

Zahakiel: Let's begin. Pastor, please offer an opening prayer.

Pastor Chick: Dear Father in Heaven. We pray for Your Spirit to teach us what we need for this hour, this day, and our eternal lives. Thank You for the promised Sabbath blessing thank You for the promised Sabbath blessing. In Yahshua's holy name, Amen.

daphna dee: Amen

Lucan: Amen

Ruthline: Amen

Adriel777: Amen

Elyna: Amen.

Zahakiel: Amen.

Barb: Amen

Peter_Jr_18: Amen.

Gloria: Amen.

Zahakiel: Happy Sabbath to everyone. Tonight's study is called "A Stone in Zion." This exact phrase does not appear that way in the Scriptures; however, the imagery certainly does, and it applies to the life that Yahshua has provided for us within His Church, the earthly society of Heaven.

We do find a similar verse that applies to Yahshua Himself, and it is found here, "Therefore thus saith the Lord Yahweh, 'Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a Stone, a tried Stone, a precious Corner Stone, a sure Foundation; he that believeth shall not make haste.'" (Isa 28:16)

Even though this refers specifically to the Savior, we know that by our shared Spirit, "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the Day of Judgment, because as He is, so are we in this world." (1 John 4:17)

Coming to the point of conversion involves inviting the Father and Son to dwell within us, and by Their Spirit they reside in the soul of the redeemed. Thus, all that relates to the soul and spirit, to the character and "mind," if it is said of Christ, it may be said of the Christian.

In Christ is life and glory unborrowed; in Christ is a unique divinity. These characteristics are not ours to claim by right, and yet even these are ours indirectly. We have life unlimited given to us, placed upon us like a robe of righteousness. (1Cor 15:53) We are partakers of Christ's divine nature, (2 Pet 1:4) and therefore benefit from every loving purpose and act of the Almighty. (Jer 29:11)

Yahshua was laid in Zion as a sure Foundation, and we are placed in Zion as similar stones, stones "like Him," (1 John 3:2) borrowing strength from that Foundation in order to form the spiritual "house" in which we live.

The question may well be asked, what is the value of a stone?

The verse in Isaiah concludes with the phrase, "He that believeth shall not make haste." Those that rest on Yahshua shall not "make haste," it reads, but the wording may be a bit misleading. We make haste to do a number of things. For example, "I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy Commandments." (Psalm 119:60)

While the word in Hebrew used by Isaiah does mean to "move quickly," or "be excited," it also comes from a root that means to run away, to flee in fear. This is more likely to be the accurate meaning, as it corresponds to a number of verses that describe the ones who trust in Yah as they who "shall not be moved." (Psalm 10:6, 15:5, etc.)

The value of stone, then, is its unmoving nature. It is its stability, its "resting" in place. A stone that moves, that slides about or crumbles, is unsuitable to be either a foundation or a portion of the wall, and therefore when the Father prepares us for our role, to be stones in Zion, we receive this characteristic.

We read, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." (Gal 5:1)

Here Paul speaks of two concepts that may seem, to the worldly mind, to be opposites. He speaks of liberty and freedom, but then, as a result of being freed, we are to "stand fast," to remain in place. The world's view of freedom involves movement, cutting loose from restraints, and straying beyond established physical and moral borders. The Bible speaks of liberty as freedom from the helplessness that natural man exhibits in the presence of sin and temptation. A prisoner of men may be "free" in every way that matters to eternity, while a wealthy world-traveler may be the most miserable of slaves to addictions and destructive impulses.

The Stones that Yah has placed in Zion are the most free of all that He has created, for we were made in His image, an image of integrity, independent thought, and creativity, and through the Gospel we have been restored to this place of power without the chains of sin binding us, and forcing us to betray our intended purpose. The stones that Yah has made, we spiritual stones, stay in place, not because we are bound there through force, but because we have found a resting place, a Sabbath experience, that fulfills our every spiritual desire, and gives us joy in remaining where infinite wisdom has seen to best position us.

Adriel777: Amen

The stone placed in Zion has no better place to go any more than Christ, the foundation Stone, has a better place to be.

