

Faith Is Action

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HAPPY NEW YEAR!

In This Issue:

**ARE YOU A BRICK
OR A STONE
PART I**

ARE YOU A BRICK OR A STONE

PART ONE BY SHARON HARDY KNOTTS

“Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious, and he that believeth on him shall never be confounded” (1Peter 2:5-6).

Peter said that we are *lively* or *“living stones.”* We are not inanimate stones, but he is speaking supernaturally, and in the Spirit, we are living stones, because the breath of God has breathed into us. When God created Adam out of the dust of the earth, he was a beautifully sculpted specimen of a human being, but he was inanimate until *“God breathed in him the breath of lives, and man became a living soul”* (Gen. 2:7). When you are born again, you become a living stone. Then in a supernatural twist, Peter said that we are not only the stones that make up the house of God, but we are also the priests who serve in

the house of God offering up spiritual sacrifices.

Bricks VS. Stones

(Addressing the audience):
“Turn around, look at the back wall, and tell me what the walls of this church are built with?”
(Everyone responded): *“Bricks.”*
“Yes, this physical church is made out of bricks, but God’s spiritual church is made out of stones!”
You might think to yourself, *Why is this significant, and what does it matter?* The significance is, **man makes bricks, but God makes stones!**

You see, bricks are all alike. All the bricks used to build this church are identical. They are exactly alike, because they are made from the same mold. Then they are put into an oven and baked at high temperatures, and when they come out, every brick is identical. Men make bricks, but God makes stones. The stones on Earth are created from nature. Stones are created from exposure

to the winds and waters and waves, and the storms and elements, and from pressure in the earth. Stones are beautiful and unique. No two stones are exactly alike.

I brought some stones with me; one is nice and round and white. It is out of a rock garden. This other is really cool that my grandson Noah gave to me. It sparkles like glitter that you would use for a craft project. He was only 6 years old, and he said, "Grandma, This stone is very special, and I'm going to give it to you." By the look on his face you would have thought that he was giving me a \$100 bill. He was really impressed with this stone, and by giving it to me, he was really telling me, "Grandma, I love you so much, I'm giving you my special stone." I wrote his name and date on it and put it in my china closet. Look at the difference in these stones. No two are identical. They are different shapes, different colors, and some are glittery. Stones created by nature are unique and bear the handprint of God, while bricks are made by man and are alike.

The Brick Bully of Babel

In Genesis 10 we read about the first brick-maker on the earth: *"Now these are the generations of the sons of Noah: Shem, Ham, and Japheth. And unto them were sons born after the flood."* Our

timeline begins immediately after the flood. Noah, his wife, and his three sons and their wives came out of the Ark, and God told them, *"Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth"* (Gen. 9:1). So they had children and grandchildren and great grandchildren, and we then come down to Gen.10:8: *"Cush (the son of Ham) begat Nimrod; he began to be a mighty one on the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the LORD; wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD. And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, Erech, Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar."*

Nimrod, who was the very first prototype of the coming Anti-Christ, began to be a mighty one on the earth. In Hebrew, a person's name is significant and its meaning bears greatly on his life. Nimrod means, *"He said, Get down."* Are you getting a feeling of what kind of person Nimrod was? He said to everybody, "Get down! Get down under me!" He was subjugating the people, and we read that *"his kingdom"* was in the land of Shinar which is modern Iraq. One of its cities was *Babel* aka *Babylon*.

He was also a "mighty hunter before the Lord." In English, we might think he was a "good hunter" before the Lord, as if it was pleasing to God. The thing is: *Everybody was a hunter back*

then. They didn't have grocery stores. All men had to hunt for food for their families. Why tell us that he was a hunter when everybody hunted? The Hebrew text reveals that he was a *hunter of men*. Compare these verses: Jeremiah 16:16: *"Behold, I will send for many hunters, says the LORD, and they shall hunt them; and afterward I will send for many hunters, and they shall hunt them from every mountain and every hill, and out of the holes of the rocks."* God is talking about hunting down rebellious men. Micah 7:2: *"The good man has perished from the earth, and there is no one upright among men. They all lie in wait for blood; every man hunts his brother with a net."*

Nimrod hunted other men, and where it says, *"before the Lord,"* it actually means *"in God's face."* We are getting the picture of what kind of person Nimrod was: He waxed great and mighty; he told everybody else to "get down; do what I say, and help me build my kingdom." He hunted men down, and this is very telling of what it will be like during the reign of the Anti-Christ. They will hunt down men, and they will do it in God's face.

