

THE FIRST LETTER OF PETER

INTRODUCTION

A. Introductory outline of 1 Peter

1. Greeting (1:1-2)
2. The greatness of salvation (1:3-12)
3. Characteristics of the Christian life (1:13-2:10)
 - a. A life of hope (13)
 - b. A life of holiness (14-16)
 - c. A life of reverence (17-21)
 - d. A life of love (22-25)
 - e. A life in the pursuit of holiness (2:1-3)
 - f. A life growing together (2:4-10)

B. Review of 1 Peter 2:1-3

1. William Barclay, . . . *they are all faults of character which hurt the great Christian virtue of mutual love. There can be no mutual love as long as these evil things exist . . . These, then, are the things which those who are reborn must strip off—for, if they continue to allow them to have a grip upon their lives, the unity of the church community will inevitably be injured.*
2. Warren Wiersbe, *When Christians are growing in the Word, they are peacemakers, not troublemakers, and they promote the unity of the church.*
3. Charles Spurgeon, *We shall have an inward and spiritual apprehension of the sweetness and preciousness of Christ as the result of living faith.*

C. Comments on 1 Peter 2:4-10

1. Wayne Grudem, *This verse begins a new section (vv. 4–10) in which Peter uses extensive Old Testament imagery to show that New Testament believers (both Jew and Gentile) are in fact a new ‘people of God’ who have come to possess all the blessings of Old Testament Israel but in far greater measure.*
2. Thomas Constable, *Not only is Jesus Christ the source of the believer’s spiritual sustenance, He is also our foundation. Peter not only changed his metaphor from growth to building, but he also changed it from an individual to a corporate focus.*
3. Roger Raymer, *His readers, having purified themselves, were ready for the practice or ministry of holiness. No longer babies, they were to grow up together to offer spiritual sacrifices as a chosen “royal priesthood.”*
4. Edmund Clowney, *In the first chapter Peter showed the wonder of God’s salvation through Jesus Christ. Now he wants to show the status that Christians have as the true people of God, so that he may encourage us to live before the world with that awareness.*

1 PETER 1:13-2:10, CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

1 PETER 2:4-10, A LIFE GROWING TOGETHER

A. Christians are living stones in God’s spiritual house (4-5)

1. Individuals become part of the church through faith in Jesus Christ (4-5a)
 - a. Believers are joined to Christ (4a), **As you come to him**,
 - 1) Wayne Grudem, *By this expression Peter hints, in a theme to be made explicit later in the sentence, that all believers now enjoy the great privilege, reserved only for priests in the Old Testament, of ‘drawing near’ to God in worship. But rather than coming to the altar or even to the holy place in the Jerusalem temple, they now come ‘to him’ in whom ‘the whole fulness of deity dwells bodily’ (Col. 2:9).*
 - 2) Roger Raymer, *‘As you come to Him’ does not refer to the initial response of a sinner who comes to Christ for salvation. The participle’s tense and voice indicate that this coming is a personal, habitual approach. It is an intimate association of communion and fellowship between believers and their Lord.*
 - 3) Edmund Clowney, *The status of Christians depends upon the status of Christ, for they are joined to him.*
 - 4) J. Ramsey Michaels, *The notion of “coming to” the Stone presupposes that it is not only living but life-giving.*
 - 5) Charles Swindoll, . . . *we should never let it enter our minds that we are ultimately responsible for our own spiritual growth. As Paul said in another context, “I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth” (1 Cor. 3:6). We play our parts in our own and in others’ growth toward maturity, but God is the Master Gardener who brings about the effects by His own grace.*

