

**PROPAGATING THE RESURRECTED,  
ASCENDED, AND ALL-INCLUSIVE CHRIST  
AS THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD**

(Friday—Second Morning Session)

Message Five

**Christ as the Stone-Savior  
Producing Living Stones for God's Building**

MR Hymns: 199

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

- Acts 4:10 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.
- Acts 4:11 This is the stone which was considered as nothing by you, the builders, which has become the head of the corner.
- Acts 4:12 And there is salvation in no other, for neither is there another name under heaven given among men in which we must be saved.
- Psa 118:22 The stone which the builders rejected / Has become the head of the corner.
- Psa 118:24 This is the day that Jehovah has made; / Let us exult and rejoice in it.
- 1 Pet 2:4 Coming to Him, a living stone, rejected by men but with God chosen and precious,
- 1 Pet 2:5 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.
- 1 Pet 2:6 For it is contained in Scripture: "Behold, I lay in Zion a cornerstone, chosen and precious; and he who believes on Him shall by no means be put to shame."
- 1 Pet 2:7 To you therefore who believe is the preciousness; but to the unbelieving, "The stone which the builders rejected, this has become the head of the corner,"
- 1 Pet 2:8 And, "A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense"; who stumble at the word, being disobedient, to which also they were appointed.

**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.**

- Acts 4:10 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.
- Acts 4:11 This is the stone which was considered as nothing by you, the builders, which has become the head of the corner.
- Acts 4:12 And there is salvation in no other, for neither is there another name under heaven given among men in which we must be saved.

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

- Psa 118:1 Give thanks to Jehovah, for He is good, / For His lovingkindness is forever.
- Psa 118:2 Let Israel say, / His lovingkindness is forever.
- Psa 118:3 Let the house of Aaron say, / His lovingkindness is forever.
- Psa 118:4 Let those who fear Jehovah say, / His lovingkindness is forever.
- Psa 118:5 Out of my distress I called upon Jehovah; / Jehovah answered me and set me in a place broad and free.
- Psa 118:6 Jehovah is for me; I will not be afraid. / What can man do to me?
- Psa 118:7 Jehovah is for me as my Helper, / And I will see what should happen to those who hate me.
- Psa 118:8 It is better to take refuge in Jehovah / Than to trust in man.
- Psa 118:9 It is better to take refuge in Jehovah / Than to trust in princes.
- Psa 118:10 All nations surrounded me; / In the name of Jehovah I indeed cut them down!
- Psa 118:11 They surrounded me; yes, they surrounded me; / In the name of Jehovah I indeed cut them down!

- Psa 118:12 They surrounded me like bees; / They were extinguished like a fire of thorns; / In the name of Jehovah I indeed cut them down!
- Psa 118:13 I was pushed hard that I might fall; / But Jehovah helped me.
- Psa 118:14 Jehovah is my strength and my song, / And He has become my salvation.
- Psa 118:15 The voice of rejoicing and salvation / Is in the tents of the righteous. / The right hand of Jehovah does valiantly;
- Psa 118:16 The right hand of Jehovah is exalted; / The right hand of Jehovah does valiantly.
- Psa 118:17 I will not die, but live, / And declare the works of Jehovah.
- Psa 118:18 Jehovah has severely chastened me, / But He has not given me over to death.
- Psa 118:19 Open to me the gates of righteousness: / I will enter in through them; I will give thanks to Jehovah.
- Psa 118:20 This is the gate of Jehovah; / The righteous shall enter in through it.
- Psa 118:21 I will give thanks to You, for You have answered me / And have become my salvation.
- Psa 118:22 The stone which the builders rejected / Has become the head of the corner.
- Psa 118:23 This is from Jehovah; / It is wonderful in our sight.
- Psa 118:24 This is the day that Jehovah has made; / Let us exult and rejoice in it.
- Psa 118:25 O Jehovah, do save, we pray! / O Jehovah, do send prosperity, we pray!
- Psa 118:26 Blessed is He who comes in the name of Jehovah; / We bless you from the house of Jehovah.
- Psa 118:27 Jehovah is God, / And He has given us light; / Bind the sacrifice of the feast with cords / To the horns of the altar.
- Psa 118:28 You are my God, and I give thanks to You. / You are my God; I will exalt You.
- Psa 118:29 Give thanks to Jehovah, for He is good, / For His lovingkindness is forever.
- 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.  
 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"?
  2. Christ is the cornerstone for the building up of the church in the New Testament age—16:18.  
 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.
  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.  
 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"?  
 1 Pet 2:4 Coming to Him, a living stone, rejected by men but with God chosen and precious,  
 1 Pet 2:6 For it is contained in Scripture: "Behold, I lay in Zion a cornerstone, chosen and precious; and he who believes on Him shall by no means be put to shame."
- B. On the day of His resurrection the Lord Jesus was made the cornerstone by God—Psa. 118:24:
- Psa 118:24 This is the day that Jehovah has made; / Let us exult and rejoice in it.
1. Christ was chosen by God in eternity past to be the cornerstone for God's spiritual building—1 Pet. 1:20; 2:4.  
 1 Pet 1:20 Who was foreknown before the foundation of the world but has been manifested in the last of times for your sake,  
 1 Pet 2:4 Coming to Him, a living stone, rejected by men but with God chosen and precious,
  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.  
 Matt 21:38 But the vinedressers, when they saw the son, said among themselves, This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and take possession of his inheritance.  
 Matt 21:39 And they took him and cast him out of the vineyard and killed him.

