

# 1 Corinthians 3:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

## Analysis

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**For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ** (θεμέλιον γὰρ ἄλλον οὐδεὶς δύναται θεῖναι παρὰ τὸν κείμενον, ὅς ἐστιν Ἰησοῦς Χριστός, themelion gar allon oudeis dynatai theinai para ton keimenon, hos estin Iēsous Christos)—this is the theological apex of the passage. Oudeis dynatai ('no one is able') asserts impossibility, not merely prohibition. No alternative foundation exists or can exist.

The perfect participle keimenon (κείμενον, 'having been laid') indicates permanent completion—Christ is the established, immovable foundation. Isaiah 28:16 prophesied: 'Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation.' Peter applies this to Christ (1 Peter 2:6); Paul echoes it here. Every other foundation—human philosophy, tradition, experience, or even religious law—is sinking sand (Matthew 7:24-27). Christ's person and work constitute the sole basis for the church's existence, the non-negotiable core upon which all else builds. To shift the foundation is to abandon Christianity itself.

## Historical Context

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In the pluralistic Greco-Roman world, philosophical schools and mystery religions competed for adherents, each claiming unique access to divine truth. Against this backdrop, Paul's exclusivism is radical: Jesus Christ is THE foundation—singular, irreplaceable, sufficient. This contradicted Corinthian attempts to syncretize

Christianity with Greek wisdom (1:22-23) or to elevate human teachers into foundational roles.

## Related Passages

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**Romans 2:1** — Judging others

**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

## Study Questions

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1. What aspects of your faith or your church's teaching risk replacing or supplementing Christ as the foundation—traditions, programs, personalities, political ideologies?
2. How does the impossibility of any other foundation (not just prohibition, but ontological impossibility) comfort you in times of doubt or confusion?
3. What practical difference does it make to build on Christ rather than on Christian principles, experiences, or community?

## Interlinear Text

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θεμέλιον	γὰρ	ἄλλον	οὐδεὶς	δύναται	θεῖναι	παρὰ	τὸν
foundation	For	other	no man	can	lay	than	G3588
G2310	G1063	G243	G3762	G1410	G5087	G3844	
κείμενον	ὅς	ἐστιν	Ἰησοῦς	ὁ	Χριστός		
that is laid	which	is	Jesus	G3588	Christ		
G2749	G3739	G2076	G2424		G5547		

## Additional Cross-References

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**Ephesians 2:20** (References Jesus): And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;

**Isaiah 28:16** (Parallel theme): 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.

**2 Timothy 2:19** (References Christ): Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.

**Matthew 16:18** (Parallel theme): And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

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