter and said that He would build His church upon a rock. Now I understand what the Lord was saying.”

Having this understanding, Peter in Acts 4 could present the Lord Jesus as the stone considered as nothing by the builders but which has become the cornerstone. Later, when he had become old, he wrote his first Epistle, in which he spoke of the Lord as the living stone and of the believers as living stones for God's building: "Coming to Him, a living stone, rejected by men but with God chosen and precious, you yourselves also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house" (1 Pet. 2:4-5a). According to Acts 3 and 4, Peter knew the Healer not only as God's Servant, the holy One, the righteous One, the Author of life, the Prophet, and the seed in whom all the earth would be blessed; he also knew Him as the stone for God's building.

I do not believe that throughout the centuries many have taught from the Word that Jesus Christ is a stone for God's building. He is not only the Servant, the holy One, the righteous One, the Author of life, the Prophet, and the seed; He is a stone for God's building. According to 4:12, this stone is the One in whom we can be saved. Hence, He is the Stone-Savior. As the Stone-Savior, He is solid, strong, and reliable. We can rely on Him and stand on Him. This stone is the rock, the foundation stone, and the cornerstone. In Zechariah 4:7 we see that He is even the topstone. Christ is the material for God's building. God's building is entirely of Christ.

It is in the name of Jesus Christ, the all-inclusive One, that we are saved. Do you know why His name is so powerful? His name is powerful because He is the wonderful, all-inclusive One. We have been saved in the name of Jesus Christ, and He is the all-inclusive One. As the all-inclusive One, Christ is God, man, the Father, the Son, the Spirit, the rock, the foundation, the cornerstone, the topstone, the door, our food, our drink, our clothing, our life, our strength, our ability, our function, our walk, our living, our words, our breath, our sight, our hearing. Oh, it is impossible to exhaust all that Christ is to us! (Life-study of Acts, pp. 128-130)

Further Reading: Life-study of Acts, msg. 16

« WEEK 5 – DAY 5 »

Morning Nourishment

1 Pet. 2:4-5 Coming to Him, a living stone, rejected by men but with God chosen and precious, you yourselves also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house into a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

Due to the influence of tradition, some say that we should not use new terms to express what Christ is....We should not trust in traditional theology, for it restricts us and even misleads us. We need to see in the Word all the aspects of Christ. In particular, our Christ has the aspect of being a stone for God's building.

Christ is not only the stone for God's building; He is also the stumbling stone and the smiting stone. Concerning Himself as the stumbling stone and smiting stone, the Lord Jesus said, "He who falls on this stone shall be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it shall crush him to powder and scatter him like chaff" (Matt. 21:44). To the believers, Christ is the foundation stone in whom we trust (Isa. 28:16). But to the unbelieving Jews, He is the stumbling stone (Isa. 8:14-15; Rom. 9:32-33), and to the nations He will be the smiting stone. According to Daniel 2:34 and 35, Christ as the stone will smite the nations at His coming back. (Life-study of Acts, pp. 130-131)

Today's Reading

For us as believers, Christ is neither the stumbling stone nor the smiting stone—He is the building stone, even the propagating stone. For us, He has become the building stone. First, we became His propagation, and now He is building us up together into God's dwelling place. He is both the Builder and the material for God's building. He is the Stone-Savior. In God's economy He is building His eternal habitation. For the Jews and the nations respectively, He is the stumbling stone and the smiting stone. But to us He is the propagating stone and the building stone.

In the Bible stone is a major item....The first man was a clay-man [cf. Gen. 2:7]. Then God Himself came to be a man, and this man was a stone-man. At the end of the Bible, in the book of Revelation, we have a stone-city, a city built of stone. Therefore, the Bible begins with a clay-man, continues with a stone-man, and consummates in a stone-city. This is God's economy.

In the Bible there is a line concerning stone from Genesis 2 through Revelation 22. In Genesis 2 we have the onyx stone at the beginning, and then in Revelation 21 and 22 we have the jasper city as the consummation. The appearance, the wall, and the first foundation of this city are all of jasper. How much truth, therefore, is indicated and implied by Peter's referring to Christ as the stone rejected by the builders but made by God the cornerstone in resurrection! (Life-study of Acts, pp. 131, 133-134)

A living stone is one that not only possesses life but also grows in life. This is Christ for God's building. Here Peter changed his metaphor from a seed, which is of the vegetable life (1 Pet. 1:23-24), to a stone, which is of the minerals. The seed is for life-planting; the stone is for building (2:5). Peter's thought went on from life-planting to God's building. As life to us, Christ is the seed; for God's building, He is the stone. After receiving Him as the seed of life, we need to grow that we may experience Him as the stone living in us. Thus He will make us also living stones, transformed with His stone nature, that we may be built together with others as a spiritual house upon Him as both the foundation and the cornerstone (Isa. 28:16). (1 Pet. 2:4, footnote 1)

We, the believers in Christ, are living stones, like Christ, through regeneration and transformation. We were created of clay (Rom. 9:21). But at regeneration we received the seed of the divine life, which by its growing in us transforms us into living stones. At Peter's conversion the Lord gave him a new name, Peter—a stone (John 1:42); and when Peter received the revelation concerning Christ, the Lord revealed further that He was the rock—a stone (Matt. 16:16-18). By these two incidents Peter received the impression that both Christ and His believers are stones for God's building. (1 Pet. 2:5, footnote 1)

Further Reading: Life-study of 1 Peter, msgs. 16-17

« WEEK 5 — DAY 6 »

Morning Nourishment

Eph. 2:21-22 In whom all the building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in spirit.

