

# LET GOD ARISE!

*Like a Master Builder  
Prayer Guide #2  
Rev. Dr. Don L. Davis*



## **Christ as Cornerstone** Matthew 21.42

### **The Solid Rock**

*Edward Mote and William B. Bradbury*

My hope is built on nothing less  
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness.  
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,  
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.

On Christ the solid Rock I stand,  
All other ground is sinking sand.  
All other ground is sinking sand.

When darkness veils His lovely face,  
I rest on His unchanging grace.  
In every high and stormy gale,  
My anchor holds within the veil.

His oath, His covenant, His blood,  
Support me in the whelming flood.  
When all around my soul gives way,  
He then is all my Hope and Stay.

When He shall come with trumpet sound,  
O may I then in Him be found!  
Dressed in His righteousness alone,  
Faultless to stand before the throne!

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### **The Rejected Stone Has Become the Cornerstone**

Ps. 118.14-26 - The Lord is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation. [15] Glad songs of salvation are in the tents of the righteous: “The right hand of the Lord does valiantly, [16] the right hand of the Lord exalts, the right hand of the Lord does valiantly!” [17] I shall not die, but I shall live, and recount the deeds of the Lord. [18] The Lord has disciplined me severely, but he has not given me over to death. [19] Open to me the gates of righteousness, that I may enter through them and give thanks to the Lord. [20] This is the gate of the Lord; the righteous shall enter through it. [21] I thank you that you have answered me and have become my salvation. [22] The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. [23] This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. [24] This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. [25] Save us, we pray, O Lord! O Lord, we pray, give us success! [26] Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! We bless you from the house of the Lord.

### **Jesus of Nazareth is the Cornerstone of God, the Capstone of God's Building**

Matt. 21.42-46 - Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures: “‘The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes’? [43] Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruits. [44] And the one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him.” [45] When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they perceived that he was speaking about them. [46] And although they were seeking to arrest him, they feared the crowds, because they held him to be a prophet.

Mark 12.10-12 - Have you not read this Scripture: “‘The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; [11] this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes’?” [12] And they were seeking to arrest him but feared the people, for they perceived that he had told the parable against them. So they left him and went away.



*Unless otherwise noted, all Scriptures are taken from the English Standard Version (ESV)*

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Luke 20.17-20 - But he looked directly at them and said, “What then is this that is written: ‘The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone’? [18] Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him.” [19] The scribes and the chief priests sought to lay hands on him at that very hour, for they perceived that he had told this parable against them, but they feared the people. [20] So they watched him and sent spies, who pretended to be sincere, that they might catch him in something he said, so as to deliver him up to the authority and jurisdiction of the governor.

Acts 4.11 - This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone.

### **Christ Is the Stone Rejected by Men but Precious to God**

Ps. 118.22 - The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.

Isa. 28.16 - Therefore thus says the Lord God, “Behold, I am the one who has laid as a foundation in Zion, a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, of a sure foundation: ‘Whoever believes will not be in haste.’”

1 Pet. 2.4-8 - As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, [5] you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. [6] For it stands in Scripture: “Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.” [7] So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, “The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone,” [8] and “A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense.” They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.



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### **The Apostles Recognized Jesus of Nazareth as the Cornerstone**

Acts 4.5-12 - On the next day their rulers and elders and scribes gathered together in Jerusalem, [6] with Annas the high priest and Caiaphas and John and Alexander, and all who were of the high-priestly family. [7] And when they had set them in the midst, they inquired, “By what power or by what name did you do this?” [8] Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers of the people and elders, [9] if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man, by what means this man has been healed, [10] let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by him this man is standing before you well. [11] This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. [12] And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”

### **As Our Foundation and Cornerstone, Those Who Trust in Christ Are Both Safe and Secure**

Isa. 8.14 - And he will become a sanctuary and a stone of offense and a rock of stumbling to both houses of Israel, a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

Zech. 3.9 - For behold, on the stone that I have set before Joshua, on a single stone with seven eyes, I will engrave its inscription, declares the Lord of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of this land in a single day.

Rom. 9.33 - as it is written, “Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense; and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.”

Rom. 10.11 - For the Scripture says, “Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.”



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1 Cor. 3.11 - For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

Eph. 2.20 - built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone.