- Matt 21:40 Therefore when the master of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vinedressers?
- Matt 21:41 They said to Him, He will miserably destroy those evil men and will lease the vineyard to other vinedressers, who will give the fruit to him in their seasons.
- 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"?
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.
 

Acts 4:10 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.

Acts 4:11 This is the stone which was considered as nothing by you, the builders, which has become the head of the corner.
  4. After God resurrected Christ, He uplifted Him to the heavens—Luke 24:51; Acts 1:9:
 

Luke 24:51 And while He blessed them, He parted from them and was carried up into heaven.

Acts 1:9 And when He had said these things, while they were looking on, He was lifted up, and a cloud took Him away from their sight.

    - 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.
 

Rev 14:1 And I saw, and behold, the Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him a hundred and forty-four thousand, having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads.

Isa 28:16 Therefore thus says / The Lord Jehovah: / Indeed I lay a stone in Zion as a foundation, / A tested stone, / A precious cornerstone as a foundation firmly established; / He who believes will not hasten away.

1 Pet 2:6 For it is contained in Scripture: "Behold, I lay in Zion a cornerstone, chosen and precious; and he who believes on Him shall by no means be put to shame."
    - 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.
 

Psa 118:22 The stone which the builders rejected / Has become the head of the corner.

Acts 4:11 This is the stone which was considered as nothing by you, the builders, which has become the head of the corner.
- 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:
- 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"?
- Matt 21:44 And 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.
- Zech 3:9 For here is the stone that I have set before Joshua-upon one stone are seven eyes. I will engrave its engraving, declares Jehovah of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day.
- Eph 2:19 So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,
- Eph 2:20 Being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone;
- Eph 2:21 In whom all the building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord;
- Eph 2:22 In whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in spirit.
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.

Gal 2:20 I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

Eph 2:5 Even when we were dead in offenses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)

Eph 2:6 And raised us up together with Him and seated us together with Him in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus,

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

Eph 2:21 In whom all the building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord;

Eph 2:22 In whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in spirit.

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

Acts 4:10 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.

Acts 4:11 This is the stone which was considered as nothing by you, the builders, which has become the head of the corner.

Acts 4:12 And there is salvation in no other, for neither is there another name under heaven given among men in which we must be saved.

- 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:

Psa 118 be omitted.

Acts 4:11 This is the stone which was considered as nothing by you, the builders, which has become the head of the corner.

Acts 4:12 And there is salvation in no other, for neither is there another name under heaven given among men in which we must be saved.

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.

Acts 4:12 And there is salvation in no other, for neither is there another name under heaven given among men in which we must be saved.

Phil 2:9 Therefore also God highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name,

Phil 2:10 That in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

Matt 1:21 And she will bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins.

1 Pet 2:5 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.

- 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.

Acts 4:11 This is the stone which was considered as nothing by you, the builders, which has become the head of the corner.

Acts 4:12 And there is salvation in no other, for neither is there another name under heaven given among men in which we must be saved.

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:
- John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.  
 John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us (and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only Begotten from the Father), full of grace and reality.  
 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"?
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.  
 Eph 2:22 In whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in spirit.

