

When A Stone Is Not A Stone

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Almighty God uses metaphors and other figurative language to describe the "hidden truths" He does not want everyone to understand at this time in man's history. Jesus Christ explained this a number of times.

Then his disciples asked him, saying, "What does this parable mean?" ¹⁰And he said, "To you it has been given to know the mysteries (secret or hidden truths) of the kingdom of God, but to the rest it is given in parables, that '**Seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand!**' (Lk. 8:9-10; NKJV used throughout unless otherwise noted; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. ¹⁴Because narrow is the gate and difficult (confined) is the way which leads to life, and **there are few who find it** (Mt. 7:13-14; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

For many are called, but **few are chosen** (Mt. 22:14; emphasis added).

Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. ¹²Those by the wayside are the ones who hear; then the devil comes and takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. ¹³But the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for awhile and in time of testing fall away. ¹⁴And the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity. ¹⁵But the ones that fell on the good

ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience (endurance; Mt. 10:22) (Lk. 8:11-15; Ed. note in parenthesis).

One of Almighty God's "hidden truths" is associated with His use of the word "stone" or "stones" in scripture. He uses these words to reveal a number of important truths designed to assist those He calls out of this present evil age (Jn. 6:44, 65; Rom. 2:4b; Gal. 1:4). Many who read scriptures containing the word "stone", or "cornerstone", understand these refer to Jesus Christ. However, the broader meanings associated with the word "stone" and "stones" are not necessarily as clear. Hopefully, by reviewing the scriptures in this study, it will become evident these words have many different meanings.

Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea (1Cor. 10:1).

And all drank the same spiritual drink. For **they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ** (1Cor. 10:4; emphasis added).

But his (Joseph's) bow remained in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the Mighty God of Jacob, from there is the Shepherd, **the Stone of Israel** (Gen. 49:24; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

So if a "spiritual Rock" or "Stone of Israel" are used to describe Jesus Christ, the question should be asked, "Can stones represent other realities?" If so, what might they represent? One of the first examples is connected with Jacob who rested his head on a pillow of small stones, which might be compared to using a bean bag today. When he fell asleep, he dreamed about

the angels of God ascending and descending on a ladder that reached into heaven.

And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep (Gen. 28:11; KJV).

A pillow is obviously very close to us, and usually comfortable. However, due to limited resources at the time, Jacob's pillow consisted of stones. Therefore, in this unusual situation, Jacob had stones close to him while he was dreaming about the actions of God's loyal angels. As we progress through this study, we will see that stones can represent loyal angels who are very close to God's faithful servants.



THE GREAT CLOUD, MENTIONED,
INCLUDES TWO ANGELIC "WITNESSES"
WHO CONFIRMED THAT CHRIST WOULD
RETURN.

Hebrews 12:1

Next, Jacob set up a larger stone and a heap of smaller ones as witnesses between Laban and himself.

Now therefore, come, let us make a covenant, you and I, and let it be a witness between you and me. ⁴⁵So Jacob took a stone and set it up as a pillar. ⁴⁶Then Jacob said to his brethren, "Gather stones." And they took stones and made a heap, and they ate there on the heap (Gen. 31:44-46).

This heap is a witness, and this pillar is a witness, that I will not pass beyond this heap to you, and you will not pass beyond this heap and this pillar to me, for harm (Gen. 31:52; emphasis added).

So there is an association, and implied interaction, between what stones represent and human beings. Specifically, the stones mentioned in the scriptures above acted as witnesses to a covenant between Laban and Jacob. These witnesses are mentioned in the following scripture,

Therefore we also, since **we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses**, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us (Heb. 12:1; emphasis added).

The great cloud, mentioned in Hebrews 12:1, includes two angelic "witnesses" who confirmed that Christ would return.

Now when he (Christ) had spoken these things, while they watched, he was taken up, and **a cloud received him out of their sight.** ¹⁰And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold **two men stood by them in white apparel,** ¹¹who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? **This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw him go into heaven.**" (Ac. 1: 9-11; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Note: The word "men" can also refer to angels (cf. Gen. 18:1-33, 19:1-24; Heb. 13:2).

