

Sunday August 8th 2010

Petros

Part Eight

1). 1Pe 2:4 ¶ *Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, 5 you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 6 Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, "Behold, I lay in Zion A chief cornerstone, elect, precious, And he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame." 7 Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, "The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone," 8 and "A stone of stumbling And a rock of offense." They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed. 9 But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; 10 who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.*

a). We had seen last week how Christ is described as a Living Stone demonstrating the steadfastness and the reliability of His nature and character. And the particular context for these character traits, given the content of our letter, would be the promise of the salvation of the soul in conjunction with the coming of His Millennial Kingdom.

b). Nu 23:19 *"God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?"*

c). God's plans, His purposes, His faithfulness, His all sufficiency are beyond doubt - Heb 4:3b.....*the works were finished from the foundation of the world.*

d). All that can remain doubtful is whether we will actually believe Him enough to practice faithful obedience even when doing so will be contrary to what the world around us is doing and what may be more expedient for us in the short term.

e). And it is to the Christ, the Living Stone that we continually come.

f). And those who do continually come to Him, within our context here, will be those who continue in the process of laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, who continue to desire the pure milk of the word as would a new born baby desire the milk of its mother, so that they can grow up to their salvation, who through their consistent faithful obedience are

themselves also classified as living stones who are being built up a spiritual house; those who because of this are destined to be king/priests during the 7th Day, who in the present are offering spiritual sacrifices through Jesus Christ that God receives to Himself with pleasure.

g). With all of this in mind v6 then begins with the word, 'therefore' drawing our attention back to all that has just gone before .

2). *6 Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, "Behold, I lay in Zion A chief cornerstone, elect, precious*

a). Because of all that we have just looked at, it is also contained in the scripture, 'Behold I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone', Who is the One chosen from the foundation of the world - 1Pe 1:20 *He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you*

b). Now we might remember from last week that the word translated, 'contained' means literally to hold all around. Therefore we can see that the all encompassing focus of scripture is the Chief Cornerstone, upon which all is to be built. And this is not just a focus on the Christ Himself, but also all that God has determined to accomplish by Him and through Him as it is impossible to separate His nature and character from His purpose. And from God's perspective, as we have seen, this is a work that is already completed.

c). Ps 2:6 *"Yet I have set My King On My holy hill of Zion."*

d). Ge 2:1 ¶ *Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished. 2 And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done.*

e). Da 2:35 *"Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.*

f). Col 1:19 *For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, 20 and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.*

g). We must realize then that this word of the Kingdom is the scriptural record. It is God's revelation to man. It is the gospel of our salvation. And there is nothing in the scriptures that stands independent of it.

3). So God has laid in place the Chief Cornerstone, who is Jesus the Christ, and in the ancient world the cornerstone was also known as the foundation stone as it was the first stone to be laid in foundation in the construction of a building. So important was this stone in the building process that all other stones could only be

set in place with reference to the cornerstone. The placement of this stone then determines the entire shape and direction of the building that will follow.

a). 1Co 3:11 ¶ *For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, 13 each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it,*

b). The Lord Jesus Christ is the foundation stone, and this foundation consists of both His sacrifice which makes possible eternal salvation, and the revelation that He is the Christ the Son of the living God which makes possible the salvation of the soul - Mt 16:16 *Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." 17 Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. 18 "And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.*

c). And only those who are in alignment with this Stone can be built into that spiritual house.

d). We can see then from our two scriptures that we are to build on this Foundation, but only that which is in alignment with the Cornerstone, the works of gold silver and precious stones, will have lasting value. And if we choose to build correctly through our choice to faithful obedience, then God takes us as living stones and builds us on this same foundation into the spiritual house that we have already referenced today.

e). And we might consider that the Holy Spirit brought to Peter's remembrance that which the Lord had taught, recorded in - Mt 7:24 *"Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: 25 "and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. 26 "But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: 27 "and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall."*

f). This is just what we read in 1 Corinthians 3 and provides us with another metaphor of the Judgment Seat.

g). And as the cornerstone, the foundation stone, is the first stone to be set in place we can also understand Christ as the foundation stone in the following way - Ro 8:29 ¶ *For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.*

h). Christ is the first, the Cornerstone, and all who follow – the many brethren who will be built up a spiritual house will be a copy of the Foundation Stone Himself making a spiritual structure of perfect symmetry - 1Jo 3:2 *Beloved,*

now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

3). The remaining part of v6 then continues as follows - *6 Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, "Behold, I lay in Zion A chief cornerstone, elect, precious, And he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame."*

a). And the promise here as we saw last week is that whoever believes on Him will not be disappointed in their hope. For those who believe on Him the fulfillment of their hope will be certain.

b). Believing on Him here in our scripture is not a reference to eternal salvation, but rather beyond that to believing on Him as the 'chief cornerstone, elect, precious' – in other words believing God concerning His plans and purposes, plans and purposes requiring the laying of the Chief Cornerstone in order to bring about the accomplishment of those plans; in other words believing the gospel of our salvation. Choosing to build our house upon the rock; choosing to build with gold, silver, precious stones; choosing to lay aside and choosing to desire, choosing faithful obedience because we believe the promises of God contained in Him.

