

## The Centerpiece of All Time, Part II

In our first session on *The Centerpiece of All Time*, we explored God's eternal purpose, the purpose of the ages, which He fulfilled in Christ.

Ephesians 3:11:

This was according to the eternal purpose [the purpose of the ages] that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord,

The Eternal God has an eternal purpose for the ages, and every bit of it centers around Christ. **Christ** continues to actively fulfill his role as **the one through whom God made the ages**.

Hebrews 1:2 (WNT):

has at the end of these days spoken to us through a Son, who is the pre-destined Lord of the universe, and through whom He made the Ages.

**God made the ages through Christ**. Incredible! God as the Architect of all things designed the ages; His Son as the Builder is now “building out” the ages, personally deploying each stage. Christ has filled the gap in the plan of redemption, making him **the centerpiece of all time**.

We can more clearly understand Christ's role as the centerpiece of the whole by considering the reference to him in

Psalm 118:22:

The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone [Hebrew רֹשׁ פִּנְיָה *rosh pinnah*, “the head of the corner”].

Psalm 118:22 [Brenton Greek Septuagint Translation]:

The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner [Greek κεφαλὴ γωνίας *kephalē gōnias*, “the head of the corner”].

The Hebrew and Greek Old Testaments concur that the stone that the builders rejected — the Messiah — was to be the “head of the corner.”

Just what is the head of the corner in a building? The Passion Translation offers further insight.

Psalm 118:22 (TPT):

The very stone the masons rejected as flawed has turned out to be the most important capstone of the arch.

A capstone is a *keystone*, the wedge-shaped stone at the apex of an arch. As the final piece placed during construction, the keystone locks all the supporting stones into position and causes the arch to be able to bear weight. Without a keystone, an arch cannot be self-supporting.

## Arch with Keystone (Ephesus)



The Romans made tremendous use of keystone arches in the many aqueducts they built to carry water into their cities. These honeycombed structures, for all their appearance of being lightweight, were actually incredibly solid, and many endure today. They could bear the weight of water throughout their length, effectively serving as elevated, artificial rivers designed to bring in water from afar.

Jesus Christ quoted Psalm 118:22 in three different gospels, each time using the same Greek words for “the head of the corner” that appear in the Greek Old Testament. Peter cited the same verse when called into question over the healing of the cripple at the Temple gate.

Acts 4:11:

This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner.

Another building analogy referring to Christ as the head appears in

Ephesians 2:20:

built on the foundation [Greek θεμέλιος *themelios*] of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone [Greek ἀκρογωνιαίος *akrogōniaios*, the final stone in the building — what the Aramaic calls the “head of the building”],

Here, Christ is called, not the “head of the corner”, but the “head of the building” — the final stone in the building. He is not just the final stone; he is also the one who brings it to completion. In Matthew 12:6 he said of himself that he was “greater than the temple.” He is the one who finishes it off.

As we read in Ephesians 2:20, the foundation of this building has been laid by the apostles and prophets. Parallels can be found in the following verses.

1 Corinthians 3:10,11:

According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation [Greek θεμέλιος *themelios*], and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it.

For no one can lay a foundation [*themelios*] other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

Paul the Apostle laid a foundation for the believers by setting forth the fundamental principles of their new life in Christ, but *the* foundation for the whole was Jesus Christ himself.

Hebrew 6:1:

Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation [Greek θεμέλιος *themelios*] of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God,

Teachers of God's people can lay a doctrinal foundation, but that foundation rests solely on Christ's accomplished work.

Understanding this, we see that the apostles and prophets are the foundation and Christ is the keystone that unites the whole.

Ephesians 2 gives a tremendous picture of the functional role of a keystone in the building of God's holy temple. The two opposing parties, Jew and Gentile, are united through Christ as a single structure.

Ephesians 2:18-22:

For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,

built on the foundation [Greek θεμέλιος *themelios*] of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone [Greek ἀκρογωνιαίος *akrogōniaios*, the final stone in the building — what the Aramaic calls the “head of the building”],

in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord.

In him you also are being built together [Greek συναρμολογέω *sunarmologeō* joined together, with parts fitted to each other] into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

We know from verses like 1 Corinthians 3:11 that Christ is referred to as the foundation. In this passage, however, the foundation of the true doctrine has been laid by the apostles and prophets. It makes more sense therefore in this context to understand the final stone in the

building as the keystone — the uppermost stone — and not the foundation, which is laid long before.

Christ as the keystone puts the finishing touches to the work of redemption for all time. He unites the opposing forces in a solid structure that is balanced and secure. It is in him that “the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord.”

Thank God that He has taken the very stone the masons rejected and made that living stone, Jesus Christ, the most important keystone of the arch. God’s purpose of the ages stands unmovable for all time thanks to His partnership with His Son in building out the ages to provide for man’s redemption and salvation.

Ephesians 4 makes it clear that the integration of the whole body starts at the top and proceeds downward. This is how all the parts fit together as a single whole.

Ephesians 4:15,16:

Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ,

from whom the whole body, joined and held together [Greek συναρμολογέω *sunarmologeō*] by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

By his finished work, Christ filled the gap in the plan of redemption, making him *the centerpiece of all time*. In like manner, the stone that was rejected in the crucifixion has been made the keystone of the heavenly sanctuary in the resurrection. What a victory we have in Christ!