Also, see study entitled: "Christ and the Pillar of Cloud".

Going back now to the covenant between Jacob and Laban, the large pillar stone symbolized an important witness to this covenant. This important witness is referred to elsewhere as the "messenger of another covenant", which by

comparison is more important than the agreement between Jacob and Laban.

Behold, I send My messenger (John the baptizer), and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to his temple, even **the Messenger of the covenant** (Jesus Christ) (Mal. 3:1a; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Therefore, there is a connection between the large pillar stone that Jacob set up as a witness of the covenant between Laban and himself, and the "Messenger of the covenant" known as Jesus Christ, who is also referred to as the "spiritual Rock that followed ancient Israel". Christ made this connection when he explained that Peter was a stone in the foundation of the early church, but that Christ was a much larger stone, or rock, upon which the entire church would be built,

And I also say to you that you are Peter (SHD 4074; stone; cf. Jn. 1:42), and on this rock (Jesus Christ; SHD 4073; large rock; cf. Mt. 7:24-25; Rom. 9:33; 1Cor. 10:4; 1Pet. 2:8) I will build my church... (Mt. 16:18; Ed. notes in parentheses).

.... you are...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** (Eph. 2:19-21; emphasis added).

With this information, a connection can be made between the pillar stone and the heap of smaller stones that Jacob set up as witnesses to a covenant between Laban and himself. In other words the spirit-being, that later became known as Jesus Christ, and loyal angels of Almighty God, were all witnesses to a covenant between Laban and Jacob. All these loyal angels serve God's human servants and relate to them as brethren,

Are they (loyal angels; cf. Heb. 1:13) not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister (serve) for those who will inherit salvation? (Heb. 1:14; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Now I, John, saw and heard these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things. ⁹ Then he said to me, "See that you do not do that. For **I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book.** (Instead) Worship God (the Father; cf. Mt. 6:9) (Rev. 22:8-9; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

No longer do I (Christ) call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but **I have called you friends,** for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you (Jn. 15:15; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Angels who are loyal to Almighty God are referred to as "fiery stones" because they have striven to obey God's law, which is represented by fire (Dt. 33:2; Ac. 2:1-4). Even Satan, prior to his rebellion, was associating with them,

You (Lucifer; now Satan) were the anointed cherub who covers; I established (appointed) you; you were on the holy mountain of God; **you walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones** (Eze. 28:14; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Now we will examine "precious stones" to see what these represent from God's perspective.

Onyx stones, and stones to be set in the ephod and in the breastplate (of the High Priest) (Ex. 25:7; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Then you shall take two onyx stones and engrave on them the names of the sons of Israel: ¹⁰six of their names on one stone, and the remaining six names on the other stone, according to their birth (Ex. 28:9-10).

So these precious stones represent the entire nation of ancient Israel which consisted of twelve tribes, or families. These stones were then carried on the shoulder of the High Priest as a reminder that he was responsible for the conduct of this nation.

And you shall put the two stones on the shoulders of the ephod as memorial stones for the sons of Israel. So Aaron shall bear their names before the Lord on his two shoulders as a memorial (Ex. 28:12).



BY THIS WE KNOW LOVE, BECAUSE HE
(CHRIST) LAID DOWN HIS LIFE FOR
US...

1 John 3:16a

This is why Jesus Christ said that our burden would be light, by comparison to his, because as our High Priest he has much more responsibility, and has suffered more, than any of us ever will,

Come to me, all you who labor and are heavy laden (with sin), and I will give you rest (from its consequences, through the process of repentance and forgiveness made possible by Christ's shed blood) (Mt. 11:28; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Therefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered outside the gate (Heb. 13:12; cf. Isa. 53:3-5).

Twelve other precious stones were worn close to the High Priest's heart signifying the love he was to express for all twelve families.