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

- 1 Pet 2:4 Coming to Him, a living stone, rejected by men but with God chosen and precious,  
 1 Pet 2:5 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.  
 1 Pet 2:6 For it is contained in Scripture: "Behold, I lay in Zion a cornerstone, chosen and precious; and he who believes on Him shall by no means be put to shame."  
 1 Pet 2:7 To you therefore who believe is the preciousness; but to the unbelieving, "The stone which the builders rejected, this has become the head of the corner,"  
 1 Pet 2:8 And, "A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense"; who stumble at the word, being disobedient, to which also they were appointed.
- A. For us as believers, the resurrected Christ is the propagating stone and the building stone—vv. 4-5:
- 1 Pet 2:4 Coming to Him, a living stone, rejected by men but with God chosen and precious,  
 1 Pet 2:5 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.
1. First, we became His propagation, and now He is building us up together into God's dwelling place—v. 5.  
 1 Pet 2:5 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.
  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.  
 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.  
 1 Pet 2:4 Coming to Him, a living stone, rejected by men but with God chosen and precious,  
 1 Pet 2:5 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.
- 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:
- 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.  
 1 Pet 2:4 Coming to Him, a living stone, rejected by men but with God chosen and precious,  
 1 Pet 2:5 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.
- 1 Pet 2:6 For it is contained in Scripture: "Behold, I lay in Zion a cornerstone, chosen and precious; and he who believes on Him shall by no means be put to shame."
- 1 Pet 2:7 To you therefore who believe is the preciousness; but to the unbelieving, "The stone which the builders rejected, this has become the head of the corner,"
- 1 Pet 2:8 And, "A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense"; who stumble at the word, being disobedient, to which also they were appointed.
1. First Peter 2:4 speaks of Christ as a living stone:
 

1 Pet 2:4 Coming to Him, a living stone, rejected by men but with God chosen and precious,

    - 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.
 

1 Pet 1:23 Having been regenerated not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible, through the living and abiding word of God.

1 Pet 2:2 As newborn babes, long for the guileless milk of the word in order that by it you may grow unto salvation,

1 Pet 2:4 Coming to Him, a living stone, rejected by men but with God chosen and precious,
    - 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.
 

1 Cor 3:10 According to the grace of God given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid a foundation, and another builds upon it. But let each man take heed how he builds upon it.

Eph 2:20 Being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone;
2. In Christ and through Christ we, as believers, become living stones to be built up as a spiritual house—1 Pet. 2:5:
 

1 Pet 2:5 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.

    - a. We are living stones through regeneration and transformation—John 3:6; 2 Cor. 3:18.
 

John 3:6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

2 Cor 3:18 But we all with unveiled face, beholding and reflecting like a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord Spirit.
    - 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.
 

Rom 9:21 Or does not the potter have authority over the clay to make out of the same lump one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor?

1 Pet 2:2 As newborn babes, long for the guileless milk of the word in order that by it you may grow unto salvation,

1 Pet 2:5 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.
3. The spiritual house into which we are being built up is God's building—Eph. 2:21-22:
 

Eph 2:21 In whom all the building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord;

Eph 2:22 In whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in spirit.

    - a. Eventually, this building will consummate in the New Jerusalem, the stone city—Rev. 21:2.
 

Rev 21:2 And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

- 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.
  - 1 Pet 2:4 Coming to Him, a living stone, rejected by men but with God chosen and precious,
  - 1 Pet 2:5 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.
  - Rom 12:2 And do not be fashioned according to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and well pleasing and perfect.

## Excerpts from the Ministry:

### CHRIST AS THE STONE FOR GOD'S BUILDING

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. In chapter three he presented this Healer in six aspects: God's Servant, the Holy One, the Righteous One, the Author of life, the Prophet, and the seed in whom all the families of the earth will be blessed. All these aspects of the Healer are for our benefit. But in chapter four Peter presented an aspect of the Healer that is especially for God; he presented Christ as the stone for God's building.

#### The Stone-Savior

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 cornerstone, 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 considered as nothing by the builders. Who were the builders who considered this stone as nothing? These builders were the leaders in the Sanhedrin.

#### The Building of God's Eternal Habitation

In our reading of the book of Acts, we may still be under the influence of traditional theology. Due to this influence, we may realize only that the name of Jesus is for salvation, that there is no other name given for us to be saved. We may not go on to consider the significance of the stone and the builders. In particular, we may not ask what these builders were building. What were they building? Some may think that they were building Judaism, that is, building a religion. However, it is not God's intention to build up Judaism or any kind of religion.

The Jewish leaders, the builders, did not know God's economy. Likewise, many believers today

do not know what God's economy is. We have put out hundreds of Life-study messages, and in these messages we have covered many things concerning God's economy. We have pointed out that God's economy is to build up His habitation in this universe. Heaven is not God's permanent habitation; rather, heaven is God's temporary residence. The Bible reveals clearly that God is not satisfied to stay forever in heaven.

### ***The Mingling of God with Man***

The Bible reveals to us that God has an economy. God's economy is a plan, an arrangement, an administration, to accomplish something. What God intends to accomplish in His economy is to build up His eternal habitation. What is God's eternal habitation? God's eternal habitation is the blending of Himself with man, the mingling of God with humanity. Neither heaven nor earth is God's habitation for His satisfaction. Nothing other than the mingling of God with man is qualified to be God's dwelling place. Although we see little concerning this in the Old Testament, it is revealed in full in the New Testament, in particular, in the Gospel of John.

