

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **Matthew 16:13-20**.
- B. Jesus wanted to know what kind of impression He was making on the people. He asked His disciples as to whom the people thought He was. They gave the wrong answers!
- C. Then Jesus focused the same question to the Twelve. Peter stepped forward and gave the right answer! Jesus is the Rock, upon which the church is built.
- D. Two interesting OT references to "the Rock" are Deut. 32:4; 2Sam. 22:2-3.
(Duet 32:4) "The Rock! His work is perfect, For all His ways are just; A God of faithfulness and without injustice, Righteous and upright is He."
(2Sam 22:2-3) And he said, "The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; **3** My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold and my refuge; My savior, Thou dost save me from violence."
- E. Today's lesson focuses on the concept of Jesus being a rock or stone.

I. CHRIST IS THE FOUNDATION STONE.

- A. A building can only be as strong as its foundation. The Lord uses a graphic illustration of building in Mt. 7:24-27.
"Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. **25** And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock. **26** Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. **27** The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell--and great was its fall."
- B. When the Lord Jesus made the promise to build the house of God, His church (Mt. 16:18), He knew the value of the proper foundation. That church is built upon Peter's confession.
"And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades shall not overpower it."
- C. When Peter preached the first gospel sermon, he made sure the people understood that Jesus was made both Lord and X (Ac. 2:36). The foundation upon which the church is built!

II. CHRIST IS THE CORNER STONE.

- A. For buildings in Bible times, the cornerstone was vital to the structure. Was the foundation important? Well, the cornerstone was the first stone laid of the foundation. From that corner, each wall was laid out and the vertical tiers were laid on top of that.
- B. Jesus is the cornerstone upon which the church was built (Ac. 4:11).
"He is the **STONE WHICH WAS REJECTED** by you, **THE BUILDERS**, but **WHICH BECAME THE VERY CORNER stone**."
- C. Part of that foundation is the apostles and prophets, but Jesus is the chief cornerstone (Eph. 2:19-20).
So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, **20** having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone,
- D. It does make a difference as the foundation upon which we build. Spiritually speaking Xians must build their lives upon the foundation already laid (1Cor. 3:10-11).
According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building upon it. But let each man be careful how he builds upon it. **11** For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

III. CHRIST IS THE ROCK OF REFUGE.

- A. Rocks have become places of refuge to many different kinds of animals, as they flee from predators. Thus, the prophets of God often used the illustration of a "rock of refuge" to refer to the safety which God provided them against their enemies (Psa. 18:45-46; 46:1).

(Psa 18:45-46) Foreigners fade away, And come trembling out of their fortresses. 46 The LORD lives, and blessed be my rock; And exalted be the God of my salvation,

(Psa 46:1) God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble.

- B. David prayed to God concerning the rock that he used as a refuge (Psa. 61:2-3).

From the end of the earth I call to Thee, when my heart is faint; Lead me to the rock that is higher than I. 3 For Thou hast been a refuge for me, A tower of strength against the enemy.

IV. CHRIST IS THE **LIFE-GIVING ROCK**.

- A. When God delivered the nation of Israel from Egyptian bondage, they were without water. But God provided water from a rock (Ex. 17:5-6).

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Pass before the people and take with you some of the elders of Israel; and take in your hand your staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. 6 "Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink." And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.

- B. The apostle Paul explains Exodus 17 event in 1Cor. 10:1-4.

For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; 2 and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea; 3 and all ate the same spiritual food; 4 and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ.

- C. Christians have life, but X is the giver of that life. From Him comes all the nourishment that results in spiritual life (1Pet. 2:4-5).

And coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected by men, but choice and precious in the sight of God, 5 you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

- D. Only X is the life-giving stone.

V. CHRIST IS THE **STONE OF STUMBLING**.

- A. God knew when He sent X into the world that some people would not accept Him. Peter writes of this fact in 1Pet. 2:6-8.

For this is contained in Scripture: "BEHOLD I LAY IN ZION A CHOICE STONE, A PRECIOUS CORNER stone, AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM SHALL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED." 7 This precious value, then, is for you who believe. But for those who disbelieve, "THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE VERY CORNER stone," 8 and, "A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE"; for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this doom they were also appointed.

- B. When Paul was discussing the future of Israel, now that the church had come into being he notes that some of the Jews would not accept God's Messiah (Rom. 9:32-33).

Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as though it were by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone, 33 just as it is written, "BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE, AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED."

- C. Men and women stumble at the word of God today. Many believe it to be foolishness and therefore X becomes a stumbling block because of their disobedient hearts (1Cor. 1:18, 22-24).

For the word of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God... 22 For indeed Jews ask for signs, and Greeks search for wisdom; 23 but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block, and to Gentiles foolishness, 24 but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

VI. CHRIST IS THE **STONE OF DESTRUCTION**.

- A. There will come a time when this stone will hurl itself in judgment against all who have abused it on earth.

- B. In a most interesting statement Jesus speaks of this fact (Mt. 21:44).

"And he who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will scatter him like dust."

- C. The apostle John must have had something similar in mind in Rev. 6:17, when he asked the great question concerning the judgment.

"for the great day of their wrath has come; and who is able to stand?"

CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

- A. Six characteristics of Jesus Christ as the rock:
 - 1. The Foundation Stone.
 - 2. The Corner Stone.
 - 3. The Rock of refuge.
 - 4. The Life-giving Rock.
 - 5. The Stone of Stumbling.
 - 6. The Stone of Destruction.
- B. Which “stone” or “rock” do you want? Why not choose X! By doing so, you can live with Him forever (see Jn. 14:1-6). But if you do not, He will become a “stone of stumbling” which will become your stone of destruction.
- C. Become a Xian today!
- D. Plan of salvation for non-Xians; erring Xians.