### **The Church Is the Temple of God Built on Christ by the Spirit**

Eph. 2.19-22 - So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, [20] built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, [21] in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. [22] In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

### **Christ Is the “Top Stone” That Will Destroy All Nations and Usher in the Reign of God in the Earth**

Dan. 2.36-45 - This was the dream. Now we will tell the king its interpretation. [37] You, O king, the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, and the might, and the glory, [38] and into whose hand he has given, wherever they dwell, the children of man, the beasts of the field, and the birds of the heavens, making you rule over them all—you are the head of gold. [39] Another kingdom inferior to you shall arise after you, and yet a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth. [40] And there shall be a fourth kingdom, strong as iron, because iron breaks to pieces and shatters all things. And like iron that crushes, it shall break and crush all these. [41] And as you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, it shall be a divided kingdom, but some of the firmness of iron shall be in it, just as you saw iron mixed with the soft clay. [42] And as the toes of the feet were partly iron and partly clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly brittle. [43] As you saw the iron mixed with soft clay, so they will mix with one another in marriage, but they will not hold together, just as iron does not mix with clay. [44] And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a



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kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever, [45] just as you saw that a stone was cut from a mountain by no human hand, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold. A great God has made known to the king what shall be after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation sure.

Zech. 4.7 - Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain. And he shall bring forward the top stone amid shouts of “Grace, grace to it!”

### **Christ Is the Rock, Smitten in the Wilderness from Which the Blessing of God Flows**

1 Cor. 10.4 - and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ.

John 7.27-39 - “But we know where this man comes from, and when the Christ appears, no one will know where he comes from.” [28] So Jesus proclaimed, as he taught in the temple, “You know me, and you know where I come from? But I have not come of my own accord. He who sent me is true, and him you do not know. [29] I know him, for I come from him, and he sent me.” [30] So they were seeking to arrest him, but no one laid a hand on him, because his hour had not yet come. [31] Yet many of the people believed in him. They said, “When the Christ appears, will he do more signs than this man has done?” [32] The Pharisees heard the crowd muttering these things about him, and the chief priests and Pharisees sent officers to arrest him. [33] Jesus then said, “I will be with you a little longer, and then I am going to him who sent me. [34] You will seek me and you will not find me. Where I am you cannot come.” [35] The Jews said to one another, “Where does this man intend to go that we will not find him? Does he intend to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks and teach the Greeks? [36] What does he mean by saying, ‘You will seek me and you will not find



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me,’ and, ‘Where I am you cannot come?’” [37] On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. [38] Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’” [39] Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. ■

OF ALL the things most painful in life, perhaps nothing is as annoying and hurtful as the state and feeling of being rejected, overlooked, and ignored by others.

My memory is full of those poignant moments when, on some nameless weekend on the neighborhood basketball courts, I was rejected by the fellas on the court. To be ignored is one thing; to be deliberately and mockingly rejected is quite another. As a kid who was simply too short to play with the “palm trees” in my neighborhood, I more than once felt the sting of being rejected by those mighty champions of street-ball, hard court titans who dominated our local legendary basketball tales of the past.

Many years have passed and I am not worse-for-wear due to the nasty and potent stings of rejection I experienced in grammar school in the city neighborhood where I grew up. (I got bigger, played varsity, and competed with city honors through high school). Still, who can forget what it means to be the last standing, when all others have been chosen and desired, and you stand alone, proof of your own isolation. The human heart, it seems, was simply never engineered to sustain repeated hits of rejection, eclipse, mockery, or dismissal. I have never once in my life met someone who was delighted in being passed over, who relishes being turned down, or who eagerly waits with joy for the next episode of being rebuffed and excluded.



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Of all the most remarkable things spoken of our Lord, it is strange to think of Jesus as a reject, as one who was nixed, eliminated from the running, and turned down as a messianic hopeful. It simply does not compute that the Nazarene could be weighed and found wanting by the religious leaders of his time, those ancient exegetes and priests who denied his credentials and refused his pleas for belief and obedience.

Jesus was given the thumbs-down by the rulers of his day—and, unfortunately, he is disaffirmed and contradicted by many so-called leaders today.

Psalm 118 is one of the most prominent Old Testament texts quoted in the New, and it addresses directly the rejection of Christ by the “builders” and his acceptance and embrace by the LORD:

*Ps. 118.19-24 - Open to me the gates of righteousness, that I may enter through them and give thanks to the Lord. [20] This is the gate of the Lord; the righteous shall enter through it. [21] I thank you that you have answered me and have become my salvation. [22] The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. [23] This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. [24] This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.*

The fact that human beings cherish things that God despises, and that God selects things that people hate is everywhere taught in sacred Scripture (e.g., Luke 16.15 - And he said to them, “You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God.”) This text clearly declares that the stone which the builders rejected has (ironically and surprisingly!) become the very cornerstone of the building! God did it; he deliberately selected and made precious the very stone that the builders passed over and treated with disdain and denial. The stone that was turned down became the very Cornerstone of God’s workmanship.