They made the breastplate square by doubling it; a span was its length and a span its width when doubled. ¹⁰And they set in it four rows of stones: a row with sardius, a topaz, and an emerald was the first row; ¹¹the second row, a turquoise, a sapphire, and a diamond; ¹²the third row, a jacinth, an agate, and amethyst; ¹³the fourth row, a beryl, an onyx, and a jasper. They were enclosed in settings of gold in their mountings. ¹⁴**These were twelve stones according to the names of the sons of Israel:** according to their names, engraved like a signet, each one with its own name according to the twelve tribes (Ex. 39:9-14; emphasis added).

Just as the twelve precious stones were next to the heart of the High Priest, so Jesus Christ clearly loved this nation and was willing to lay his life down for it. By extension, Christ did this for all fallen creation so that they can eventually be grafted into the spiritual household of Israel, which is God's firstborn (Ex. 4:22; cf. Hos. 11:1).

By this we know love, because he (Christ) laid down his life for us ... (1Jn. 3:16a).

Greater love has no one than this, to lay down one's life for his friends (Jn. 15:13).

And if some of the branches were broken off (representing Israel), and **you** (Gentiles; cf. vs. 11), **being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them**, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree (Rom. 11:17; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Because ancient Israel stubbornly persisted in their rebellion against the Holy One of Israel, He put the entire nation away (Jer. 3:8). This action can be compared to stones being thrown away,

A time to cast away stones (Eccl. 3:5a).

However, the Holy One of Israel promised not to forget his nation permanently. So they will eventually be gathered and led to repentance.

And a time to gather stones (Ecc. 3:5b; cf. Dt. 30:3; Lam. 4:1-2; Isa. 27:9, 54:1-8).

To summarize so far, stones can represent loyal angels, individuals, families, and nations, depending on the context in which they are used. Now we will examine situations where stones are used to describe something unclean or unrighteous.

Then the priest shall command that they take away the stones in which is the plague, and they shall **cast them into an unclean place outside the city** (Lev. 14:40; cf. vs.41-48; emphasis added).

Fallen angels were "cast out" of Almighty God's presence due to their rebellion against Him and are now described as "dark stones". Their punishment will eventually result in their death (Rom. 6:23a; Jude 5-6).

He has set a bound to darkness, and he searches out every limit; **a stone is darkness, and the shadow of death** (Job 28:3; LXX; emphasis added).

These dark stones are also described as "stones of emptiness" because their rebellion created a great upheaval which led to darkness and emptiness on the face of the earth (Gen. 1:2).

And He shall stretch out over it the line of confusion and **the stones of emptiness** (Isa. 34:11b; emphasis added).

I beheld the earth, and indeed it was without form, and void; and **the heavens, they had no light** (Jer. 4:23; emphasis added).

It is important to mention that God did not originally create anything in a state of emptiness or confusion. Therefore this state of affairs occurred due to the sin of Satan and the angels that followed him.

For thus says the Lord, who created the heavens, who is God, who formed the earth and made it, who has established it, **who did not create it empty** (or a waste) (Isa. 45:18a; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Someone who makes false accusations can be associated with stones that represent unrighteousness.



**HE HAS SET A BOUND TO DARKNESS,
AND HE SEARCHES OUT EVERY LIMIT;
A STONE IS DARKNESS, AND THE
SHADOW OF DEATH.**

John 28:3; LXX; emphasis added

And as David and his men went along the road, Shimei went along the hillside opposite him and cursed as he went, **threw stones at him** and kicked up dust (2Sam. 16:13; emphasis added).

For his unrighteous behavior, Shimei was eventually executed,

The king (Solomon) said moreover to Shimei, "You know, as your heart acknowledges, all the wickedness that you did to my father David; therefore the Lord will return your wickedness on your own head (1Kgs. 2:44; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Just as Shimei made false accusations against David, so Satan made sure there were false witnesses against Christ (Mt. 26:60). Therefore, Satan is a stone associated with false accusations.

