

Are you a “Living STONE” or a “living Brick”?

1 Peter 2:4-5 Which do we want to be?

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All scriptures are NKJV unless noted otherwise.

Summary: You know we’re called a “living stone”, but why not a “living brick”? The differences between stones and bricks explains what our Father is doing in preparing us for eternity. I hope you will never ever think of your calling to be a living stone in the same minimal light again.

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Warm Sabbath greetings and shalom, my brothers and sisters in the Messiah, Jesus Christ (whom I usually will call Yeshua, meaning “Salvation”. I also often refer to God Almighty our Father as “Abba”, meaning “Daddy”. And I use YHVH where it is used in Scripture.)

I also apologize to all of you who faithfully come to this site for not having new messages recently. My recording equipment broke down and needed repair and replacement, so I hope we’re back on track. Thank you for your patience.

I hope Abba in heaven is inspiring this message as it has been impressed strongly in my heart for a couple of weeks now. This started out as a simple blog but the more I got into the blog, the more I realized there was more to this topic than I had even first imagined.

The other day I was thinking about how we are called “living stones” in scripture. *I asked various ones what comes to their mind when someone mentions “stones”.* What do you think of when you hear the word “stones”? Well, the answers I got mostly revolved around the small stones or pebbles in the ground, or ones you might see while weeding, or small decorative stones you may have, or stones or rocks in the garden or in a river bed. Those were the answers I got.

So what do you think of, but more importantly, what did *God* have in mind when He inspired Peter to call us “living stones” in 1 Peter 2. Understanding this will have everything to do with our understanding of our calling and everything we go through.

Remember to think spiritually when we read of physical things in scripture – like a temple, manna, a lamb, a sacrifice, a priest, water, wind, fruit – and so much more. YHVH is not thinking of rocks, frankly, when He calls us living stones. He’s thinking of YOU and what He is transforming you and me to be. Let that sink in to your mind. Turn to 1 Peter 2.

1 Peter 2:4-5

“Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, 5 **you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house**, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”

Notice first of all, our older brother Yeshua is the standard of a Living Stone– and HE is called *precious*. Then in verse 5 we are told, “YOU ALSO, AS LIVING STONES, are being built into a spiritual house...” (KJV – “lively stones”)

There you have it. So YOU are called a living stone. I say again, the physical is a type of the spiritual. You’ll read a good explanation of the physical representing the spiritual in 1 Cor. 15:44-49 as well as through parts of Hebrews 7-10 and Romans 4-5, 9-11 and more. We also know from the Biblical records that the House of God, the temple, was built of stone, not brick.

Here’s the question today: WHY are those being called out of modern-day Babylon today called living “stones” – and not living bricks?

Have you ever wondered about that? I’ll bet most people haven’t. I hadn’t until I heard someone broach the subject that got me thinking even more about it.

Are you and I – a living *brick* – or a living *stone*? Is it even important? Does it even matter? Or is this just a silly topic? The casual listener might think so. But not so fast. How do stones differ from bricks? What SPIRITUAL lessons can we learn in the differences between stones and bricks? I believe if you are a spiritual brick, you won’t even be part of the spiritual house of God. It’s that simple. He’s not looking for bricks for his new temple, but stones. *Once you get the point of this sermon – and do further thinking on it on your own, you’re going to be seeing and understanding what’s happened in your life as never before.*

Why does God never want to call you His “living bricks” – but He does call you his “living stones”?

Elsewhere, as I covered in my message about being a spiritual HOUSE OF God, we are often referred to as God’s temple or God’s house (1 Cor. 3:16; 1 Cor. 6:19, etc.) – Hebrews 3:6 tells us we are God’s house. 1 Timothy 3:15 says the church is the “house of God” today. Now go to Ephesians 2:19-22 and notice the imagery of a temple or house of God, a building. Do you ever think of yourself as part of a building, being prepared to fill a particular spot in the spiritual temple of God?

Ephesians 2:19-22

“Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, 20 **having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone,** 21 in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, 22 in whom YOU also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.”

The first time BRICK is mentioned in the Bible

The first time a word or topic is mentioned in the Bible is often very important. This is no exception. Now besides the temple of God, there was another temple. The ancient Babylonians liked their temples to be towers in the beginning. We know about the Tower of

Babel in Genesis 11 but you may not have realized that that tower also doubled as their TEMPLE. Be turning with me to Genesis 11.

