

## Long Story Short: The Living Stone and the Chosen People

### Reflect...

- Think about a time in your life when you experienced panic or distress. What happened? What did you rely on ultimately to get you through?
- In your opinion, what things are essential to a strong foundation in life? What can make it difficult to have a strong foundation? What are common stumbling blocks?
- What do you see yourself and others in the world truly relying on for a strong foundation? How often is a relationship with God foundational for people?

### Read Your Bible...

- Isaiah 28:16-17a; 29
- 1 Peter 2:4-8
- John 2:18-22

### Apply God's Word to Your Life...

1. In Isaiah 28, God speaks about His new building project. What is unusual about it? What does He promise to those who rely on Him?
2. Peter quotes verse 16 and the first part of 17 to talk about what God is doing. He identifies the "living stone"—rejected by humans but chosen by God—as Jesus Christ. He goes on to describe a temple built on that foundation stone. What (or who) is the temple made of (1 Peter 2:5)? How do you fit in to God's building project?
3. Ancient Israel had a specific place to go to meet with God: a temple or tabernacle. In the John 2 reading, what does Jesus say about the temple? What does this mean for us? If He is the temple and we are made a temple together in Him, where do we need to go to meet with God? Where and when can we pray or worship?
4. For some, Jesus is the precious cornerstone at the foundation of our lives. For others, He is the stone that causes them to stumble. How do you think that works one way or the other?
5. Have you applied this to your own life? Is there anything taking Jesus' place as the cornerstone? What keeps you from relying on Him?

Think of the challenge and excitement of building a new house. The materials and time needed, the contracts and details, the potential for comfort and security and family. Imagine not knowing when it would be finished! Through the prophet Isaiah, God was promising a brand new thing. It was exactly what His people were longing for: a new temple. A new house of prayer and worship where they could count on meeting with God. But the building was unusual. The foundation stone would be laid by God himself. Justice and righteousness would be the measurements used in its construction. Jesus promised that once destroyed, it would be raised again in just three days. He was talking about Himself. He was talking about the resurrection and eternal life—a glorious project that would include all who believed in Him.

The temple was no longer built of stone and timber, but redeemed hearts and lives. This is the stuff eternity is made of! Instead of incense, it would be filled with prayer. Instead of holy objects, it would be filled with holy laughter and sweet communion. Its doors would never close and its banners would never fade. This promised temple was nothing less than the rebuilding of God's people around the Living Stone—the Son who fulfills the Father's plan.

**Pray...** Lord God of heaven, hear our prayers. The earth and everything in it is Yours. We are Yours. But we have lost our way. We confess that we rely first upon ourselves and upon our own wisdom. We build our lives and fill our houses. But, apart from You, we have nothing. You are rebuilding Your people, Your church, around Your Son, Jesus. Use us in that great heavenly project! Build our lives upon Your sure foundation. Fill us with Your Holy Spirit. Make our hearts a temple fit for Your dwelling. In Jesus' Name, Amen.