



Ephesians 2:17-22
The Living Stones of the Temple

"17 And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near.
18 For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.
19 Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,
20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief *cornerstone*,
21 in whom the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord,
22 in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit."

As I read the Bible I am so often struck by the perfection of all its parts and how they all fit together - I've marveled in the way that Paul is building his letter to the Ephesians – each argument building on another and complementing his other works and the works of other Apostles and Prophets –

NO CONTRADICTIONS IN EACH BOOK BUT RATHER EACH COMPLEMENTS

As You read you see how one part progressively builds on the other to for the whole

Quarry imagery – how all the parts of the Bible written over thousands of years fit together perfectly – an evidence of its being God's divinely inspired truth

WCF 1.5

"the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole (which is, to give all glory to God), the full discovery it makes of the only way of man's salvation, the many other incomparable excellencies, and the entire perfection thereof, are arguments whereby it doth abundantly evidence itself to be the Word of God"

Scripture is Like KING SOLOMONS TEMPLE

"1 Kings 6:7 And the temple, when it was being built, was built with stone finished at the quarry, so that no hammer or chisel or any iron tool was heard in the temple while it was being built."

Temple fit together so perfectly that the stones fit together almost seamlessly, so much so that it is said that you couldn't fit even the thinnest knife blade between the stones.

No final editing in the Bible either.

Builders knew what the final building would look like when assembled - God knew from the beginning what the Scripture would look like when finished.

Like the Temple is NOT a Haphazard collection of STONES, Bible is not a random collection of Books. God always intended for his people to have this complete CANON, or RULE for all of their FAITH LIFE AND PRACTICE.

SAME WAY the plan of redemption is coming to its perfect conclusion, which will be the completion of this *HOLY TEMPLE IN THE LORD*, that is the Church, the body of Jesus Christ

Verse here tell us How the people of God fit into the final plan of the temple, each one a living stone

Remember Marble when quarried is rough and unfinished, it is dull

When the edifice is completed – We'll all fit together AS SEEMLESSLY AS THE ORIGINAL TEMPLE, or the BIBLE

No purgatory, for glorification will be perfect at Christ's return – COMPLETE CHURCH A Bride without Blemish or spot:

Ephesians 5:26-27 "26 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, 27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish."

This temple is composed of believers, and each believer is a LIVING STONE being carefully finished, crafted, shaped, and then put by the Lord into their proper position.

Often we don't see that, we don't understand our place or final purpose in the Temple, but God does, he knows where each stone needs to go in order that the Building may be complete:

1 Peter 2:1-10 "Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking,
2 as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby,
3 if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious.
4 Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious,
5 you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

Looking at these verses

V.17 Last Week, Christ the source of Peace. Reconciliation between MAN AND GOD
RECONCILIATION BETWEEN MAN AND MAN – Peace on Earth, Goodwill to man

The Burden of the GOSPEL: Justification by faith in Christ Alone the source of PEACE → GOD AND MAN, MAN AND MAN

But all that Christ has done to effect this would have been of no avail had the GOOD NEWS not been preached.

He DID NOT PREACH, but the AMBASSADORS PREACH

"Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God." (2 Cor. 5:20)

Gospel was preached to those who were AFAR OFF: That is these GENTILES

Gospel was preached to those who were NEAR: The Jews

Both still needed to hear the Good News preached. Just as those **WITHIN** the Church, but who have not embraced it need to hear the gospel as much as those **OUTSIDE**

V.18-19 Big difference with Arminianism on this point, we believe that Christ did not only die to open the way of access to God, but that he actually introduces us into his presence and favor

On the cross Jesus really procured for YOU everything necessary to become not only citizens of the kingdom of Heaven but members of the FAMILY OF GOD. Real not Potential redemption. Which WILL BE APPLIED.

All the members of the Godhead are working together to bring about the plan of redemption.

Access to the Father, through Christ, by the Spirit

V. 20 The connection between the Word of God, the Preaching of the Gospel revealed in the Word is intimate, Paul says: "having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets" EXPOUND

ARE *they* the Foundation? NO IT IS THE MESSAGE THEY PREACHED! **The GOOD NEWS OF JESUS CHRIST AND HIM CRUCIFIED!**

Luke 24:44 Then He said to them, "These *are* the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and *the* Prophets and *the* Psalms concerning Me."

