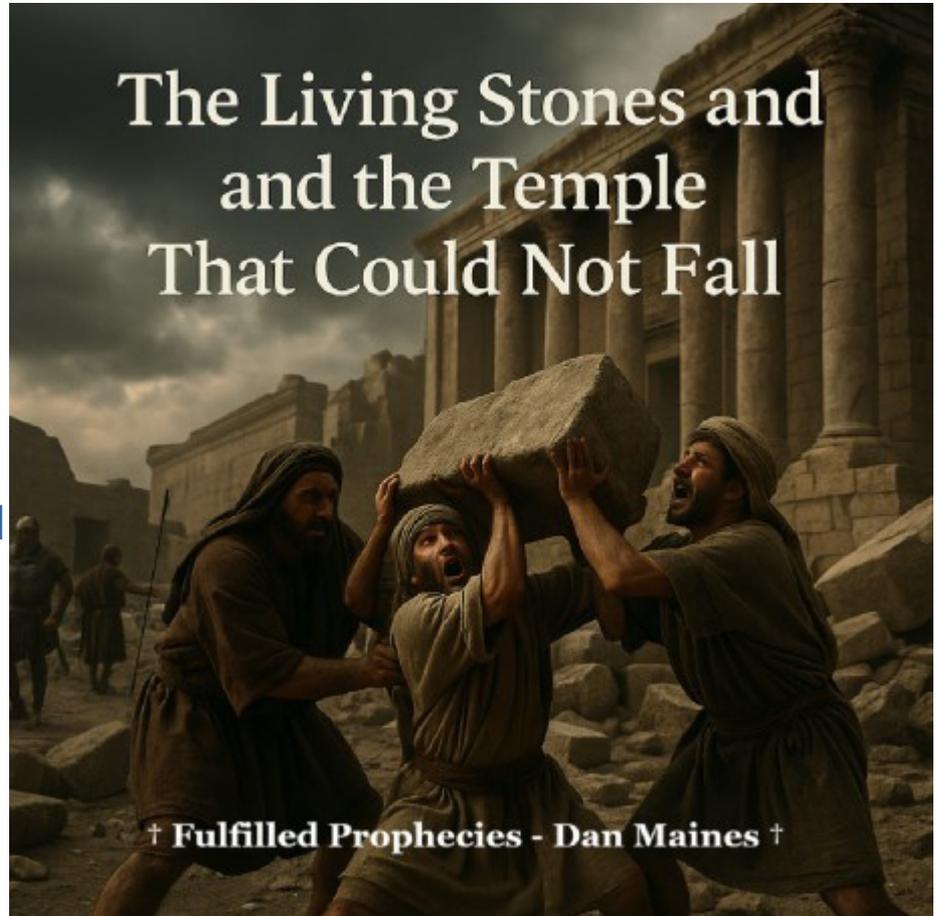


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The Living Stones and the Temple That Could Not Fall



By Dan Maines

The Living Stones and the Temple That Could Not Fall

1 Peter 2:4-6

And coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God, you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For this is contained in Scripture: Behold, I lay in Zion a choice stone, a precious corner stone, and he who believes in Him will not be disappointed.

† Peter presents a powerful image of transition from a physical to a spiritual temple. In the old covenant, worship centered around a building of stone, but in the new covenant, God's dwelling is among His people. The believers became the structure, and Christ Himself is the cornerstone that holds it together. (John 4:23-24 - Worship in spirit and truth; Ephesians 2:20 - Christ the cornerstone)

† The phrase "rejected by men" refers to Israel's leaders who cast away the true cornerstone. When they rejected Jesus, they unknowingly rejected the only foundation that could give lasting life. The temple they honored would soon crumble, but the spiritual house built on Christ would endure forever. (Matthew 21:42 - The stone the builders rejected; Luke 20:17 - The rejected stone became the chief cornerstone)

† This passage shows the complete fulfillment of God's plan to dwell with man. His Spirit no longer resides in a building but in living hearts. Every believer is now a part of the true holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices through Christ, not animal offerings under the law. (2 Corinthians 6:16 - God dwells among His people; Hebrews 13:15 - Spiritual sacrifices of praise)

Ephesians 2:19-22

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.