In the material world, of course, we are made of flesh. Our bodies have needs, and so we move, and work, and eat, and fulfill all that the Father has created us to require. In the Spirit we are at rest, in one sense in the walls of spiritual Jerusalem, and in another sense

in the fire of Yah's judgment, being refined as impurities are burned away. We both have value, because the stones are making up the building, and we are gaining value as we are purified through Yah's love and judgment to shine all the more brightly in the day that Yahshua returns to gather us to Himself.

As all stones rest on the Foundation, so some stones rest on others. The ones at the top rest on those lower, and while the ultimate Foundation is always Christ, we are nevertheless called to support one another as mutual representatives of the Savior to each other.

We read this passage, well known among us, "And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." (Eph 4:11, 12)

All that the apostles and teachers and prophets have to share with us are from Christ, and therefore all glory is His, but He is pleased to work through these agents to bring agreement ever more clearly with the Sabbath rest in which we lie. As unsuitable fragments are chipped away, and rough edges smoothed, the stone undergoes changes...and they may feel, to the surface, uncomfortable. Nevertheless the stone does not move from its place. It is no less of a stone because it is being shaped, and in fact the tools of the Craftsman are making it, through the very discomfort and force of its refinement, a more valuable and suitable part of the wall.

We read, "Shall the axe boast itself against him that heweth therewith? Or shall the saw magnify itself against him that shaketh it? As if the rod should shake itself against them that lift it up, or as if the staff should lift up itself, as if it were no wood." (Isa 10:15)

The axe is not alive, and therefore cannot protest against the way it is used. It is the skill of the woodcutter that brings forth the effects of the axe. Similarly, in construction, the stone is not alive, to complain about its refinements. Now, here we have to think spiritually, because the Scriptures call us "lively stones," or "living stones," and so we are; yet at the same time, "self" that would cause the stone to prioritize its own will and existence is dead.

What the Christian life becomes, then, is an experience symbolized by a stone that is alive in the sense that it is alert, and rejoicing, and blessed to be used in Yah's workmanship, but "dead" in the sense that its concerns are caught up in the great Building of which it is a part, not wishing to be seen for itself – a single stone – but thankful to be contributing to the overall, brilliant appearance of Yah's Temple on the earth.

We may say, then, similar to what Yahshua said to His doubtful disciple, "If you have seen me, you have seen the Father." If you are looking at me, a single stone, what you are really seeing is my Father's house of which I am a part. You cannot see a brick within a wall and not see the building. Thus, any observer is seeing how I rest in place, making up the walls and decorations of the Spiritual structure, and that observer is being called,

invited, by the Master of that house to stand beside me, resting on the Sure Foundation, and leaning against (and supporting) other stones in turn.

Do you have a lack, a need?

The Father has prepared a stone, resting on the Foundation of Christ, to make up that lack.

Do you have a gift, a strength?

The Father has prepared you to lend support to another who has need of those blessings. There is a reason that the Scriptures speak so frequently of construction and gardening. These are all creative acts that shape and guide individual elements to make up a greater whole.

The Kingdom of Heaven is like a net cast into the sea, the Savior says, (Mat 13:47) because it calls to all kinds to compose a collective unity. Like a stone, the value of a Christian is attributed. On its own, by its own merits, it has no particular worth. Diamonds, emeralds, and rubies are prized because people consider them to be prized. The Christian is justified, and holy, because Yah has said to His people, "You are holy." It is His declaration, His statement, that places worth within us, and it is wholly dependent upon His grace. It is therefore a great error for a stone to take glory for itself, and to say, "I know where I am supposed to be. Let me go and find a place where I belong."

A stone has no "self" by which it might direct its own course, and neither does the Christian who has covenanted with the Father and Son, permitting Their perfect will to be expressed through our words and actions. We take responsibility for what we have agreed to do, and in this sense we are "lively" stones, but we seek only the glory of the building of which we are a part, and the Builder who has constructed it.

Consider the fall of Lucifer. We read, "Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle... thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness. I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee." (Ezek 28:13, 17)

This first-created angel saw his own glory, placed upon him like a robe, and thought that it was his own substance, that the brilliant stones that made up his vestment were his by right instead of by charity. He had become like the axe that says to its wielder, "Why do you swing me?" or like the stone that says to the Builder, "Why did you place me here?"