This was only about 100 years after the flood. How quickly Satan had his man to rise up, even after God had cleansed the earth and Noah and his righteous sons came

out of the Ark to repopulate. We know now that Nimrod built the city of Babel, and we learn how he did it in Chapter 11:

"And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech. And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and they dwelt there. And they said to one another, Go to and let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for (instead of) stone, and slime had they for mortar. And they said, Let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth" (which is exactly what God had told them to do after the flood).

"And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the children of men builded, And the Lord said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do. And now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city. Therefore is the name of it called Babel, because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence

did the Lord scatter them abroad from the face of all the earth” (Gen. 11:1-9).

We know Nimrod was behind this, because he built Babel. He was telling people, “Get down. You are going to build a city for me, and we are going to make it out of **bricks**.” We read that they journeyed *from the east*, but this is not a simple statement of their direction. It is actually a Hebrew figure of speech meaning *from the sun* or *from the light*. The sun rises in the East, and in the Bible, *light always stands for God and truth*. 1John 1:5-6: “*God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth. But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we do have fellowship with Him.*” Jesus told us in John 3:19-20: “*Men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.*” They know that if they come to the light, they will be exposed, and they are not willing to give up their evil deeds, so they won’t come to the light. Therefore, in Hebrew, “*from the east*” is the same as saying “*from the light*” or “*from the truth*.”

Nimrod and his men said: “*Let us build a tower, whose top may reach up to heaven.*” The literal Hebrew says: “*his head in the heavens.*” It no doubt refers to the worship of the Zodiac or planetary bodies. Such idolatry was very

strong in New Testament times in the Greek and Roman world, and still persists to this day. Paul wrote in Romans 1:25: “*Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshiped and served the creature more than the creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.*”

The account of the building of the tower in Babylonian writings states: “For one whole year they molded bricks. When the second year arrived, they raised high the head of Esagila.” This was the sanctuary of the pagan deity Marduk. Esagila means “House of the Uplifted Head.”

Nimrod had brought the people under subjection, and they were going away from the truth, away from what God had told Noah and his sons when they came out of the Ark, *to multiply and replenish the earth*. They were doing their own thing, their own way, and making bricks.

Got Stones?

If you ever been to the Holy Land, you know there’s one thing they do not have a shortage of and that is *stones*! *They have stones, stones and more stones*. The Land is covered with stones. If you were going to build a fence, or a wall, or a building, it would only make sense to use stones. You have to clear the stones anyhow before you can build anything. You can’t build on a field covered with stones. You can’t plant a gar-

den; you can't plant crops; you can't have pasture for sheep and goats, because of all the stones. The first thing you have to do is remove the stones. When you go Israel, you will see fence markers dividing the property lines, and they too are made of stones, piled up one on the other. Everything tends to be made of stone, because they are plentiful, and you have to get rid of them anyhow.

It would have only made sense for them to use stones to build their tower, but they said, *"Let us make bricks and burn them thoroughly."* The fire needed to be very hot in order for them to bake hard enough to use to build. What kind of back-breaking labor would it take in that day, with primitive tools, to make such bricks? It would take slave labor. It would take a tyrant like Nimrod enslaving men and telling them, "You get down in the dirt and make me bricks. Then put them in the heated furnace and make sure you burn them thoroughly."

