

Jesus Our Rock

1 Peter 2:4-8

Pastor John Miller

I want you to follow with me beginning in verse 4 as I read down to verse 8 in 1 Peter, chapter 2. Peter says, “To Whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed...”—in my King James Bible, which means “rejected”—“...indeed of men, but...”—this living stone is—“...chosen of God, and very precious. And you also...”—speaking to the believers—“...are living stones, built in a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the Scripture...” Now, by the way, he’s going to be quoting Isaiah 28, verse 16. “Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious. And he that believeth on Him shall not be confounded...”—or “put to shame.” “Unto you therefore which believe...”—verse 7—“...He is precious. But unto them which are disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed...”—or rejected—“...the same is made the head of the corner. And a stone of stumbling, a rock of offense, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient, whereunto they were also appointed.”

It was Simon, the human author of this epistle, to whom Jesus gave a nickname. The nickname was “Peter,” “Petros.” And the name Peter actually means “stone” or “rock.” So it’s only fitting that Peter be the one who talks about Jesus as our living stone or rock. I want you to notice it in verse 4. “To whom coming, as unto a living stone.” So Peter—or you might say “Rocky,” as Jesus nicknamed him—is still writing to encourage the suffering saints to stand in their salvation. So in chapter 1 to chapter 2, verse 10, the subject is their salvation and that they need to stand in it.

So last Sunday we saw in chapter 2, verses 1-3, that there are three steps we need to take if we’re going to grow in our salvation. I want to remind you of them. The first is in verse 1. We need to lay aside sins that hinder our growth. The second step is in verse 2. We need to desire the sincere milk of God’s Word that will help us grow. So lay aside the hindrance to growth and desire the Scriptures, which help us to grow. And then the third step we looked at is in verse 3. Remember the Savior, that He is good. If you’ve tasted and seen that the Lord is good, why wouldn’t you want to hunger after more of God as He’s found and discovered in His Word?

But now we come to verse 4 to verse 10. And by the way, verse 4 to 10 is one unit. And as I said, I’m doing something I don’t normally do; I’m going to take two weeks in the same passage. So we’re going to pick out this week what we want to look at, then next week, we’re going to go, starting at verse 4, and we’re going verse by verse and kind of break it up in its context. We’re going to look at the believers as being living stones, and that we’re compiled together to make a house for God, that God dwells in us and that we are a kingdom of priests and a nation set apart for God to show forth his praise. I just summarized verse 4 to 10. But you can see that it contains a lot of important things and more than I felt we could cover in one Sunday, so we’re going to take two weeks to look at this important passage.

But today I want to look at one subject, and one subject only, and that is, Jesus our Rock.

Jesus our Rock. Now I want you to notice in verse 4 as we're introduced to this concept. Peter says, "To Whom coming." Now the question we need to ask right there is, "To whom are we coming?" And we answer that by backing up into verse 3. "If so be that ye have tasted..."—notice this—"...that the..."—who?—"...Lord is good..."—or "gracious." So the answer "To whom are we coming?"—verse 4—is the Lord. He just mentioned the Lord in verse 3, said the Lord is good, and now he says we're coming to the Lord.

Now that word "coming" is in the present tense. And it actually means that we keep on coming. Now I believe that this coming to the Lord is after our conversion. He's not talking about coming to the Lord for salvation. He's saying after you've been born again, after you've been regenerated, after you've become Christians. You come to the Lord for salvation, then we come to the Lord for sanctification. And it means that we keep coming, and we keep coming and we keep coming and we keep coming. What do you do as a Christian every day? You come to the Lord, right? You come to Him in prayer. You come to Him in His Word. You come on Sunday to worship. You come on Wednesday nights. We're coming, we're coming, we're coming. We keep coming to the Lord. So what happens when you get saved? It starts a life of pursuing God. Paul says, "I forget those things which are behind, and I press toward the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Your passion as a child of God should be "more of Thee, O God." And you find more of God in the Word. You find more of God in prayer. And so we're coming, we're pursuing and we're seeking after God.

So he's still talking about growth, but he wants us to know that Jesus is the One we come to, Who is our living stone, our living Rock. It's interesting in verse 3 that Jesus is our sustenance. We feed on Him, we've tasted of Him. And then in verse 4, Jesus is our strength. So when we come to Him and feed on Him, we find strength in Him, because Jesus is our rock. So Jesus is our milk, and Jesus is our rock.