† Paul confirms that the household of God was already being formed in the first century. The foundation of this new temple was the apostles and prophets, with Christ as the chief cornerstone. This temple, made without hands, was rising while

the old one stood ready to fall. (1 Corinthians 3:10-11 - Christ the only foundation; Acts 2:42 - Built on the apostles' teaching)

† The phrase "growing into a holy temple" shows that the structure was expanding as the gospel spread. Each believer added by faith was another stone in the house of God. By AD 70, the foundation and structure of this temple were fully established, and the old covenant house came down. (Isaiah 2:2-3 - The mountain of the Lord's house established; Matthew 24:1-2 - Not one stone left upon another)

† The Spirit's indwelling in this temple was permanent. God's glory once filled the temple of Solomon, but His Spirit now fills the Church eternally. There will never again be a veil or a separation between God and His people. (Hebrews 9:8-11 - The veil signified the old system; 2 Corinthians 3:17-18 - Where the Spirit is, there is liberty)

Matthew 24:1-2

Jesus came out from the temple and was going away when His disciples came up to point out the temple buildings to Him. And He said to them, "Do you not see all these things? Truly I say to you, not one stone here will be left upon another, which will not be torn down."

† The disciples admired the visible temple, but Jesus prophesied its total destruction. His words were not about distant ages but about the very structure before their eyes. The fall of that temple would mark the end of the old covenant world. (Luke 21:6 - The days will come when not one stone will be left; Matthew 23:38 - Your house is left to you desolate)

† Every stone that fell in AD 70 testified that the shadow had passed. The sacrifices ceased, the priesthood ended, and the physical structure that once represented God's presence was gone forever. What remained was the true, eternal temple made of living stones. (Hebrews 8:13 - What is becoming obsolete is

ready to disappear; John 2:19-21 - Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up)

† The destruction of the temple was not a defeat, but a declaration that redemption was complete. Christ's finished work had removed every barrier between God and man. The presence that once filled the Holy of Holies now filled His people. (Matthew 27:51 - The veil was torn; Hebrews 10:19-22 - We enter through the veil, His flesh)

1 Corinthians 3:16-17

Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are.

† Paul reminds the Corinthians that they themselves were the temple. The Spirit that once filled a physical sanctuary now indwelt them directly. The holiness once confined to Jerusalem was now spread among all believers. (Romans 8:9-11 - The Spirit dwells in you; Ephesians 3:17 - Christ dwells in your hearts through faith)

† The warning "If any man destroys the temple" was directed at those who opposed the Church. Persecution could not destroy what God had built. The true temple could not be touched by fire, sword, or siege. (Matthew 16:18 - The gates of Hades will not overpower it; Isaiah 54:17 - No weapon formed against you shall prosper)

† God's temple is not a building to be rebuilt but a people to be revealed. Its foundation cannot crack, its walls cannot fall, and its glory will never fade. The destruction of the old temple only proved the permanence of the new. (Revelation 21:22 - The Lord God and the Lamb are its temple; Daniel 2:44 - The kingdom will never be destroyed)

Hebrews 12:27-28

This expression, "Yet once more," denotes the removing of those things which can be shaken, as of created things, so that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe.

† The writer of Hebrews identifies the shaking as the passing of the old covenant order. The heavens and earth of that system were being removed so that the eternal kingdom would stand unshaken. (Haggai 2:6-7 - I will shake the heavens and the earth; Hebrews 8:6-7 - A better covenant established on better promises)

† The kingdom they were receiving was the same unshakable structure Peter and Paul described. When the visible temple fell, the invisible kingdom was revealed in full strength and glory. (Daniel 7:27 - The kingdom given to the saints; Luke 1:33 - His kingdom will have no end)

† Gratitude should mark every believer who understands this fulfillment. We no longer serve in fear of loss but in confidence of permanence. The dwelling of God is with men, and it cannot be shaken. (Revelation 21:3 - The tabernacle of God is among men; Psalm 46:5 - God is in her midst, she will not be moved)

Historical References

Josephus recorded that during the Roman siege of Jerusalem, the temple was set on fire and its stones were torn apart, fulfilling Jesus' prophecy exactly. Eusebius wrote that the early believers had fled to Pella, obeying the Lord's warning, and saw the judgment on the old covenant city as the end of that age. These historical witnesses confirm that the physical temple fell, but the living temple endured.

How It Applies to Us Today

We are the temple of God. The Spirit does not dwell in temples made with hands but in living people. The fall of the old temple was the final sign that redemption was finished. Our worship is not tied to a place, a building, or a ritual, but to the eternal presence of God in us. The Church is the temple that cannot fall, and Christ is forever its cornerstone.

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

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Source Index

† 1 Peter 2:4-6; Ephesians 2:19-22; Matthew 24:1-2; 1 Corinthians 3:16-17; Hebrews 12:27-28
† Josephus, Wars of the Jews, Book 6
† Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, Book 3

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