

RETOURNER À L'AUTEL

The stones we do not cut

God comes down. And he comes down where no one is expecting him.

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« Un seul autel. Beaucoup de chemins pour y revenir. »

The stones we do not cut

Where this journey comes from

God comes down. And he comes down where no one is expecting him.

On Carmel there was nothing left. The altar where the LORD had once been called upon was no more than a heap of thrown-down stones, in a country that had changed gods. **That is where he sends his prophet.** And this man's name is already the answer to the whole story: **Eliyahu, "the LORD is my God."** It is, word for word, the cry of the people when the fire falls (1 Kings 18:39).

Elijah does not bring the fire down. He does something else, and it is a man's work: **with his own hands, he puts the stones back in place.**

"And he repaired the altar of the LORD that had been thrown down. Elijah took **twelve stones**, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob." **1 Kings 18:30-31**

Ellen White · Prophets and Kings, p. 151, chapter "Carmel" "In the reconstruction of this ancient altar, Elijah revealed **his respect for the covenant** that the Lord made with Israel when they crossed the Jordan into the Promised Land. Choosing '*twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, . . .*' he built an altar in the name of the Lord." **He is not counting tribes. He is recalling a promise.**

VERIFIED · original English, PK 151.

Twelve stones, when there are no longer twelve tribes

The kingdom has been split in two for generations. North and south are separated. **And Elijah takes twelve stones anyway.**

He builds for a unity that no longer exists. That is exactly what you are going to do: **raise an altar in a house where no one prays anymore, and lay stones for a family that has not yet come back.** He does not build on what he sees. **He builds on what God has promised.**

And these stones are not cut

The Law forbids it: "*if you wield your tool on it you profane it*" (**Exodus 20:25; Deuteronomy 27:5-6**). They are rough, heavy, irregular.

What it takes	
Strength	Mental and spiritual. This is not a program to follow, it is work to be done.
Understanding	The kind that comes from the Holy Spirit. You will not know on your own where each stone goes.
Patience	For when they do not fit together. And they will not, not on the first try.

And now, understand why God forbids the chisel

The stone that is not cut is the man. God refuses to have him touched up before he is set into the wall. He takes him lumpy, irregular, imperfect, **and he builds with him.** The chisel would mean demanding that he change before he comes in. **That would be to profane the altar.**

That is Study 1. And that is the whole gospel: come as you are.

And these stones are people

This is not an image laid on top of the text: **it is the text that gives it.** "Twelve stones, **according to the number of the tribes.**" Each stone is a tribe. **Each stone is a people.**

And Peter picks it up word for word:

"you yourselves like **living stones** are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a **holy priesthood**, to offer **spiritual sacrifices** acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." (**1 Peter 2:5**) Stones. Living. Being built into a house. And offering a sacrifice. **That is your altar, word for word.** And the cornerstone is Christ (1 Peter 2:6-7; Ephesians 2:20).

So why does God gather them? The next verse says it:

"... that you may **proclaim** the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." (**1 Peter 2:9**) **He does not gather stones to make a wall. He gathers a people to carry a message.**

And on that altar there is only one thing

Elijah did not raise twelve stones in order to look at them. **He laid an offering on them.**

Fire does not fall on bare stones. It falls on an altar where an offering has been laid.

RIGOR • Never say "the fire does not fall on the stones". **1 Kings 18:38 says the opposite:** *"the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt offering and the wood and the stones and the dust."* **The stones were consumed along with the offering.** What is true, and verifiable: **fire does not fall on bare stones.** Without an offering, there is nothing.

"Behold, **the Lamb of God**, who takes away the sin of the world!" (**John 1:29**) **That is the message the living stones have to carry. Not a program. Not a method. A Lamb.**

The seven principles

The twelve studies are not twelve sessions to tick off: **they are twelve stones to put back**, one by one, in a house where the altar has gone out.

They come from the **seven principles** of the booklet *Back to the Altar*, by **Don MacLafferty**. Five of them carried two moves at once: we have separated them.

	The principle in the booklet	Becomes
1	Come to Jesus just as you are	Study 1
2	Honor Jesus as Lord	Study 2
3	Discover Jesus in his Word and in prayer	Studies 3 and 4
4	Receive a fresh baptism of the Holy Spirit	Studies 5 and 6
5	Love your family sacrificially	Studies 7 and 8
6	Make others disciples of Jesus	Studies 9 and 10
7	Live the mission God has given you	Studies 11 and 12

What we added, we say so

From the booklet: the seven principles · the template of each session · the five steps of the baptism of the Spirit · the seven steps of the assurance of salvation · the items of the "Connect".

Added here: the S.M.S. and the C.I.T. · the two variants A and B · the Lamb on the altar in Study 2 · the prodigal son · the Spirit before the water.

Added for this page: the wheel and the rule of return · the guardrails · the labeled links · the bridge · the right to say "nothing this week".

The rest is his, and we owe him the rest.