Look at what it says about BABEL – and the original Babylon, led by arch-enemy of God, Nimrod and his mother-wife Semiramis. And remember that all religions – except YHWH's teachings -- were molded and shaped by ancient Babylon, arch-enemy of God. Our God says He will once more destroy Babylon in the last days and warns His children to all come out of Babylon and not to be a part of its ways (Revelation 18:4).

Now notice what Babylon produced for their building material for their city, tower and temple. Was it stone? No, they were in what is now Iraq. There's not a lot of stone there, so they made a building material.

Genesis 11:1-4

Now the whole earth had one language and one speech. 2 And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and they dwelt there. 3 Then they said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks and bake them thoroughly." **They had BRICK for stone**, and they had asphalt for mortar. 4 And they said, "**Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves**, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth."

The KJV says "slime" but the Hebrew word usually refers to asphalt, tar, and pitch – not slime. Babylon was the first to learn how to harden bricks by baking them, or "burning" them, as KJV says. OK – so the ancient rebels made a man-made "stone" called "brick". Bricks had been made before – but they were just sun-dried, apparently, and so not very strong. But these bricks in Genesis 11 were fired, were baked to make them much harder.

But let's get the point: this building material, brick, was man-made. Brick is made quickly, and comes out of a mold, whereas stone takes a long time to form and each is unique.

Asphalt or tar would have made their tower-temple also waterproof, perhaps in defiance to God himself. Maybe the ancient Babylonians were saying "Go ahead God, send another flood if you want. We're not afraid of it or of you because we have a high tower that is water resistant now."

So the first time we read of bricks, they are mentioned in connection to rebellion against God. They wanted to build a high tower – which was actually their pagan temple as well – and defy God to send another Flood. This tower was to be built to the heavens! And it was sealed with tar, pitch and asphalt so it was water proof! BRICK -- in God's mind – was associated with BABYLON, with rebellion. Some say that when God confounded the languages there He also struck their tower with lightning and so the tar and pitch burned and lit up the sky for miles around. That's a tradition, and I can't prove that – but it would make sense.

Even ancient Egypt, which had been molded and shaped (like bricks!) by their leaders who were descendants of those scattered out of Babylon when God confounded the languages – even Egypt built their buildings largely from brick. Again, I'm not saying brick was the only "stone" they used, but notice the enslaved Israelites were engaged in making more and more BRICK for their taskmasters, as well as other tasks.

Exodus 1:13-14

The Egyptians made the children of Israel serve with rigor. 14 And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage — in mortar, **IN BRICK**, and in all manner of service in the field. All their service in which they made them serve was with rigor.

See also Exodus 5:6-8.

But YHWH – GOD ALMIGHTY – clearly told Israel to make altars and temples out of STONE, not brick. When Israel went astray, they made altars of BRICK – against the Eternal God's clear commands (see Isaiah 65:3). YHWH had said his altar was to be built of unhewn stone.

Why is this important? Why does it matter? Why am I writing a blog on it? BECAUSE God doesn't want his spiritual temple (you and I) to be modeled after BRICK, but of spiritual stone. He doesn't want you a part of that world system but HIS system. The world is represented by brick, you are represented by stone. It's not just semantics or playing with words. Understanding the difference is vital. We need ministers to talk and teach the vital difference and what it means for us today.

How do bricks and stones differ? The difference – when seen spiritually – explains why we're going thru what we're going through, and why we are called stones.

What is a brick? It's a small unit of building material, usually a block of **soil/clay** and often some lime and sand or concrete material that's been kneaded and then either fire hardened or dried out in the sun, used by masons in construction. Bricklayers will secure the bricks to each other with mortar – made of cement, sand and water.

So my point is this: ***the history of brick is tied to defiant and pagan men*** who were "in God's face"; or as scripture puts it – "before YHWH": Nimrod, a mighty hunter "before YHWH" (Genesis 10:9). **So the first mention of Brick in the Bible is with BABYLON.** The first time something is mentioned in the Bible is significant.

