

## THE LIVING STONES OF SHECHEM

Shechem is one of the most amazing cities in the Bible, but it's far more than just a city. It's like a portal on the earth where the Kingdom of Heaven and the people of the earth meet. It has spiritual and prophetic overtones written on every stone, making it far more than just an average city. In this article, I would like to unpack these living stones for you and allow the Spirit to move you back in time to the very place where Joshua charged the people of Yahweh at the altar of God.



Deuteronomy 27:1-4: Then Moses and the elders of Israel charged the people, saying, “Keep all the commandments which I command you today. 2 So it shall be on the day when you cross the Jordan to the land which the Lord your God gives you, that you shall set up for yourself large stones and coat them with lime 3 and write on them all the words of this law, when you cross over, so that you may enter the land which the Lord your God gives you, a land flowing with

milk and honey, as the Lord, the God of your fathers, promised you. 4 So it shall be when you cross the Jordan, you shall set up on Mount Ebal, these stones, as I am commanding you today, and you shall coat them with lime.”

"Cross over." What does that phrase mean in the original language? The Hebrew word just so happens to be the word "Ivrit," which is the word "Hebrew" in Hebrew. Yep. Hebrew means **"crossed over one."** When the Israelites go from the wandering place in the desert to actually "crossing over" into the Promised Land, they are to set up these stones in a particular place. But the key here is "crossing over." It's moving from a side that is dead to one that is full of life.

*2 Corinthians 5:17: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. Old things have PASSED away and behold all things have become new." (emphasis mine)*

*John 5:24: "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has PASSED from death into life." (emphasis mine)*

The above scriptures tell us that if we are **"in Christ"** that we are **"crossed over"** to Him. Spiritually speaking, this means that the Promised Land represents Yeshua and to be "in Christ" is to actually be in the Promised Land. Being in the Promised Land doesn't mean that you can lay in your hammock and sip virgin strawberry daiquiris all day. It means that you are now in proper covenant with the Father and you get the assistance of His Son to help you destroy the giants in the land. He will help you take back the land that is to be given to you. This consummation all happens in Shechem with these living stones that are covered in lime and have the commandments written on their very faces.

What is the difference between hewn stones and living stones? Hewn stones have been cut, chiseled, and formed by man to fit the way a man wants them to fit for building purposes. They all look the same and the final appearance is the stones themselves, fitting tightly together to accomplish a single purpose. But building something with living, unhewn stones is far more difficult. Instead of taking perfectly square stones and stacking them to form a wall, imagine taking round stones of every shape and size and trying to form a wall with them. This is the way altars were made by the ancient Hebrews (crossed over ones).

In order to do this, you needed stones of every shape and size to fit into the odd spaces that would be created by the building process. The most common stones were the little pieces that were sometimes no bigger than a rock that you would skip across a lake. These small rocks would be the ones that were wedged in the cracks between the larger stones to keep them in place. One could say that they were holding up the arms of the larger stones.

*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, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."*

As you can see from the above verse, stones represent people. Those who are not of Christ are hewn stones; man has formed them, and they all look alike. The stones in the resulting structure

show off all their glory when seen by men. The wall is strong, and each stone fits perfectly in place and is forced to look just like the other. There is no room for the smaller stones or stones of unusual form. Unfortunately, many religious institutions look just like this.

On the other hand, a house built by living stones requires each one to be used. It's a community of believers that is diverse and welcomes each and every member. It understands that even the smallest "rock" is of utmost importance as they help keep the larger rocks in place. Every person, regardless of how they're made, is looked upon with great value in the spiritual house, the spiritual altar that Yeshua is making. God does not desire that man would change a single thing in how He made him. For before the foundation of the earth, He knew the **EXACT** place that their stone would fit into the wall.

Incredibly enough, in Hebrew the word for "**stone**" is "*eben*," spelled **aleph, beit, nun**. In the ancient Paleo pictograph, where each letter had its own meaning, "*eben*" meant "*the strong leader of the house brings life*." And of course, that strong leader is Yeshua, the chief cornerstone. What's amazing is that the word "**son**" in Hebrew is "*ben*," spelled **beit, nun**. The only thing missing for the "house of life" to actually bring forth the life it was created for is the addition of the letter aleph, the strong leader Yeshua!

Not only do "*eben*" and "*ben*" sound the same, they come from the same root word "*banah*," which is the Hebrew word for "**build!**" To "**build**" (*banah*) the House of God, He uses living "**stones**" (*eben*) that are carefully put into place by the Master-builder, His "**Son**" (*ben*)! To be a living stone is to be a living **SON!** In addition, to be a son means that you are now commissioned to partner with the Master in building up the House of God! And not only are you a builder, but you are also the actual stone that He is going to use to **DO** the building!

Now that we know that we are the stones and what He wants to do with them, let's get back to the building process. Unfortunately, when all the stones are in place, it's not exactly attractive. There are large stones, medium stones, round, square, and shards of stones wedged in the cracks along the gaps all over the place. It appears weak standing next to the wall of man-made with perfectly hewn stones. But the Father sees this and while the proud stone wall of man basks in its beauty, gloating over the disjointed and ugly stone wall beside it, the Father adds one more thing to complete His living wall. He understands that a diverse wall, using every member and built the way He desires - with the chief Cornerstone Yeshua - will not look strong or attractive. It will look more like a pile of rocks ready to fall at any moment. But the man-made rocks have forgotten that they were not to be seen by man lest they fall into the temptation of pride. They are to **be** covered by another kind of rock: crushed limestone that would be made into the plaster. It will completely surround the entire heap of stones. Then, to top it all off, the Torah will be written on its surface, completely surrounding the living stones that now lie hidden behind its beautiful outer appearance.

The outward appearance has no comparison now. The square man-made stone wall is no match for the white limestone with the beautifully etched words of the Torah glistening in the sunlight. The altar of God is to be a replica of the entire tabernacle itself. The fence that went all the way around the tabernacle always represented the Torah scroll surrounding the priests (the living

stones). As they worked, they were held in place by the Eastern gate, the chief cornerstone, Yeshua Himself.

The Torah, which means "**instructions**" in Hebrew, is the Word of God and Yeshua is the Word made flesh (John 1:14). This makes Him the living Torah. It is not us that people should see, but rather the glory that shines through us. That is what is supposed to affect people and drive them to be part of the House of God. It is the Word that is to be seen through us. Just as Moses' face was glowing when he came down from being in the presence of Yahweh, so, too, should people be able to see us alight with the joy of the Lord. They should be fixated on the glow coming from the glory of the Word that surrounds us, protects us, and strengthens us. Our wall may look uneven, discombobulated, and weak, but when it is surrounded by the glory of the very Word of God, we cannot be any stronger if we choose to stay within its protective borders.

*2 Corinthians 12:10: "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong."*

Lastly brethren, I want to point out that even though every single rock used in the altar is to be uncut, placed with the others in the oddest puzzle-type fashion, there is one stone that does not seem like one but is the most important of all. It's hiding in plain sight. The limestone plaster that covers the entire structure is the stone that has been crushed beyond recognition, forced to watch the other stones go untouched by the blow of the Master. He watched Him put each one carefully into place, joining them together according to His perfect design. But the limestone took blow after blow, never understanding what he did to deserve such treatment. As each piece broke off he thought that maybe he would be worthy to be used as a small piece to be wedged in the cracks of a larger boulder, helping to hold it in place. But when the final blows came, the limestone realized that there was nothing left of his once great stature and bright white beauty. He was crushed beyond recognition...to sand. He knew at this point he would not be able to be used in the wall any longer. In despair, he hung his head, feeling useless, abandoned, and without value.

Then he felt the Master builder's hands scoop him up and place him in a trough, mixing him with the water of the Word. The Master began to use him to fill in every gap in the wall, every crevasse, and every seemingly weak spot there was until the entire structure was covered. He began to understand what the purpose of every blow and every stinging pound of the chisel had been: his Master wanted to get him to the point where he would be soft and pliable enough to actually be used anywhere and everywhere the Master desired. He would be a stone, a son, which would not shy away from the final fine-tuning chisel that would inscribe the very words of Master on his now soft and pliable heart. The limestone was the last stone to be picked, but the first one to be crushed. His heart was broken and shattered in pieces while all the other rocks stood by in horror at what was happening to their brother. But it was all part of the Master's purpose and He knew exactly what He was doing. He needed to finish this altar by placing His Word around it and He needed a candidate to crush in order to accomplish His final plan.

My friends, "**consider it pure joy when you face trials of many kinds...**" It is those crushing experiences that prepare you to receive the very Word of the living God, forever etched into the deepest fibers of your heart. His blows are not without purpose. Each one is perfectly planned out. The sorrow will only last for the night and inexpressible joy will come in the morning.

When you awaken to what He has made you to be, you will choose to stay under the Master's hand.

Each one of you is valued and needed to fulfill His master plan. Regardless of how you view yourself, He loves you just the way you are and has the perfect spot for you in His magnificent house. Be thankful to your Master for how He decided to make you and praise Him for the final outcome you may not be able to see just yet. If you find yourself being crushed by life, hurt by others, and you feel a chisel stuck in your side, be of good cheer. It's in those painful moments that you understand that He has chosen to write His Word on your heart for all to see.

Never question the Master's hand or the Master's plan. Let Him break you and crush you into the Master's sand.

*"...the head is Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supply, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes the growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love." --Ephesians 4:16*

Shalom,

Jim Staley