

## Todd Alexander - A Burdensome Stone

*This transcript was generated automatically. Its accuracy may vary.*

Brethren, today the session title for my session is A Burdensome A Collision of Kingdoms. It's based on Daniel chapter two, as well as Zechariah chapter 12. That's Daniel chapter two, and Zechariah chapter 12.

Today, the pressure to abandon Israel is deafening. That wrestling match has left many of us tired. That moral wrestling match, that pressure to abandon Israel, that moral wrestling match, it doesn't make us faithless. It makes us watchmen.

Today we return to the prophecies of Daniel and Zechariah to see that this chaos that we are dealing with in the world is really not a sign that God has lost control, but evidence that he is taking it back. Not by chaos, but by conquest. Not by accident, but by arrival. Not the end, but the clearing.

Now, Scripture gives us a hidden structural key, a progression of stones.

And God is not improvising history. He is building.

And the stones appear in divine order. There's a stone that strikes. There's a stone that aligns. There's a stone that burdens the nations, and finally, a stone that crowns the kingdom with peace.

So today we will follow these stones through prophecy and discover where we stand among them. Part 1 the Image and the Impact in Daniel Chapter 2. We might all be aware of this prophecy in Daniel chapter 2, verses 34 through 35 and 44. 45. It's a beautiful prophecy.

And you remember this from our stories that we heard as children. So first, come back with me to Babylon. Let's be time travelers for a moment. It's my favorite movie based, by the way, being a time traveler. So let me ask you this.

Can you smell the incense? Can you feel the dry heat of the Mesopotamian night? King Nebuchadnezzar is asleep, but he's tossing and turning. He's haunted by a nightmare, a nightmare that he cannot catch. He sees a huge, terrifying image.

It's a head of gold. It's shimmering and absolute. That's the glory of Babylon. There's a powerful chest and arms of silver. That's the Medes and the Persians, strong but inferior.

Do you see the belly and thighs of brass? That's the Grecian intellect and the spread of language, and then there's the legs of iron. Rome. The autocracy.

Cold, brutal, unyielding, crushing the known world under its heel.

But then the vision shifts. In our mind's eye, we look down past the glory of the gold, past the strength of the iron, down to the feet. Iron mixed with clay. Pagan and papal Rome. Iron is rigid.

Clay is brittle, and they cannot be fused. They may occupy the same space, but they do not. They cannot stick together, and this describes our world today.

It's fragile, it's destructive. It's a fragile, destructive ecosystem that we live in today. It's called the time of the end.

## Todd Alexander - A Burdensome Stone

But watch. Daniel says, I saw a stone cut without hands. Without hands. It's God's kingdom, and it destroys the accumulated systems.

And this phrase cut out of the mountain without hands is really the death knell of humanism. You know, humanism is invading our culture. I think maybe the sister was testifying about that in the school, and the concept of humanism is that mankind will always increase and progress, that will use its intellect to pull itself forward and to save itself. But this phrase about this stone that's cut out of the mountain without hands, that's the death knell to humanism.

Basically, it means that no election brought this stone about and no treaty signed the kingdom of God into law. No army mobilized it. No, it's divine intervention. It's the sovereignty of Jehovah carved out of the mountain. Now, a few scriptures actually confirm this intervention.

Psalms 2, 8, 9, I really enjoy, and this talks about kingship given to Jesus by Jehovah. The kingship of the kingdom is Jesus, and it's given to him by Jehovah, and it says this, verse 8, Psalm chapter 2, verses 8 and 9. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth.

For thy possession Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron. Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Brethren, that's what we're seeing today. Messiah will break the nations with a rod of iron and dash the systems of men like a potter's vessel. Let's take a look at Isaiah, chapter 28, verses 16 and 17.

Isaiah, chapter 28, verses 16 and 17. It says, Therefore, thus saith the Lord God. Behold, I lay in Zion a foundation stone, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation. He that believeth shall not make haste. You know what that means, not make haste.