PRECIOUS STONES ARE ONE-OF-A-KIND, UNIQUE

Bricks, since they tend to come out of a mold to be the same size and shape when being made for a specific wall or building – also depict the pagan rulers of this world trying to SHAPE everyone to be conforming to their world order, their world system. (repeat)

So bricks tend to be the same size, shape and composition – all alike. **BUT no two stones are exactly alike.** Each stone retains certain individuality. Each stone has its own color, its own "fire", its own hardness, its own SHAPE, its own hardness and its own BEAUTY. Each precious stone is UNIQUE.

And guess what? YHWH created and likes that uniqueness and diversity in stones. Peter, James, John, Paul were all apostles – and yet so different! And yet they all had the mind of Christ. **Abba likes having different personalities, differences in temperament, differences in tolerance levels** to stress, etc. etc. that HE put into each of us. Just look at creation: look at all the varieties of grasses, of flowers, even varieties of turtles or monkeys or kinds of cats and dogs. No two mountain peaks are the same, No two lakes are the same. He is into variety.

Bricks are man-made. Bricks are part of man's system. Stones are not. God made the earth and stones. Do you want to be made by God -- or man?

God's temple was made of **STONES** – each unique, many of them very large, each with its own qualities that were chosen for its own particular unique place in the temple. But let's get to the point: *I'm not talking about stones – but about you.* YOU have been selected as a precious stone “in the rough” and now the Master is working on you to make you beautiful and perfect in every way. Again, each stone is unique. *A precious stone is not a man-made product.* GOD, and the processes in creation that He started, created stones. God likes what that shows us about his LIVING stones, making up the spiritual temple.

If the Almighty could take the time to make each stone, each rock, unique and precious – how much more is He doing that with His very own children who will make up His spiritual temple?

Too many of man's systems – even in many Christian churches – try to make us all conform to whatever the human leader deems best. But Abba (our loving Father) is not into making thousands of identical human “bricks” – but HE was the one who created us. HE made each of us unique, for HIS special tasks.

All of us have rough edges that Abba is working on and working with. But He loves what is uniquely you. Though he will convert you and me, radically change our hearts – many of our quirks will be retained so we will still be recognizable as uniquely the person each is. He doesn't want a lot of robots! He wants children. And children are all different, and parents love it to be so!

God Almighty – our Daddy in heaven -- LIKES the diversity in His children's personalities, even as we all strive to work together in the mind of Christ. He enjoys our different strengths, different personalities, different character traits – as ANY father or mother would, as they enjoy their many children and grandchildren, no two the same, each one unique, and each one marvelous and priceless, made by God himself. That's what God wants – not a bunch of identical human bricks! Come on!

But what do we see even in the various believer congregations whether “Christian”, “Hebrew roots” or “Messianic”? I describe it this way: All the human yellow pencils are getting together in one box as they exclude the red and blue pencils. And so we continue to have more and more “splinter” groups who don't fellowship and worship with other believers who are part of “that other group over there”. And then, to make it worse, we have minister after minister blaming GOD for the divisions and continued fracturing and splits and splintering of his ekklesia – which was supposed to picture the perfect unity of the ONE BODY of Christ himself. We sing “Onward Christian soldiers” and make mockery of the words ...”All ONE BODY we; ONE in hope and doctrine, one in charity”. Really?

I believe that's telling us that YHWH – though he IS shaping and molding us and preparing us – also likes the uniqueness HE placed in each of us. YOU are unique in all the universe. Father in heaven likes that, because HE made you. He made you unique. He doesn't want you being just another brick – all alike, all *molded* into the same size and shape and ... BORING.

BRICKS ARE NOT PRECIOUS. PRECIOUS STONES ARE PRECIOUS.

Bricks will never be called “precious” – unless it's a gold brick, I suppose. But especially when we're talking about the TEMPLE of GOD, whose temple you are, you - - the living stones of that temple – are actually called a precious stone, like Yeshua – not just a backyard pebble. You're a *precious* stone.

1 Peter 2:4-5

“Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and **PRECIOUS, YOU ALSO, AS LIVING STONES** (you are also precious), are being built up a spiritual house....”

Are you hearing the differences? And it gets even clearer when we read shortly how David included many precious stones as he prepared the building of the temple, to be done later by his son Solomon.

Bricks are not precious stones and never called “precious bricks”. Let me be sure you “get” this point: **you're not just any old stone – you're a PRECIOUS stone** in God's new temple. And the “stones” in the temple were not pebbles. They were pretty huge. They had a job to do, to support an entire structure. So stop thinking of yourself as backyard pebbles to be thrown away but more of what Scripture says you are – huge building blocks or decorative stones in the House of God.