In the world, and in secular Christianity, we have encountered Church-hoppers. These are people who move from congregation to congregation, seeking a place to fit in. Even within Adventism, we have been associated with those who keep the feasts, reject the Trinity, understand the separation of Church and state, and a host of other doctrines that nudge them closer to the Bible's teaching than the mainstream SDA Church; and yet none of

them have come with a proper understanding of that most basic Seventh-day Adventist principle: the Seventh-day.

None of them have found contentment... and how could they? Contentment in Christ is not to be found outside the Gospel that we represent. It is to be expected that an active seeker after truth will not have found it yet; unfortunately, many of them come with "momentum."

The purpose of a stone is to rest in place, and if placed in water, it will sink to the bottom. But if you throw a stone too quickly, if you spin it onto the surface of the water at a certain angle, it will "skip" over that surface, even though by nature it should sink down and find a settled place. The doctrines of the world are like that... they spin their victims. They confuse them with speed, and spectacle, and carnal energy, so that even should they be so incredibly blessed as to find the living waters being carried by the Little Flock, often enough they bounce right off of where nature and spiritual gravity are inclining them to be.

Those human "stones" that have come to rest in the water of life will no more move from their spot than an actual stone could rise up of its own accord and float out of a lake. The idea of "leaving the Church," just like the idea of divorce from a marriage, is not a concept that exists in the mind of Christ. It is just a label we use, like "darkness," or "silence," to indicate an empty place where something else should be.

Once the truth is found, and it is understood to be truth, it becomes who you are. One is a "member of the CSDA Church," not like someone who pays dues and visits a clubhouse once in a while is a "member" of that association. Rather, one is a "member of the CSDA Church" like an eye or a finger is a member of a body. The membership reflects what the people are in spirit and in truth, and they cannot unmake themselves any more than a stone can decide it no longer wishes to be a stone. If this sounds restrictive, rather than comforting, then pray for the mind of Christ.

We were made with a purpose, with a role to fulfill, and we who are drinking at the Fountain that is Yahshua, and we who are eating at the Tree of Life that is Yahshua, have found that purpose, and that role. While the world, like Martha, rushes from one duty, one task, to another, (Luke 10:40) we, like Mary, sit at the Savior's feet, and so accomplish much, much more.

The work is done in the flesh, but the spirit is always at rest, and when that spirit IS at rest, the work that is done builds for both time and eternity. Stones are tough, and strong, but they exert no force. Consider what this means.

The Kingdom of Heaven does not need to be won by strength, or purchased by wealth, or apprehended (figured-out) by intellect. It is a gift, given to the great and lowly alike. While the world's truth-seekers attempt to gain spiritual enlightenment by rituals, by mental acrobatics, and by the quest for hidden knowledge, those who have received Yah's gift of everlasting life are simply resting. We have all that we need, blessed in the food, and

clothing, and shelter that our Father's providence has brought under our authority, and rather than attempting the grand things, our work and education in the School of Yahshua involves perfecting the ordinary things. As we perfect the ordinary, we apply the blessings we have received to our daily lives, washing the clothing, preparing the meals, and tending the garden, just as Yahshua would...and we find that the great things that others are trying to accomplish proceed out of us naturally, effortlessly, because it is the resting stone, the peaceful stone, that composes the mighty temple in Zion.

May Yah complete His temple upon the earth, bringing in and refining His precious stones, each with a resting-place prepared, each with a role to play. And may we, with wisdom from above, understand and rejoice in that role, receiving the blessings of Yah both directly and through our fellow citizens of Heaven's Kingdom, and in turn blessing others with the peaceful strength that Yah has made us all to possess.

"Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name." (Rev 3:12)

Zahakiel: Are there any questions or comments about the study tonight?

Adriel777: Amen!

Pastor Chick: Great study.

Marie: Amen

Zahakiel: Then, I will ask Bro. Luke to offer a closing prayer.

Lucan: Dear heavenly Father. We thank you for putting us in a settled place, members of your Son and of one another. We thank you for inviting us into, and giving us the perfect unity that exists between the Father and Son. As we dismiss into the remainder of the Sabbath hours, may your Spirit bind us to You and to one another. In the name of Yahshua we pray, amen.

Pastor Chick: Amen.

Peter: Amen

Elyna1: Amen.

Barb: Amen

Ruthline: Amen

Adriel777: Amen

Marie: Amen

Zahakiel: Amen

daphna dee: Amen

Peter Jr 18: Amen.

Gloria: Amen