

Sunday August 15th 2010

Petros

Part Nine

1). 1Pe 2:6 *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. 11 Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, 12 having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.*

a). So, as we saw last week, the Chief Cornerstone, who is the Lord Jesus, the Christ, has been laid in Zion as a foundation stone upon which God will build up a spiritual house.

b). That which is quoted in v6 comes from - Isa 28:16 *Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, I lay in Zion a stone for a foundation, A tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation; Whoever believes will not act hastily. 17 Also I will make justice the measuring line, And righteousness the plummet;*

c). Now this scripture would relate particularly to Israel within the context of the nation being brought to repentance. This stone was of course, according to the scriptures, rejected by the builders, the nation of Israel at Christ's first advent, but is nevertheless the Chief Cornerstone upon which His 'Church' is to be built.

d). And again as we noted last week every 'living stone' that is to be subsequently laid upon this foundation must undergo the process of transformation in order to be in complete symmetry with the foundation stone Himself – hence, justice is to be the measuring line and righteousness the plummet - 1Co 15:49 *And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man.*

e). Isaiah 28:16 is also used in connection with Israel and the 'Gentile Church' in - Ro 9:30 ¶ *What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness of faith; 31*

but Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness. 32 Why? Because they did not seek it by faith, but as it were, by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone. 33 As it is written: "Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offense, And whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame."

f). The Jews then at Christ's first advent, the ones to whom the foundation stone was sent stumbled at the stone because they did not seek righteousness by faith, but by dead works - Mt 23:23 *"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone."*

g). And as a consequence of their stumbling they rejected the stone as we have seen, but although they rejected the stone He was a chosen Stone, chosen by God and set in place from the foundation of the world irrespective of what Man has to say about it - Mt 21:42 *Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: 'The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone. This was the LORD'S doing, And it is marvelous in our eyes'?" 43 "Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it. 44 "And whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder."*[Lit. winnowing out the chaff]

h). And so He remains in place at the head of the corner, precious to those who believe, but to those who are disobedient, who disbelieve just like Israel, He is a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence; Who in that Day, to follow the imagery of Matthew 21, will fall on the disobedient and grind them to powder.

i). There is then a striking contrast between those who are disobedient, who we have just seen, and those who believe who are described as - 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.*

2). And so, keeping all of this in mind look how our scripture continues – 1Pe 2:11 *Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul,*

a). Beloved = Greek – ‘agapetos’ = dearly loved

b). This word ‘beloved’ comes from the word ‘agape’ – the Divine love that is God. The address then is to those whom God loves dearly, His own special people. Can you hear the depth of the love that God has for us expressed in this word? Can you sense the tenderness of His heart here?

c). Then what comes next is truly astounding. The Great God of the universe who has the power to grind us to powder, who is our Creator, says to us through the pen of Peter, 'I beg you...'. And this is exactly what is written here, 'I beg you...', I plead with you – because you are sojourners and pilgrims, because you are resident aliens living within a hostile world system, because this world is not your home, because you are looking for a heavenly land and a heavenly city, because your hope remains yet future and you have the choice to build your house upon the rock or upon the sand. Because of all this 'I beg you' to abstain from fleshly lusts.

d). Abstain = Greek – 'apechomai' = hold yourself constantly back from

e). We know only too well that our sin nature is alive and well and only too ready to 'bob' up from the place of death, and it is because of this that we are told to hold ourselves constantly back from it. I picture this as being like a horse that wants to bolt or a dog on a leash that sees a rabbit – we can either choose to let it go or hold on tight and stand our ground. It may take every ounce of strength, but it can be done. The scripture would not say, 'hold yourself back from' if it were not possible to do, on every occasion, in every circumstance.

f). And of course it does remain a choice for each of us, and we can choose not to hold ourselves back from, but let's remember what we just read – God begs us to do this. In the context then of what is to be gained and what can be lost, the heart of God cries out to us, 'I beg you, hold yourselves back from fleshly lusts'.

g). And the reason He begs us to do this? Let's remind ourselves again – 1Pe 2:11 *Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul,*

h). The word translated 'which' here, in the original language speaks of having a particular quality and so these fleshly lusts are of such a nature as to war against the soul.

i). War = Greek – 'strateuomai' = to serve in a military campaign;

j). What we would see in this then is that the fleshly lusts warring against the soul is not a onetime deal but an ongoing campaign. The very nature of the fleshly lusts is to wage a war of attrition against the soul to bring about the soul's destruction. Now this is not against the soul per se as fleshly lusts are a part of our soul/life, but rather against the soul that would be saved in order to prevent that salvation resulting in the loss of the soul for the duration of the Millennial Kingdom – 1Co 3:15a *If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss;* Ro 12:21 *Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*

k). Mt 16:26 *"For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, [the outworking of fleshly lusts in the extreme] and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? 27 "For the Son of Man will come in the glory*

of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.