A heap of stones can represent those who have witnessed someone guilty of committing a sin. As angels are intimately serving mankind, they would be included as witnesses of all the crimes that occur in both the physical and spiritual realm. The witness of these angels *continues to remain and will be brought to the attention of those who are resurrected to judgment at the end of Christ's millennial rule (Rev. 20:5-6).

Then they raised over him (Achan) a great heap of stones, still there to this day. So the Lord turned from the fierceness of His anger... (Jos. 7:26a; Ed. note in parenthesis).

And the king of Ai he hanged on a tree until evening. And as soon as the sun was down, Joshua commanded that they should take his corpse down from the tree, cast it at the entrance of the gate of the city, and raise over it a great heap of stones that ***remains to this day** (Jos. 8:29; 10:26-27; emphasis added).

And they took Absalom and cast him into a large pit in the woods, and laid a very large heap of stones over him... (2Sam. 18:17a).

Stones can be used in judgment against those who are adversaries of God's servants. The family of Benjamin was known for their accuracy in throwing stones against Israel's enemies.

Now these were the men who came to David at Ziklag while he was still a fugitive from Saul the son of Kish; and they were among the mighty men, helpers in the war, ² armed with bows, **using both the right hand and the left in hurling stones** and shooting arrows with the bow. They were of Benjamin, Saul's brethren (1Chr. 12:1-2; emphasis added).

Then David put his hand in his bag and took out a stone; and he slung it and struck the Philistine in his forehead, so that the stone sank into his

forehead, and he fell on his face to the earth (1Sam. 17:49; cf. Dan. 2:34).

God is pictured using sling stones in judgment against his enemies, while at the same time comparing his loyal servants to "precious stones in a crown".

The Lord of hosts will defend them (God's servants); **they shall devour and subdue with slingstones** (Zech. 9:15a; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

The Lord their God will save them in that day, as the flock of His people. For **they shall be like the jewels** (Lit. *stones*) **of a crown** (Zech. 9:16a; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

It is Jesus Christ pictured as "a stone that was cut out without hands" who will eventually subjugate all forms of rebellion against his heavenly Father,



AND THEY TOOK ABSALOM AND CAST
HIM INTO A LARGE PIT IN THE WOODS,
AND LAID A VERY LARGE HEAP OF STONES
OVER HIM...
II Samuel 18:17a

You watched while a stone was cut out without hands (not of man's work; cf. Ex. 20:25; Zech. 4:6-10), which struck the image (representing the kingdoms of this world) on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces (Dan. 2:34; Ed. notes in parentheses).

When Satan suggested that Christ turn stones into bread, Satan was referring to the stones over which he had control. In other words, Satan was offering Christ the opportunity to turn fallen angels into something useful/beneficial, without Christ having to endure a horrendous execution,

Now when the tempter came to him, he said, "If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." (Mt. 4:3).

It is unlikely that Satan's reference to stones is coincidental because Christ had just mentioned turning stones into something useful 12 verses earlier.

And do not think to say to yourselves, "We have Abraham as our father." For I say to you that God is able to raise up children from these stones (Mt. 3:9; cf. Lk. 19:39-40).

The stones that represented rebellious angels were the same stones that hurt Jesus Christ, even though he "worked with them" previously in order to teach them God's truth (1Pet. 3:18-20).

He who quarries stones may be hurt by them ... (Eccl. 10:9a; emphasis added).

Now we will look at examples of the word "stone" or "stones" being applied to those considered clean and righteous.

You (faithful servants of God) also, as **living stones**, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God (the Father) through Jesus Christ (1Pet. 2:5; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Just as physical stones were used against those who committed a capital offense in ancient Israel (Lev. 20:2, 27; 24:23), so "righteous living stones" will come into contact with those who are part of the resurrection to judgment (Jn. 5:29).

Do you not know that we shall judge angels (following the second resurrection; cf. 2Pet. 2:4)? How much more, things that pertain to this life (1Cor. 6:3; cf. Ps. 149:5-9).

Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name (Lk. 10:17).