The Egyptian Slave Maker

We all know the story of the children of Israel when they were enslaved in Egypt. Like Nimrod, Pharaoh forced them to make bricks for his building projects. *"And the Egyptians made the children of Israel serve with rigor; and they made their lives bitter with hard bondage in mortar and*

in brick; and in all manner of service in the field, and all their service wherein they made them serve was with rigor" (Ex. 1:13-14).

The word *rigor* means "crushing pressure and labor." The children of Israel were slaves for 400 years, helping the Egyptians build all their monuments. We mostly know about the three great pyramids, but they have pyramids and monuments all over Egypt, and the children of Israel were their slaves who were forced to work till crushing exhaustion. Their lives were bitter and they cried out to God to deliver them. God kept His promise to Abraham that they would be afflicted for 400 years, but then He would bring them out (Ref. Gen. 15:13-14). The "affliction" they suffered was *making manmade bricks for man to be exalted*. Before Pharaoh finally freed them, he made their lives even more cruel, making them gather their own straw without diminishing their daily quota of bricks. He too was a real brick bully!

Altars of Stone

God did not like the idea of men using bricks to build anything that pertains to Him and His holiness. When God told Moses how to make His altar for the Tabernacle, He said: *"There thou shall build an altar unto the Lord thy God, an altar of stones: Thou*

shall not lift up any iron tool upon them. Thou shalt build the altar with whole stones, and thou shall burn offerings thereon..." (Deut. 27:5-6).

The altar not only had to be built with stones, but they had to be whole stones. They couldn't use their iron tools to shape them. They had to build the altar one stone piled on top of another. God wanted His altar to be holy, and He did not want man's fingerprint on it: "*An altar of earth shall thou make unto me, and shall sacrifice thereon thy burnt offerings, and thy peace offerings, thy sheep and thine oxen: in all places where I record My Name...*" (even when they entered into the Promise Land, anywhere His Name was recorded) "*I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee. And if thou wilt make me an **altar of stone**, thou shalt not build it of hewn stone: for it thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it*" (Ex. 20:24-25).

Did you know that God was that picky about holiness? God has some particular ideas of what holiness is to Him. He said, "Make me an altar of whole stones, and do not lift a tool upon it, because if you do, it's polluted and is not worthy to be My altar."

Now fast forward to the time they are finally moving into the Holy Land, and Joshua has taken over for Moses: "*Then Joshua built an altar unto the LORD God*

*of Israel in mount Ebal, As Moses the servant of the LORD commanded the children of Israel, as it is written in the book of the law of Moses, **an altar of whole stones, over which no man hath lift up any iron:** and they offered thereon burnt offerings unto the LORD, and sacrificed peace offerings*" (Josh. 8:30-31). Joshua was careful when they went into the land and built the altar, to obey the commandment that God had given to Moses to build the altar only of stones.

Now let's speed ahead to the time of King Solomon. Up until this time, God's house was a big tent. When you read about the Tabernacle, don't think *building*. As in the wilderness, God's house was a tent. David desired to build God a house, a permanent dwelling place for the Ark of the Covenant, but God said, "No, David, you have been a man of war and a man of blood, but your son Solomon will be a man of peace, and there will be no wars in all of his reign, and he will build me a house." You talk about a miracle! In those times all we read about is war. They were constantly going to war with this "ite" and that "ite" and the other "ite," but Solomon reigned 40 years with no wars.

"And the house, when it was in building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither: so that there was neither

hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building" (1Kings 6:7). You have probably seen on the news the Wailing Wall or the Western Wall. That's all that is left of Solomon's beautiful temple. The stones are huge, and they are all about the same size. They were squared off so that they fit neatly one on top of the other. It would have been impossible to build that magnificent temple out of random stones from here and there, because they would not have fit perfectly. God allowed them to use the iron tools to make them the right size and shape, but they had to do it somewhere else. He didn't even want *the sound of the hammer* anywhere near where the House of God was to be built! They had to prepare them elsewhere, and then move them to the House of God.

