

Eternity Daily Bible Study - No. 362
Series: The Primal Church - Acts Chapters 1-8
Verses: Acts 4:5-12
Topic: The Stone That The Builders Rejected
Date: 16th November 2004

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Acts 4:5-12 MKJV And it happened on the next day that their rulers and elders and scribes, gathered to Jerusalem, (6) and Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest. (7) And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power, or by what name have you done this? (8) Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, Rulers of the people and elders of Israel, (9) if we are examined today on a good work for an infirm man, by what this one has been healed, (10) be it known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, in this name does this man stand before you whole. (11) This is the Stone which you builders have counted worthless, and He has become the Head of the Corner. (12) And there is salvation in no other One; for there is no other name under Heaven given among men by which we must be saved.

Peter and John are brought out of prison and tried before a court consisting mainly of Sadducees and relatives of the High Priest (the John & Alexander here are Annas' relatives and not any of the apostles).

The question asked by the court is a God-given question every missionary wishes to hear: "By what power, or by what name have you done this?" (verse 7 above). This leads naturally into clear witness about Christ.

Peter's answer, given by the Holy Spirit, is straightforward and to the point: "be it known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, in this name does this man stand before you whole."

The apostles are careful to point to Christ! It is His name, and it is His power that works miracles of healing.

Now the question by the Sanhedrin has another implication – they wanted to know the spiritual technology involved. They could not do miracles themselves! The Jewish authorities had no healing power – just legal power. They had all the wrong kinds of power for being part of the Kingdom – social power, legal power, and monetary power. These powers do not heal the sick, raise the dead or grant forgiveness of sins.

Peter then goes on to quote Psalm 118:22 - *This is the Stone which you builders have counted worthless, and He has become the Head of the Corner.*

Peter's name (Petros) means Stone, and Jesus referred to Peter's confession of faith saying "upon this rock I will build my Church" so the metaphor of a Stone was important to Peter and also appears in his epistle and is an indication of his authorship. There is a bit of wordplay here, there are two words for rock "lithos" and "petros", Jesus is always the "Lithos", while Peter is the "Petros".

1 Peter 2:4-8 MKJV For having been drawn to Him, a living Stone, indeed rejected by men, but elect, precious with God; (5) you also as living stones are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. (6) Therefore also it is contained in the Scripture: "Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner Stone, elect, precious, and he who believes on Him shall never be ashamed." (7) Therefore to you who believe is the honor. But to those who are disobedient, He is the Stone which the builders rejected; this One came to be the Head of the corner, (8) and a Stone-of-stumbling and a Rock-of-offense to those disobeying, who stumble at the Word, to which they also were appointed.

Christ is the Living Stone (1 Peter 2:4) and Christians are living stones – the smaller copies. We are being built together into a spiritual house – a temple, of which we are also the priests (Jesus being the High Priest) to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

The Stone has a dual nature – to those who believe it is a precious stone, a living stone – "Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner Stone, elect, precious, and he who believes on Him shall never be ashamed."

However to those who do not believe it is a stumbling stone, a rock-of-offense and leads them to the doom to which they are appointed (1 Peter 2:8). Daniel sees the Rock falling on the kingdoms of this world and utterly crushing them (Daniel 2:34,44).

Standing before the Chief-Priests Peter emphasizes this saving nature of the Stone: "And there is salvation in no other One; for there is no other name under Heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

This plainly contradicts Universalism – the all roads lead to God doctrine. It also repudiates allegiance to the many academic schools of Judaism such as Gamaliel (who would have been present) as well as to the false religions, sects and cults of this world. You cannot be saved through the idols of men, or the doctrines of Confucius, or by serving Mohammed, Buddha, Osiros, or Thor but only through the name of Jesus.

Christ alone is the means of salvation, which is why we must engage in evangelism and in missionary work. All other systems shall be as be chaff and as fine dust when the Stone descends upon the kingdoms of this world.

Dead men cannot offer eternal salvation but the Living Stone can – and does.

Blessings,

John Edmiston

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