I was talking to somebody about this at the break, in a different context. But what this means is that they will not. If you believe in and properly are developed by the power of Jehovah and Jesus Christ, then you will not be immature in your Christian development.

And I think that's a necessary directive for us to stay close to the foundation stone in this transition of the ages. Verse 17 in Isaiah 28, very powerful scripture. We love it because it talks about the kingdom. It says, judgment will I lay to the line and righteousness to the plummet. Man, we love that.

We love justice. We love the idea of justice and everlasting peace, and it's coming. It says, judgment also will I lay to the line and righteousness to the plummet, and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place.

So what Isaiah does here is he adds that Jehovah lays a tested foundation stone, Zion. That's heavenly Jerusalem, and that it's going to be in charge of the judgment of the earth. Righteous judgment. Righteous judgment.

Righteous judgment without exception.

And that the earthly government will be centered in Jerusalem, and this infrastructure is coming together right now. We see it. We see it rising from the dust heap of the earth.

Daniel's stone cut out of the mountain without hands. It's not merely for destruction. Yes. It removes everything that's not aligned with the kingdom of God, and that is so that the kingdom of

## Todd Alexander - A Burdensome Stone

God will be unfettered.

None will hurt or destroy an all my holy mountain. But Daniel's stone flies through the corridors of human history, and it strikes the image not at the head, not at the chest, not at the belly, not at the legs, but at the feet. Daniel, chapter two, verses 34 through 35, it says this. Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay and brake them to pieces.

Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, the gold broken to pieces together and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors, and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them, and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. Wow. It breaks the entire structure.

It breaks it down, it destroys it to the point of powder until the wind carries away like wind on the summer threshing floors. I was talking to brother Dan about the threshing floor. He gave me an interesting insight, by the way, and that is that Mount Moriah means. What does it mean, Brother Dan? God will provide.

And I love that, because that is the whole context of the day that we live in. The world's systems are turning to dust, and the confusion itself is proof that the stone has struck. But brethren, we're not supposed to fear the dust. The stone becomes a mountain and fills the whole earth. This is the fulfillment of the Abrahamic promise.

This is God's kingdom. This is restitution, and it's happening Right before our eyes. God has a plan, and you are in it. But the destruction of the Gentile powers is not the end of the story.

It's just the clearing of the construction site to make way for God's kingdom. Let's consider the second stone. That's the chief cornerstone, and it's found in Ephesians chapter two.

So shift your eyes away from the dust, because the dust settles and the noise of the crashing empires fade. We step out of the debris of Daniel and into the quiet quarry of Ephesians, and this is what the Apostle Paul tells us in Ephesians 2:20. Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone. Wow.

This is a different kind of stone. The stone in Daniel was a boulder hewn, destructive, an instrument of judgment and everlasting peace. But this chief cornerstone, this is polished, and it is a reference point. It's a reference point for every other stone in the structure that must align with the chief cornerstone. That's you.

You are the other stones in the structure. Jesus Christ is that chief cornerstone, and this is the mystery that we cherish as Bible students. Chapter five out of volume one, the mystery. The unfinished mystery.

Wow. It's beautiful. By the way, when the. When the Chinese brother translated volume one in 2008, he said he. He read chapter.

I told him to read chapter five first because he thought we were with the jws, and he read chapter five and he called me and he says, I got to tell you that my wife and I were weeping after we finished that.

## Todd Alexander - A Burdensome Stone

The mystery that we cherish as Bible students is that the stone structure aligned under the chief cornerstone is not just Jesus. First Peter, chapter two, verses four through six. Peter expands this concept beautifully. He says, you also are lively. Stones are built up a spiritual house.

And the Apostle Paul confirms in First Corinthians 3, 11, 13, no other foundation can be laid than Jesus Christ, and he says that every stone is tested by fire to reveal its true character. Brethren, that chiseling that you feel, it's not accidental, it's preparation for kingdom service.

We are all being chiseled. Can you feel that chisel?

Some of you know exactly what it feels like.

And there are seasons in our life when God feels more like a sculptor than a comforter.

