It is narrated in Sanh 107b that Jesus, after having been rebuked by the teacher and realizing himself the impossibility of doing penance, turned to putting up i.e. worshipping a brick (סנהא על לברק). The enigmatic wording has given rise to many an interpretation. Jechiel of Paris suggested that the brick was in the form of a cross. Abraham Perizol interpreted the words as describing the service of John Christ. Wagenseil paraphrased more vaguely: suspendens laterem (sive figuram quandam lateritiam), Gust. Rösch thought of a 'Mythisierung der Warnung' in Hab 2.18.19. Sam. Krauss referred to the foundation stone of the temple from which, according to the Toledoth Jesu, Jesus read the name of God. G. R. S. Mead played with the idea of a rock symbolism which had developed in Egyptian masonry, H. J. Zimmels recently suggested putting the י as prefix denoting the accusative as distinct from יי, to signify the fish of Christian worship or, in this case, the messianic claim of Jesus. It was not easy for everyone to appreciate this scale of interpretation. Thus, J. Z. Lauerbach states calmly that 'the phrase, as it stands, makes no sense' and Herm. Leb. Strack even spoke of an 'alberne Erfindung'.

The stone is by no means seen in a negative light in Jewish literature. Jahwe himself can be called a rock. Even more, the stone can become instrumental in God's actions; Dt 32.18 accuses Jeshurun of having abandoned 'the rock who bore you ... the God who gave you birth' and the Jews are warned in Mt 3.9/Lk 3.8 that God may raise children unto Abraham from these stones (ἐκ τῶν λίθων τούτων). But more important is the indirect function in God's design. The stone cries out against the oppression committed by the Chaldaeans in Hab 2.11 and echoes this. Stones testify

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1 See J. CHR. WAGENSEIL, Tela Ignea Satanae (Altdorf 1681) II, p. 19.
3 Confutatio libri Toldos Jeschu (in: Tela Ignea) p. 16.
5 Das Leben Jesu nach jüdischen Quellen (Berlin 1902), p. 189.
9 Jesus, die Häretiker und die Christen (Leipzig 1910), p. 33*.
10 Dt. 32.4.15 (rephrased in the LXX)
11 Cited in I Q Hab 9.15; the next two verses are missing. Is it the idea that the 'stones' of the Qumran community are oppressed?
against the transgression of a particular law\textsuperscript{12}, against a sin against God\textsuperscript{13} or a secession from the community\textsuperscript{14}. Similarly Jesus announces in Luke 19.40 that, if his disciples, who are hailng his entry into Jerusalem, were to be silenced by the Pharisees, stones would cry out instead of them. Thus, stone is seen as the touchstone which testifies for God and the Messiah and against the Chaldaeans and the Pharisees.

To be precise, this usage is not the only one. Even the raising of children from stones is not without an undertone. At least terminologically it fits in with the old chthonic religion in which the stone is seen as origin of the power of life and seat of the goddess of the earth\textsuperscript{15}. And again, the Gentiles are described in Jewish polemics as those who worship sun, moon and stars, stone and wood\textsuperscript{16}. These pagan deities are considered weak\textsuperscript{17}, poor\textsuperscript{18}, speechless\textsuperscript{19}, vain\textsuperscript{20} and even dead\textsuperscript{21} στρομέτεχες, but not necessarily – especially so in certain developments in Late Judaism – as non-entities\textsuperscript{22}. In the same way, the worshipping of stones as their symbol is erroneous but may not be completely ineffectual altogether. Thus stone is at least the symbol of something and, under certain circumstances, instrument even of God’s own actions.

But in this instance it is brick, the man-made brick known from and stigmatized by the story of the tower of Babel\textsuperscript{23}. It seems that this difference of expression is not casual. Thus brick is a persiflage of בז, worshipping a brick is the worshipping of nothing\textsuperscript{24}.

\textsuperscript{12} TehPs 73 § 4.
\textsuperscript{13} Chag 16a; cp. Strack-Billerbeck, Kommentar II. 252.
\textsuperscript{14} Taan 11a.
\textsuperscript{16} Jalqut Shimoni § 766.
\textsuperscript{17} Sap 13.17 (ἀσθένής cp. 13.19 ἀδραπόστατος); cp. Ker. Ptr. Fr. 2; Athenagoras 10.2.
\textsuperscript{18} See Theol. Wb VI, 909.
\textsuperscript{19} Hab 2.18; 3 Makk. 4.16 (κοφα καὶ μὴ δύναμεν νυκτί); Joseph and Ase-neth 12.5; 13.11 (νεκρα καὶ κοφα); cp. i Cor 12.2 (ξαφνα); cp. the poem of Shem Tof, who claims that the Christians invoke נזר דב (cited by J. A. EISENMENGER, Entdecktes Judenthum I, 1742, p. 145).
\textsuperscript{20} Or Sib 2.59 (ματη) – taken over from PaPhocylides (see A. KURFESS Z. N. W. 1939, p. 171 ff.); Or Sib 3.29 (ματτιος); Arist 134 ff.; 3 Makk 6.6 (καυς); 6.11 (ματτιος); Si Enoch 10.6.
\textsuperscript{21} Sap 13.10.18; cp. Hebr. 61 (νεκρα ἐργα); Did 6.3; Praed. Petri (Clem. Strom. 6.5.39).
\textsuperscript{22} Cp. Paul who sets the θεὸς ζών against the ἡδωλα (I. Thess 1.9) without denying the latter’s existence (I. Cor 8.5; 10.18 ff.).
\textsuperscript{23} Symptomatic for the connotation that ‘brick’ has to the Rabbinic mind is a discussion in Ab. z. 45 ff. The question arises whether an object destined for worship is to be considered unclean for Israelites or not. A mountain is seen as clean because no manual labour is involved. The same even applies to a boulder which had fallen from the mount. The same is said too of an egg. But a brick “set up” for worship becomes unclean. It is considered man-made κατ’ ἐξουσίαν.
\textsuperscript{24} It would be wrong to link the phrase with the polemic against the ‘builders of the wall’ in Ez 13.10 (cp. Damaskusschrift 4.19; 8.12.18;