

Choosing the Right Path

1 Peter 2:4-10

Online Sermon:

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It seems like all our lives we are trying to build something. Some fueled by their longing to connect, love, and receive love from others, are motivated to actively build meaningful relationships with those in their midst. Others are



constantly driven by the never-ending desire to amass wealth and build the nicest home possible. And there are still those who find motivation to build a sound mind and fit body through a regimen of proper nutrition and regular

physical activity. As we witness wars on the television, witness the devastating impact of diseases like Covid-19 across the world, and as we mourn the loss of loved ones at funerals; we cannot help but wonder whether King Solomon was right when he said there is truly nothing new under the sun, and that all things are ultimately without lasting significance, as the deeds of previous generations gradually fade from memory

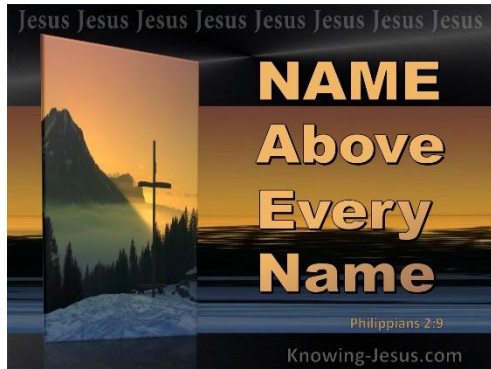
(Ecclesiastes 1:9). Once this generation passes away, for instance, who will remember that we had lots of friends, were excessively rich, or had buff bodies? Does this imply that endeavoring to construct something enduring and of substantial value is ultimately a futile endeavor? After all, are not our attempts to obtain significance merely dust chasing after dust? Though our lives are like the “mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes” (James 4:14), surely those created in the divine image who hold infinite value in the eyes of God are also beckoned to leave a lasting imprint on those around them on earth and in realms of heaven! In today’s passage (1 Peter 2:4-10) Apostle Peter offered a reminder to those dispersed all throughout Asisa Minor.

Although they were not physically present at the great temple of Jerusalem to worship God, they were still to rejoice because, through the living Stone, they were being built into a spiritual house, destined to become a royal priesthood capable of offering sacrifices to God that not only pleased Him but were also eternal!

To establish a house that never fades it must have a strong and permanent foundation. Let’s now take some time to reflect on the primary cornerstone of our spiritual dwelling, which is Jesus.

The Living Stone

Centuries after the passing of the last great Old Testament prophet Malachi an “impoverished itinerant preacher from Galilee named Jesus” came along and took the imagery of



the stone passages and applied it to Himself, “instead of to Judaism, the city, or the temple.”¹

God’s chosen people found this offensive, for in the Old Testament, the term “stone” or “rock” symbolized God’s faithfulness. In

Isaiah, God was referred to as “the Rock eternal” (26:4) and “Rock of Israel” (30:29), while in Psalms, God was described as a “rock of refuge and a strong fortress” (31:2) and “my Redeemer” (19:14).² The long-awaited Messiah had finally arrived among His people, but they rejected Him as their king because His mission was not to vanquish Israel’s enemies,

particularly Rome, but rather to lay down His life for the many (Mark 10:45).³

Only the God-man had the power to satisfy God’s righteous wrath and pay the price for human sins and that is why “God exalted Him to the highest place and gave Him the name that is above every name” (Philippians 2:9).⁴

As prophesized in Psalms 118:22, Christ faced rejection from humanity, but the ultimate judgement did not come from humans; it was God’s divine verdict.⁵ Though His own rejected the authority of the vineyard’s own son over their lives (Luke20:9-18),⁶ He in whom all the Old Testament “promises were being fulfilled”⁷ offered all to come to Him, the living Stone. “This Stone is not, like the stones of earth, an inert mass; it is living, full of life; nay, it gives life, as well as strength and coherence, to the stones which are built upon it: for the Lord hath life in Himself—He is risen from the dead and is alive for evermore.”⁸ For those who reject Him, He becomes a source of

¹ David R. Helm, [1 & 2 Peter and Jude: Sharing Christ’s Sufferings](#), Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2008), 74.

² J. Rawson Lumby, “[The Epistle of St. Peter](#),” in *The Expositor’s Bible: Ephesians to Revelation*, ed. W. Robertson Nicoll, vol. 6, Expositor’s Bible (Hartford, CT: S.S. Scranton Co., 1903), 694.

³ J. Rawson Lumby, “[The Epistle of St. Peter](#),” in *The Expositor’s Bible: Ephesians to Revelation*, ed. W. Robertson Nicoll, vol. 6, Expositor’s Bible (Hartford, CT: S.S. Scranton Co., 1903), 695.

⁴ J. Rawson Lumby, “[The Epistle of St. Peter](#),” in *The Expositor’s Bible: Ephesians to Revelation*, ed. W. Robertson Nicoll, vol. 6, Expositor’s Bible (Hartford, CT: S.S. Scranton Co., 1903), 695.

⁵ Norman Hillyer, [1 and 2 Peter, Jude](#), Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 61.

⁶ David R. Helm, [1 & 2 Peter and Jude: Sharing Christ’s Sufferings](#), Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2008), 74.

⁷ David R. Helm, [1 & 2 Peter and Jude: Sharing Christ’s Sufferings](#), Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2008), 74.