But he's not breaking us. He's fitting us. It's glorious. It hurts. Doesn't it hurt?

The trials of life.

It feels like we're broken. I've been there. I felt that. But we're not being broken. We're being shaped.

And we're being fitted for A temple that will rise on the ruins of that image of Daniel, and so far we've considered these two pictures of the time of the end, the smitten stone of Daniel, that's the kingdom power destroying the old order, the cornerstone of Ephesians. That's the kingdom class being prepared to bless. But then there's a third stone, a stone that sits right in the middle of this transition. It's a stone that is causing the nations to stumble.

That's the burdensome stone of Zechariah 12.

I shared this scripture in December on my trip to Israel with a gentleman who is very influential. He's the senior strategist of all of Israel. He was the PR guy that got Netanyahu in power in 90s and Ariel Sharon in the early 2000s, and Ehud Olmert and I shared the scripture and he has a Master's of Theology degree from Hebrew University, and he told me he loved walking across the street to Union Theological Seminary in New York City and talking to the Christians there.

So I shared this with him.

It says, and in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people. All that burden themselves with it shall be cut to pieces. It's got to be really encouraging for Israelis to hear that. But we are watching this burden unfold in real time now. October 7, 2023, accelerated the world's obsession with Israel.

All of the nations of the earth are trying to take up the task of dealing with the nation of Israel, and we experience this burden individually. Also, when you have to defend your position on Israel. How about this? Have you ever heard this?

You know, that sign in your front yard makes me feel uncomfortable. Or, you know, how can you, as a follower of the Prince of Peace, support a nation that seems to be causing such visible destruction? Have you had to deal with that now personally? Yes. I see the children in Gaza.

I see the rubble, and my heart breaks too.

## Todd Alexander - A Burdensome Stone

And some people of our friends might wonder if this is really God's hand, and brethren, it's right that our hearts break, and perhaps it's a deeper lesson for us that prophecy does not call us to harden our hearts while the world suffers. Prophecy does not call us to harden our hearts while the world suffers. It calls us to see the suffering through God's long patience.

Jehovah is dealing with the nations, and he's dealing with us. You feel his patience in the chiseling, in the shaping.

Every side of the conflict in Israel reveals something unfinished in the human heart.

Every side of this conflict in US reveals something that's unfinished inside ourselves, and the purpose of God's kingdom is not merely to judge that conflict, but to heal it.

So we do not watch these events with triumph. We watch these events with sobriety, with compassion, and with confidence that the same God who disciplines also restores.

We mourn for Hagar's children just as we mourn for Sarah's children. But we look at the destruction through the lens of prophecy. We have to know what time it is in the day of the Lord. We need to know what time it is. The night is far spent.

So let's consider this burden of the nation of Israel for a moment. A burden. Just think of a burden. A burden is heavy, isn't it? It's heavy, it's awkward.

It scrapes the hands of those who try to move it, and today's Israel is actually a moral burden for the world, and the nations are being forced to make a choice. This principle of choice is actually ancient. We read this in Genesis chapter 12, verse 3.

It says that God told this to Abraham. I will bless them that bless thee and curse them that curse thee. Well, our Ohio Secretary of State quotes that. Every time I've met him, he quotes that, that scripture, it's really exciting. Zechariah 2, verse 8 confirms this.

He says, he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye. Jerusalem becomes a burdensome stone because the nations are unknowingly wrestling with God's covenanted people. They're ignorant.

Now, part of the burden of Israel is that it is actually called a Western anomaly. It's a Western. It's a Western anomaly. I don't know if you've ever heard that term. But a Western nation with Western style institutions planted in a very different region, it's a bad neighborhood and it's the most dangerous neighborhood in the world.

One of my favorite people on the scene is Michael Oren, the former Israeli ambassador to the United States, and he's also a historian. If you ever get a chance to read the book Power, Faith and Fantasy, the nation of Israel from 1700s to 1900s, it's really powerful. But Michael Oren calls Israel the forward operating base of Western civilization, and he asks a legitimate question.

