

1 PETER 1:13-2:3 | A LIVING STONE

This passage continues Peter's theme of speaking of the Christian church in Old Testament terms, reflecting the transformation that Christ has brought to the church. Just as the readers are called exiles (1:1) this chapter continues the theme of those who were mercifully 'called out of darkness into his marvellous light' (2:9-10).

A Living Stone (v 4). V 4 begins with an invitation to come to Jesus which picks up the 'tasting' theme in v 3. We quickly realise something of an oxymoron when we read it is a 'Living Stone' as the metaphor to describe Jesus' person and work. Jesus himself understood his ministry in this way in Mark 12:10-12 as he rebuked the Pharisees for their rejection of him. This theme of being rejected is common for Peter and characterises the cost of Kingdom living (1 Peter 2:20; 3:14, 18; 4:1-2, 14). Yet here we are reminded Jesus' ministry as the Living Stone, chosen by God and precious to him (v 4) is building living stones into a spiritual house (v 5). Peter has in mind the OT analogy of the Temple as he replaces the animal sacrifices with spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God as the New Covenant Priesthood (see also Romans 12:1 & Hebrews 13:5). This remarkable new status comes through Jesus' death and resurrection where he makes us alive and equipped to live for God's glory.

A Corner Stone (v 6). The quotation in v 6 comes from Isaiah 28:16 and that chapter of prophecy is surrounded by the judgement that will come to Israel for their unfaithfulness and in ability to respond faithfully to the promises of God. The 'stone' imagery is a picture of certainty and stability among the erratic and wilfully disobedient people of God (read Isaiah 28). None the less God will raise up a remnant who will stand for the sure foundation of God's word and not be put to shame. In the New Testament Jesus becomes the corner stone for the new spiritual building of believers as the new people of God are 'built up' in him and who will stand with him unashamed on the last day (1 Peter 1:9).

A Head Stone (v 7). The third reference to stone in the passage (a fourth occurs in v 8) references Jesus' ministry as the Head stone (NIV uses corner stone again but Peter's word is different from v 6). If Christ was the cornerstone on which the

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(READING THE BIBLE
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people of God are built, here he is the head stone without which no foundation can be sustained. The quotations from Psalm 118:22 speak of the promised Saviour being salvation to some but a stumbling block to others as they disobey the message (v 8).

Peter concludes with a return to the people gathered in the new temple of God in vv 9-10 (the spiritual house Christ is building) where as his holy and chosen possession are declaring his praises because they've been granted mercy (v 10) and called into his Kingdom. This new status of citizenship will be explored by the behaviour called for in appeals that begin from v 11 for good and godly living.

GETTING STARTED

1. What do you think is the most compelling metaphor that could be used to describe the people of your church?
2. What metaphor do you think those looking in on the church would use to describe it?

INTO THE TEXT

Read 1 Peter 2:4-10

3. How did Jesus understand his own ministry as the 'stone' in Luke 20:17-19?
4. What function does Jesus have as the living stone in vv 4-5?
5. What response is Peter looking for from the living stones of v 5 (see also v 9; Romans 12:1 and Hebrews 13:5)?
6. What is the blessing that comes from the promise of the cornerstone's ministry in v 6? What do you think this is speaking about (see 1 Peter 1:4; 5:1, 4)?
7. How does Psalm 118:22-29 tell us we should respond to the promise of v 6?
8. What is the warning that comes from the promise of the cornerstone's (lit. headstone) ministry in v 8?
9. We can spend a lot of time reflecting on why people don't accept Christ as Lord. When it boils down what is the reason Peter gives in v 8? How is this behaviour described in Isaiah 28:9-15?

10. How does v 10 help us in our evangelism?

TAKEAWAY

1. How do you avoid being chosen and precious becoming elitist and privileged?
2. What do you think it means to belong to the priesthood of all believers?