

# I Am: Part 16

## The Cornerstone or The Rock of Offense

### Pastor James Bell

Matthew 21:33–45 NLT

33 “Now listen to another story. A certain landowner planted a vineyard, built a wall around it, dug a pit for pressing out the grape juice, and built a lookout tower. Then he leased the vineyard to tenant farmers and moved to another country. 34 At the time of the grape harvest, he sent his servants to collect his share of the crop. 35 But the farmers grabbed his servants, beat one, killed one, and stoned another. 36 So the landowner sent a larger group of his servants to collect for him, but the results were the same. 37 “Finally, the owner sent his son, thinking, ‘Surely they will respect my son.’ 38 “But when the tenant farmers saw his son coming, they said to one another, ‘Here comes the heir to this estate. Come on, let’s kill him and get the estate for ourselves!’ 39 So they grabbed him, dragged him out of the vineyard, and murdered him. 40 “When the owner of the vineyard returns,” Jesus asked, “what do you think he will do to those farmers?” 41 The religious leaders replied, “He will put the wicked men to a horrible death and lease the vineyard to others who will give him his share of the crop after each harvest.” 42 Then Jesus asked them, “Didn’t you ever read this in the Scriptures? ‘The stone that the builders rejected has now become the cornerstone. This is the LORD’s doing, and it is wonderful to see.’ 43 I tell you, the Kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a nation that will produce the proper fruit. 44 Anyone who stumbles over that stone will be broken to pieces, and it will crush anyone it falls on.” 45 When the leading priests and Pharisees heard this parable, they realized he was telling the story against them—they were the wicked farmers.

As this story brings us back to last week’s message about Jesus being the true vine we have yet another parable that points us to the Character of I Am. The Cornerstone is the first stone set in a building foundation that joins two walls, or a vital and basic part on which everything else depends. It determines how well the dwelling is built.

This parable reflects the Isaiah 5 illustration of the first vine which was Israel. The same mention of the dwelling, wall, wine press, and watch tower. Jesus relays the parable as the vineyard was leased to a tenant farmer. This means that ownership did not change hands. The farmers only became stewards. And all the owner wanted was what rightfully belonged to Him. But the tenants became violent and hostile. As I studied I began to wonder why the farmers would turn for the worse. Did they not have an agreement with the owner? The greek word for lease means to hire out for one’s own benefit. So have you ever been hired with knowing what you are hired to do

or for what amount? This means there is an agreement between the two parties. You trade your labor for “X” amount per hour, day, or job. This means the tenants were not caught off guard. They knew but the problem occurred when they became greedy. Remember scripture tells us the love of money is the root of all evil. Their greed now caused them to reject the agreement made from the beginning. Their greed for power and wealth has caused them to lose sight of authority over them. They are blinded by greed to the degree that they silent every voice and person that speaks by the owners authority. But it doesn’t stop there... the owner sends His very own son. And the sad part is that the son is even recognized but He was not glorified as the Son. They thought that if they could silence the Son that the Father would forfeit his claim to what He had established.

I love how Jesus used this opportunity to minister to the hearts of those listening. And how did He minister? By stating the obvious! But each of us knows that the truth is not always welcomed. The truth has the tenancy to make us uncomfortable. But Jesus said knowing the truth will cause us to be free. What do we want to hear? The truth holds us accountable and leaves us without excuse.

Jesus persisted to ask a question, “What will the father do to the farmers?”. The Pharisees rationalized the situation and the logic answer would be wrath. But if we could dial the answer a little tighter we would find the true answer to be judgement. A decision made based off of an investigation. And the details have been laid out precisely in Jesus’s parable.

The farmers judgement would be death, meaning a separation from stewardship. They knew the agreement made from the beginning but lost sight because they thought more of themselves than that of the owner. And Jesus said have you not seen the scripture... “The stone that the builders rejected has now become the cornerstone.”

The Son that was rejected now becomes the foundation. The tenants thought that if they killed or did away with the Son that they would have triumph but because of their acts the Son now becomes the cornerstone of Fathers work.

1 Corinthians 3:11 NLT

11 For no one can lay any foundation other than the one we already have—Jesus Christ.

The foundation determines how structurally sound the house is. Why do we think its the first thing that takes place in the process. This step cannot be skipped and so many people are building their lives and has left out Jesus. And we all know based

from the revelation of John 1 that Jesus is the word. The word of God has been rejected from so many people and their lives become shambles. Nothing they do sticks together nor does it last. Look at how Jesus framed it.