Bricks of Rebellion

After hundreds of years and many kings, Israel had become assimilated with the nations around her and rebelled against God. He sent the prophet Isaiah to declare: *"I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts. A people that provoketh me to anger continually to my face; that sacrificeth in gardens, and burneth incense upon altars of brick.... Which say,*

Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou. These are smoke in my nose, a fire that burneth all the day" (Isa. 65:2-5).

They were soon to go into captivity because of their rebellion. They went after their own thoughts; just like those in Nimrod's day that he convinced to go away from the truth, and to make him bricks to build a tower, so they could have a name, and not be scattered across the earth.

The thing that jumps out to me in God's indictment: *"You offer me incense on altars of brick"*! It is as though God is saying to them (and to us): *"Yes, you do come to Tabernacle. Yes, you come to church on Sunday. Yes, you do offer up incense, but you are doing it on altars of brick when I have commanded you to make altars of stone."*

There are many American churches today that have the name of Christ in their church names, and they have all kinds of programs and conferences and things going on, but God says, "All this is smoke in my nose. All your manmade religiosity and hierarchy of "who's who" and who's at the top, is smoke in My nose! **I don't want your altars of brick. I want living stones, holy stones.**"

When people start walking after their own thoughts, they have become bricks instead of

stones. When Christians become enmeshed in the world and take on the world's perspective, begin to talk like the world, to dress like the world, they are manmade bricks! They have become a part of the world's form and fashion. Paul said, *"And be not conformed to this world, but be ye trans-*

*form*ed by the renewing of your mind..." (Rom. 12:2). The world wants to *conform* you to make you like everybody else, not the holy, peculiar, one-of-a kind stone God made you to be. Christians are now looking to the models of the world, and God is saying, "I

don't want your unholy, worldly bricks. I'm looking for holy, living, God-breathed stones."

The Spirit of Nimrod

Nimrod said, *"Let us build a city and a tower whose top may reach the Heaven, and let us make a name lest we be scattered abroad."* They decided: "God, we don't want Your plan. We are doing our own thing, and we are going to do it our way." They rebelled against God to the point that God had to come down to intervene. He said, "The people have become *as one*, and they are so united in what they are striving to do, that if we don't confound their language so that they can't communicate, there will be no stopping them. There will be no restraining them."

There are people today who think that God is behind all the trouble and rebellion that are going on. But I believe that many of things that are going on in the earth, the devil is behind for his purpose, and God has not intervened. Many blame God for things He has nothing to do with. It's the wickedness of man; it's the spirit of Nimrod; it is the spirit of Antichrist that's in the land. But when God gets enough, and when it serves His plan and His



The Tower of Babel

purpose, He will intervene. He said, *“Let us go down and confound their language,”* and this really illustrates the power of unity in the detrimental sense. When the Pharisees came to Jesus and said to Him, when He was casting out devils: *“You cast out devils by Beelzebul”* (the prince of devils), He answered, *“Can Satan cast out Satan? Won’t his kingdom collapse if he goes around casting out demons? A house divided cannot stand. A kingdom divided will not stand.”* The point is, even Satan needs unity to accomplish his agenda. God said that there is no stopping them when ungodly men are bent on doing things. We see it in the world; we see it in our nation, and we think: *How can they keep getting away with this?* They are under the spirit of Nimrod, a spirit of rebellion unified against God, and they are deceived into believing they will succeed.

Much Damage Has Been Done

In crucial cases facing our nation, the barn door is open and the horse is out, and there’s no getting it back in. “Changes” that have happened in this nation in the last few years, we warned about, but I don’t think anybody really believed it. Now we have federal judges overturning the votes of the people where a majority voted against legalizing same-sex marriage. The govern-

ment is supposed to be *“For the people, by the people, of the people,”* but in states where a majority went to the voting booth and voted against same-sex marriage, they have overturned the will of the people. You can see that when people get in one mind and one accord to do evil, evil can prevail.