2Co 1:20 For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us. 21 Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, 22 who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.

4). Then as we move into v7 we come to a familiar word again - *1Pe 2:7 Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, "The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone," 8 and "A stone of stumbling And a rock of offense." They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed.*

a). In view of the fact that God has laid in Zion a chief cornerstone, who is the One chosen from the foundation of the world to be placed there, the One held in highest honor and those who believe on Him will not be put to shame, because of these things the preciousness of the Stone is retained for those who believe alone. But for those who are disobedient, those who disbelieve, there is no preciousness, this Stone who the builders, national Israel, rejected has nevertheless become the chief cornerstone but for them has become a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence.

b). And here we have another comparison – for those who believe, the Cornerstone is precious; for those who disbelieve and are therefore disobedient, the same stone is a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense. Christ has been set in

place and that remains unalterable, it will be our own personal choices that determine how we will relate to Him.

c). And again the choice to disbelief/disobedience has nothing to do with matters of eternal salvation, no more than did Israel's rejection of their Messiah at Christ's first advent. No we are dealing here with those who are already Christians, who may on the one hand reject the word of the Kingdom outright and on the other hand may have readily received it but have chosen to be hearers of the word only and not doers of the word.

d). For those then who choose to be disobedient the cornerstone who should have been precious has become a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence.

e). The word translated stone here is the word 'lithos' which we had seen last week and stumbling is a word that means to stub against in the sense of stubbing the toe and tripping up – and so we would get the idea in a figurative sense of those who are disobedient, who disbelieve, continually tripping up on the word when they come into contact with it.

f). It doesn't cause them to stumble in the sense of making them sin, but rather continues to bring them face to face with their sin as they keep stubbing their toe against it.

g). Just think how many times we stubbed our toe over keeping the speed limit at one time because we didn't want to.

h). Now not only is the Cornerstone described as a stone of stumbling, but also as a rock of offence.

i). Rock = Greek – 'petra' = massive living rock

j). Offence = Greek – 'skandalon' = a trap-stick (bent sapling), i.e. snare (figuratively, cause of displeasure or sin):--occasion to fall (of stumbling), offence, thing that offends, stumblingblock.

k). And we will I hope remember that it is upon the 'petra', the massive living rock, that is the revelation that Jesus is the Christ, that the Lord tells Peter He will build His church.

l). And if we think about this for a moment we will know it in practice to be true. The orthodox Jew is offended today over the word that proclaims Jesus as the Christ. And then as I began to think about the hostility that we have encountered from those who reject the word of the Kingdom, I realized that it is not with us personally that they are offended, but with the word that we preach. It is the word of the Kingdom that is a rock of offence for them.

m). And for those who know the word and then choose disobedience the word that requires from them a different course of action to the one they want will always be an offence to them. Many of us were offended for a long time over not being involved in politics. It is the word that taught that in relation to the coming Kingdom that we were offended with.

n). And in a general sense Christians being offended by the word of the Kingdom should really not be a surprise for us as the scriptures record –
2Ti 4:3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers;

o). Just as the original builders, Israel, rejected Christ as the Cornerstone because of their unbelief and therefore that concerning Him has now become an offense to them, so will those Christians who reject Him as the Cornerstone through unbelief find that the word concerning Him is a rock of offense also. And, according to our scripture it is to this that they have been appointed.

p). Simply then, those who believe are appointed to find Him precious and those who are disobedient find Him an offence.