Now God as a rock is a common metaphor used in the Bible. And that's what that is; it's a metaphor. God is not actually a rock; right? We know that. Even when the Bible says the ears of God or the eyes of God or the hand of God, God doesn't have ears, God doesn't have eyes, God doesn't have hands. Those are terms we use to describe that God sees and God knows and God speaks and God works. But "God is not a man that He should lie." The Bible says, "God is spirit, and they who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." So this transcendent God that we can't find by our own ability, descends to us in metaphors to explain Himself, His nature or His character, His actions. So the Bible says over and over—and I can't give you all the verses, but we're going to kind of do a grand tour in the Bible of God our Rock. It's going to be kind of A to Z on God our Rock.

In Psalm 18:2 it says, "The Lord is my rock and my fortress." In Psalm 62:2, "He only is my rock and my salvation. He is my defense; I shall not be greatly moved." Deuteronomy 32:4, "He is a rock. His work is perfect."

Now what does the image of the metaphor of a rock convey? Three things that I would point out. It conveys stability; when you have a big rock, it's kind of hard to move. It conveys

strength; rocks are very strong. And it conveys security. Now those are three categories you might think of as God our Rock.

He's my stability. If your life lacks stability today, you come to the Lord, and He becomes your rock. If your life lacks strength—you know, "I don't have the strength to face tomorrow, I don't have the strength to face this bereavement, I don't have the strength to face this sickness, I don't have the strength to face this sorrow," God is your strength. The Bible says, "He's a very present help in time of trouble." He's our rock. You ever have a person who's always there to help you and support you? And you go, "They're my rock!" Well, that rock could be removed. But Jesus said that He would never leave you, and He would never forsake you. Amen? He's the rock that gives us strength. He gives us security. He gives us stability. If you need those things in your life today, look no further; Jesus Christ is your rock. Have you found Him to be your strength, your security and your stability? David cried in Psalm 61:2, "When my heart is overwhelmed, lead me to the rock that is higher than I." I love that. You have a heart that's overwhelmed? "I don't know what I'm going to do. I don't know what I'm going to say. I don't know how I'm going to handle this situation." "When my heart is overwhelmed, lead me to the rock that is higher than I." Our resources are limited. You might think you're young and healthy. You might lose your health. You might think you have a lot of money. You can lose your money. And there are things that money can't do. You might think you are surrounded by friends and family. They can be taken away in a moment. Jesus Christ is that rock, and He's the only rock that gives us that strength and that stability and that security.

Now the question I want to answer is "What kind of rock is Jesus?" I'm glad you asked the question, because I'm going to answer it for you. And buckle your seatbelts; I have eight facets of Jesus our Rock that I want you to write down. Number one, He's our living rock. He's the living stone. Notice it in verse 4. "To Whom coming, as unto..."—what?—"...a living stone..." "A living stone." Now wait a minute. We go from a metaphor to a paradox. Living stone? We use the word "rock" or "stone" to think of somebody who's dead; right? "He's stone-cold dead." "He's as dead as a stone"; right?

I'm dating myself; remember back in the early '70s when someone introduced pet rocks? How dumb is that! Not dumb for the guy who invented it; he's rich now. He's got a home on the cliff overlooking LaJolla beach. Pet rocks?! I had a friend who owned a pet rock. By the way, I'll spill the beans; this friend was Skip Isaac, Pastor Skip Isaac. It's okay; he confessed his sin, as well. I first met skip in 1973, and I went into his little apartment and he had a pet rock. And I go, "What's that?" He goes, "That's my pet rock." I tell him, "It's a good thing you got married; you need domesticating, dude. Your wife fixed you up." But he actually had a pet rock, and he said, "It's really cool; you don't have to feed it. And it doesn't make any noise, and it doesn't make a mess. You don't have to clean up after it. And it's just the best pet I've ever had." Come on. A pet rock?

When we think of a rock, we think of something that's inanimate; right? But here Jesus Christ is called the "stone" or the "rock" that is alive and living. Why? Jesus is the living stone because He is the living God. And guess what? God is not dead. God is not dead. He is the living and

the true God. I believe that this is an affirmation or proclamation of the deity of Christ. Who is Jesus Christ? He is the living stone because He is the living God.