He says, why does the world demand perfection from Israel while shrugging its shoulders at the dictatorships that surround it? And Michael Oren defines this as the super standard. The super standard. Consider this, he says, when a dictator in Syria slaughters 500,000 of his own people, the world shrugs. It's just the Middle East.

## Todd Alexander - A Burdensome Stone

But when Israel defends itself. The world erupts. This is the super standard. It's the soft bigotry of low expectations applied to the Arab world and a crushing, impossible standard applied to the Jewish people.

Let me also share a metaphor from Thomas Friedman, a political commentator that provides some clarity. He describes the Middle east as a struggle between the coalition of inclusion, modernity, trade and peace, and the coalition of resistance, Iran and its proxies. He likens Iran to what he calls a, and I've never heard this word before, he likens Iran to a Paris parasitoid wasp.

So he says, picture a wasp. It doesn't just sting, it injects its eggs into a living host, a caterpillar, and the eggs actually hatch inside. Eating the host alive while using its skin for protection. Makes me sick just thinking about it. Sorry about that before lunch.

But Hamas is the egg, Gaza is the caterpillar, and Hamas has woven itself into the schools, the mosques, the hospitals, and they're not protecting their people. They are wearing their people as armor. They're not protecting their people. They're wearing their people as armor.

And Friedman says, if you play by the rules of the jungle, you survive. If you play by the rules of the courtroom, you get eaten. So I think what's happening is Israel is trying to bring the rules of the courtroom into the jungle, and that is why it is messy. That is why it's heartbreaking.

That is they are cutting out a cancer that has intertwined itself with the vital organs of a society in Gaza.

So deep down, even the secular world knows that Israel is different. It's a country born of Judeo Christian values, but they view Israel simply as a political entity. The world views Israel as simply a political entity. We, however, see Israel as the clock on God's wall.

So please indulge me for a moment in a little thought experiment. We look back at the exodus of the Jews from Egypt as a glorious deliverance. I love Charlton Heston in that movie. The Exodus makes me feel good inside, and we see the mighty hand of God freeing his people.

But the Exodus to Egypt was devastating. It was salvation for the Jews of Israel, but it was devastating to both Pharaoh's army and every family in Egypt. Every family lost a firstborn child. So imagine if today's media had been there to cover the 10 plagues. How would the headlines read?

Here's one headline. I got two headlines for you. Headline number one. Environmental disaster on the Nile river turns to blood. Experts blame climate change.

Local cult leader Moses claims God.

Here's another headline. Disproportionate force. Plague of hail destroys Egyptian crops. United nations holds emergency session condemning Moses for collective punishment.

Do you see? The Jews were a burdensome stone to Egypt long before they were a burdensome stone to the nations. Pharaoh found them to be burdensome. He wanted them managed. He wanted them silent.

And when God intervened to disrupt the status quo, the empire did not repent. Instead, they hardened their heart, and we are seeing this same spiritual pathology today. The world prefers a stable Pharaoh to a disruptive prophet.

## Todd Alexander - A Burdensome Stone

And the media narrative that you see today is really just the modern version of Pharaoh's magicians.

Today, the spirit of the age tries to explain away the finger of God as mere politics or magic.

Let us not fall for that.

Just as the burden of the Hebrews broke the back of Egypt, the burden of modern Israel is exposing the moral bankruptcy of the nations. God is using Israel as a tool to expose the moral bankruptcy of the nations. Let's not be a part of that nations, and the nations will harden their heart and the nations will break this bias of the world. Antitypical Egypt against Israel.

It's not just politics. It's a spiritual hardening against God's plan, and this leads us to the tried and true warning that Israel is a canary in the coal mine. The terror tactics that tested by Hamas on the Gaza envelope in Israel, including the Nova Festival, Sderot, kibbutzim, the tunnels, the drones, unimaginable savagery that I witnessed firsthand afterward are exports intended for London, for Paris and for New York.

What we see in Israel is a nation that's holding back a tidal wave of medieval chaos.

And if Israel breaks, the world political system will drown.