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Most scholars believe this saying to be a proverb, but with a huge amount of ironic twist. A stone (we are not told which one) that was originally rejected for building purposes by the very builders themselves winds up in a preeminent position. This very stone that is despised by the builders (the reasons why are unclear) turns out to be, on further inspection, the chief cornerstone, often called the “bondstone” or the “top stone,” the “capstone,” the “corner of the foundation,” the “crowning stone of all.” In light of the plain New Testament references, this text has primary allusion to Christ (see Matt. 21.42; Mark 12.10; Luke 20.17; Acts 4.11; Eph. 2.20; 1 Pet. 2.4,7).

Jesus, the Stone of Stumbling for the so-called “builders” in Israel who rejected his lordship, has now been exalted through the anointing and election of God. As the Stone laid in Zion by Yahweh himself, Jesus is the Capstone, the Chief and Precious Cornerstone who, believed in and relied upon, never disappoints (Isa. 28.16).

This powerful messianic prophecy has a corollary truth conjoined to it that lies at the heart of both the Old and New Testament citations about God’s choice and our rejection of it. A principle emerges that illustrates the complexity of God’s divine irony in leadership selection. This principle clearly reveals the precise nature of God’s choice of men and women to represent him.

God chooses the broken to confound the whole, the foolish to shame the wise, the poor to astound the rich, the base and the despised to shame the honorable, and the weak to humble the strong. God chooses and exalts what men tend to reject and despise (cf., 1 Cor. 1.26-29).

This is the heart of the irony of God’s use of men and women, and is testified of in virtually every narrative involving God’s choice. While people tend to look on the appearance of a person, the external background, history, training, pedigree, socioeconomic background, education, and other



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notable phenomena, God looks on the heart (1 Sam. 16.7). Whomever God calls and empowers accomplishes his task, and he tends to select those whom even the most experienced find detestable. The strength and wisdom of God are best displayed through human vessels which are weak and foolish, and his grace is made perfect through weakness.

God's selection of Christ despite his rejection by the so-called experts should give us hope who pray for the transformation of the cities and renewal of the poor. Those people who appear to be useless, even to the keenest eye of the most experienced builders, may easily become the select vessels of God, not merely to make an exceedingly useful contribution, but through his grace and preparation, may even become the very cornerstone of God's enterprise. This is the heart of the divine irony of God's selection of leaders.

This month, let us stand in awe at the irony of God shown in how and in whom he chose to be the Cornerstone. Our prayers and efforts are neither in vain nor wasted; our God is able to exalt the weak and bring down the strong, to elect the rejected and transcend the experts. As we enter into the season of Epiphany, let us affirm what seems self-evident from the life and calling of the Master: *The Stone that the Builders reject can easily become the Capstone through the selection and provision of the Lord.*

Truly, this is the Lord's doing, and it truly is marvelous in our eyes! ■

### **The Season of Epiphany: Jesus Is the Cornerstone**

*Matt. 21.42-46 - Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes"? [43] Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruits. [44] And the one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him."*



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### **Biblical Principle of the Month**

During this Season of Epiphany as we ponder God's revelation of himself through Jesus Christ's incarnation, let us joyfully declare that God's choice is not dependent upon appearance, position, power, background or history. God elects not on the basis of pedigree, socioeconomic background, or status in the world, but according to his sovereign will. God can call and empower whomever he will to accomplish whatever he desires. Those whom the experts reject become the critical pieces in his overall plan. This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes!

*Ps. 118.19-24 - Open to me the gates of righteousness, that I may enter through them and give thanks to the Lord. [20] This is the gate of the Lord; the righteous shall enter through it. [21] I thank you that you have answered me and have become my salvation. [22] The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. [23] This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. [24] This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.*

*Isa. 28.16 - Therefore thus says the Lord God, "Behold, I am the one who has laid as a foundation in Zion, a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, of a sure foundation: 'Whoever believes will not be in haste.'"*

### **Example of Resting on God's Foundation: Paul**

*1 Cor. 3.5-11 - What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. [6] I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. [7] So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. [8] He who plants and he who waters are one, and each will receive his wages according to his labor. [9] For we are God's fellow workers. You are God's field, God's building. [10] According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else*



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*is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it. [11]  
For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is  
Jesus Christ.*



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