And secondly, because Jesus died on the cross, He rose from the dead. And He lives in resurrection power. Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and I am the..."—what?—"...life, and he who lives and believes in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." So He's the living stone.

And thirdly, when you put your trust in Jesus as the living stone, then you have a living hope. Look back at chapter 1, verse 3. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto..."—what?—"...a living hope..."—how?—"...by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." So Jesus Christ is the living stone. My question is, "Have you come to Him for life? Are you trusting in Him?"

Let me give you the second facet or aspect of Him being a living stone. And that is, He's the chief cornerstone. Notice it in verse 6. In verse 6, "Wherefore..."—or "whereunto"—"...also it is contained in the Scriptures..." Now he's quoting from Isaiah 28:16. He's also alluding to Psalm 118:22. And he quotes that again in verse 7. But notice in verse 6, he says, "...it is contained in the Scriptures, Behold, I lay in Zion..."—now Zion is the mountain on which Jerusalem is built on, so it was a synonym for the city of Jerusalem—"...a chief..."—here it is—"...cornerstone, elect, precious. And he that believes on Him, shall not be put to shame" or "disappointed." But the point I want to make is that Jesus Christ is the cornerstone. Psalm 118:22, "The stone, which the builders refused, has become the head cornerstone."

Now this is a Messianic prophecy. That means that the psalmist was prophesying of the Messiah, Jesus Christ. "Cornerstone" could also be translated "keystone." It's the most important stone in a wall, an archway or a building. The cornerstone, in the ancient world, kept everything in plumb. And kept the walls intact. It was tied to the foundation. It's the foundation stone. And it kept the walls together. Then if you had an arch, in the middle of that arch was the keystone. If you take down that keystone, the arch will collapse. We have Spanish arches today, and they put that center stone in there to hold that arch in place. So you might say Jesus is the most important stone; He holds everything together. You know that Jesus is the theme of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation? If you take Jesus out of the Bible you have no Good News. You have no Gospel message. Jesus is found in Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy and all through the history and the prophecy and the poetry. He's found in the Gospels, He's found in the book of Acts, He's found all the way through the epistles, He's in the Revelation—it's an unveiling of Him, and He comes back in power and glory. The whole of the Bible is about this keystone, this cornerstone.

You know that He's supposed to be the keystone of your life? Hold it together. Most important one. I would say doctrinally this concept applies to Jesus being preeminent. Preeminent. You know what that word means? It means nothing higher. Prominence means importance. Preeminence means nothing higher. Jesus Christ is to be the exalted one. I'm getting a little lost on myself right now because I love this subject; it's so cool. But did you know it's impossible to think too highly of Jesus Christ? Did you know the most exalted thought that can

go through our little pea brains about Jesus Christ is not too high, is not too exalted? Now it's perfectly possible and highly probable that you could think too highly of me. But that's not true when it comes to Jesus. It's not true when it comes to Jesus. You try to muster up the grandest, most stupendous, glorious, amazing thought of who Jesus is, and it still falls short of reality. Think about that. He's infinitely beyond anything we could ever comprehend or understand. Do you realize how important Jesus Christ is? He's to have preeminence in our lives, He's to have preeminence in the church, He's to have preeminence in your marriage, in your work. In everything He's to have preeminence. Isaiah said in chapter 28, verse 16, "Therefore, thus saith the Lord, 'Behold I lay in Zion a foundation stone, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation. He that believes on Him shall not make haste.'" And Peter translates that "shall not be disappointed." Jesus is our fixed point. He is the foundation on which we stand.

Here's the third point of Jesus our stone. He is the chosen and precious stone. This comes from our text. The word "chosen" could be "choice," and the word "precious" could be "valuable." I want you to see it in verse 4. Look at it with me in your Bible. "Chosen of God and precious." That's what God the Father thinks about God the Son, this living stone. "Chosen of God and precious." Jump down to verse 6 of chapter 2 of 1 Peter. "Elect" and "precious." So, verse 4, He's "chosen of God and precious." Verse 6, He's "elect" and "precious."