John 1:14 says, "The Word became flesh and tabernacled among us." This word refers to the incarnation: the Word, which is God (v. 1), became flesh and tabernacled among us. The word *tabernacled* in this verse is rich in its significance. It signifies that the incarnated One is the very mingling of God and man. This mingling is God's tabernacle, where God can dwell. Furthermore, in this tabernacle God's chosen people can serve God and stay with Him. Therefore, in John 1:14 we see the mingling of God with man in the incarnation to become God's tabernacle, His dwelling place.

In John 14:23 the Lord Jesus said, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make an abode with him." Here we see that the Son and the Father will come to the one who loves the Lord Jesus and make an abode with that one.

Then in John 15:4 the Lord went on to say, "Abide in Me and I in you." Here the Lord indicated that He may become our abode, our abiding place, and that we need to be His abode. The Lord seemed to be saying, "Abide in Me so that I may abide in you. Be My abode so that I may be your abode." Here we have the mingling of God and man for a mutual dwelling place. Have you ever heard anything concerning this? There is not such a concept in traditional theological teachings.

### ***A Building in Resurrection***

In John 2:19 the Lord Jesus said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." According to John 2:21, "He spoke of the temple of His body." Here the Lord seemed to be saying, "You Jewish leaders should be builders. However, eventually you will destroy this temple. But I will build it up in three days. In resurrection I shall build up what you have destroyed." This building in resurrection includes not only Jesus Christ Himself but also all those who believe in Him. Ultimately, He and all the believers will be built together into the habitation of God, which in the New Testament is called the house of God, the church (1 Tim. 3:15).

Now we can see that God's economy is to build an eternal habitation for Himself and for His chosen people. This habitation is actually the mingling of God with His chosen people.

### ***A Mutual Dwelling Place***

The thought of having God as our habitation can be found in the Old Testament. For example, Deuteronomy 33:27 says, "The God of old is your habitation." In Psalm 90:1 Moses says, "O Lord, You have been our dwelling place / In all generations." In these verses we see clearly that God is our habitation. However, in the Old Testament we cannot see a verse telling us that we, God's chosen people, are His habitation. But the New Testament reveals clearly that there is a universal building, and this building is the mutual building of God and His chosen people. Actually, this habitation is God as our dwelling place and we as God's dwelling place. This wonderful dwelling place is God's building.

God intended to use Moses, the kings, the prophets, and all the Jewish leaders to build this habitation. Therefore, the builders in Acts 4:11 should refer to the builders of God's universal habitation. (*Life-study of Acts*, pp. 122-125)

### **THE CORNERSTONE OF GOD'S HABITATION**

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. However, God made Him the cornerstone. The more the Jewish leaders rejected Him, the more God used Him. First, He was a stone only in a general way. But after the rejection by the Jewish leaders, God in resurrection made Him the cornerstone. At first He was a common stone. Then the Jewish leaders rejected Him by killing Him. But God honored Him by raising Him from the dead and making Him a particular stone, the cornerstone, the very prominent stone that joins the walls of a building. Christ is the cornerstone of God's habitation.

### **PETER'S KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST AS THE STONE**

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 on 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."

No doubt, the Lord's word 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" (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.

### **SAVED IN THE NAME OF THE ALL-INCLUSIVE ONE**

When some hear that we say according to the Scriptures that Christ is the cornerstone, the

foundation stone, the topstone, and even all the stones in God's building, they may accuse us of teaching pantheism. This is a false accusation. Yes, we say that Christ is our food, air, water, light, door, clothing, and dwelling place, although this certainly is not pantheism. Is Christ not qualified to be our food and drink? Is He not qualified to be our air, clothing, door, and dwelling place? Is He not the foundation stone, the cornerstone, the topstone, and all the stones for God's building? Surely Christ is qualified to be all these things. However, today some detract from Christ's qualifications and falsely accuse as pantheists those who teach from the Bible that Christ is all-inclusive, that He is all in all. The New Testament reveals that Christ is all in all (Col. 3:11), and we are the fullness of this One who is all in all (Eph. 1:23). How wonderful that we are Christ's fullness to express Him!

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!

Due to the influence of tradition, some say that we should not use new terms to express what Christ is. They claim that we should use only those terms used by the church fathers, the councils, and traditional teachings. This imposes a great restriction on God's people. We need to break through this restriction and use new terms when necessary to convey the all-inclusiveness of Christ. 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. Hallelujah for this building stone!

### **THE STUMBLING STONE, THE SMITING STONE, THE PROPAGATING STONE, AND THE BUILDING STONE**

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.

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.

### **FROM A CLAY-MAN TO A STONE-CITY**

In the Bible stone is a major item. In Genesis God created a man of clay (2:7). Hence, the first man was a clay-man. 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. (*Life-study of Acts*, pp. 127-131)