

Doctrinal Studies

The Cornerstone

Jesus Christ is the foundation and chief cornerstone for Israel. Nevertheless, this stone causes the unbelieving Jew to stumble. The failure of Israel to accept Jesus Christ as ruler and Messiah is taught in Rom. 9:30-33: *"What then shall we say [to what conclusion are we forced] that the Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness [they didn't have the Mosaic Law], have obtained it [righteousness], a righteousness that is by faith [God's imputed perfect righteousness through faith]; but Israel, who pursued a law of righteousness [human self-righteousness], has not attained it [has not accomplished the purpose of the law]. Why not? Because they pursued it not by faith but as if it were by works. They stumbled over the "stumbling stone [the Lord Jesus Christ]". As it is written: 'See, I lay in Zion a stone that causes men [unbelievers] to stumble and a rock that makes them fall [arouses opposition], and [the adversative use of kái = "however"] the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame.'"*

There are two spiritual buildings in history: Israel and the Church. Those who are part of the superstructure of either of those two buildings, i.e. believers, will never be disappointed regardless of whether they are winners or losers in the spiritual life. God's plan in every dispensation, including the Age of Israel and the Church Age, begins with faith alone in Christ alone. That salvation can never be lost, canceled, or reversed.

Jesus Christ in hypostatic union, as the chief Cornerstone, is the foundation for these two invisible buildings. The church, as a building, is in the process of construction at present. When the "rapture" or resurrection of the Church occurs, the Church will become a spiritual temple for all eternity.

Israel also has Jesus Christ as its foundation, but because Israel rejected Jesus Christ at His first advent the construction of Israel as a spiritual building was halted. When the Church is removed this construction will resume with the believers of the Tribulation and the Millennium. At the end of the Millennium those who are part of Israel will become a holy temple for all eternity.

At the first advent Jesus Christ came as the foundation of Israel. But at Pentecost He became the foundation for the Church. During the Church Age, Israel has a foundation, but an incomplete superstructure. In grace God gave the Jews an additional forty years after Pentecost to get into the new superstructure – the church. After that, the Jews came under the fifth cycle of discipline when Titus and the legions of Rome destroyed Jerusalem and scattered the Jews. During that grace period they were warned by the temporary gift of tongues of impending discipline. Today Jews are no longer to look to Jerusalem, but to Jesus Christ. Believing Jews of today become a part of the Church, not Israel. They become a part of the Royal Family of God forever.

In His resurrection, ascension and session Jesus Christ is the starting point for the spiritual building of Israel. The Jews had every opportunity to understand the first advent from their rituals. For example every week on the Sabbath they had "shama Yisrael, adonai elohenu, adonai echad," which means "hear, O Israel, Jehovah is God, Jehovah is unique." elohenu refers to the Deity of Christ in hypostatic union. echad refers to His humanity in hypostatic union. The meaning of this phrase celebrates the uniqueness of the hypostatic union - undiminished Deity and true humanity in one Person forever – the foundation for the new spiritual building called Israel.

This is comparable to passages in Rev. 1:8, 21:6, and 22:13 where Jesus referred to Himself as the "Alpha and Omega". Alpha is the first letter of the Greek alphabet; omega is the last. Alpha refers to the pre-incarnate existence of Christ as eternal God. Omega refers to Christ's post-incarnate existence in the hypostatic union. As Alpha and Omega at the

completion of the building called the Church (resurrection of the church, or Rapture) Jesus Christ will resume construction of the spiritual building called Israel.

The Jews should also have understood the first advent from their feast schedules. The Passover portrays the saving work of Jesus Christ on the cross. I Cor. 5:7 says, "*Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.*" This actually occurred during the first advent around 14 April 30 AD. The cross must come before the crown. The only true Israel is the Jew who believes in Jesus Christ, following the pattern set by Abraham.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread occurred for one week immediately after the Passover, from 15 to 30 April 30 AD. Described in Lev. 26:6-7, this feast portrays the fellowship of God with believers only. In hypostatic union our Lord revealed Himself as the "Bread of Life". The unleavened bread, (leaven is always a picture of sin) represents the impeccability of Jesus Christ as He went to the cross to be judged for our sins. His humanity remained in the prototype divine power sphere operating strictly from the resources provided by the omnipotence of the Holy Spirit (Heb. 9:14). He used divine happiness as His problem-solving device while on the cross (Heb. 12:2).