Now remember when Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist? You remember that; don't you? And John put Jesus under the water, brought Him up, and what happened? A dove descended on Him, which was the Holy Spirit manifested in the form of a dove. But the point I want to make is, then there was the audible voice of God the Father, Who spoke about Jesus. I want to know what God thinks about Jesus. I want to know what God the Father says about Jesus. This is what He says. He said, "This is My beloved Son." "In Whom I am well pleased" could be translated, "In Whom My soul delights." Think about that. Now if God the Father says about God the Son, "I delight in Him," what should I do? I should delight in Him, as well. If God the Father says He delights in His Son, then I should be doing the same thing. He should be my delight. He should be my treasure. So He is the chosen. He is the precious stone.

We all know how precious diamonds are or rubies are, emeralds are. We know about the beautiful stones people put great value on. There are no stones that compare to Jesus Christ, the living stone. He is far more valuable than rubies or diamonds or emeralds or gold. He is indeed chosen, choice, by God the Father, and precious. Why? Because He came from heaven to us. Because He was born of a virgin. No one has ever been born of a virgin. Christ alone. He lived a sinless life. He died a substitutionary death. He rose from the dead. He ascended back into heaven. And He will return to reign upon earth for ever and ever and ever. "And of His kingdom there will be no end." No wonder Jesus is choice and very precious.

Is He precious to you? I want you to ask yourself this morning as a Christian, "Is He more valuable to me than anything else? We put value on our homes. We put value on our money and bank account, and we put value on our family, and rightly so. But did you know that the Bible actually says that we should love Jesus more than anything on earth, including your own

family? It doesn't mean you neglect them; you have a great responsibility. But Jesus, our God, is to have preeminence. "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." You need to love Him more than anyone else, more than anything else. You need to pledge your absolute allegiance and love to Him. He's your creator, He's your Savior, He's your sustainer, He's your rock. He's everything. He's the chief cornerstone. He's the choice, precious stone. He's the valuable precious stone. Is He precious and valuable to you?

Here's number four. Write it down. He is the dependable stone. Let's go back to verse 6. It says in verse 6, "He that believes on Him shall not be confounded" or "shall not be disgraced" or some translations have—and my preference is—"put to shame," or I would render that "disappointed." When you go back to Isaiah 28, verse 16, "shall not make haste." Do you know that if you trust in Jesus Christ, He is dependable; He won't disappoint you? That's why He's a rock. People in your life you depend on, you go, "They're my rock!" But sooner or later, they will fail you. But Jesus Christ is a rock "Who will never leave you or never forsake you." You can depend on Him. Trust Him. Let me repeat myself. You can depend on Jesus; amen? You can depend on Jesus. He will never let you down. Friends and family will let you down. Pastors will let you down. But Jesus will never let you down. So you need to get grounded and founded on the rock of your salvation, Jesus Christ.

He's the rock, by the way, that doesn't roll. Now I'm not anti-rock and roll. Someone said, "Jesus is my Rock, and he rolled my blues away." Well, that's fine. But I say that Jesus is the rock that doesn't roll. He's the rock that I can build my house upon, my life upon, my ministry upon. And He said that we should build the church upon Him, Who's the Rock. Next Sunday I want to go into that—Peter being the rock, and who's the church built upon. It's built on Jesus Christ, not Peter. He's just a little stone. Jesus is the massive rock. And He's the rock that doesn't roll and the rock that doesn't move.

You know in the ancient world, rocks in the desert, dry arid land, where there is a lack of trees, rocks were used for shade, and rocks were used for shelter. You ever need to be shaded from the scorching trials of life? You're out in the desert, and you're starting to wilt and you find a big rock and you hide behind it. You get on the opposite side of the sun, and it casts a shadow, and it's like, "Ah, thank you God for this rock." That's what Jesus is. When you're weary and you're tired and you're discouraged and you're ready to give up, "Lead me to the rock that is higher than I." I don't know what I would have done these last 43 years of ministry if I didn't have the Rock to run to in my time of need. You know that if you're in a war, a good thing is to hide behind a rock. Not behind a bush, but behind a rock. Because that's the best defense against spears and arrows and the things that come against you. People are attacking you and assailing you and coming against you. Run to your Rock. Hide behind Jesus Christ. He's your shelter in a time of storm and your shelter in a time of spiritual attack and warfare. And Psalm 27:5—write it down—Psalm 27:5, the psalmist says, "For in the time of trouble, he shall hide me in his pavilion. In the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me. He shall set me upon a rock." Jesus is your Rock.