Matthew 7:24–28 NLT

24 “Anyone who listens to my teaching and follows it is wise, like a person who builds a house on solid rock. 25 Though the rain comes in torrents and the floodwaters rise and the winds beat against that house, it won’t collapse because it is built on bedrock. 26 But anyone who hears my teaching and doesn’t obey it is foolish, like a person who builds a house on sand. 27 When the rains and floods come and the winds beat against that house, it will collapse with a mighty crash.” 28 When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching,

It’s not enough that we just acknowledge the word of God. We must follow. What does following look like? From beginning to end! From Genesis to revelations. From birth to death. From a word spoken all the way to death on the cross. This is the missing ingredient in so many people’s lives. Jesus didn’t deny the rain, the flooding, or the winds. He only assured the outcome. And the outcome is from the bases of what you build your life on. Look at how Jesus addresses this further.

Matthew 16:13–19 NLT

13 When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” 14 “Well,” they replied, “some say John the Baptist, some say Elijah, and others say Jeremiah or one of the other prophets.” 15 Then he asked them, “But who do you say I am?” 16 Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” 17 Jesus replied, “You are blessed, Simon son of John, because my Father in heaven has revealed this to you. You did not learn this from any human being. 18 Now I say to you that you are Peter (which means ‘rock’), and upon this rock I will build my church, and all the powers of hell will not conquer it. 19 And I will give you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. Whatever you forbid on earth will be forbidden in heaven, and whatever you permit on earth will be permitted in heaven.”

Jesus asked a question to his disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?” If you could for just a moment reflect over a few conversations throughout your life about people’s outlook of Jesus. What have their words or action been in relation to who Jesus is? And we are well aware that actions speak louder than words.

The disciples had been paying attention to what people have been declaring. And all of the answers pointed to men and actions of God. The fruit of Jesus’s ministry was comparable to the works of the prophets. So in the eyes of man, Jesus was doing the

work of God. But then Jesus asked, “But who do you say I Am?” All throughout this series the LORD has asked us this same question. Who am I to you? We have spend the last 15 weeks preaching about the I Am but have we viewed this from the perspective of what the Bible declares or has this become a staple in our fellowship with El-Shaddai: God Almighty. Knowing Jesus for ourselves is not from the perspective of man. Knowing Jesus is not because your’e a good person. Knowing Jesus isn’t because you once said the sinners prayer. Knowing Jesus is not because you come to church. It’s so much deeper than that. So let’s look back to Simon Peters’ response in verse 16. Matthew 16:16 “16 Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” Messiah means anointed one. The anointed Son of the living God.

So many people have a knowledge about Jesus but not a revelation of Jesus. Revelation only comes from the Father. And this is what the church is purposed to be built upon. This is why so many peoples lives are crumbling when the storms of life come. They have not built their life on the Revelation of Jesus or the word of God. They have a knowledge but not a revelation. So we pose the question to you again this morning...Who is I Am to you? We may be correct in our declaration of Him being Savior but when will we declare Him as LORD?

1 Peter 2:6–8 NLT

6 As the Scriptures say, “I am placing a cornerstone in Jerusalem, chosen for great honor, and anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced.” 7 Yes, you who trust him recognize the honor God has given him. But for those who reject him, “The stone that the builders rejected has now become the cornerstone.” 8 And, “He is the stone that makes people stumble, the rock that makes them fall.” They stumble because they do not obey God’s word, and so they meet the fate that was planned for them.

As we go back to our sub-title, “The Cornerstone or The Rock of Offense”. The “or” in the subtitle isn’t a choice between two different identities—it’s the recognition that Jesus’s single identity produces opposite outcomes based on human response. He will be our cornerstone or He will be the Rock that causes us to stumble. This identity is dual but one or the other from the basis of our choices. We will either build our lives on His word or we will judged by His word. He will be our cornerstone or He will be the rock of offense. Again the or doesn’t identify Him as two different identities but the or identifies our choice. He will be one or the other. Our failure to obey means that we will meet the fate destined for all who obey.

John 12:44–48 NLT

44 Jesus shouted to the crowds, “If you trust me, you are trusting not only me, but also God who sent me. 45 For when you see me, you are seeing the one who sent me. 46 I have come as a light to shine in this dark world, so that all who put their trust in me will no longer remain in the dark. 47 I will not judge those who hear me but don’t obey me, for I have come to save the world and not to judge it. 48 But all who reject me and my message will be judged on the day of judgment by the truth I have spoken.

Judgement has already been rendered for disobedience. Jesus only came to save us from judgement. The wrath of God has already spoken the sentence of those who disobey. Judgement just has not been declared yet. And if we continue to reject the word and cornerstone we will stumble upon the rock.

Matthew 21:44 NLT

44 Anyone who stumbles over that stone will be broken to pieces, and it will crush anyone it falls on.”

The two fold of the rock of offense: stumbling and crushing.

I Am the Cornerstone or I Am the Rock of Offense. Which one is He in your life?

Let me pray with you today!