Scripture clearly tells us that David – who prepared most of the material used for the first temple – used marble slabs a lot, as well as polished granite and even *precious* stones.

1 Chronicles 29:1-2

“Furthermore King David said to all the assembly: “My son Solomon, whom alone God has chosen, is young and inexperienced; and the work is great, because the temple is not for man but for YHVH God. 2 Now for the house of my God I have prepared with all my might: gold for things to be made of gold, silver for things of silver, bronze for things of bronze, iron for things of iron, wood for things of wood, **onyx stones, stones to be set, glistening stones of various colors, all kinds of PRECIOUS STONES, and marble slabs in abundance.**”

2 Chronicles 3:6-7

“And he **decorated the House [of God] with precious stones for *beauty***, and the gold was gold from Parvaim. He also overlaid the house — the beams and doorposts, its walls and doors — with gold; and he carved cherubim on the walls.”

I'm making the point: Christ is the chief cornerstone to this building. And we are being built IN HIM, it says in Ephesians 2. And HE is called “precious” in 1Peter 2:4-5 and it goes on to say there, “YOU also [are precious] living stones....” And we're told that these stones that represented us were “glistening stones of various colors, all kinds of *precious* stones” for *beauty*... Wow, are you getting the picture of how your Daddy in heaven, Abba - Almighty God sees you, wants to see you, and WILL see you when that spiritual temple comes together?

A precious, precious stone!

Don't forget that the PHYSICAL is a type of the spiritual.

Even Heavenly Jerusalem where God our Daddy in heaven, God Almighty reigns, is a whole CITY the size of half the United States, is made up of golden streets and gates made of solid pearl, and its walls foundations are made of precious stones. All that pictures US – the first fruits being called now. You're precious in God's eyes; a precious living stone.

If you're not familiar with the description of Heavenly Jerusalem – read **Revelation 21**.

Revelation 21:18-21

The construction of its wall was of jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass. 19 **The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with all kinds of precious stones**: the first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, 20 the fifth sardonyx, the sixth sardius, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. 21 The twelve **gates were twelve pearls**: each individual gate was of one pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.

So you're not only a stone, but a *PRECIOUS* stone.

What are examples of PRECIOUS stones? Can you name a few? It's a highly valuable piece of mineral or rock. They are also called "gemstones". Technically there are 4 truly precious stones: **DIAMOND. RUBY. Sapphire. Emerald. Those are "precious stones"**. On top of that, there are dozens and dozens of types of semi-precious stones – like opals, tanzanite, beryl, jade, jasper, agate, aquamarine, garnet, onyx, topaz and so on.

Now what Abba defines as a "precious stone" and what men have defined as precious or semi-precious, may be two different lists. Some "precious stones" today actually cost less than some so-called "semi-precious stones", for example. Many opals, jades and other semiprecious stones today cost more than some precious stones.

The largest DIAMOND discovered, in the rough, was **the Cullinan diamond**, weighing 3,106 carats (your wedding ring might be a quarter, half or whole carat) before it was cut. That's about 1.3 pounds – more than half a kilo, or **.59 kilo** to be exact.

Now God is into BIG. Look at the universe. Kid you not: the largest single diamond ever discovered is a burned out STAR the size of our SUN! You can research it. (New Yorker magazine, June 26, 2014, article by Michael Lemonick). Imagine a huge rock out in space, the size of our sun, which has been determined to be a "diamond". The size of our SUN! Apparently some believe there is one out there! There are planet-sized diamonds out there in space too – just Google "diamond size of sun" and you'll read the articles in scientific journals.

So in the heavenly Jerusalem I think we're going to see buildings, streets, walls and gates and structures of indescribable beauty when we finally get to see it all with our own eyes.

The most beautiful precious stones and diamonds I've ever seen are in the **Tower of London's Crown Jewels**. They are simply exquisite. Take the time to go on GOOGLE

and type in “the Crown Jewels largest diamonds” and look at the pictures. In these crown jewels you have diamonds and emeralds, rubies and sapphires not only in crowns, but in *orbs, swords, scepters, rings, vestments and even spurs. And God is not against us having these: he made them for us. David certainly had it all in abundance.*

Abraham's servant gave Rebekah some very valuable gold and precious stones too. See Genesis 22:53. The Bride of Christ is depicted as being arrayed in fine and precious stones in several places too (Isaiah 61:10; Psalm 45).