Fifthly—write this down—He is the rejected stone. Jesus is the rejected stone. Now this is in

verse 4. I want you to look at it, verse 4. It says, "Rejected indeed of men." Now there's an intended contrast there. It says that He is "rejected" by men but He is "chosen" or "elect" and "precious" by God. So you have two opinions: God's opinion, "elect" and "precious"; and then the other opinion of man, that He is "rejected indeed of men." So in verse 4, God says that He is "chosen" and "precious," but men do reject Him. I don't know why anyone would reject Jesus Christ. In verse 7, again it's repeated. He's "the stone which the builders rejected." When they were building Solomon's Temple, they made a stone for the corner, and they didn't fit it at the time they set it up from the quarries, and they set it aside. Later when they called for that stone, they discovered it had already been quarried and sent, and they found it off down the side of the mountain, because that cornerstone had been rejected. Now in Psalm 118:22, this concept is drawn from this Messianic psalm.

Did you know that Jesus—and I just want you to write this down; I want to relate it to you—Jesus in Matthew 21:33-46 gave a parable. And the parable that He gave is sometimes called the Parable of the Wicked Husbandmen or farmers. Now let me just quickly relate the parable to you. It was directed toward the religious leaders or the Jews who were rejecting Him. He said there was a man who owned a bunch of land. Now I'm going to put it in simple, basic terms. Parable. A man who owned a bunch of land, and he loaned it or rented it out to farmers. So the farmers moved onto the land, and they began to grow the crops. And when the time came, the landowner sent his servant to collect for the rent of his land. Well, those farmers saw the servant coming, and they beat him up and they sent him away empty. So they abused this messenger of the landowner. "We're not going to pay you. We beat up your servant. We sent him back empty handed." So the master, the owner of the land says, "Okay." And he sends another servant. And the other servant comes to collect, and the farmers beat him up, treat him rudely and send him away empty. So the man who owns the land says, "What am I going to do? They rejected my servants." Listen carefully. The owner of the land says, "I will send my son. Surely they will respect him." So he sends the son, and when the farmers saw the son coming to collect, they said, "This is the heir. If we kill him, the land will be ours." So they took the son, and they rejected him and they killed him.

Then Jesus in the story turned to the Jews around Him and said, "So what do you think the landowner is going to do?" And they said, "Well, he's going to come in, and he's going to be angry and he's going to wipe out those farmers, and he's going to take his land, and he's going to loan it to someone else." Jesus said, "Yes, that's right." Then Jesus made the application to the parable in verse 42 of Matthew 21. "Jesus said unto them, 'Did you never read in the Scriptures,...'—and again, He's quoting Psalm 118:22—"...the stone which the builders rejected, the same has become the head of the corner"; this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes?" Jesus actually used the same verse to refer to Himself and how Israel was rejecting that cornerstone. God sent His prophets, and they beat them and they persecuted them and they rejected them. And then God sent His only Son. John 3:16, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." The Bible says that He "came unto His own, and His own received Him not." So God sends His Son at last, and they killed Him, and they murdered Him. That's a picture of what they do to Jesus Christ, their promised Messiah and deliverer. The Jewish leaders of Jesus' day rejected Him, even though He was the chief

cornerstone.

And many people still do that today. But it doesn't change Who He is. Do you know that no matter who rejects Jesus Christ, He's still the living stone? He's still the precious stone. He's still the chosen, elect stone. On Wednesday night in Romans, we're going to discover God's plan for Israel, Romans 9, 10 and 11. Though they rejected the prophets, though they rejected God's Son, though the Lamb was lent out to someone else, and the Jews were dispersed for almost 2,000 years, they returned back to their land. And in Romans 9, we have Israel's election, in Romans 10, we have Israel's rejection and in Romans 11, we have Israel's restoration: God's plan for the nation of Israel. But at this point, God sent His Son, this living stone, this cornerstone, and they rejected Him.