When we look at the world at large, we have no idea the unity that is in the House of Islam. It’s clear that there are many factions: Hamas, Hezbollah, Al-Queda, and this new Isis that is really gaining power and strength, and they do fight with one another, because everybody wants to be tribal chief. But when it comes to the matter of the Cross, and the Bible, and Christians, and Jews, they forget all about their differences. They are united, and they have one goal: to annihilate Israel off the map. They don’t want to annihilate America. They just want their flag flying over the White House. We can sit and think, *That is never going to happen.* But if God hadn’t come down and intervened, they were united on building that tower of Babel.

God was not threatened by their tower. We all know that tower was only going so high, bricks or no bricks, slaves or no slaves. They were never going to reach God. We’ve sent many rockets into space. In 1969 we sent a man to walk on the moon, but he still didn’t get to the third heaven

where God is. If you want to get to the third heaven where God is, you have to get into the Spirit and to take a spiritual rocket ride like Paul, who said, *“I was caught up to the third heaven. Whether in the body or out of the body I don’t know, but I know I was there”*

their rebellion against Him, and Nimrod walking around saying, “I said, Get down,” and making slaves of people to build his kingdom. God said, “We’re not going to let this go any further.” He wasn’t stopping the building of the tower per se, but intervening



European Parliament in Strasbourg, France

(Ref. 2Cor.12:2-4). John said, *“I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and I saw a door in Heaven open, and someone said, Come up here,”* and immediately he was caught up to Heaven.

That tower of Babel was never going to reach God. God was not nervous about it or concerned that they might succeed in building their tower. What God saw was

by confounding their language, so that they could not communicate anymore. Nimrod could say, “I said, Get down! I said, Put those bricks in that furnace,” but they didn’t know what he was saying. That was the end of the tower of Babel. God dismantled the kingdom of Nimrod, but the *spirit of Nimrod* is still very active in the world today!

The European Union

In 1992 powerful nations of Europe signed a treaty to make of themselves a unity: *The European Union*. They began with 6 countries, and now there are 28. They don't all speak the same language, of course: The French speak French, and the English speak English; others speak German, Dutch, etc. In 2002, they created a common cash currency—the *Euro*, that is used by most members. While the EU does not have an official capital, the seat of its Parliament is located in Strasbourg, France, and other councils meet in Brussels, Belgium as well.

The EU Parliament Building in Strasbourg is most interesting. Its design is a modern replica of the painting of the Tower of Babel. You can google these to see photos. In some, the images are side by side. The eerie thing is, the building was designed to look like it's unfinished, for the express purpose of resembling the Tower of Babel. The EU even published a poster depicting the Tower of Babel with the 12 stars of its flag super-imposed over it and with the slogan: EUROPE-MANY TONGUES-ONE VOICE.

With modern technology, language differences are no longer a barrier. The spirit of Nimrod is alive and well! It is the *spirit of Antichrist*. It is not about a person. It is about the ideology: *"Let's do this without God."* Some are say-

ing, *"Let's do it without God, because there is no God."* Others are saying, *"Well, if there is a God, I don't care, and I don't need Him."* It's a spirit of godlessness and a spirit of man-exalting self-promotion.

You know how every ten years they "name the decade"? I think they should name this one *"The Decade of the Selfie."* Honestly, have you ever seen so many people take so many "selfies" of themselves? All day long, every day, as if we really want to see their picture twenty times a day. Last night I heard a celebrity on one of the news channels actually say, so nonchalantly, because to her it sounded perfectly acceptable: *"I am self-possessed."* Now she is very beautiful, but she believes it is okay for her to take endless selfies of herself and plaster them all over social media so everybody can see them. Then we have young girls coming up who see this, and that's what they want to emulate. Even little girls, 3 and 4 years old, are already posing in different positions, some "sexy," and they're posted online. I'm thinking, *My God, what is she going to be like by the time she is thirteen? You will not be able to live with her! I wonder: Does this child ever get dirty? Does she ever just play?*

This is the age we are living in, and we have to refuse **to let the world make us one of its**

bricks! God made you to be *a living stone* not a worldly brick!

*Don't Miss Part Two Coming
in Next Month's FIA!*