In Old Testament Israel the cornerstone of each building was the chief stone from which every single measurement of the entire building was made. The cornerstone itself must, of necessity, be perfectly formed with every corner and side at 90 degrees from all others. The stone hewers were called stone squarers. It had to be laid perfectly level on every side. Any deviation in the form or arrangement of the cornerstone would be reflected in the entire building.

Cornerstones have always been part of our architectural history. By uniting two intersecting walls, a cornerstone aligned the whole building and tied it together. It always lay at the corner of two walls and formed the corner of the foundation of an edifice. Upon it the alignment of the entire structure rested.

The picture to the right shows how the stones of a building in Israel were laid. Notice how large the stones were—and how straight.

Below is a picture showing the simple diagram of modern day construction indicating its corner stone. Notice that everything is measured from that stone. (Let us consider how we, as Christians, are not to measure ourselves by each other, but we must measure ourselves by Christ (2 Cor. 10:12; Eph. 4:11-13).

One passage in the Old Testament book of Job seems to be a general scripture for the word cornerstone. “Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof;” (Job 38:6).

Another passage in the Old Testament book of Psalms also refers to the cornerstone. “That our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth; that our daughters may be as corner stones, polished after the similitude of a palace:” (Psa. 144:12).

The following passages about stones refer to Jesus:

- Psalms 118:22—The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner.
- Isaiah 28:16—Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.
- Matthew 21:42—Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?
Mark 12:10—And have ye not read this scripture; The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner:

Luke 20:17—And he beheld them, and said, What is this then that is written, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner?

1 Corinthians 3:11—For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 3:9-11—For we are labourers together with God: ye are God’s husbandry, ye are God’s building. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

As the chief cornerstone, Jesus is the source of every measurement in the eternal spiritual temple.

Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit (Eph. 2:19-22).

Jesus Christ is the Chief Cornerstone from which all other measurements must be made. He is perfectly and flawlessly formed with no spot or wrinkle or any such thing. All other stones in the building must be perfectly formed and aligned with that Chief Cornerstone the Lord has laid down.

Under the Old Law, stones of some buildings had to be cleansed (Lev.14:33-48). In particular, notice verse 40.

33 And the Lord spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying,
34 When ye be come into the land of Canaan, which I give to you for a possession, and I put the plague of leprosy in a house of the land of your possession;
35 And he that owneth the house shall come and tell the priest, saying, It seemeth to me there is as it were a plague in the house:
36 Then the priest shall command that they empty the house, before the priest go into it to see the plague, that all that is in the house be not made unclean: and afterward the priest shall go in to see the house:
37 And he shall look on the plague, and, behold, if the plague be in the walls of the house with hollow strakes, greenish or reddish, which in sight are lower than the wall;
38 Then the priest shall go out of the house to the door of the house, and shut up the house seven days:
39 And the priest shall come again the seventh day, and shall look: and, behold, if the plague be spread in the walls of the house;
40 Then the priest shall command that they take away the stones in which the plague is, and they shall cast them into an unclean place without the city:
41 And he shall cause the house to be scraped within round about, and they shall pour out the dust that they scrape off without the city into an unclean place:
42 And they shall take other stones, and put them in the place of those stones; and he shall take other mortar, and shall plaister the house.
43 And if the plague come again, and break out in the house, after that he hath taken away the stones, and after he hath scraped the house, and after it is plaistered;
44 Then the priest shall come and look, and, behold, if the plague be spread in the house, it is a fretting leprosy in the house: it is unclean.
45 And he shall break down the house, the stones of it, and the timber thereof, and all the morter of the house; and he shall carry them forth out of the city into an unclean place.
46 Moreover he that goeth into the house all the while that it is shut up shall be unclean until the even.
47 And he that lieth in the house shall wash his clothes; and he that eateth in the house shall wash his clothes.
48 And if the priest shall come in, and look upon it, and, behold, the plague hath not spread in the house, after the house was plaistered: then the priest shall pronounce the house clean, because the plague is healed.

Several passages may be related to “...take away the stones in which the plague is...”

- “Take away the dross from the silver, and there shall come forth a vessel for the finer. Take away the wicked from before the king, and his throne shall be established in righteousness” (Pro. 25:4-5).
- “And I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin: And I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning: afterward thou shalt be called, The city of righteousness, the faithful city” (Isa. 1:25-26).
- “And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican” (Matt. 18:17).
- “Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit” (John 15:2).
- “To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?...But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person” (1 Cor. 5:5-6, 13).
What or who are the living stones in the New Testament Temple?

- Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builted together for an habitation of God through the Spirit (Eph. 2:19-22).

- To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an 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 Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed (1 Pet. 2:4-8).

- Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are (1 Cor. 3:16-17, 19).

- And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people (2 Cor. 6:16).

- Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the
city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name (Rev. 3:12).

So what may we conclude from this study? After the cross there is one temple ➔ the Church, and Jesus is the chief cornerstone of that temple. The apostles and prophets are the foundation, while we are the living stones in it.