

THE CORNERSTONE

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Lesson: Matthew 21

About a week before the Lord was crucified He was sitting in the Temple teaching the people about His heaven and His kingdom on earth. This made the chief priests and the elders of the people very angry, for to their mind only they had the right to teach the things of heaven and the church. So, they walked up to the Lord and asked who had given Him the right to teach about heaven and the church. The Lord promised to answer that question if they would first answer Him if the baptism of John was “from heaven or of men” (Matthew 21:25). But they neither could, nor would, answer that question, for they did not really know anything about heaven, the church or John the Baptist. They were very proud of themselves because they knew the law of Moses and the teachings of the prophets almost by heart. Often they stood in the Street corners and prayed out loud, and often they recited whole chapters of the law to the people. But they did that not from a love of the Lord and His Word, but from a love of themselves—to impress upon the people that they were very pious, and very learned and wise men.

Do you know what happens when you have that kind of love of self? You will become so blind that you cannot even see the Lord; you cannot even see that a truth is a truth. Here the Lord was sitting in the midst of them, teaching the truth about heaven and the church, and the chief priests in the Jewish Church did not even recognize the Lord, or see the truth in His teaching. It is of course true that the body of the Lord was no different from the body of any other man. But these men who knew the Word of God almost by heart, should have been able to see the truth in the Lord’s teaching; they should have been able to recognize the Lord in the man, Jesus; for to see truth is really to see the Lord. But those who have blinded themselves by self-love cannot see truth. And many of the people were no different from their leaders in this respect. This is why the Lord said to His disciples, “Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch” (Matthew 15:14).

But the Lord still loved all these blind people. In every possible way He sought to help them understand and believe that He was really the Lord—their promised Messiah. He asked them if they remembered what king David had prophesied in one of his psalms, “The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of corner” (Psalm 118:22).

These words from the psalm they remembered well. But as the Lord reminded them of this saying of king David, something wonderful happened. Somehow they knew that the “builders” who refused or rejected the “stone” were themselves. They were the builders; they were supposed to help the Lord to build His kingdom on earth. For this, of course, is the duty of priests.

But although they knew within themselves that they were the builders who had rejected the “head stone of the corner,” they still would not admit it. Instead of feeling sorry because they had done this and asking the Lord to forgive them, they grew even angrier with Him. They began to hate the Lord so much that they wanted to kill Him. And the Lord, who can see into the hearts of all men, knew that this was a burning desire within them. And therefore He said to them, “The kingdom of God shall be taken away from you and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof” (Matthew 21:43).

The Lord called Himself the “head stone of the corner.” And you can understand that a corner stone in a building must be very strong and solid. If this important stone, the stone upon which the whole house is to rest, is cracked or soft it is quite likely that when the building is almost finished, it will break into pieces, or crumble, and then the whole building will fall.

Perhaps you have heard sometime that during your life in this world you, as it were, build a house in your mind—a house in which you will live in the other world. And this house is built by all the things you believe to be true. Every time you say to yourself, “This I believe,” or “I can see that this is a truth,” you add another stone to that house in your mind. This is why the Lord spoke of Himself as “the head stone of the corner.” For to believe that the Lord Jesus Christ who was born of the virgin Mary, is the One and Only God of heaven and earth is the most important of all truths taught in the Lord’s Word. This truth must be the corner stone if your house is to be in heaven. And all the other truths, or “stones” which you use when building the house of your mind must also be taken from the Word, or they must be truths seen in the Word. Only in such a house can you find safety and happiness.

The Lord built a Divine temple within Himself when He lived in the world. And absolutely nothing that came from any man, or even from any angel, could be used in the building of that Divine temple. And when the Lord had finished the building of that Divine Temple within Himself, He had no longer any use for the body which He had taken from Mary. This is why He permitted evil and wicked men to nail that body to the cross. For that body belonged to this world; that body was discarded. For only then could the Lord rise in His own Divine body.

This is the wonderful story of Easter. It is wonderful because the evil and wicked men who believed that they had killed the Lord by nailing His body to the cross, actually helped Him to complete the building of the Divine temple within Him. The Lord rose in His own Divine Body on the third day as He had

promised His disciples. And in this His Divine glorified Human, which He sometimes spoke of as a “Temple”, the Lord is forever present with all His children of men both on earth and in heaven. And He is forever helping them to understand, ever more clearly that He is the “Head Stone of the corner,” the One and Only God of heaven and earth.