There's a sixth aspect of which Jesus is the stone. And this is He's the smitten stone. The smitten stone. Now this is not drawn from the text in Peter, but it is taken from the Old Testament book of Exodus, chapter 17, when the people of Israel came out of the exodus in Egypt, and they were wandering in the wilderness for 40 years. Can you imagine being out in the wilderness with a couple million people and you're responsible to take care of them? This would not be fun. And there were no In-And-Outs. There were no AM & PMs. There were no Burger Kings. Praise God. Nothing. And the first thing the people said was, "We're thirsty." Slap that dude! "We're thirsty. Moses, we're thirsty." I would have just said, "Forget you, man." God brings you out of Egypt, and all you do is whine and freak out because—"Yah, we're thirsty!" Well, yah, they were thirsty. There's nothing to drink. So Moses cries out to God. Now what did God tell Moses to do? Take his rod—"See that big rock? Hit that rock." And when you hit that rock, what was going to happen? Water's going to gush out. So Moses hit the rock, the water gushed out and the people drank. Right?

So when you come into the New Testament, 1 Corinthians 10:4, guess who the rock was? Jesus. Paul, the Apostle, says that rock was Christ. Then in John 7, when they were celebrating the Feast of Booths or of Succots, and on this one appointed day, they would come in with water jugs, and they would pour water on the ground, which is symbolic of God providing water from the rock. Last day, the great day of the Feast, and the grounds would be covered with water and they remember that God brought the water out of the rock, and they're singing the hallel psalms and they're rejoicing, guess what Jesus did? I love it. He stood up and then He cried, "Is anyone thirsty?" Like, "Who's the weird dude?" you know. Is anyone thirsty? Right when they were pouring the water out and celebrating God's provision from the Rock, "Is anyone thirsty?" Jesus said. "If you are, come to Me, and drink." Jesus was that rock. And He was smitten on the cross, so that we could come to Him and we could drink and have everlasting life. And we could have satisfaction for our soul's great need. So when Jesus was smitten on that cross, He became our living water, and we come to Him as that rock and we drink and we are satisfied.

But not only is He the smitten stone, but—write this down—number seven, He is the stone of stumbling. He is the skandalon, the stumbling stone. Look at verse 8 of our text. "A stone of stumbling," "a rock of offense...to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient..."—or

unbelieving—"...whereunto also you were appointed." So the concept there is, you're walking down the path, you hit a stone and you start to fall. You ever been walking on a dirt path and your toe catches on a stone—"Oh, I almost fell," you know? So you stumble over Jesus. He's the stumbling stone. He's the stone of offense, which is the word "skandalon." We get our word "scandal" from it. And he's talking about those who reject the Gospel, who don't believe in Jesus Christ. They stumble over Him. They scandal over Him, they stumble, they fall. So He's the smitten stone, He's the stumbling stone.

Now I want to point something out in verse 8, and I'll touch on it more next week. But notice he uses the word "disobedient." They stumbled at what? The Word. Being what? Disobedient. So therefore they are appointed to final judgment. Now they were appointed to disobedience. Their disobedience brought them to an appointed end, that is, the judgment of God. So God didn't pre-appoint them not to believe. God pre-appoints that if you reject Jesus Christ, this is what's going to happen. This is going to be the inevitable result. So the words "disobedience" and "did not believe" are used in the New Testament as synonyms. And it's very important for you to get this and understand this. When he's talking about people who reject Jesus Christ, and they don't believe the Gospel, guess what the Bible calls that? Disobedience. You know why? Because God commands everyone to believe and repent. And if God commands us to believe in His Son, Jesus Christ, for you not to believe, is an act of disobedience.

You know, right here this morning, if you're here and you haven't trusted Jesus Christ, you haven't believed in Jesus Christ, and you've been given an opportunity to trust in Him, guess what you are? Disobedient. And guess where disobedience leads? To death and final separation. Don't blame God; you're given an opportunity to believe in Him, to trust in Him. If you reject Him, the inevitable result will be your judgment. We all know John 3:16; right? "For God so loved the world, He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him will never perish but have everlasting life." What about John 3:18? Have you ever read that? John 3:18. This is what it says. "He that believeth on Him is not condemned, but he that believeth not, is condemned already..."--why?--"...because he has not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God." The reason why a person goes to hell is not because they drink or smoke and they go to movies and they do sinful things. It is because they have not believed in and trusted Jesus Christ.