Without being built up into a spiritual house, the living stones can do nothing and thus are useless. The stones need to be built up into a house that will be useful to God. This usefulness of the stones is the priestly service, and this house is the priesthood. There is the need of a priestly body, a priestly group, to offer spiritual sacrifices. If we are not built up as such a priestly body, we are not qualified to offer anything to God. Therefore, if we are not built up, we are not qualified to serve. For the service, we need the Body. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, p. 3871)

Today's Reading

We all must realize that we cannot serve God by ourselves individually. We must serve in coordination with others. One stone can never be a house; it must be built up together with other stones to form a building. It is impossible for an individual Christian to constitute the priesthood. This means, strictly speaking, that if there is no building, there is no real service to God. It is only when we are built together that proper service can be rendered to God. Real service to God is a matter of the building.

Service always follows building. If there were no tabernacle, there could be no priests to serve. As Christians, we are individual persons, but we cannot be individualistic Christians. We cannot serve the Lord independent of others. Each individual priest must be coordinated with all the other priests. It is a dreadful thing to attempt to serve the Lord apart from the proper church life, apart from being built up with others. We must be built together as the priesthood to serve God in the building, the church, in a coordinated way.

First Peter 2:5 says that we, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house. However, if we all are clay, how can we be built up? In order to be built up as a spiritual house, we need to become stones, and in order to become living stones, we need to come to Christ as the living stone by drinking the guileless milk of the word.

If we long for the milk of the word, this milk will be like a current of living water flowing within us. As we stay in this flow, the current will carry away our natural substance and replace it with Christ as heavenly, divine minerals. Gradually, over a period of time, we will be transformed; that is, we will become precious stones. If we would be transformed, every day we need to come to the Lord as milk.

Feeding on Christ by taking in the nourishing milk in the word of God is not only for growing in life but also for building up. Growing is for building up. Although the nourishing milk of the word is for the soul through the mind, it eventually nourishes our spirit, making us not soulish but spiritual, suitable for being built up as a spiritual house of God.

Our mutual dependence on one another as the members of the Body comes through a transforming work. When we are transformed into the image of Christ and express Him fully, our individualism will disappear automatically. Only then will we be in the coordination and relatedness of the Body.

The spiritual house into which we are being built is God's building. Eventually, this building will consummate in the New Jerusalem. In the New Jerusalem there will not be any clay, for all the clay will have been transformed into precious stones. This means that the New Jerusalem is built with precious stones. We are becoming the precious stones that will be built up into the New Jerusalem. The building work is now going on as we daily, even hourly, come to Christ as milk and drink Him. Then we will have the flow, the current, that transforms us from clay into stone for God's building. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, pp. 3871-3872)

Further Reading: The Conclusion of the New Testament, msg. 383; Life-study of 1 Peter, msg. 18

WEEK 5 — HYMN

The chief Cornerstone Thou art, Lord The Church — Her Foundation

834

The musical score is written in G major and 4/4 time. It consists of four staves of music. The lyrics are: 1. The chief Cor - ner - stone Thou art, Lord, Jew - ish build - ers did des - pise; God by re - sur - rec - tion placed Thee, Thou art pre - cious in His eyes. Through Thee we re - ceive sal - va - tion, And, to - geth - er built by Thee, Jews and Gen - tiles are Thy dwell - ing, One new man, in har - mon - y.

3. On Thyself the Church is builded,
And though many storms assail,
Still it stands erect, for 'gainst it
Gates of hell cannot prevail.
Thine authority possessing,
It doth bind and loose in Thee,
Bringing men into Thy kingdom,
Satan's captives setting free.

4. Living Stone of life art Thou, Lord,
Precious, chosen thus to be;
Living stones Thou too hast made us,
One in character with Thee.
Built together as a temple
That our God may dwell therein,
Thus we are a holy priesthood,
Offering sacrifice to Him.

7. Thou art God, yet flesh becamest,
God with man in Thee doth dwell;
Thou, the Temple for His glory,
God in Thee Himself doth tell.

Thus the Church too is the mingling
Into one of God and man;
So it is with every member
For the building of God's plan.

8. Thou, the everlasting Dwelling,
In all ages art our home;
We in Thee enjoy protection,
Living in Thyself alone.

Thou our Sanctuary art, Lord,
We and God abide in Thee;
Thou, God's presence art within us,
Where we worship ceaselessly.

9. Cornerstone, Foundation, Topstone,
Rock, and Church, and Living Stone,
Dwelling-place, and Sanctuary,
Builder too art Thou, we own.
Praise we give for what Thou art, Lord,
As Thy wondrousness we see!
Grant that we may be built up, Lord,
As the living stones in Thee.