So let us all remember, God doesn't ask us to take our sides in human anger. God does not ask us to take sides in human anger.

God does not ask us to take sides in human anger. He asks us simply to recognize his timing.

So let's talk about the transition. Where does this leave us right now? We have two worlds that are now standing. Where does that leave us right now? We're living in the great dichotomy.

On one hand, the gentile systems, the iron and clay, crumbling, confused, failing for fear. On the other hand, the fig tree sprouting forth leaves. 78 years ago this May. That's almost an entire generation. According to Psalm 90:10 of 80 years.

Luke says this in Luke 21, 29:31, Jesus said, Behold the fig tree. When they shoot forth leaves, ye see and know the kingdom of God is nigh. Now remember the first Question that the disciples asked Jesus in Acts. I think it's like Acts chapter one, maybe verse six. They said, hey, Jesus, will it be now that you restore the kingdom of God?

And the apostle Peter kind of creates a bookend to that answer, and he says in Acts 3, 1921. Peter later connected this with the times of restoration of all things spoken of by all the prophets.

The leaves are not the kingdom. The leaves on the fig tree are not the kingdom itself. They are simply the signal that the season has changed. Tough, resilient, a Western anomaly that refuses to die.

I like quick one liners, if you haven't noticed, and Ezekiel, chapter 37, verse 8. Here's a quick one liner, and I think he brings a key to us. He says there was no breath in them.

That's the resurrection of the body, of the nation of Israel. The body was complete. It had flesh, it had bones, it had sinews connecting those bones. It had the infrastructure, the operating system of

## Todd Alexander - A Burdensome Stone

the of the body. But it says there was no breath in them.

And that's what we're seeing today. We're seeing Israel restored nationally. But they are not yet awakened by the Messiah. Romans 11, verses 25 through 27. Paul explains that blindness in part remains until the fullness of the Gentiles come in.

Afterward, Israel's deliverance comes.

And Zechariah tells us of that moment of the first breath. They look upon me, whom they have pierced. Zechariah 12:10. So, my brethren, this is why the conflict continues. Israel is assembled, but not yet breathing spiritually.

They are not yet alive. In the Messiah, the body stands, the breath is still future.

So let's go back and look at this structural key that we have in the Scriptures. It's a prophetic structural key that ties together the narrative of the Abrahamic promise, the prophetic progression of stones. Scripture does not give us random metaphors. It gives us an ordered architecture of the establishment of God's kingdom, and you are in it.

First, the smiting stone. Daniel 2:34, 35 and 44:45. A stone cut out without hands. Strike the image, strikes the image at its feet, and the whole Gentile structure collapses. This is God's kingdom power breaking the old order.

Next, the Chief Cornerstone. Ephesians 2:20 and 1st Peter 2. That same kingdom is not only a force of judgment, it's a building. It's a building for heavenly Zion. It's a building for the future God.

Jesus Christ is the chief cornerstone, and you are being shaped right now with chisel and hammer. Without a sound.

And in the future, every living stone must align with him. God's preparing the kingdom class. Now then we have the burdensome stone. In Zechariah 12, before the world can be blessed, nations must be tested, and Jerusalem becomes that burdensome stone that exposes the hearts of the governments and the people.

And those who try to lift that stone in opposition are cut and wounded by it. Let us not have any part in this process, and then, of course, the foundation stone. In Isaiah 28, after shaking and stumbling and the stumbling, Jehovah says, behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation stone, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation. This is the kingdom government being established in righteousness, not merely destroying, but replacing, not merely judging, but governing.

And then finally, we have Zechariah. Chapter 4, verse 7. It says, and when the building is brought to completion, the prophet speaks of the headstone with shoutings, crying, grace, grace unto it. That that is the kingdom of God, that is finished not by human might, not by legislation, not by vote, not by human power, but by God's spirit, and the whole world will rejoice when that structure is complete.

A really great scripture is in Ezekiel 39, 28:29, it says this.