SO – let's go beyond just thinking we are stones in the temple, and start thinking of what we truly are in God's plans for us. And remember, if we repent and submit to him, HE WILL complete what He's started in us. He's the builder. He's the architect. Salvation is by His grace. It's completely His work and His doing – freely, by faith, by grace.

I think if you start reading Paul and Peter's writings about our destiny and our high calling – from the point of view that you're not just a rock, but a precious stone like David prepared for the house of God – you'll be encouraged and live better, and tend to live up to the calling we've been given. Though in one way, mankind (Adam) was made from just a piece of dirt – *adamah* – red dirt – we're being transformed to the image of God himself.

So remember, bricks are not precious. bricks are common-place.

PRECIOUS STONES ARE RARE; BRICKS ARE COMMON-PLACE

Precious stones are RARE, certainly not common or common-place. Precious stones are valuable, sometimes costing millions of dollars for one stone largely because of the things that make it precious – including their rarity, purity, brilliance, color, fire, cut and so many things. But nobody ever, ever would pay millions of dollars for one clay brick!

A precious stone is expensive because it is PRECIOUS, because IT IS RARE, it's hard to come by. Think of “Many are called, FEW are chosen.” “Narrow is the way and FEW there be that find it.” Few. Rare. Called to be the living house of God. That's you and that's me – or it can be, if we quit looking down at the dirt we one were as people living in sin, and start looking up to the glory of God we're being called to be! Precious stones are BRILLIANT, beautiful, decorative, and usually very, very hard. More on how the hardness fits in later.

Brethren, when I start believing that someone even like me, can be called a precious living stone in Christ, in God's mind – and when I can really believe He is forming, shaping, cutting and polishing that stone (you and me) now – it does help me live more obediently and uprightly. It's when I keep thinking what a piece of --- well, how bad I am – then I tend to live down to that horrible view of myself and I don't live so righteously.

When you see this picture of this exquisite diamond below, think spiritually. That is how God sees you: the end from the beginning, the finished work of Christ in you – without spot or blemish, perfect in Christ. It's at the resurrection when we are changed to spirit that we shall be INCORRUPTIBLE, without fault, without sin, without the horrible weight of sins and their consequences in our lives today!

Top 10 World's Rarest & Most Valuable Gems

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Pink Star Diamond

Let's say you've got an extra \$80 million or so burning a hole in your pocket. What would you spend it on? Would a single - admittedly beautiful - diamond ever catch your eye?

The Pink Star Diamond is a "Fancy Vivid Pink" diamond that was mined in 1999 in South Africa. Weighing in at 59.6 carats, this gem was sold by Sotheby's for a record \$83 million: more than any other diamond - or any gem - ever sold.

Composition: Carbon | Market Value: \$83,187,381, or about \$1,395,761 per carat



Image Credit: TYRONE SIU/Reuters/Corbis

Remember how Paul says in 1 Cor. 15 – then this corruptible shall put on incorruption. And Jude says at the end of his book, we shall be presented “faultless” before his presence. And notice who the one who will make you faultless is? YOU? Let’s read it.

Jude 24-25

Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling,
And to present you FAULTLESS before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, To God our Savior, Who alone is wise, Be glory and majesty, Dominion and power, Both now and forever. Amen.

Revelation 14:5 says the 144,000 who follow the Lamb of God – are “without fault”. Remember why? They let their Savior take their faults upon himself, HE bore our iniquity, so now God the Father sees us without fault, by faith in Yeshua. And in that faith, we let Christ live in us and we crucify the old self.

But we cannot claim to be a true believer while insisting on living in a life of intentional sin. No, believers prove their salvation by the change going on in their lives as Christ lives in them. We are saved by grace *for* good works, remember (*Ephesians 2:8-10*). But we must have faith in our Messiah Yeshua, to save us and to grow in his Way and His nature. The good works don't save us but are evidence of the fact we are being saved. And we're going to be rewarded by our works. See Revelation 22:12; 1 Cor. 3:8,14 and more.

Now – how precious are you?

How precious are you to God:

Malachi 3:16-17

Then those who feared YHVH spoke to one another, And YHVH listened and heard them; So a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear YHVH And who meditate on His name.