1). Holding ourselves back from fleshly lusts is an intrinsic part of the spiritual warfare.

3). Our scripture continues - 1Pe 2:11 *Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, 12 having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.*

a). As we have noted already today we do live in a world that is hostile and we live here as foreigners and aliens, and in the midst of those with whom we live, classified here as Gentiles, we are to live our lives in a way that is honorable and virtuous demonstrating the Christ like attributes of the Cornerstone on whom we are being built and in whose likeness we are being formed. In other words our lives are supposed to be different from those around us and those around us must be able to observe that difference on a daily basis.

b). Those here in v12 called Gentiles may speak against us, adversely criticize us and even slander us because of that difference, but in that day when all wrongs are righted they will have to give glory to God for the good works that they have observed in us.

c). People may say whatever they like about us, but it will be in the day to day way that we live amongst those who have no clue about the coming Kingdom that the witness of a separated life will be observed - 1Pe 1:13 ¶ *Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; 14 as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; 15 but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, 16 because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy."*

d). Ultimately our actions will speak louder than their words – Php 1:27 ¶ *Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel,*

e). Because the reality of a separated life cannot help but be observable to a world that does not live that way, our scripture then continues with the word, ‘therefore’.

4). 1Pe 2:13 ¶ *Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance [institution] of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, 14 or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those*

who do good. 15 For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men-- 16 as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God. 17 Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.

a). We are then to submit ourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake.

b). In simple terms we are to obey the laws of the land, providing they not contrary to the law of God, but the word submit here does not allow our obedience to the law to be casual or grudging.

c). Submit yourselves = Greek – ‘hupotasso’ = to subordinate; reflexively, to obey:--be under obedience (obedient), put under, subdue unto, (be, make) subject (to, unto), be (put) in subjection (to, under), submit self unto.

d). This is exactly the same word used for wives submitting to their own husbands. We are to submit ourselves and maintaining that attitude of heart in which we will look to be obedient, we are to place ourselves under the governing authorities. We could then understand it this way – ‘put yourselves in the attitude of submission to’. And we are to do this for the Lord's sake – as this is exactly what He did leaving us the example which we need to follow - Mt 22:21b...*And He said to them, "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."*

e). Ro 13:1 ¶ *Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.*

f). Ro 13:7 ¶ *Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.*

g). There are no exclusions and no exceptions for this – and living this way will certainly make us noticeable amongst those around us. It is one of those remarkable paradoxes of scripture that the very ones whose citizenship is in heaven will through their faithful obedience be model citizens upon the earth.

h). And I am sure that we will have noticed that submitting is something that we do to ourselves through our own choice to faithful obedience. It is an attitude of the heart in conjunction with the renewing of our mind that is expressed in lifestyle.

i). And we will also see from our scripture that this is referring to government at every level - *whether to the king as supreme, 14 or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good.*

j). There is no need for us to criticize it or complain about it, as this is a fleshly lust to do so, and it is not down to us to decide on fairness or rightness or even foolishness. Our mandate is to comply in an attitude of submission.

k). I wonder if anyone has come face to face with the rock of offense right here?

5). Our scripture continues - *15 For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men*

a). It is the will of God that we do good, and that good which we are to do contextually here is submitting ourselves to every ordinance of man. And we would see that God's will in this extends beyond ourselves, that our doing good may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.

b). You may put to silence = Greek – 'phimoo' = to muzzle

c). So we would need to understand this as leaving the foolish men with absolutely nothing to say. The way the word is used in relation to the Lord and the Sadducees shows this to us clearly - Mt 22:34 ¶ *But when the Pharisees heard that He had silenced[phimoo] the Sadducees, they gathered together.*

d). And we will see from the scripture that it is the ignorance of the foolish men that is silenced.

e). Ignorance = Greek – 'agnosia' = ignorance (properly, the state):-- ignorance, not the knowledge.

f). And this word is interesting because it speaks not of being devoid of the knowledge, but rather a lack of understanding of the knowledge. We might be reminded of those Christians who are described as - 2Ti 3:7 *always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.*

g). Those who lack this understanding are described in our scripture as 'foolish'.

h). Foolish = Greek – 'aphron' = properly, mindless, i.e. stupid, (by implication) ignorant, (specially) egotistic, (practically) rash, or (morally) unbelieving:--fool(-ish), unwise.

i). I think we can agree that this is a very strong word, and those described here, contextually, would be those who are disobedient/ disbelieving to the word who we saw in Chapter 2 v8, but would also be, in a general sense, all Christians who would fall in this category.

j). And a perfect example of this we can see with regards to the nation of Israel in an incident we have already referenced in Matthew Chapter 22 where the Sadducees who had full knowledge of the scriptures and were eternally saved and therefore capable of spiritual understanding, were, because of their unbelief, 'foolish', and demonstrated their 'ignorance' by asking the Lord a question about the resurrection even though they didn't believe in the resurrection from the dead - Mt 22:23 ¶ *The same day the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Him and asked Him,*

k). And it is by ‘doing good’, by boldly teaching the scriptures that the Lord puts them to silence as there is nothing they can say. And so it would be for us as we boldly declare the scriptures by submitting ourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake.