- b. Jesus is the alive foundation (4b), ***a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious,***
- 1) *a living stone*
 - a) Thomas Constable, *The point here is that even though Jesus Christ is the church's foundation, He is also alive today.*
 - b) Edmund Clowney, *Christ is the living Stone, however, not just because he is a living person, but because he is alive from the dead as the risen Lord. God set his cornerstone in place by the resurrection.*
 - c) Roger Raymer, *Here he said this Stone is living. It has life in itself and gives life to others. People may enter into personal, vital relationships with this "living Stone."*
 - d) Peter Davids, *Christ is a "living stone." This both introduces the stone imagery that will dominate the next five verses and designates Christ not as a monument or dead principle, but as the living, resurrected, and therefore life-giving one.*
 - e) Wayne Grudem, *The fact that Christ is the living stone shows at once his superiority to an Old Testament temple made of dead stones, and reminds Christians that there can be no longing for that old way of approach to God, for this way is far better.*
 - 2) *rejected by men*
 - a) Note Psalm 118:22, *The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.*
 - b) Peter Davids, *The term "rejected" implies examination by builders and then casting aside as a reject, unfit for the future building of the nation.*
 - c) David Walls, *Each person accepts or rejects this 'living Stone.' . . . This rejection refers to the people of the first century who ultimately crucified Christ and to anyone since that time who has not embraced him as personal Savior.*
 - d) Wayne Grudem, *The sentence contrasts the world's estimate of Christ with God's estimate, and warns the readers that while coming to Christ is to side with God, it will mean being opposed by 'men' . . .*
 - e) Roger Raymer, *Whereas Christ was rejected by men . . . Christians rejected by the world may take heart in the knowledge that they are the elect (1:1), valued (1:18) by God.*
 - 3) *in the sight of God chosen and precious*
 - a) Note 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.'*
 - b) Wayne Grudem, *Precious means 'highly valued or esteemed,' an apt term to describe God's evaluation of his Son and also to suggest how believers should always esteem their Lord.*
 - c) J. Ramsey Michaels, . . . *well-hewn and valuable for building.*
 - d) David Walls, *God the Father places infinite value upon Christ.*
 - e) Paul Achtemeier, . . . *if the Christian community is elect and precious to God because it is based on Christ who is elect and precious to God, then it is also true that as that elect and precious Christ was rejected by human beings (2:4b) so will be the community constituted by him (2:7b–8).*
 - f) Charles Spurgeon, *The whole spiritual building is the result of the election, the choice of God. Jesus Christ, the great foundation and the chief cornerstone, is chosen of God, and all the living stones that are built upon Him are also chosen of God.*

- c. Christians are part of a spiritual house (5a), ***you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house,***

- 1) *like living stones*
 - a) David Walls, *Christians must grow together not just as individuals, but as living stones, which, when joined together with others, become integral parts in God's building of a spiritual house.*
 - b) Wayne Grudem, *As you continually come to Christ (in initial faith, then in worship and prayer) you are yourselves being built into a spiritual house . . . these humble believers also, like Christ, have become living stones precious to God . . . Thus Peter encourages Christians to think of themselves as the living stones of God's new temple.*
 - c) Charles Swindoll, *A continuing construction project is going on. Christ is in the process of building up His church, those dead stones quarried from the pit of sin, brought to life as "living stones," then fit into His glorious structure called the church. Each time someone trusts Christ as Savior, another stone gets placed into that living, growing church.*

- 2) *as a spiritual house*
 - a) Wayne Grudem, . . . *As you (keep on) coming to Christ (in worship, in prayer and praise), you are (continually) being built up into a spiritual temple, a place in which God more and more fully dwells.*
 - b) J. Vernon McGee, *Today God is building a temple, a living temple. Those of us who come to Him as the sinners we are, who fall upon Him, cast ourselves upon Him for mercy, are saved. And He makes us a part of the living temple He is building upon the foundation stone, which is Christ Himself.*
 - c) Edmund Clowney, *The reality of union with Christ is seen in the life of each living stone. Our mutual union with Christ removes the tension between the claims of the individual and of society. In Christ we find the meaning of our personal lives; in Christ we find the joy of belonging to one another. We rejoice in the honour and the ministry of being built together.*
 - d) William Barclay, . . . *Christianity is community; individual Christians find their true place only when they are built into that structure . . . A Spartan king boasted to a visiting monarch about the walls of Sparta. The visiting monarch looked around and could see no walls. He said to the Spartan king: 'Where are these walls about which you boast so much?' His host pointed at his bodyguard of magnificent troops. 'These', he said, 'are the walls of Sparta, every man a brick.'*