The Feast of First Fruits was the first Sunday after the Passover. This portrays the resurrection of the humanity of Jesus Christ at the termination of the first advent. I Cor. 15:20, 23 says, "*But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of them that sleep... but each in his own battalion: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming.*"

Pentecost occurred 50 days after the Passover, sometime in the first week of June. Pentecost represents the last administration of the fifth cycle of discipline to a Jewish client nation (there have been three such occurrences: the Northern Kingdom of Israel in 722 BC, the Southern Kingdom of Judah in 586 BC and Judea in 70 AD). So Pentecost marks the removal of Israel as a client nation to God until the Second Advent.

The Big Gap, so called because there are no Jewish feasts between the first week in June and the first week in October. This five-month gap represents two coterminous factors: the intercalated Church age, and the times of the Gentiles, in which only Gentile nations can serve as client nations to God. "Intercalation" means insertion, hence the insertion of the Church Age and the times of the Gentiles before the completion of the Age of Israel.

There are two terminations in scripture: that of the Church Age with the resurrection of the Church or the "Rapture", and that of the dispensation of Israel at the Second Advent of Christ. This coincides with Jesus Christ being the chief cornerstone, the foundation for both spiritual buildings. During this "Big Gap", the Royal Family of God is being constructed on the foundation of Jesus Christ through the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

In the first advent Jesus Christ also became the foundation for the spiritual building of Israel. However, because of Israel's rejection of Jesus Christ during His first advent, construction on that building is postponed until the Second Advent when the Lord will supersede Satan as the ruler of this world.

For this reason there is no prophecy in the Church Age as there was in the Old Testament times. Instead of prophecy *mystery doctrines* are available to Church Age believer. Mystery doctrine is a category of truth unknown to the human authors of the Old Testament, but revealed to us in the New Testament (Rom. 16:25-26; Eph. 3:1-6; Col. 1:25-26). There are many places in the Old Testament where the Church Age would have been mentioned had God desired to do so. But instead they were passed over in total silence under the principle of mystery doctrine (mystery is from the Greek word μυστήριον – musterion – which means *hidden* or *concealed*). For example, it could have been inserted between Dan. 2:40 and 41; 7:23 and 24; 8:22 and 23; 11:35 and 36 and between Hosea 3:4 and 5.

The Feast of Atonement (Yom Kippur) represents the fulfillment of the unconditional covenants to Israel – the Abrahamic, Palestinian, Davidic, and New Covenants. For the fulfillment of these covenants to Israel all Jewish believers of the Old Testament and the Jewish

martyrs of the Tribulation are resurrected while Jewish believers who survive the Tribulation enter the Millennium to enjoy these as well. Two categories of Jews will enjoy the fulfillment of these covenants: those in resurrection bodies, and those in bodies of corruption. The New Testament commentary of this feast is in Rom. 3:23-26. There is also an excellent discussion about it in Heb. 9:24-28.

The feast of the Tabernacles (Zech. 14:9, 16; Lev. 23:33-43) represents the millennial reign of Jesus Christ under perfect environment.

Having the eschatological calendar meant that perceptive Jews required very little explanation to understand God's plan for them.

Summary of Jesus Christ as the Chief Cornerstone

1. Jesus Christ fulfills the Chief Cornerstone principle during the first advent in two ways:
 - a. Through the virgin birth Jesus Christ became David's greater Son, the ruler of Israel, both in the Millennium and forever.
 - b. Through His strategic victory on the cross, followed by His resurrection, Jesus Christ became the ruler of the Royal Family of God during the Church Age and forever.
2. Therefore, Jesus Christ is the cornerstone and foundation of two spiritual buildings during the first advent: Israel and the Church.
3. Jesus Christ is the cornerstone and foundation of the Church now under construction (Eph. 2:20-22).
4. To the Jews during the first advent, our Lord was the stone of stumbling (Rom. 9:32-33).
5. To Israel at the Second Advent, Jesus Christ is the headstone of the corner (Zech. 4:7).