6). Our ‘doing good’ is to be, according to the scripture - 1Pe 2:16 *as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God. 17 Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.*

a). We have been set free - Ro 6:16 *Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness? 17 But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. 18 And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. 19 I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness. 20 For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. 21 What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. 22 But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life. 23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

b). But we are not to use our freedom as a cloak for vice but as our scripture says, confirmed here in Romans, we are to make ourselves slaves of God.

c). Peter uses the word ‘bondservant’, which is a translation of ‘doulos’ – the lowest and most servile of all household servants.

d). And as bondservants of Christ we are to honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.

7). Having introduced the theme of slaves and masters in v16-17 the idea is carried on in - 1Pe 2:18 *Servants, be submissive to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh.*

a). And here we move into a very practical application of the separated life built on the foundation of the Cornerstone within which, historically, would be a very difficult situation.

b). The word translated, ‘servant’ here shows us that we are dealing with household slaves in the service of their masters. And as slaves of course they were the property of their master with no hope of being free from that relationship other than by the will of their owner.

c). And the admonition here is that the servants are to be submissive to their masters. The word translated submissive once again is 'hupotasso'. So the servant, the owned slave, was to place himself in exactly the same heart attitude of obedience as we saw with regards to the ordinances of man. And they are to do this 'with all fear'.

d). It is of course what comes next that must cause us particularly to take note. They are to be submissive, 'not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh'.

e). There is no distinction made here between masters on the basis of whether they were Christian or not they are just classified as 'good and gentle' on the one hand and 'harsh' on the other. The Christian slave is simply told that regardless of the circumstance he finds himself in he is to maintain the heart attitude of submission.

f). The 'good and gentle' would refer to those who are kindhearted, who are considerate and thoughtful in their treatment of their slaves.

g). Understanding the 'harsh' on the other hand will benefit from looking at a definition – Harsh = Greek – 'skolios' = warped, i.e. winding; figuratively, perverse:--crooked, froward, untoward.

h). Froward = Anglo-Saxon – 'from-ward' = averse [to be totally set against]

i). The idea of what we are looking at here then is a master who has an intense personal dislike of the slave resulting in him treating that slave with an unusual severity.

8). 1Pe 2:19 *For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully.*

a). And so within the context of faithful obedience expressed through submission, even in the household of a harsh master, our scripture then continues to show what is commendable in this circumstance.

b). The word translated, 'commendable' is the Greek word 'charis' which means an action over and above that which would normally be expected and is therefore, 'commendable'. It is the same word used for God's grace in the NT.

c). And so within the life of our household slave who has a harsh master, it is an action over and above that which would normally be expected to, 'endure grief, suffering wrongfully'.

d). Endure = Greek – 'hupophero' = to bear from underneath, i.e. (figuratively) to undergo hardship:--bear, endure.

e). Grief = Greek – 'lupe' = sadness:--grief, grievous, + grudgingly, heaviness, sorrow.

f). Suffering = Greek – 'pascho' = to experience a sensation or impression (usually painful):--feel, passion, suffer, vex.

g). Wrongfully = Greek – ‘adikos’ = unjust; by extension wicked; by implication, treacherous; specially, heathen:--unjust, unrighteous.

h). As we look at this then we will realize that this is not the household slave being falsely accused of something someone else has done, the master having made a mistake, but is rather the harsh master, because of his dislike of the slave finding every opportunity to punish the slave even though the slave has done nothing to deserve it. On the slave’s part he is to bear from underneath the grief, the sadness, the sorrow that comes from this treatment while still remaining in complete submission to the master.

i). And according to our scripture he is to do this ‘because of conscience toward God’.

j). Conscience = Greek – ‘suneidesis’= co-perception, i.e. moral consciousness:--conscience.

k). This comes from the word ‘suneido’ which means to see completely, to understand.

l). The Christian slave then being fully cognoscente of the nature and character of God and understanding the promises of God is able to see past his circumstances to the hope which is ahead and in order to see that hope realized he is willingly prepared to endure grief, suffering wrongfully.

m). I think we can see in this circumstance of the slave and his master exactly the same mindset and determination that we see recorded in –
Heb 11:35 *Women received their dead raised to life again. And others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. 36 Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. 37 They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented-- 38 of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth. 39 And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, 40 God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.*

n). We will return to this next week if the Lord is willing.