

A Precious Cornerstone – Isaiah 28:16-29

Introduction – Against the background of faithless Israel and Judah, whose vain and misplaced confidence in created things and false securities will fail, Isaiah utters one of the grandest Messianic prophecies in his book. This promise rests like an immovable rock in the middle of a sea of rebellion and judgment, as though this sure Stone will survive any storm (Matt 7:24-27) – something we could all use in our day.

The Sure Foundation (vv16-17) – Israel/Judah will be judged, but God has already laid a precious cornerstone in Zion, a sure foundation that will never be moved (v16) and He will build that new city up with the straight lines of His justice and righteousness (v17). While this is referring to Jesus, the Lord states that it is already accomplished in Isaiah's day, referring to His eternal plan of salvation determined before the foundation of the world. Note: 1. there is only One Cornerstone, 2. faith is required to be found aligned to that Stone, 3. righteous, sanctifying lives will be the result.

The Covenant of Death Annulled (vv18-20) – To bargain with death is bad business and it won't protect you. A culture of death will be annulled when the scourge passes through (v18). It will come in waves, morning by morning, so powerful that it will be a terror just to hear the daily reports (v19, such a contrast to new mercies every morning for those who are trusting in God – Lam 3:22-24). The world's solutions to our problems don't fit and don't provide true comfort and rest – we've made our bed and now we must lie in it (v19).

God's Ways You Never Imagined (vv21-22) – The Lord rose up and gave victory to David by breaking through his enemies at Mount Perazim (2 Sam 5:20). He rained down hailstones upon Israel's enemies at Gibeon (Josh 10:11). He will rise up again and do a "strange, foreign, unusual" work. It will be strange because Jerusalem has become His enemy. It is even stranger because God will bring His wrath upon His own Son. And it is awesome and head-turning because it will bring about the salvation of the Gentile-nations. Nevertheless, it is the end of "*the land*" (v22b) and of course, the old temple.

The Way of a Farmer and the Lord of Armies (vv23-29) – This omnipotent power is handled with great wisdom, like a farmer in his field. He knows when, where, how, and what to plow, sow, harvest, and prepare. Be it with different nations, or different eras, or individual lives, the Lord knows how to bring about chastisement like a perfect Father – with an eye to His perfect success and fruit (v29). But what is His end? Where is this Wisdom leading?

A Stone of Eschatological Hope – Sorry for the technical word there. Eschatology is the "study of last things" and the current popular evangelical eschatology expects the church to fall into apostasy and the world to grow more dark and wicked (only encouraged as, in our nation, the church is going soft and the world more dark). But in this view, their "Stone" is not a sure foundation. Their "building" upon this Stone is going to fail. That is not what the Scriptures teach – and that is why we must continue our work as citizens of the kingdom of God with great hope even in the midst of spiritual downturns. Your heart, your home, your church, and then your nation, should proclaim the hope-filled crown rights of Jesus.

A Chief Cornerstone – Everything about the building is aligned to the chief-cornerstone. Everything in life finds its meaning, purpose and direction by being aligned to Jesus Christ. This is another way of saying that Jesus is Lord of all. When you cannot find meaning in what is going on, align with the Cornerstone. When you cannot find an anchor for your soul, look to the Cornerstone. But notice, when things are "going wrong," the problem is not that Jesus is not Lord. This tried Stone, this precious Cornerstone has been laid in Zion. Look around you and say what the Word says: Jesus is Lord; Jesus is in control.

Shall Not Make Haste (1 Pet 2:4-6) – Some translators take this phrase, "*shall not be made to panic*" and the LXX gets used by Peter to translate, "*shall not be put to shame*." With all you have to stand up for and all you need to stand against, with all your trials, we must remember that we are aligned to "*a tried Stone*" that never fails, and a "*precious Cornerstone*" that the Father will never leave. You remain aligned to Him by believing on Him and all His promises – promises to you and your children – promises to you and the future of this sorry world – promises to you and your eternal assurance. Isaiah declares this while declaring the impending destruction of a land. In our age, Jesus has already come and established this new building – how much more must we stand with confidence and hope?

The Temple of the Lord over All the Earth (Eph 2:19-22) – Paul uses the same imagery as he discusses the reconciliation of God with all men, Jew and Gentile, and the reconciliation of all men with one another. We are being fitted together into one holy temple in the Lord. "*Dwelling place*" carries the idea of a permanent home; God is taking up permanent residence as Lord in the church, the vast spiritual body of the redeemed. This is the work of God. He takes dead stones, dead faith, dead people, dead religion, a dead world, and by Christ through a living faith, transforms all of this for Himself into a living temple.