When you stand before God, the books are going to be open. He's got one question for you: "What did you do with Jesus?" The precious stone, the cornerstone, the living stone. What did you do with Jesus Christ? If you reject Him, Who is the smitten stone, then you will face the judgment of God. So they stumble in unbelief.

Here's my last point. You go, "Whew, good." I told you I've got eight, and I got eight. I gotta get through them. Jesus is the smiting stone. He's not only the smitten stone, but He's also the smiting stone. In the same parable that Jesus gave of the wicked farmers, the wicked husbandmen, in Matthew 21, Jesus said these words at the end of the parable. He said, "Whosoever falls on this stone," which had been rejected, "will be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it..."—that is, the stone—"...will grind him to powder." Now again, these are

metaphorical terms. And people say, "What is He talking about?" Jesus is the stone. If you fall on that stone, you are broken in salvation. You come to Him in obedience. You come to Him in faith, and you believe in Jesus Christ. It's like falling on the stone, and you're broken. But Jesus said there's coming a day when that stone will fall on you, and it will grind you to powder. Who is that? Those who reject Jesus Christ. So He's either the stone of salvation, that you fall on and are broken, or He is the stone of judgment, that you reject, and He will fall on you and He will grind you to powder.

Now we're not done with the stone image yet. If you go back to the book of Daniel—don't turn there, but I'll relate to it—Daniel 2. Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, had a dream. Stay with me; this is pretty cool. And in his dream, he was wondering—because he ruled the world, he was wondering, what was going to happen after he died. "What's going to happen in the future? What's going to happen to my kingdom, the great Babylonian empire?" So God gave him a dream. He had a dream of a statue. And the statue had a head of gold. It had breast and arms of silver. Unlike me, it had a belly of brass. And unlike me, it had legs of iron. My legs aren't quite so strong. And it had 10 toes of iron mixed with clay. And he woke up. It was like, "Wow, what does it mean? What's this dream? Head of gold, breast and arms of silver, belly of brass, legs of iron, feet and toes of iron mingled with clay." Long story short, Daniel was brought in to the presence of the king to interpret the dream. And Daniel said, "You, O king, are the head of gold." He said the belly or the arms and chest of silver represent the next ruling empire, Medo Persia. The belly of brass represents Greece, that will come after the Medo-Persian Empire. The legs of iron represent the Roman Empire. And after the Roman Empire, the feet and toes of iron and clay speak of a revived Roman Empire. The efforts and energies of man. Iron and clay don't mix well. The revived Roman Empire.

But the story of the dream is not over. Because in this dream, the king saw a stone. And the stone came from heaven. And it was cut without hands; the Bible makes it very clear that this stone that came from heaven was not cut by hands. And the stone coming from heaven struck this image and the feet. And God was showing the king all of the kingdoms of the world up to the time of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. And the stone struck this image, and all the kingdoms of man crumbled. And then the stone grew, and the stone grew, and the stone grew, and it became an everlasting kingdom of which there was no end. That's the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. Amen?

So though we look around this troubled world of ours, and we have an election coming up in a few months—God have mercy on us—I do still believe we should register to vote and vote our conscience. We should not disengage with our culture. But this world is not our home. And the Bible predicts it'll get darker and darker and darker and darker. And just before the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, there's going to be seven years of tribulation on earth. And they'll be a revived Roman Empire, and there'll be a world-ruling dictator, the 10 toes of iron and clay. But praise be to God! Amen? The stone is coming back. And when He comes back, He's going to be the smiting stone. And the kingdoms of earth and the kingdoms of men will be no more. And we cry out in the Lord's Prayer, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Jesus Christ is coming back, the smiting stone.

Now, the only thing left for us to do is to fall on Him and be saved. Have you done that? Have you repented of your sins? Have you believed the Word? Have you trusted in Jesus Christ as your Savior? He is the Rock that cannot be moved. If you don't fall on Him and be broken, then He will one day fall on you, and you'll be ground into powder. I think of that beautiful song we sing. "

My hope is built on nothing less

Than Jesus' blood and righteousness.

I dare not trust the sweetest frame,

But wholly lean on Jesus' Name.

On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand.

All other ground is sinking sand.

Let's pray.