

A STUDY OF 1 PETER

A Living Stone (1 Peter 2:1-10)

1 Peter 2:1 begins with the word “So” which tells us the Peter is referring to what he has written before. In the beginning of chapter one, Peter teaches that Christians live as people of hope, even in the midst of persecution as they await their final inheritance. Later in the chapter he instructs that a people of hope are to be a holy people. The holy life is based on a new relationship with God as our Father. Now Peter moves on to further describe the life of the Christian, shows another contrast with those outside of Christ, and describes the Jesus as the foundation upon which our lives are built.

In 1 Peter 2:1, the Apostle Peter describes how Christians are to treat one another. Among Christians there should be no malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander. These things are to be “put away” or “cast aside” because they have no place in the life of the church. There must be intentional effort to remove these attitudes and actions. While we should treat no one with the attitudes and actions listed below, they are especially harmful in the church and stand in stark contrast to a life of hope and holiness.

1. Briefly define the following words:

A. Malice -

B. Deceit -

C. Hypocrisy -

D. Envy -

E. Slander -

2. How would the attitudes and actions listed above bring harm to the church?

In verse 2, Peter uses the illustration of a new born baby. Previously in 1:3 and 1:23 Peter had written about being “born again.” A person receives the new birth at their baptism and then begins a life of spiritual growth. Peter does not use this illustration to say that his first readers were not growing, but instead uses it to describe the type of intense desire they should have for spiritual nourishment.

The milk of 1 Peter 2 is described as pure since it has no contamination, it is spiritual, and it brings Christian growth.



3. What is the milk of 1 Peter 2:2? (See 1:23,25)

¹ The NIV and the NASB use the word “therefore” in 1 Peter 2:1.

4. Describe the craving that an infant has for milk and why this craving is necessary.

Verse three issues a call to remember the past -- “if you have tasted that the Lord is good” you should crave pure spiritual milk.

In verse 4, Jesus is referred to as a living stone. Jesus stands as the foundation upon which Christians build their lives. He is living because he is the resurrected Lord. This stone was “rejected” by men. In first century construction a builder would carefully examine a stone before using it in a building. Spiritually, the Jewish leaders looked at Jesus, examined him, and decided to reject him. They evaluated him and believed him to be worthless. Many today still examine Jesus and his claims only to reject him for things that are truly worthless.

Psalm 118:22

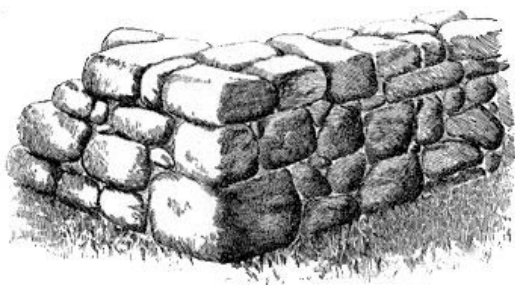
“The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.”

Isaiah 28:16

therefore thus says the Lord God, “Behold, I am the one who has laid as a foundation in Zion, a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, of a sure foundation: ‘Whoever believes will not be in haste.’”

5. Why did the Jesus leaders reject Jesus?

6. Why do people reject Jesus today?



Whereas people rejected Jesus, God has chosen him and finds him to have great value. Christians also find Jesus to be of great value. Peter says in verse 4, “and you come to him . . .” Try to grasp the enormity of the privilege of being allowed to examine Jesus and to accept him!

Because of our relationship with Jesus, we also become “living stones” and are being built into a “spiritual house” which is the church. In this beautiful picture, God is making something beautiful out of our lives. We are only a part of this building because we are made a part of Christ in baptism (Galatians 3:27) and are joined with Christ and one another to be collectively built into a spiritual house.² (See Hebrews 3:5-6)

The metaphor that Peter uses draws on the imagery of the Old Testament. In this picture, the temple was made of physical stones, but the church is a spiritual house, made up of people. In the Old Testament the access of the people to God was through priests, but now God has made all Christians a part of his holy priesthood. In the Old Testament animal sacrifices are made, but as Christians we offer spiritual sacrifices.

7. What are the spiritual sacrifices that Peter writes about in verse 5? (See Hebrews 13:15-16; Romans 12:1; and Philippians 4:18)

² The “you” of verse 5 is plural and refers not to individual Christians, but to the church as a whole.

8. How should we be influenced by understanding that we are living stones, built upon Jesus the chief cornerstone, and that together we “build” the church?

In the Old Testament Zion referred to the mount upon which Jerusalem was located. Later it came to signify heaven and denotes the dwelling place of the people of God.

Every person will encounter Christ whether they accept him or reject him. The Jewish leaders rejected him (verse 7), but God made him the chief cornerstone. To others, he becomes a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense, while to the Christian this stone is precious. Every person will either recognise Jesus as the chief cornerstone and build their life on him (believe vs. 7) or will disobey (vs. 8) stumble over him and fall. Those who disobey are (by their own choice) predestined to stumble and fall.

9. What is a stumbling block and how can Jesus be described in this way?

The Privileged Position of Christians

As Peter describes the privileged position of Christians in verse 9, he again uses the collective “you.” This is not spoken just to individual Christians, but all Christians together enjoy these blessings.

- A. **A Chosen Race.** (In the Old Testament, the Jews were God’s chosen people, now Christians are God’s chosen people.)

10. How are Christians Chosen?

- B. **A Royal Priesthood.** All Christians are priests who serve the King of Kings and who will also share an inheritance with Christ. Their priestly duties are indicated in verse 5.
- C. **A Holy Nation.** This indicates the distinctiveness of Christians who are separated from the world and to God.
- D. **A People for His Own Possession.** We belong to Christ (thus we are called Christians.) God is our Creator, Redeemer, and Lord.

11. Describe what it means to be possessed by God?

- E. **A People who Proclaim the Excellencies of God.** “The purpose of the church is to render continuous testimony to the mighty acts of the Lord. The church is to bear public witness to all that God is and all that God has done. Especially, we are to bear witness to how God has called us out of the *darkness* of sin and ignorance into the wonderful *light* of the

gospel.”³ The word “proclaim” means “to tell forth, divulge, publish; to declare abroad, celebrate.”⁴

12. What are some ways in which we can proclaim the excellencies of God?

F. A People Called Out of Darkness and into His Marvelous Light. (1 Corinthians 1:9; Galatians 1:6)

G. Christians are God’s People. This seems to especially be written to Gentile Christians. We once were not God’s people, but we have been adopted as sons.

H. Christians Have Received God’s Mercy. Gentiles were not in a position to receive God’s mercy, but now in Christ Gentile Christians are recipients of God’s mercy.

13. What lessons from 1 Peter 2:1-10 do you think are most important?

³ Smith, James R. *Teacher’s Commentary: General Epistles*. Lulu.com. p. 47.

⁴ *The Zondervan Greek and English Interlinear New Testament* (NASB/NIV). p. 1061.