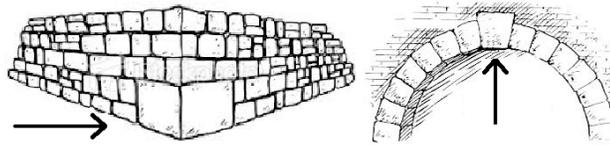


Addendum - Foundation, Cornerstone, Keystone



Cornerstone and Keystone

Foundation. The foundation of our faith is not to be built on the sand, that is, upon the opinions and dictates of others, but on the Word of God. Our faith is to be built upon the Rock, and Jesus is the Rock. *“Therefore whosoever hears these sayings of mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock.”* (Matthew 7:24)

Cornerstone. The cornerstone is the first stone set in the construction of a building. *“Behold, I lay in Zion a stone for a foundation. A tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation... Also I will make justice the measuring line, And righteousness the plummet.”* (Isaiah 28:16-17) A plummet is a weight, usually with a pointed tip on the bottom, that is suspended from a string and used as a vertical reference line in construction. Originally made of lead (*plumbum* in Latin), as the building’s height increased, the plummet was raised to maintain with strict accuracy the vertical line of the building perpendicular to the ground. In constructions of great height, the plummet would hang in a container of oil to dampen swinging movement. Like the plummet, the measuring line is used right from the beginning of construction to keep all other stones aligned, wherein the cornerstone is the reference point. Jesus is the Cornerstone.

Keystone. A keystone is the wedge-shaped stone placed at the apex of an arch. It locks all the stones in position allowing the arch to bear the weight of the building. *“The stone that the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone.”* (1 Peter 2:7, NKJV) Although in most English translations the word “cornerstone” is used in this verse, the King James Version uses instead the term “head of the corner.” In Spanish versions of the Bible, the equivalent word for cornerstone in this verse is not used. Rather, the term *cabeza del ángulo* (head of the angle), or *piedra del ángulo* (stone of the angle), or *piedra angular* (angular stone) is used. An angular stone is a large-sized, wedge-shaped stone which is positioned at the head or center of the arch. An angular stone is a keystone.

“Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.” (Ephesians 2:19-22)

The above verses address the people of Ephesus, and consequently all Christians after them, who each are a stone that will fit together and grow unto a holy temple for God’s dwelling. Although in the letter to the Ephesians again the word cornerstone is used, in Spanish translations “keystone” is used. In Latin, *summo angulari lapide* is used, meaning top angular stone or “capstone.” And in three Greek translations (1550 Stephanus New

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Testament; 1881 Westcott-Hort New Testament; and 1894 Scrivener New Testament) the word “centerpiece” is used. So is Jesus *also* the keystone? The following quote from the *Desire of Ages* has always amazed me because the writer, having only available the words “corner” and “cornerstone,” as expressed in the English translations, describes Jesus as the “keystone.” I believe that only Divine inspiration could have done this. Let’s take a look:

“In quoting the prophecy of the rejected stone, Christ referred to an actual occurrence in the history of Israel. The incident was connected with the building of the first temple. While it had a special application at the time of Christ’s first advent, and should have appealed with special force to the Jews, it has also a lesson for us. When the temple of Solomon was erected, the immense stones for the walls and the foundation were entirely prepared at the quarry; after they were brought to the place of building, not an instrument was to be used upon them; the workmen had only to place them in position. For use in the foundation, one stone of unusual size and peculiar shape had been brought; but the workmen could find no place for it, and would not accept it. It was an annoyance to them as it lay unused in their way. Long it remained a rejected stone. But when the builders came to the laying of the corner, they searched for a long time to find a stone of sufficient size and strength, and of the proper shape, to take that particular place, and bear the great weight which would rest upon it. Should they make an unwise choice for this important place, the safety of the entire building would be endangered. They must find a stone capable of resisting the influence of the sun, of frost, and of tempest. Several stones had at different times been chosen, but under the pressure of immense weights they had crumbled to pieces. Others could not bear the test of the sudden atmospheric changes. But at last attention was called to the stone so long rejected. It had been exposed to the air, to sun and storm, without revealing the slightest crack. The builders examined this stone. It had borne every test but one. If it could bear the test of severe pressure, they decided to accept it for the cornerstone. The trial was made. The stone was accepted, brought to its assigned position, and found to be an exact fit. In prophetic vision, Isaiah was shown that this stone was a symbol of Christ... Carried down in prophetic vision to the first advent, the prophet is shown that Christ is to bear trials and tests of which the treatment of the chief cornerstone in the temple of Solomon was symbolic.” (pp. 597-598) [Emphasis mine]

In the above quote, we note that the construction of the temple had already commenced and was well in process long before the time came to set the “cornerstone” in place. Because a cornerstone is the first stone laid, then which stone is it that for so long was an annoyance to the laborers while the building of the temple progressed? All the stones that were used were prepared beforehand, sculptured to specifications to take their unique position in the wall of the temple. But the long rejected stone needed not be touched, for it was an exact fit. And the very fact that it was a perfect fit due to its large size and “peculiar shape” testifies of it not being the first stone laid, because the first stone is not required to fit among other stones. On the contrary, the other stones that form the wall are the ones that must align to the first

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stone, that is, the cornerstone. Hence a stone that must fit into a unique, peculiarly shaped spot where it will bear the weight of the temple, is not the first stone. It is the keystone, as other translations reveal. That stone is Christ Who bears the weight of the house of God. Again, with only the words “corner” and “cornerstone” available via the English translations, it is pleasantly astonishing to me that Ellen White got it so right. It once again affirms that God’s Spirit was guiding her as she wrote.

Christ is the Rock upon which the foundation of our faith is built. Christ is also the Cornerstone, the Alpha of our faith, from Whom the measure of justice is aligned; and in Whom we are kept truly upright in His righteousness, submerged in the Oil that keeps us from wavering. Christ is likewise the Keystone, the One Who uplifts and sustains our faith, and Who keeps us from falling and crumbling amid the trials and vicissitudes of life.

Christ Himself *is* the stumbling stone that interrupts our lives and path of our choice to re-sculpture our character as stones being made ready to be used for the completion of His dwelling. And as the Ten Commandments are engraved permanently upon tablets of stone, so is the Character of God engraved in Christ, Who is our strength and our Rock in every sense.