Then shall they know that I am the Lord their God, which caused them to be led into captivity among the heathen. Have you ever included this message in your prayer? Ask God to bring the full establishment of his kingdom soon. This is the scripture that you're thinking about when you say

## Todd Alexander - A Burdensome Stone

that. Ezekiel 39, 28:29.

Then shall they know, talking about Israel, that that I am the Lord their God, which caused them to be led into captivity among the heathen. But I have gathered them unto their own land and have left none of them anymore there. Neither will I hide my face any more from them, for I have poured out my spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord God. So this prophetic moment is still future, and God is turning his face back toward his people.

And when God turns his face toward one thing, he necessarily turns his face away from another. God's favor has left the Gentile nations. They are collapsing. God's favor has returned to Jacob. They are thriving.

They are surviving against all odds. As Bible students, we do not rejoice in the suffering of other people. We do not cheer for war. But we recognize the groaning. We recognize that the burdensome stone is being positioned by the divine architect, the nation Sheikh.

The fig tree has brought forth leaves. The plan advances. We await the breath. We await the fig tree.

And here, brethren is the beautiful harmony. God's divine plan of the ages is perfect. First, God completes the little flock. Those are the living stones aligned to Christ. Next, God prepares Israel as the earthly stage of his kingdom.

And soon those two will meet.

My mission in December in Israel was to let some of the leadership know about the resurrection of the ancient worthies, and I had some precious moments. I cried in a man's office over that subject. He is in charge of 30,000 troops in the Israeli border guard.

The living stones are being aligned to Christ. Next, God prepares Israel as the earthly stage of the kingdom, and those two will meet, and Revelation 11:15. Jesus declares the moment of that union.

The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ.

And then will Isaiah's vision unfold. In Isaiah chapter 2, 2, 4, where it states that the law shall go forth from Zion and the nations shall learn war no more.

The stone that struck becomes the foundation of peace.

And when the breath enters Israel, the burdensome stone actually transforms that burdensome stone. It transforms. It stops being a rock of offense. It becomes a foundation stone for the world, and that controversial nation becomes the teaching nation.

That debated city, Jerusalem, becomes the city of the great king. The wasp of terrorism will be crushed not by bombs, but by the rod of iron of the Prince of Peace. So in conclusion, my brethren, what manner of persons ought you to be in all holy conversation and conduct? I'd like to end with the words of the apostle Peter. We saw all of this coming.

We've been learning about it how long, O Lord?

## Todd Alexander - A Burdensome Stone

Peter saw all of this coming. He saw the elements melting with fervent heat, and his advice for us was not to build a bunker. His advice was not to argue on Facebook. Peter's advice was not to panic.

He simply said, seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness? What manner of persons, not anxious, not bitter, not political, but holy, steady, peaceful architects of redemption. Peter says that we should be looking for and hastening unto the coming of the day of the Lord. Brethren, we don't look for and hasten the coming of the day of the Lord by fighting a culture war. We hasten it by getting our own characters in line with the cornerstone.

Steady in the storm, holy in the fire, faithful to the end. We hasten the kingdom of God by becoming the kind of people the kingdom can safely be entrusted to. So tomorrow morning when you open your news feeds, the headlines are against the nation of Israel. Do not be shaken. This is the world's burden.

It's not your burden. They are burdening themselves with the apple of God's eye, and when the narrative in your workplace, your community, or even in your family tries to force you into silence, remember what we saw today. The Judgment stone, the stone cut out of the mountain. The blessing stone, the chief cornerstone and your part in God's building.

And the cutting stone, the burdensome stone where the nations will be cut to pieces. Let us not argue about this deafening noise of destruction, brethren. We're not standing with the chaos. We're standing with the culmination, and let us watch that clock.

Let us follow the finger of God, even when the whole world points the other way. Lift up your eyes beyond the headlines. The stone has struck. The cornerstone is gathering. The burdensome stone is fulfilling its appointed work.

So let us be found in peace, steady, holy, aligned with the cornerstone, ready for the moment when the stone that struck becomes the mountain that heals. We are not here to perform the truth. We are here to bear witness to it, and God be with you.