So it will be the living stones in God's spiritual temple that will be involved with judging fallen angels. The goal will be to restore all sinners in their relationship with Almighty God and His son, Jesus Christ. This will be a process made possible through the action of God's Holy Spirit, which is compared to "water" (Jn. 4:10-14; 7:37-39). Just as physical water wears away stone and rock; so God's Holy Spirit will wear away the stubbornness and pride associated with a sinful state of mind.

But as a mountain falls and crumbles away, and as a rock is moved from its place; ¹⁹ **As water wears away stones...** (Job 14:18-19a; emphasis added).



**HE WHO QUARRIES STONES MAY BE
HURT BY THEM ...**

Ecclesiastes 10:9a; emphasis added

I will give you (sinners) a new heart and put a new spirit within you; **I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh** and give you a heart of flesh (softer, more teachable attitude) (Eze. 36:26; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Large stones are associated with God's law in Deuteronomy 27:1-8 because large stones are more difficult to destroy or break down; just as God's law will not be broken down or destroyed despite the efforts of those who wish to do away with it.

Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. ¹⁸For assuredly, I say to you, **till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle**

will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled (Mt. 5:17-18; emphasis added).

Just as large stones are hard to break apart, so the Body of Christ will not be permanently broken asunder.

... I (Christ) will build my church, and the gates of Hades (the grave) shall not prevail (be victorious) against it (Mt. 16:18b; cf. 1Cor. 15:55; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Because stones represent permanence, Joshua wrote the entirety of God's law and commandments on stones.

And there, in the presence of the children of Israel, he wrote on the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he had written (Jos. 8:32).

Because the physical altar represents the spiritual altar in heaven (Heb. 8:4-5; 9:23), and because the spiritual altar represents God's work as opposed to man's, the physical altar was not to be cut/hewn by the hands of man (Ex. 20:25). In other words, mankind can take no credit whatsoever for God's work of atoning/covering for the sins of mankind, which was pictured every time an animal was offered on a physical altar beginning with Abel's offering (Mt. 23:35).

... as it is written in the Book of the Law of Moses: "an altar of whole stones over which no man has wielded any iron tool." And they offered on it burnt offerings to the Lord, and sacrificed peace offerings (Jos. 8:31b).

In like manner, the spiritual temple of God is not made with human hands. Instead, it is entirely God's work as opposed to the physical temple in Jerusalem that was destroyed in 70 CE. Therefore, all the stones in the physical temple represented the work of man, which is why it was finally removed.

Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and his disciples came to him to show him the buildings of the temple. ²And Jesus said to them, "Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, **I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down.**" (Mt. 24:1-2; emphasis added).

Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father (Jn. 4:21).



AND THERE, IN THE PRESENCE OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL, HE WROTE ON THE STONES A COPY OF THE LAW OF MOSES, WHICH HE HAD WRITTEN

[Josiah 8:32](#)

As the physical temple was central to the worship system of ancient Israel, and as sinners from all nations have always had the potential to be "grafted into Israel" (cf. Ex. 12:48-49), Christ's prophecy about the stones of the physical temple being brought down prefigures the humbling of all sinners in the hope they repent during a future period of judgment known as the second resurrection (Rev. 20:4-6). Therefore one aspect of Christ's prophecy, in Matthew 24:1-2, was dual in nature because it has not yet been fulfilled.

In conclusion, there are many meanings associated with the use of the word "stone" or "stones", and the context in which these words are used is central to understanding what they are supposed to represent. God's faithful servants in both the physical and spiritual realm are compared to stones. Peter described early church members as being "living stones" while loyal angels are described as "fiery stones." God's chosen servants are also compared to "precious stones." In contrast, those who oppose the will of Almighty God's are compared to dark stones

because they are under the influence of their leader, Satan (Mt. 8:12; Lk. 22:53; Jn. 3:19, 8:44, 12:35; Eph. 5:8; 6:12; Col. 1:13; 1Pet. 2:9; 2Pet. 2:17; Jude 6, 13; Rev. 12:9).

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