

## Living Stones

1 Peter 2:4-10

Several years ago my wife and I visited England. We noticed that many of the homes were made of stone; they were built in the early 1700's. Instead of being numbered, houses were named, as if they had personalities. I was intrigued to observe that properties were also surrounded by stone fences; older than a thousand years.

Most of the houses here are very young – not even 100 years old. I am continually impressed by the craftsmanship and attention to detail involved in building with stone, the only material that lasts the test of time.

Today I want us to at New Testament building:

Christ the Rock,  
Christ the Builder, &  
Believers the Building.

Peter writes,

- 4 And coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God,  
5 you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.  
6 For *this* is contained in Scripture:  
“BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A CHOICE STONE, A PRECIOUS CORNER *stone*,  
AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED.”  
7 This precious value, then, is for you who believe; but for those who disbelieve,  
“THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED,  
THIS BECAME THE VERY CORNER *stone*,”  
8 and,  
“A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE”;

for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this *doom* they were also appointed.

- 9 But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR *God's* OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;  
10 for you once were NOT A PEOPLE, but now you are THE PEOPLE OF GOD; you had NOT RECEIVED MERCY, but now you have RECEIVED MERCY.

Peter speaks of Jesus as “a living Stone.” In these verses Jesus is also referred to as a choice stone, a precious corner stone, a rejected stone, a stone of stumbling and rock of offense. The reference is to Jesus' Redemption.

## I. Christ is the Rock.

<sup>4</sup>And coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God,

Jesus as the living stone was rejected by men, when they crucified Him; but was precious in God's sight when He raised Him from the grave.

He began this chapter speaking of salvation as ***a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.***

Jesus' death and resurrection accomplished our salvation.

Peter writes,

"...knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ."

(vs. 18-19).

Redemption is the purchase price for buying a slave out of the slave market. Christ's blood was the redemption price that paid for our salvation.

Vance Havner writes,

"Redemption from sin has been accomplished already. All who avail themselves of what was wrought on Calvary have been bought in the market, bought out of the market, never again to be on sale in the market. The redemption of our bodies awaits the resurrection when all who have been redeemed through faith in Christ shall be transformed and take their new bodies fashioned like His glorious body. Then follows the redemption of all creation. When the saints rule on an earth set free from the blight of decay and death, man and beast will be at peace. God has set His face to redeem man and nature from the havoc wrought by the devil. Lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh!"<sup>1</sup>

In this text Peter refers to Jesus as the Rock – the stone the builders rejected.

In Daniel 2 Nebuchadnezzar's dream is interpreted by Daniel the prophet.

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<sup>1</sup> Vance Havner, *All the Days*, (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1976), p.61.

He first tells the king the content of His dream as a giant statue representing the kingdoms of the world present and future. Then he described a rock that grew and smashed the statue into dust that was in turn blown away by the wind.

THIS ROCK IS THE GLORIFIED, RESURRECTED AND RETURNING CHRIST.

THROUGHOUT PETER'S LETTER HE REFERS TO CHRIST'S RETURN:

"SALVATION READY TO BE REVEALED IN THE LAST TIME." (v. 5)

"FIX YOUR HOPE COMPLETELY ON THE GRACE TO BE BROUGHT TO YOU AT THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST."  
(v. 13)

"DAY OF VISITATION" (2:12)

"THE END OF ALL THINGS IS NEAR" (4:7)

"TO THE DEGREE THAT YOU SHARE THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST, KEEP ON REJOICING, SO THAT ALSO AT THE REVELATION OF HIS GLORY YOU MAY REJOICE WITH EXULTATION." (4:13)

"...GLORY THAT IS TO BE REVEALED." (5:1)

"AND WHEN THE CHIEF SHEPHERD APPEARAS, YOU WILL RECEIVE THE UNFADING CROWN OF GLORY." (5:4)

"AFTER YOU HAVE SUFFERED FOR A LITTLE WHILE, THE GOD OF ALL GRACE, WHO CALLED YOU TO HIS ETERNAL GLORY IN CHRIST, WILL HIMSELF PERFECT, CONFIRM, STRENGTHEN AND ESTABLISH YOU"  
(5:10).

**PETER QUOTES FROM Ps. 118,**

THE STONE THAT THE BUILDERS REJECTED HAS BECOME THE CHIEF CORNERSTONE. THIS IS THE LORD'S DOING; IT IS MARVELOUS IN OUR EYES. THIS IS THE DAY WHICH THE LORD HAS MADE; LET US REJOICE AND BE GLAD IN IT." (Ps 118:22-24)

This refers to something that happened in the building of Solomon's temple in Jerusalem. Stones were quarried far from the Temple site.

Detailed plans by temple architects, transported to the site and assembled without the noise of stone cutting tools.

