

THE AGE OF SAMUEL

PART III - BURNT STONES

² saying in front of his friends and the Samaritan army officers, “What does this bunch of poor, feeble Jews think they’re doing? Do they think they can build the wall in a single day by just offering a few sacrifices? Do they actually think they can make something of stones from a rubbish heap--and charred ones at that?”

Nehemiah 4:2 NLT

I. Burnt stones are inevitable. (Matthew 18:7 NIV; I Corinthians 10:32; II Corinthians 6:3 NIV; James 3:2 KJV)

[Mat 18:7 NIV] ⁷ Woe to the world because of the things that cause people to stumble! Such things must come, but woe to the person through whom they come!

[1Co 10:32 NIV] ³² Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God--

[2Co 6:3 NIV] ³ We put no stumbling block in anyone’s path, so that our ministry will not be discredited.

[Jas 3:2 KJV] ² For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same [is] a perfect man, [and] able also to bridle the whole body.

** As fallen people we all possess the capacity to offend and to be offended.*

II. Five sources of offense.

A. Valid sin (Matthew 18:15-17)

¹⁵ *“If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. ¹⁶ But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that ‘every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.’ ¹⁷ If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector.*

B. Mutual misunderstanding (Acts 15:36-40)

³⁶ *Some time later Paul said to Barnabas, “Let us go back and visit the believers in all the towns where we preached the word of the Lord and see how they are doing.” ³⁷ Barnabas wanted to take John, also called Mark, with them, ³⁸ but Paul did not think it wise to take him, because he had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in the work. ³⁹ They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus, ⁴⁰ but Paul chose Silas and left, commended by the believers to the grace of the Lord.*

C. False expectations (I Peter 2:4-8)

⁴ *As you come to him, the living Stone--rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him-- ⁵ you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁶ For in Scripture it says: “See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame.” ⁷ Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe, “The stone the builders rejected has*

become the cornerstone,”⁸ and, “A stone that causes people to stumble and a rock that makes them fall.” They stumble because they disobey the message--which is also what they were destined for.

D. Immaturity on both sides (Romans 14†)

E. Dual woundedness (wound to wound contacts.)

III. Three ingredients to rebuilding burnt stones into their proper wall.

A. Timing is everything. / Let it cool. (Proverbs 18:19 NIV)

¹⁹ A brother wronged is more unyielding than a fortified city; disputes are like the barred gates of a citadel.

B. Use caution when building another’s burnt stone into your wall. (Proverbs 18:17 NLT)

¹⁷ The first to speak in court sounds right--until the cross-examination begins.

C. Don’t be right; be reconciled. / Remember where you came from.

† [Rom 14:1-23 NIV] ¹ *Accept the one whose faith is weak, without quarreling over disputable matters. ² One person's faith allows them to eat anything, but another, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables. ³ The one who eats everything must not treat with contempt the one who does not, and the one who does not eat everything must not judge the one who does, for God has accepted them. ⁴ Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To their own master, servants stand or fall. And they will stand, for the Lord is able to make them stand. ⁵ One person considers one day more sacred than another; another considers every day alike. Each of them should be fully convinced in their own mind. ⁶ Whoever regards one day as special does so to the Lord. Whoever eats meat does so to the Lord, for they give thanks to God; and whoever abstains does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God. ⁷ For none of us lives for ourselves alone, and none of us dies for ourselves alone. ⁸ If we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. ⁹ For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living. ¹⁰ You, then, why do you judge your brother or sister? Or why do you treat them with contempt? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat. ¹¹ It is written: " 'As surely as I live,' says the Lord, 'every knee will bow before me; every tongue will acknowledge God.' " ¹² So then, each of us will give an account of ourselves to God. ¹³ Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in the way of a brother or sister. ¹⁴ I am convinced, being fully persuaded in the Lord Jesus, that nothing is unclean in itself. But if anyone regards something as unclean, then for that person it is unclean. ¹⁵ If your brother or sister is distressed because of what you eat, you are no*

longer acting in love. Do not by your eating destroy someone for whom Christ died. ¹⁶ Therefore do not let what you know is good be spoken of as evil. ¹⁷ For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, ¹⁸ because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and receives human approval. ¹⁹ Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification. ²⁰ Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All food is clean, but it is wrong for a person to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble. ²¹ It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother or sister to fall. ²² So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the one who does not condemn himself by what he approves. ²³ But whoever has doubts is condemned if they eat, because their eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin.