

1 Peter 2:4-10

Recap: 5 Themes in 1 Peter

- Responding to Suffering
- Hope for the future
- Christian Identity
- Christians and Culture
- Holiness

Main Ideas:

Jesus is the Living Stone (and we are living stones)

We are a Chosen People

Who is the Living Stone in 1 Peter 2:4-8

4 As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him — 5 you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house[a] to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 6 For in Scripture it says:

*“See, I lay a stone in Zion,
a chosen and precious cornerstone,
and the one who trusts in him
will never be put to shame.” (Isaiah 28:16)*

7 Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe,

*“The stone the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone,” (Psalm 118:22)*

8 and,

*“A stone that causes people to stumble
and a rock that makes them fall.” (Isaiah 8:14)*

They stumble because they disobey the message—which is also what they were destined for.

Who or what is the Living Stone Peter is talking about?

- Three OT passages, and how Peter relates them to Jesus.
- (Remember: Peter’s use of the OT is explained in 1:10-12.)

The Stone is a Metaphor for the Messiah.

- Jesus quotes Psalm 118 in Gospels (about himself)
- Peter quotes Psalm 118 in Acts (about Jesus)
- LXX of Isaiah 28 shows a subtle change in their understanding of Isaiah 28.

Brief context of OT Passages and how they point us to the Messiah

- Isaiah 28—Immorality, but a Living Stone is coming.
- Psalm 118— God is good, even in the hard times. “It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in humans.” v. 8
- Isaiah 8— People were rejected God and turning to the nations.

The Most Important Decision of our Lives

The Living Stone was Chosen by God, but Rejected by Humans.

Chosen—“Elect”; Chosen (foreknowledge) before the world in 1 Peter 1:20.
Being chosen by God doesn't mean life is always going to be easy... in fact, this Stone who was chosen by God was immediately rejected by the world.

Precious—Held in honor.

The Living Stone was rejected by humans—leading to consequences from God.

Parable of the Tenants

Jesus predicts his death and rejection (Jesus wasn't surprised by their rejection)

Esau sells his inheritance for a meal, rejected by his Father.

Thought they were bringing shame to the Stone, but they were bringing shame on themselves (v. 8) because they stumble and fall.

Decision Time—Will We Place our Trust in Jesus?

How are we voting? How do we demonstrate our choice? The decision is characterized by

- Faith (trust v 6b) — Who we rely on as our foundation and security.
- Values (honor / precious v. 7) — Who or what we consider worthy of honor.
- Obedience (v. 8) — Who or what we follow as our moral standard.
- (This might correspond to L1L2 heart / mind / soul / strength)

For those who choose Jesus:

v. 6b— We will never be put to shame (Isaiah 28:16) / never stricken with panic.

Rock-Solid Identity: living stones, spiritual house, holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices through Jesus.

- Spiritual house / spiritual sacrifices might have been important to Jewish Christians away from Jerusalem or Gentile Christians who knew how important it was for Israel to offer sacrifices in the Jerusalem Temple.
- From the physical to the spiritual, in which all Christians, regardless of their geographic location or ancestry, can worship the one true God.

v. 9-10 — Identity, from darkness to light, from nobodies to somebodies, from guilty to forgiven.

For those who reject Jesus:

Stumble

Fall (a rock of offense), literally *petra skandalon*, which relates to what Jesus said to Peter in Matthew 16:23. Peter (*Petros*) is a *skandalon* for rejecting the necessity of the cross.

Shame (implied in v. 6b that they are subject to shame / humiliation)

Implied in v. 9-10 that they will be excluded from God's people and left in the dark, where they apparently prefer to stay.

A Costly Decision Either Way

We are forced to make a decision: “Peter eliminates all neutral ground.” Jobes

If we accept the Living Stone, we'll be ridiculed by the world which has different values and priorities. If we reject the Living Stone in order to avoid this ridicule, we'll be rejected by God who placed that Living Stone at the center of our existence.

But, Peter's primary message is that the honor that comes from choosing Jesus vastly outweighs whatever shame we experience from our world, and we shouldn't be like Esau who threw it all away for a single meal, because his Father ultimately rejected him because of it.

The Community of Believers in 1 Peter 2:4-5, 9-10

"9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

"Even if Peter's readers find themselves alienated from their society and suffering a loss of status, Peter assures them that they have become part of a much grander and everlasting community."

- Living Stones
- Spiritual House
- Holy Priesthood
- Chosen People (Race)
- Royal Priesthood
- Holy Nation
- God's Special Possession
- The people of God

Living Stones built into a Spiritual House—Similar to the analogy of the body that Paul uses, this metaphor emphasizes that all have a part to play, and our value is at its highest when we work together according to God's plan.

Chosen People (Race)—Chosen ("Elect") just as the Living Stone was chosen.

Isaiah 43.

- God will deliver Israel from the oppression of the Babylonians just as he redeemed Israel from the oppression of the Egyptians.
 - Babylon = Rome; the Empire that was persecuting Christians.
- **Isaiah 43:20-21 (NIV)** "I provide water in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland, to give drink to my people, my chosen, the people I formed for myself that they may proclaim my praise."
 - God provides us what we need in the midst of our wilderness wandering.
 - The purpose of being chosen is to declare the praises of God (Isa 43:21 and 1 Peter 2:9)

Royal Priesthood, Holy Nation, God's Special Possession

Exodus 19:5-6

- Treasured Possession
- Kingdom of Priests
- Holy Nation

Spoken after God has rescued Israel from their slavery; God moves first, and our identity flows from his redemptive work. What God has done to free us determines who we are in Christ.

Priests:

Levites were set apart from Israel for the special purpose of worshipping God.

Israel was set apart from the nations for the special purpose of praising God.

Christians of every race are set apart from our society for the special purpose of declaring God's praises.

Holy Nation

Christians were considered bad citizens: “Because the prosperity and welfare of the empire were believed to depend on religious forces, the Christian’s exclusive allegiance to Jesus as God was naturally viewed as detrimental to the rest of society. From that perspective, Christians were bad citizens of the empire, and this made them subject to accusations of treason.” Jobes

Rejected by their nation as traitors, Christians find comfort in knowing they form a holy nation with believers from every country on earth—a citizenship that transcends our earthly allegiances.

Common theme: Set apart / holiness (Be Holy as God as Holy)

Theologically, it takes two to tango: Holiness is only possible because of the Spirit, but we have to be a willing participant.

1 Peter 1:1-2—We are chosen by God (elect), sanctified (made holy) by the Spirit and the blood of Jesus, so that we might be obedient to Jesus.

God is the one who brings us from darkness to light; he is the one who offers us mercy (2:10)

Application

- Trust in God Alone
- Be Part of the House God is building.
- Embrace your calling: To declare the praise of God in all you do.