

A Stone, Elect, Precious

by H.J. Vine

The sermon emphasizes the importance of building our lives on the enduring foundation of Christ, symbolized by precious materials, to reflect His glory and righteousness.

Scripture: Revelation 21:18

Topics: "Jesus Christ", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

H.J. Vine preaches on the importance of building our lives on the foundation of Jesus Christ, as depicted in 1 Corinthians 3:13, where our works will be tested by fire. Those who build with 'gold, silver, precious stones' symbolizing Christ's righteousness and perfections will be rewarded, while those who build with 'wood, grass, straw' will suffer loss. The 'precious stones' represent the excellencies of Jesus Christ, with the 'precious onyx' and 'precious cornerstone' symbolizing His pre-eminence and resurrection, emphasizing the need for His perfections to adorn our lives and the assembly.

Transcript

In a day that is coming, we are told, "Fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he has built thereupon (on Jesus Christ, the only Foundation) he shall receive a reward" (1 Cor. 3:13). It is said, the day shall declare it (when the work is manifested), because it shall be revealed in fire. The "wood, grass, straw" mentioned will be burned, and those who build with materials which these things signify will suffer loss: on the other hand, the "gold, silver, precious stones" will abide, and those who build with what these represent will be rewarded by God. This is to encourage us to possess and build with the latter, for in all construction you must first have your materials.

The apostle had spoken of Christ being made redemption to us from God (1:30). It is in Him redemption is ours through His blood. Silver represents this in Scripture. It is also said, He is made unto us righteousness, which gold is used to signify. Christ, who knew not sin, was made sin for us upon Calvary's cross, that we might become Gods righteousness in Him. Amidst the darkness of Golgotha the sin was judged: in the splendours of God's glory the righteousness will be displayed when the assembly shines forth as "the city of pure gold" (Rev. 21:18). Then also the foundations of its wall will be "adorned with every precious stone."

Building with precious stones, gold and silver may not loom so large before the eye as that of wood, grass and straw, but the intrinsic value is greater by far. What do the "precious stones" symbolize? Surely, the perfections and excellencies of our Lord Jesus Christ. What but the personal worth and distinctions of

Jesus could these precious stones signify? There are two stones specially distinguished in God's Word as being designated "precious" by the Spirit. The first is found in Job 28:16--"the precious onyx." The second is in Isaiah 28:16--"a precious cornerstone." Also in 1 Peter 2 this is spoken of as a living Stone, chosen of God and precious, which had been cast away as worthless by the religious builders of that day. Nevertheless, this is the "Corner-stone, elect, precious," and to those who believe on Him His preciousness is accounted, for if Christ be the chosen One, they in Him are "a chosen race"; if He be the King and Priest, they are "a kingly priesthood"; if He be the Holy One then they are "a holy nation"; and if He be the One in whom God finds His eternal pleasure, they also are "a people for possession, that they might set forth the excellencies of Him who has called them out of darkness into His wonderful light." This indicates what we have said as to the meaning of "precious stones" used for building now, and found in the wall of the heavenly City hereafter.

The two stones designated "precious" have very significant places. The precious onyx is the first stone named in the Bible (Gen. 2:12) Gold and bdellium [which manna was said to be like in colour (Num. 11:7)] are mentioned in the same verse. We find the onyx on the shoulders and breastplate of the high priest in Exodus 28; again in Job 28 in relation to wisdom; and later in Ezekiel 28:13 decking with other gems the King full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. The precious Stone of Isaiah 28 had been tried before being set as the Cornerstone, just as in 1 Peter 2 it had been rejected of men but became the living Stone to whom the redeemed come, and in relation to whom those who are also living stones are built up a spiritual house; for, whilst He is the Foundation, He is the Corner-stone as well as "the Head of the corner," the crown and glory of all.

The precious onyx therefore speaks of Christ, the Son of the Father's love, known to us as "The Firstborn of all creation" (Col. 1:15), who is to have the pre-eminence in all things in the heavens and upon the earth, whether they be thrones, lordships, principalities or authorities. The Stone, elect, precious, tells of Christ as "the Firstborn from among the dead" (Col. 1:18). He is the living One, the Head of the body, the assembly, that He might have the first place in all things, for in Him all fullness dwells. In each circle therefore He is the First: in the wide creation and in the new creation He is supreme. All building must be adorned with His perfections and excellencies; His own worth and distinctions are to be displayed in the assembly: He is to be glorified in His saints and wondered at in all that have believed. The loveliness and beauty of the Stone elect and precious are yet to be admired, although refused once by men: exalted on high with Himself, the assembly to which His Infinite perfections have been ministered, shall be the means of displaying their Divine lustre and illumination. The nations shall yet walk in the light of God's glory thus seen.

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