"They shall be Mine," says YHWH of hosts,

"On the day that I make them my JEWELS." (other translations: special treasure)
And I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him."

What makes a gem stone precious? In the rough, they already have value – but it's potential beauty, potential value.

A few of the many things that make a stone a precious stone:

- **RARITY** – many are called, few are chosen.
- **It is a GENUINE gem stone.** *It's the real thing. Be careful when buying a diamond that you're not just buying a pretty quartz or cubic zirconia.*
- **Brilliance** *(we shall shine as the stars in glory (Daniel 12:1-2), we shall be like the Father is, and see him as he is (1 John 3:1-2);*
- **Color and Clarity.**
- **Hardness** – *Diamonds are the hardest of all stones and minerals. If your fingernail is a hardness of 2 on my scale, a penny is a 3, an IRON FILE has a hardness of 6.5, a ruby or sapphire would be 400 – and a diamond is 1,500 in comparison. On another scale of 1-10, a diamond is a 10. A ruby is a 9. A sapphire is around 7.5-8.*
- **Perfection.** *No flaws in it. The more **flawless a gemstone is**, the more valuable. How much has each of us let go of self and let Christ live in us? The more we do, the more flawless and perfect and complete we will be. As Paul said, "I no longer live...but Christ lives in me..." (Gal. 2:20). HE is the perfect one. Ask for and receive HIS perfect righteousness by faith (Philippians 3:8-11).*
- **SIZE and carat** and type of CUT – *all play into its value. How much have you grown and overcome and changed?*

- ***Value is also ultimately determined also by WHATEVER someone is willing to pay for it. It's worth nothing if no one wants to pay money for it. But You have been bought. A very, very high price was paid for you. 1 Cor. 6:20. We are not our own. We belong to Christ who bought us.***

How precious are you? Here's the real answer: Abba sent His one and only Son to die for you. And His Son willingly also accepted that quest and actually offered himself.

John 10:17-18

"Therefore My Father loves Me, **because I lay down My life** that I may take it again. **18 No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself**. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father."

When we think of Yeshua and his sacrifice, think of it personally. Look how Paul says it:

Galatians 2:20-21

"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, **who loved ME and gave Himself for ME**. 21 I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain."

So this is how precious and costly you are: PRICELESS. How do you put a price on the price paid for you: what Yeshua did for you.

You, a living precious stone – are priceless. This is never said of a brick!

**PRECIOUS STONES ARE UNDER MUCH MORE HEAT AND PRESSURE
THAN BRICKS**

That's another thing about bricks vs. stones: BRICKS ARE JUST FIRE- HARDENED DIRT. Precious STONES are formed by intense heat and pressure.

Diamonds, for example, are simple made of ONE thing: **CARBON**. Carbon is the 4th most common thing on earth! For carbon – we can think of CHARCOAL, SOOT, COAL, tar, petroleum, and so on. That's carbon. That's how a diamond begins, as carbon. **BUT, contrary to popular opinion, diamonds RARELY actually come from actual coal.** Research it if you don't believe me. That is an old myth.

I'm just saying "coal" is a commonly known "carbon" so you get an idea. So a diamond – though it started out as common *carbon* – is far different in the end. So will you and I be if we get the vision of what we're being called to be: *totally transformed into the glory and*

I think that's just words for many people. We are being transformed into the same glory and image of Christ, if we believe and submit to that transformation. What did it take for Christ?

Again, a diamond is made of carbon -- that's you and me in the flesh --- that has been put under thousands of tons of stress and pressure 93 miles under the earth's mantle, in 2000

degree heat and then shot up to the surface over time by lava flows. Now we've said they are formed from CARBON, and they are – but rarely actually are they made from COAL itself. Some of these precious stones take millions of years to form. Do you realize that?

Yeshua, the Son of Man and the Son of God, was no exception.

Isaiah 28:16 (about Yeshua)

Therefore thus says YHVH God:

"Behold, I lay in Zion a stone for a foundation,

A tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation;

Whoever believes will not act hastily.

You've undoubtedly read about the prophecies and gospel accounts of what Yeshua went through. In Gethsemane – which means *the Olive press* – he sweat BLOOD, as he was in so much agony, we're told. Remember He is the precious cornerstone of this building. That stone has to be able to withstand the most stress.