Christ is the Cornerstone in two different senses,

1) the first is that like a Cornerstone, the whole church rests on Christ. 1 Cor. 3:11 "For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ." As the Hymn puts it so well "The Church's One Foundation is Jesus Christ Her Lord" Christ is the solid rock upon which we must build, for if we build on any other rock, we are building on *shifting sand*.

2) The Second sense is in the fact that a cornerstone, unites and sustains two walls. And in Christ, as Paul points out, the Jewish and Gentile members of the church are united and sustained. The Jews were the people of the Old Covenant and now to them are added under the New Covenant, the Gentiles, two walls joined seamlessly being built up into the same Holy edifice.

The prophet Isaiah predicted Christ's role as the cornerstone when he wrote: Isaiah 28:16 "Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, I lay in Zion a stone for a foundation, A tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation; Whoever believes will not act hastily.

V. 21 Christ being the cornerstone everything depends on Union with him. Christ is not only the support of the building, he is the source and cause of its growth. Union with Christ is the sole essential condition of our being parts of that living temple of which he is the corner stone.

The Church, made up of many living stones, grows in him, in virtue of Union with him, into one HOLY TEMPLE.

Example: There is a movement today within Christendom, that actually believes that the **physical temple** in Jerusalem will be rebuilt. They badly misexegete the Old Testament promises and assume that "Temple" means the physical building in Jerusalem

JESUS SAID THAT THE TIME WOULD COME WHEN THE *PHYSICAL* TEMPLE WOULD BE DESTROYED TO BE REPLACED BY THE EVERLASTING TEMPLE THE CHURCH WHICH IS HIS BODY

John 4:17 "20 "Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship."

21 Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father.

22 "You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews.

23 "But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.

24 "God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

All of the OT promises find their culmination not in an actual building, or even in the nation of Israel, but in Jesus Christ. As the scriptures put it 2 Cor. 1:20 **"For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us."**

V.22 Many Denominations and Congregations in the Visible Church (define) of the Lord Jesus Christ, but look beyond those lines and you have one body, one building, one temple.

ONE BODY, ONE BUILDING, MADE UP OF COUNTLESS LIVING STONES ALL UNITED TO CHRIST BY FAITH.

The Church is Christ's it belongs to him, it is consecrated to his use, therefore it cannot be used for anything but his service without profanation. That is why Christ was so angered by the money changers in the temple and this means that for us, the church is set aside for a holy, not a secular use.

But that also has implications for us, for you too are temples of the Holy Spirit, and therefore you are Christ's set apart for His use. If we turn aside to sin or become instruments for the Devil to use, then we too have been profaned.

1 Cor. 6:18-20 "Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body.

19 Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?

20 For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's."

Some have twisted this verse as meaning that we should avoid things that physically injure us: This is not speaking of physical health, *but spiritual health.*

Again no idolatry, we are the Lords

2 Cor. 6:16 "And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people."

We are being built together with other believers to form this habitation of God. He indwells each of you individually by His Spirit or you could never have become the Living Stones in the first place, but in another sense He dwells within the Church Corporately so that as Christ said "where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them."

EXHORTATION:

- 1) ARE YOU BUILT ON THE ONE FOUNDATION?
- 2) ARE YOU BEING BUILT UP INTO THE TEMPLE OF THE LORD?
- 3) IS YOUR LIFE, YOUR MARRIAGE, FOUNDED ON ROCK OR SAND?
- 4) IS YOUR MARRIAGE A STRONG BUILDING?

JESUS SAID IN MATTHEW 19:6 "Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."
THE BOND BETWEEN HUSBAND AND WIFE SHOULD BE AS INSEPERABLE AS THE BOND BETWEEN CHRIST AND BELIEVERS.

(IN CHAPTER 5 PAUL WILL BE SPEAKING ABOUT THAT.)

5) ARE YOU ONE OF THE "LIVING STONES" PETER SPOKE OF TODAY?