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“Jesus Our Cornerstone”

Isaiah 28

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Seven hundred years before Christ, Isaiah prophesied about the Messiah being a precious cornerstone. A cornerstone is the beginning point of a building. It's the foundational stone upon which all other stones are aligned. Isaiah used building imagery to describe Jesus in this way because he is the foundation of the church, and of our salvation too. It's incumbent upon Christ-followers to ask themselves whether or not Jesus is the cornerstone of every aspect of their lives. In other words, does everything in life “square” with Jesus as the cornerstone or is he simply just a small brick placed somewhere in the wall of your life?

Historical Background

1. Isaiah was called by God to minister to the southern kingdom of Judah, but this chapter is an exception, because Isaiah prophesied about the northern kingdom of Israel.
 - a. Most Bibles use the subtitle: *“Woe to Ephraim.”*
 - b. Ephraim was one of the larger tribes of Israel.

2. **Isaiah 28:1-4** – *“Woe to that wreath, the pride of Ephraim’s drunkards, to the fading flower, his glorious beauty, set on the head of a fertile valley – to that city, the pride of those laid low by wine! See, the Lord has one who is powerful and strong. Like a hailstorm and a destructive wind, like a driving rain and a flooding downpour, he will throw it forcefully to the ground. That wreath, the pride of Ephraim’s drunkards, will be trampled underfoot. That fading flower, his glorious beauty, set on the head of a fertile valley, will be like a fig ripe before harvest – as soon as someone sees it and takes it in his hand, he swallows it.”*
 - a. The *“wreath”* that Isaiah referred to was the city of Samaria.
 - b. In circa 732BC, God would send the Assyrians (from the region of modern-

day Iraq) to be his instrument of judgment upon Ephraim.

3. Pastor Gary said: “Meanwhile, here’s what’s happening in the southern kingdom. [The] people of the south [were] chuckling, [because] their brothers and sisters to the north [were] getting into trouble, [and] getting spanked!”
4. Isaiah challenged the people of Judah by informing them of the danger of having a false sense of security.
 - a. **Isaiah 28:14-15** - *“Therefore hear the word of the LORD, you scoffers who rule this people in Jerusalem. You boast, ‘We have entered into a covenant with death, with the grave we have made an agreement. When an overwhelming scourge sweeps by, it cannot touch us, for we have made a lie our refuge and falsehood our hiding place.’ ”*
5. Isaiah made it very clear that God was aware of Judah’s rebellion and that their time for judgment was coming!
 - a. **Isaiah 28:18-19** - *“ ‘Your covenant with death will be annulled; your agreement with the grave will not stand. When the overwhelming scourge sweeps by, you will be beaten down by it. As often as it comes it will carry you away; morning after morning, by day and by night, it will sweep through.’ The understanding of this message will bring sheer terror.”*
 - b. When the Assyrians conquered the northern kingdom of Israel and assimilated its people into the Assyrian Empire, they also moved south toward Egypt, and in the process inflicted great damage and harm to the people of Judah.
6. Pastor Gary said: “This is the way God deals with us. As part of God’s love and mercy he will never allow us to remain the way we are when we are on a reckless path, and when we are on a reckless path, God will intervene. ... When God has to intervene versus when we come to our senses and humble ourselves [it] usually is unpleasant at first. ... When we are living in rebellion toward God, [he] loves us so much that he’s not content to just let us stay on [a] wayward, reckless path [that leads] to our ultimate destruction and separation from him. So, God will come along from time to time and he will spank us! He will allow things in our lives to get our attention. That’s not an unloving father; that’s a loving father. The Assyrians [were] a part of God’s discipline to help wake up the people whom God loved. ... And they would respond, but there [would] be a lot of heartache along the way.”
 - a. **Hebrews 12:11** - *“No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.”*

7. In the middle of this chapter that deals with judgment, Isaiah wrote about the Messianic promise from God!
 - a. **Isaiah 28:16** - *“So this is what the Sovereign LORD says: ‘See, I lay a stone in Zion, ¹a tested stone, a precious cornerstone for a sure foundation; the one who trusts will never be dismayed.’ ”*
 - b. Pastor Gary said: “As we’ve seen in previous times [when Isaiah wrote and prophesied, he interrupted] the pronouncement of God’s judgment to herald the good news of God’s salvation.”

8. The Bible is the best commentary on the Bible, and we read that the apostle Peter stated that the *“precious cornerstone”* was nonother than Jesus Christ!
 - a. **1 Peter 2:4-6** - *“As you come to him, the living Stone - rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him - you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For in Scripture it says: ‘See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts **in him** will never be put to shame.’”* (Emphasis added)
 - i. “[It’s important to note that] Peter added *“in him”* so everyone would know that Isaiah was referring to a person, not some inanimate object. ... [The Bible presents] Jesus as the cornerstone. He is the one upon whom the foundation is built. ... A cornerstone is laid, and all of the rest of building is squared off of that stone. So, everything about our lives needs to square with Jesus.”
 - ii. **Psalm 62:2** - *“He alone is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will never be shaken.”*

A Tested Stone

9. Pastor Gary said: “Jesus has been tried and tested and proved true. He is the real deal. He been through the fire of betrayal, humiliation, abandonment, [and] people have slandered him, [falsely accused him, and] denied evening knowing him, and then, people ultimately crucified him. He’s been tested for sure. But through it all... but Isaiah would later [write] that he never even opened his mouth. He didn’t retaliate against his enemies nor did he deviate from the plan of God for the salvation of the world. Jesus was tested, and he was found true, as the only Son of God who was faithful to complete the will and purpose of God...”