Luke 22:41-44

And He was withdrawn from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and prayed, 42 saying, "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done." 43 Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him. 44 **And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly.** Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

When I was younger, I thought his agony was from imagining what a scourging or crucifixion was going to feel like in a few hours. That certainly was part of it. But a large part of it was the agony of being rejected by the people he came to save – by his own tribe Judah, by his own creation – humankind, by his own ministers and priests.

Any of you who have had your dad reject you and walk away... or your daughter or son disown you, you know a tiny portion of that awful, awful agony. It surely has to be worse than not even having kids. We read of Yah's feelings of rejection and the PAIN he went through in the story of the gold calf, and also in Isaiah 1, and all through scripture. Yeshua, who was the One dealing with Israel, came to save them, and again he was rejected. Not just by the Jews, but by ALL of us, all humankind.

Notice the sequence of how more and more people rejected Christ. Imagine how that hurt.

Mark 12:10 calls him the Stone that the builders rejected! But he's now the cornerstone. If you study the gospels, you see that Yeshua has this topic of rejection on his mind quite frequently.

Mark 8:31 – he taught how he had to be rejected by the elders, priests and scribes and even killed.

Luke 17:24-25—Son of Man coming back in glory, but "first he must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation."

1 Peter 2:4 says he was a living stone, rejected by MEN, but chosen by God....

Did you catch the progression? Not just the builders – but all of us rejected him. And he knew it, knows it, and accepts it – but it still hurts. If you've been rejected and are feeling

so much pain, be sure you understand Yeshua does understand. If you are in pain, HE knows pain. If you have an ordeal to go thru, HE knows what that's like.

Isaiah 53:1-6

Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of YHWH been revealed?

2 For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, And as a root out of dry ground.

He has no form or comeliness; And when we see Him, There is no beauty that we should desire Him.

3 He is despised and rejected by men,

A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him;

He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.

4 Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows;

Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted.

5 But He was wounded for our transgressions,

He was bruised for our iniquities;

The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed.

6 All we like sheep have gone astray;

We have turned, every one, to his own way;

And YHWH has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

When your own church rejects you, when your own synagogue tries to kill you, when your priests cry out for your crucifixion, when your own chief apostle says he never knew you, when even your own brothers ridicule you, when your own people want nothing to do with you – and they still don't --and you made them all – the pain had to be indescribable.

But in the end, it made Him a perfect, flawless, hardened, and beautiful, PRECIOUS Cornerstone and the perfect high priest who can relate to us. He's the precious stone that is what we're supposed to pattern our lives after. WE are being built IN HIM, into a holy temple (Ephesians 2:20-22). We're not precious stones by ourselves, but IN HIM.

So when you have trials that seem to go on and on and on, in spite of praying for relief, in spite of fasting, in spite of praying in Yeshua's name – you're still in your wheelchair, you're still rejected by your family, you're still not healed, you're still without a job.... You're that carbon 93 miles below the surface going through the 2000 degree heat and stress to make you the PRECIOUS LIVING STONE – not a brick – but a rare, valuable, beautiful, sparkling, gorgeous, valuable, priceless, one-of –a kind LIVING PRECIOUS STONE you're being created, formed and fashioned to be.

Praise you Yeshua. Praise you Daddy, Almighty Father in heaven. Praise you. But Abba, sometimes the pain and pressure is mighty tough. We cast our stress on you and on Yeshua, as you have told us to do.

Psalm 66:10-11

"For You, O God, have tested us; You have refined us as silver is refined.

You brought us into the net; You laid affliction on our backs."

Isaiah 48:10

"Behold, I have REFINED you, but not as silver;

I have TESTED you in the furnace of affliction".

Zechariah 13:9

I will bring the one-third through the fire,

Will refine them as silver is refined, And test them as gold is tested.

They will call on My name, And I will answer them.

I will say, 'This is My people', And each one will say, 'YHWH is my God.'"

GEMS IN THE ROUGH – HAVE TO BE CUT, POLISHED, AND SHAPED

When we look at stones – made by God, not man-made – whether we are making a beautiful pavement, walkway, building façade – or a jewel in a piece of jewelry – the original gem stone in the rough may not look like much. They look like a rock, a stone.

Here's a picture of a 60 carat diamond in the rough. Even in the rough, each one is unique, no two alike.