2. The role of believers in the spiritual house (5b)

a. ***to be a holy priesthood,***

- 1) Roger Raymer, *All believers are priests (cf. 1 Peter 2:9; Heb. 4:16; Rev. 1:6) and need no mediator other than Jesus Christ to approach God directly. Such priestly service requires holiness (cf. 1 Peter 1:16, 22).*
- 2) Peter Davids, *But they are not only the stones that form the house, but also the priesthood that serves in it. The term for "priesthood" is found in the NT only here and in 2:9.*
- 3) Warren Wiersbe, *In the Old Testament period, God's people had a priesthood; but today, God's people are a priesthood.*

b. ***to offer spiritual sacrifices***

- 1) Hebrews 13:15-16, *Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name. Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.*
- 2) Roger Raymer, *Praise to God and doing good to others are spiritual sacrifices that please Him (Heb. 13:15).*
- 3) Charles Swindoll, *Praising God ... thanking Him ... doing good ... sharing. These kinds of sacrifices please God. Clearly, all of us can serve as priests in that "holy" and "royal" order (2:5, 9).*
- 4) Wayne Grudem, *As priests, believers offer not the animal sacrifices of the Old Covenant, but spiritual sacrifices, which the New Testament elsewhere identifies as the offering of our bodies to God for his service (Rom. 12:1), the giving of gifts to enable the spread of the gospel (Phil. 4:18), the singing of praise (Heb. 13:15), and the doing of good and sharing our possessions (Heb. 13:16).*
- 5) Charles Spurgeon, *You and I bring no lambs or bulls, but we present a real sacrifice that is far more pleasing in His sight, for it is written, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, you will not despise" (Psa 51:17).*

c. ***acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.***

- 1) Access to God is through Jesus Christ alone, John 14:6, *Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*
- 2) Peter Davids, *Their offering will please God, not in and of itself, but because it is "through Jesus Christ." Thus even the worship and praise of the Christian is dependent on the work of Christ for its acceptability.*
- 3) Wayne Grudem, *'Spiritual sacrifices' must be offered through Jesus Christ, for only through him are Christians qualified to be priests to God—or to do anything pleasing in God's sight.*

3. Comments

- a. Edmund Clowney, *Outward washing, the cutting away the flesh, the offering of bulls and goats, could never remove sin or qualify any sinner to stand in the presence of the Holy One of Israel. Those elaborate preparations and safeguards bore witness to the reality of God's holiness, and to the need of cleansing and atonement. But only God could provide the true and spiritual sacrifice. Only One who had clean hands and a pure heart could ascend at last the hill of the Lord. Jesus Christ came; the one righteous, covenant-keeping Servant of the Lord. His atoning death fulfilled the temple sacrifices. His blood provided the cleansing that the old ceremonies could only picture.*

- b. Thomas Constable, *The Christian who is not working in relationship with other Christians as fellow stones, as well as with Jesus Christ as his foundation, cannot fulfill God's complete purpose for him. While every Christian has an individual purpose we also have a corporate purpose that we cannot fulfill unless we take our place in the community of Christians that is the church.*
- c. Wayne Grudem, *This verse thus gives explicit statement to the doctrine of the 'priesthood of believers.' Since all who come to Christ are now a holy priesthood, able continually to 'draw near' to God's very presence and offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ, there can no longer be an elite priesthood with claims of special access to God, or special privileges in worship or in fellowship with God.*
- d. Warren Wiersebe, *It is important that we, as God's priests, maintain our separated position in this world. We must not be isolated, because the world needs our influence and witness; but we must not permit the world to infect us or change us. Separation is not isolation; it is contact without contamination.*

TO BE CONTINUED, LORD WILLING