“Early in the construction a stone was sent that did not seem to fit. Since the builders did not know what to do with it, they laid it aside and forgot it. Later when they came to place a large capstone on their now nearly completed structure and sent to the quarry for it, they were told that it was not there, that it had already been sent up. They searched for it, found the stone that had been laid aside earlier, and installed it. It fit perfectly. This “the stone the builders rejected [became] the capstone.”<sup>2</sup>

**JESUS APPLIED THIS verse to Himself,**

“Have you never read in the Scriptures:

‘The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone; the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes’?”

(Matt. 21:42-44)

Christ is the Rock...

**II. Christ is the Builder.**

5 you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

6 For *this* is contained in Scripture:

“BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A CHOICE STONE, A PRECIOUS CORNER *stone*,  
AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED.”

Nowhere else in the New Testament are believers called living stones, though elsewhere they are described as God’s temple or house (1 Cor 3:16; 6:19; Eph 2:19–22; Heb 3:6). The picture here is of a house in which believers constitute the building stones.<sup>3</sup>

There are also a wide variety of metaphors used to describe the church such as a body, the bride of Christ, etc. Christ is the builder of His church just as He said in a conversation with Peter,

“I also say to you that you are Peter,  
and upon this rock I will build My church;  
and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.”

Jesus began this statement,

“Blessed are you Simon Barjona (son of Jonah)”  
and then renamed him “Peter” meaning “little rock - petros”  
and upon this rock (Petra- great rock) I will build my church.”

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<sup>2</sup> Showers, p.

<sup>3</sup> Schreiner, T. R. (2003). [1, 2 Peter, Jude](#) (Vol. 37, p. 105). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

(Matt. 16:17-18)

Christ came to redeem a people to Himself and build them into His church. In the eyes of the world the church is a building or an organization. When people have children they sometimes look to the church for dedication or christening, to start their kids off on a good standing with God. Then when they want to have genuine wedding, blessed by God they turn again to the church. Then when death comes they give a good send-off to their loved one's by having a service in a church gathering of friends and relatives. The church, then, is a place in which people are *hatched, matched, and dispatched*.

Peter here speaks of Christ's church as a joining of stones to make a house of worship, where God's people worship God because of what Christ has done. "The Christian church is a society of sinners. It is the only society in the world, in which membership is based upon one qualification: all members are unworthy." (Charles C. Morrison)

### III. Believers are the Building

7 This precious value, then, is for you who believe; but for those who disbelieve,  
"THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED,  
 THIS BECAME THE VERY CORNER *stone*,"

8 and,  
"A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE";

for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this *doom* they were also appointed.

This section shows a distinct contrast between believers and non-believers. The non-believer's outcome is "doom," "darkness," and exclusion. A non-believer wants to return to Eden or Utopia without God. In this age of deception men believe in 'make-believe', dreams and illusions... They will end up as a nightmare –***without mercy, apart from God.***

**God's People Restored:** For the believer – one who receives Christ's work of redemption there is restoration of all that God originally created in and for us.

**When God made the man,** He created **individuality**. Made in God's image man would be creative, responsible, hard-working and the only one of his kind. He tended the garden, ruled over creation, and enjoyed relationship with God.

**Then God created the woman** from the man. She was the only one of her kind; through her came something totally different from the man – **community**.

After the fall man's individuality was corrupted and made selfish.  
 The fall separated him from God and corrupted the entire creation.  
 In the woman community was also corrupted.  
 The first two members of her community were Cain and Able,  
 one brother murdered the other.

They weren't even close to God's original creation, which God said was *very good*.  
 After the fall they were broken - enslaved to sin and death.

Through Christ's redemption man's individuality is restored.  
 Peter writes,  
 "He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to  
 sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were  
 healed." (1 Peter 2:24)

Jesus also restored Eve's community through a redeemed people – First in Israel  
 and then the church – a redeemed community.

Through faith in Christ's redemption comes restoration in every sense  
 – God's people are restored and blessed.

### **God's People Blessed:**

- 9 But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR *God's* OWN POSSESSION, SO THAT YOU MAY PROCLAIM THE EXCELLENCIES OF HIM WHO HAS CALLED YOU OUT OF DARKNESS INTO HIS MARVELOUS LIGHT;
- 10 for you once were NOT A PEOPLE, but now you are THE PEOPLE OF GOD; you had NOT RECEIVED MERCY, but now you have RECEIVED MERCY.

When Christ Returns we will enjoy great riches because we are in Christ.  
 On that day many will understand too late, how important they were as stones in  
 God's holy building project - by the holes in the walls they left unfilled.

As a community in Christ, no one can take your place.

Peter writes,  
 "Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere  
 love of the brethren, fervently love one another for the heart..." (1 Pet. 1:22)