Anyway, even when making just a walkway with stone, instead of brick, a skilled craftsman puts the stones where they fit, or sometimes has to cut them a certain way. In the end, we have a beautiful walkway but it's interesting to look at! I realize bricks are sometimes chipped or cut as well when it comes to the ends or corners of a wall or pavement – but there's more uniformity.

Also, God wants the REAL thing. Even if they're genuine, there are industrial-quality diamonds and gemstone diamonds. There are quartz that look like diamonds. There are cubic zirconia that are pretty – but aren't diamonds. God wants the real thing.

So Peter speaks of the trying of our faith for GENUINENESS. That's tough. That hurts.

1 Peter 1:3-9

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has **begotten us again** to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an **inheritance incorruptible and undefiled** and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 who are **kept by the power of God through faith** for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

6 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various **trials**, 7 **that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ**, 8 whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, 9 receiving **the end of your faith — the salvation of your souls**.

The process of making a gem in the rough into a precious stone someone will cherish, is very interesting. Look it up. How they cut a diamond using a fast moving wheel with diamond paste on it, and how if that diamond could speak, it would have to TRUST the one making the cuts will make it more beautiful in the end.

But remember how the ministry is building on to the foundation of Yeshua – Jesus Christ – will be tested by fire. Are you straw – or are you precious stones?

1 Corinthians 3:9-15

For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building. 10 According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. 11 **For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.**

12 Now if anyone builds on this foundation with **gold, silver, precious stones**, wood, hay, straw, 13 **each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is.** 14 If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. 15 If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

IN the same way, we don't always like the process of being cut, chipped, polished, brushed – but in the end, we will be what God wants us to be. You know that... but sometimes we forget it, while we're going through the process of God transforming us.

Trust him. Rest in him. Believe him. Though painful now, it will be worth it.

Here's another picture of rough uncut diamonds before they became polished gem stones. Some of these may end up as "industrial diamonds" and not gem stones.



God Sees the Precious Stone at the end

Isaiah 62:2-5

The Gentiles shall see your righteousness,
And all kings your glory.
You shall be called by a new name,
Which the mouth of YHVH will name.

**3 YOU shall also be a crown of glory In the hand of YHVH,
And a royal diadem In the hand of your God.**

4 You shall no longer be called Forsaken,
Nor shall your land any more be termed Desolate;
But you shall be called Hephzibah, and your land Beulah;

For YHVH delights in you,
And your land shall be married.

5 For as a young man marries a virgin,
So shall your sons marry you;

And as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride,
So shall your God rejoice over you.

Ah, yes. We know that passage. But do we always KNOW IT IN OUR HEARTS? Do we always believe it?

Anyway, you get the point. You're a gemstone living stone from God, made by God, being polished by Him, cut by him, shaped and molded – until Christ is formed in us.

Here's a summary of some of the things we've said:

---Bricks are associated initially with man's rebellion against God as they built the pagan temple at Babylon out of brick. (I'm not saying it's wrong to use brick today, OK?) Pagan temple = brick. God's temple = stone.

---A true gemstone has been tried and proven to be genuine, as there are many stones that look like a gemstone but aren't. God tests us and knows we have genuine faith in Him and are the real thing. Who's ever heard of having a gemologist be sure a brick is a real brick?

---We do not want to be molded into bricks of the world's way. We want to be polished gems being prepared for our place in the living temple of the Highest.

---Gemstones are made by God. Bricks are man-made.

---Stones take a long time to form. Bricks are made quickly.

---God equates stones to His temple and Bricks to Babylon.

---Precious stones are one-of-a-kind. No two alike. Bricks look pretty similar.

---Precious stones are created from unimaginable stress, pressure and heat that bricks don't even begin to experience by comparison.

---Precious stones are EXPENSIVE, very rare and very valuable. Bricks are not even close in value to precious stones.

---Precious stones can be extremely tough with a hardness many times stronger than iron, and though bricks are fired in "ovens" too, they're not nearly as hard as precious stones.

---Precious stones in the rough have to be cut, shaped and polished and worked on before they can look anything like the gem they are intended to be. Bricks mostly just come out of the mold, ready to be used.

God rejoices over his precious living stones and we will be the precious jewels in his eyes that he cherishes, protects, and keeps close to him forever and ever and ever and ever!

Closing prayer. (Hear the audio)

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