5). *1Pe 2:9 But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; 10 who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.*

a). V9 then returns to those who believe and makes an emphatic contrast, ‘But as for you’, with the disobedient of v7-8.

b). Those who believe then, the ‘You’ of v9 ‘are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people’ contrasted with those who stumble and are offended.

c). Generation = Greek – ‘genos’ = a race, a body with a common life and descent. [It does not mean a group of individuals living within the span of a lifetime]

d). We can see then that this word encompasses not only Peter’s readers but all those from this dispensation who have made the choice to faithful obedience, the choice to believe. And this group is chosen not in the sense of hand picked individuals, but in the sense that no other group would have access to the designations that follow in this verse. This would be the same truth that we find in - *Eph 1:3 ¶ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, 4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, 5 having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, 6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He has made us accepted in the Beloved.*

e). This ‘chosen generation’ then are further described as ‘a royal priesthood’. The word royal comes from the Greek word meaning king and so we would understand them as being those who will be king/priests during the Millennial Kingdom.

f). Now this should not be surprising as those who comprise this ‘chosen generation’ will be those who will be joint heirs with Christ and in this they will have a similar function, and Christ of course will ultimately be the great King/Priest after the order of Melchizedek - Ge 14:18 *Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High.*

g). Ps 110:4 *The LORD has sworn And will not relent, "You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek."*

h). Those who will be king/priests are also described as ‘a holy nation’ – holy as we know means to be set apart and the word nation means a multitude of people of the same nature. And this then is a further description of the ‘chosen generation’ – they are then a multitude, a great number, a people group who through their choices to faithful obedience are set apart from the world. And this is a present action that will have a future fulfillment. The choice to separate ourselves now, to lay aside, to not conform will result in us being a part of the people group who will be separated out at the Judgment Seat from those who do not make this choice.

i). And let’s remember that what we are reading here is being set in contrast to the outcome for the disobedient that we have previously seen. And perhaps the last description given of those who believe compared with those who don’t is the most poignant of all – ‘His own special people’.

j). The word translated, ‘special’ here is a word that literally means ‘to make around’ – the idea here is of making something and the encircling it in order to demonstrate complete ownership. This is exactly the same idea we find with regards to Israel recorded in - Isa 43:21 *This people I have formed for Myself; They shall declare My praise.*

k). And so, on a personal level, if we allow the Holy Spirit through the word to transform us into the image of His Son, then we are now by virtue of choosing to allow the process, and will be confirmed yet future, when our faith is brought to its conclusion, God’s unique, individual possession; fully purchased, fully owned, fully formed and fully approved. And please see this on an intimate, one on one relationship.

6). *that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;*

a). Proclaim = Greek – ‘exaggello’ = to publish, i.e. celebrate:--shew forth.

b). Praises = Greek – ‘arete’ = properly, manliness (valor), i.e. excellence (intrinsic or attributed):--praise, virtue.

c). As we look at this we will see that we are not looking at singing praise songs or speaking the words, ‘praise the Lord’, we are rather looking at publishing,

showing forth both in the word preached and the life lived the intrinsic excellence and virtue of the God who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light.

d). The words ‘Him who called you’ are a translation of just one Greek word ‘kaleo’ = to "call" (properly, aloud, but used in a variety of applications, directly or otherwise):--bid, call (forth), (whose, whose sur-)name (was (called)).

e). This then is not referring to what some may incorrectly designate ‘our calling’ but God’s voice, through His word bidding us and encouraging us so that we are no longer associate ourselves with the darkness, those things to be found within the kingdom of Satan, but instead associating ourselves with the coming Kingdom that is characterized as light; a light we can only marvel at.

f). Ge 1:4 *And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness.*

g). Joh 1:5 ¶ *And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.*

h). Ro 13:12 *The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.*

i). Eph 5:8 *For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light*

7). There was a time then - *10 who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.*

a). People = Greek – ‘laos’ = a people (in general; thus differing from 1218, which denotes one's own populace):--people.

b). There was a time when we were no more than Gentiles dead in our trespasses and sins, but now we have a designation as a particular people – the people of God - Eph 2:11 ¶ *Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh--who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands-- 12 that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.*

c). And let us remind ourselves once again here that the ‘people of God’ is not just a reference to eternal salvation, but rather to those who will make up the spiritual house, those who are built upon and aligned with the Chief Cornerstone.

d). There was a time then when we were separated from the mercy of God, but we are separated from it no longer.

e). Obtained mercy = Greek – ‘eleeo’ = to compassionate (by word or deed, specially, by divine grace):--have compassion (pity on), have (obtain, receive, shew) mercy (on).

f). And again this is not the mercy of God associated with eternal salvation but the mercy of God with respect to the salvation of the soul – 1Pe 1:3 ¶ *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,*

g). Heb 4:15 *For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

h). La 3:22 *Through the LORD'S mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not. 23 They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness.*

8). What greater incentive could we have to walk in faithful obedience than that which we have seen today, what greater motivation could God provide for us than this. There is so much to gain, and conversely of course so much to lose.

a). This is why our scripture continues with such passion –
1Pe 2:11 *Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul,*

b). And it is here that we shall continue next week, if the Lord is willing.