A Precious Stone

10. There are two categories when it comes to valuable gemstones: precious and semi-precious.

¹ Zion is a reference to Israel.

- a. Gems such as diamonds, rubies, emeralds, sapphires, are considered to be precious.
- b. There are three reasons why gems would be considered precious: rarity, quality/perfection, and value.
 - i. Jesus is the rarest of all because he was born of a virgin, was of a Divine origin, and the only Son of God!
 - ii. Jesus is the best in quality/perfection because he lived a sinless life!
 - 1. [Hebrews 4:15](#) – *“For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are – yet was without sin.”*
 - iii. Jesus is of inestimable worth because he is one of a kind and has no equal!

A Sure Foundation

- 11. All stones are set in reference to the cornerstone, and if the cornerstone is not properly set, the entire structure is in danger of collapse.
- 12. Pastor Gary said: “Everything about our lives must be squared off of the cornerstone. ... We want everything about our church to be about Jesus. This is who we are. We are not just Cornerstone Chapel in name only. I’m constantly searching my heart and the heart of our church, asking important questions [related] to Jesus [being] the cornerstone of our church. [I ask questions like]; ‘Does this honor Jesus? Does this dishonor Jesus? Does this reflect well on Jesus? Are we lifting up Jesus? Are people hearing about Jesus, [and] learning about Jesus? [Are people] growing in their relationship with Jesus? Are we bringing glory to Jesus? Do we celebrate Jesus? Are we being true to the teachings of Jesus? If you come here, you’re going to hear about Jesus, because it’s all about Jesus! ... The day we stop talking about Jesus, worshiping Jesus, living for Jesus, and leading people into a relationship with Jesus, [will be] the day this church dies! And God help us that that day never [comes]. We are all about Jesus!”
- 13. [1 Peter 2:6](#) – *“... the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame.”*
 - a. Pastor Gary said: “One of the wonderful things about coming into relationship with Jesus is that he will never shame you. ... He just wants to forgive you.”
 - b. In [John 8:2-11](#), the Bible records the account of Jesus and his conversation with a woman at a well in Samaria.
 - i. Jesus wasn’t “soft on sin,” he was “heavy on grace!”
 - ii. [John 8:10-11](#) – *“Jesus straightened up and asked her, ‘Woman, where*

are they? Has no one condemned you?' 'No one, sir,' she said. 'Then neither do I condemn you,' Jesus declared. 'Go now and leave your life of sin.' "

- iii. **Romans 8:1** - "... there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus..."

Is Jesus The Cornerstone?

14. Pastor Gary said: "If you're a follower of Christ, is [Jesus] the cornerstone of every aspect of your life? This is the important question that all of us must ask ourselves... It's one thing to say, 'Jesus is my Lord, because he's the cornerstone of my salvation.' ... [I] know a lot of people who talk about Jesus, [and] can even quote Jesus, but Jesus is not really the cornerstone of their lives. You know what he is? He's just another brick [that fits] somewhere else in the structure of their life. [He's] someone that [they] just insert, conveniently, into their life. And, if [they] can conveniently insert him into their life, then they can remove him conveniently, because he's just another brick in their life.] Nothing will be affected really if he comes and goes. But, if he's the foundation, [and they remove him], then the whole building [will crumble]. Too many Christians have made Jesus just another brick in the wall of their life. [Jesus] needs to be the cornerstone."
15. Is Jesus the cornerstone of your: marriage, dating life, sexuality, social media, business/work, finances, friendships, and thought life?

Discussion Questions

1. Read **Isaiah 28:16** to provide a foundation for your Bible study time.
2. Read and discuss **Isaiah 28:14-15, 18-19** and focus on the danger of the sin of presumption concerning having a false sense of security. (See #3 through #5 above)
3. Spend time talking about Pastor Gary's remarks concerning God's discipline. (See #6 above)
4. Read and discuss 1 Peter 2:4-6. (See #8 above)
5. Spend time talking about Pastor Gary's comments concerning Jesus being a tested stone. (See #9 above)
6. Read and discuss Pastor Gary's remarks about Jesus being a sure foundation. (See #12 above)

7. Read and discuss [John 8:2-11](#). (See #13 above)
8. Allow the people in your group to share their experiences concerning the ways the Lord is the cornerstone of their lives. (See #14 and #15 above)
9. Close your time in prayer as the Holy Spirit leads.

* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New International Version (NIV 1984).