

“Christ is our Foundation”

Luke 21:5-28

The Temple in Jerusalem was quite a sight to behold. The foundation of the gigantic platform on which it was built is now known as the “Wailing Wall” and stands nine stories tall. Massive stones were quarried and the entire platform which was built for the 90ft. by 30ft. cedar temple building and its sprawling courtyards – the platform was the size of about 23 football fields. It took more than 40 years to construct. It was very impressive. It still is.

Yet, Jesus is quick to remind His disciples that the noble stones and impressive trappings of the Temple can be, and will be, easily thrown down. That would be a shocking statement. We cannot imagine a building like our church one day being flattened by war. Jesus’ words were shocking, yet that Temple would be burned to the ground about 40 years later in 70 AD. We watch the news and churches are destroyed and Christians are persecuted and even killed in many countries throughout the world. Jesus tells His hearers that this should be expected.

When you turn on the news and see the devastation and desolation of entire cities and regions; when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, just remember that Jesus told us this would happen. And as we have seen in our study of Revelation in Bible class, this Great Tribulation happening in the

world has been happening since Adam defied God and ate of the forbidden fruit. We should not expect one stone to be sitting upon another. Thank God we are not seeing these things in Quincy right now. Pray for our brothers and sisters in Christ who have seen the devastation of which Jesus speaks.

On another occasion, Jesus speaks of another stone – a lasting stone that cannot be broken. He reminds His hearers of what the Psalmist says, “The stone the builder rejected has become the capstone.”

Christ is the stone the builders of the Temple rejected. The problem with the Temple was not that it was built with grand and glorious stones. Just like the problem with the Pharisees and Sadducees was not that they came from wealthy or privileged families. Wealth and honor are gifts from God – something for which we should be thankful. The problem was what they did with those gifts and what they believed and taught others to believe.

The presence of a glorious temple in Jerusalem should have been a good thing. The “noble stones” and offerings adorning the Temple mount should have been a perpetual testimony to the goodness and nobility of God Himself – but it wasn’t.

When Jesus cleared the Temple of the moneychangers and the sellers of animals, He rightly called it a “den of robbers.” The chief priests themselves did not believe the Word of God and rejected the promise of the resurrection. They did not believe in heaven or hell. They said that when you are dead, you are dead, but you live forever in the memory of your children and all the generations that follow. Isn’t that nice? I mean “WOW” what a great hope that is.

The so-called spiritual leaders, the priests in Jesus’ day said there was

no resurrection. Jesus says, “I am the resurrection and the life.” Truly “the stone the builders rejected has become the capstone.” The capstone is the stone at the top of an arch which holds everything in place and distributes the weight properly. If you remove the capstone, the entire structure will fall down.

The Temple in Jerusalem built under King Herod was eventually destroyed, just as King Solomon’s Temple was destroyed 600 years earlier. Those buildings were magnificent feats of architecture. They were built to last forever. They came to a disastrous end.

The Good News of salvation, the forgiveness of sins, the hope of the resurrection must be the strength of the temple. If Christ is not the foundation, a Temple, a church, a person will come to a disastrous end. Just because some thing or some one has the noble appearance of godliness does not mean that everything is right with God. The Crystal Cathedral can go bankrupt. When I was growing up, who would have imagined that to be possible? Like I said last week, it’s our sinful mind that puts more value into the church or the pastor of the big church in the big city.

In Jesus’ day, who could imagine that the Temple could be torn down? Jesus certainly knew what was going to happen. He even uses that as a metaphor for His own death and resurrection.

God does not reside in a Temple built by human hands, for what building can contain Him? But He has chosen to reside in a temple nonetheless – you as His temple. The Temple of Solomon and the Temple of Herod were built to last forever. They came to a disastrous end, not because God abandoned them, but because those worshiping at those temples had abandoned God. And because Adam’s children have

abandoned God, there had to be a new Adam, a second Adam for whom no earthly temple of wood and stone needed be built.

The Good News of salvation, the forgiveness of sins, the hope of the resurrection were not the strength of the Temple in Jerusalem. The builders of that Temple had rejected Christ, the cornerstone, the capstone, the firm foundation.

Adam was created to last forever. Sin brought about the disastrous end called death. But because the promise of Christ was his foundation, because that Good News became the strength of him, the forgiveness of sins, the hope of the resurrection which must be the strength of the temple – Adam has lived and will live forever in the presence of his Father, only because his Father sent the Second Adam.

From the beginning, God intended for you to live forever. But the sin of Adam and your sin was going to bring about a disastrous end. However, Christ has intervened. He endured the disastrous end of condemnation, the wrath of judgment under the Law, and the pain of death. The Good News of salvation, the forgiveness of sins, the hope of the resurrection must be the strength of you – for you are the temple of God's Holy Spirit.

No matter how noble, stately, or majestic we may appear on the outside, as the hymn writer says, "The Church's One foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord." He is the stone that gives us strength. Without Him, everything falls apart. The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone. In Christ, we are designed and have been built up to last forever. Amen.