⁸ H. D. M. Spence-Jones, ed., [1 Peter](#), The Pulpit Commentary (London; New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1909), 69.

confusion and a stumbling block.⁹ However, for those who have faith in His redemptive sacrifice, He serves as the gateway to becoming part of a “new people of God,” inheriting all the blessings of the Old Testament Israel and enjoying the privilege of approaching the Father in worship and adoration.¹⁰

Reflection. What an honor it is to come to the living Stone and receive salvation and spiritual blessings. What are some of the blessings that you are thankful for and why? Imagine for a moment what our plight would be without the incarnate Son of God!

Building a Spiritual House

To the many individuals scattered throughout Asia Minor, distanced from the religious activities of Jerusalem’s grand stone temple,¹¹ Peter’s proclamation about the rebirth leading to believers becoming living stones, in which God resides,¹² would have been Good News indeed. In Matthew 16:18-20, Jesus tells Peter that he is the rock upon which He will construct His church, signifying a transformative shift where the

spiritual community known as the church now serves as God’s dwelling place. Church, for Peter, “is the antitype of the ancient temple—a building not material, but spiritual, consisting, not of dead stones, but of sanctified souls, resting on no earthly



foundation, but on that Rock which is Christ.”¹³ While God’s intent on Mount Sinai,¹⁴ that His people would be a “kingdom of priests and a holy nation” (Exodus 19:6), was not fulfilled in the OT, it has been

fulfilled in the Christian church. Individually and collectively believers are the temple in which God’s very own Spirit resides¹⁵ and, therefore, they are meant to serve as the “very heart and center of God’s activity in the world.”¹⁶ Embracing their interdependency on one another while bowing to the Chief cornerstone, akin to the Israelites of the OT, “the people of Jesus Christ are to be God’s light unto the nations (Isaiah 49:6), by word

⁹ Clinton E. Arnold, *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: Hebrews to Revelation*, vol. 4 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 132.

¹⁰ Wayne A. Grudem, *1 Peter: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 17, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 103.

¹¹ David R. Helm, *1 & 2 Peter and Jude: Sharing Christ’s Sufferings*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2008), 75.

¹² Norman Hillyer, *1 and 2 Peter, Jude*, Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 61.

¹³ H. D. M. Spence-Jones, ed., *1 Peter*, The Pulpit Commentary (London; New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1909), 70.

¹⁴ J. Rawson Lumby, “The Epistle of St. Peter,” in *The Expositor’s Bible: Ephesians to Revelation*, ed. W. Robertson Nicoll, vol. 6, Expositor’s Bible (Hartford, CT: S.S. Scranton Co., 1903), 695.

¹⁵ David A. deSilva, “1 Peter,” in *John’s Gospel, Hebrews–Revelation*, ed. Craig A. Evans and Craig A. Bubeck, First Edition., The Bible Knowledge Background Commentary (Colorado Springs, CO; Paris, ON; Eastbourne: David C Cook, 2005), 300.

¹⁶ David R. Helm, *1 & 2 Peter and Jude: Sharing Christ’s Sufferings*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2008), 75.

and deed.”¹⁷ While the “once and for all” sacrifice of the “great High Priest upon the altar of the cross”¹⁸ has forever fulfilled the requirements of the OT law, this does not mean believers no longer need to give sacrifices unto the Lord. In our roles as ambassadors and royal priests, we are called to continuously offer sacrifices such as “praise (Heb. 13:15), prayer (Rev. 5:8), self-consecration (Rom. 12:1; Phil. 2:17), benevolence (Rom. 15:27; Heb. 13:16), and giving (2 Cor. 9:12; Phil. 4:18).”¹⁹

Each of us has unique spiritual gifts and specific role inside the church. As we carry out God’s purpose, let us not forget to express our gratitude to the Chief cornerstone, through whom all things are made possible.

Reflection. Imagine standing outside the gates of the temple, only being allowed to view the building where God dwelled, but not permitted to enter! We ought to rejoice for as the temples of God’s Spirit He dwells within us and has commune with our souls.

¹⁷ Paul Barnett, [1 Peter: Living Hope](#), ed. Paul Barnett, Reading the Bible Today Series (Sydney, South NSW: Aquila Press, 2006), 34.

¹⁸ H. D. M. Spence-Jones, ed., [1 Peter](#), The Pulpit Commentary (London; New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1909), 70.

¹⁹ Norman Hillyer, [1 and 2 Peter, Jude](#), Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 62.

Choosing or Rejecting Christ

All of us face a crossroad in which our choice determines our eternal destiny. Even before the beginning of time the divine plan was that God would appoint Jesus as the living Stone through which one’s salvation would be determined. Christ stands as the bedrock and cornerstone of the new temple,²⁰



where God resides, with faith in His atoning sacrifice as the admission requirement. To build something in life of eternal value is “not due to an individual’s status, worthiness, or

achievements, but it is solely the consequence of being made a member of God’s family through Christ Jesus.²¹ Just as the Cornerstone holds unmeasurable value to God, so too are believers eternally precious in His sight! Those who have been “bought at a price” (1 Corinthians 6:20), the precious blood of the Lamb (1 Peter 1:19), share in the inheritance of being adopted into God’s family.²² And while faith in the living Stone

²⁰ Norman Hillyer, [1 and 2 Peter, Jude](#), Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 62–63.

²¹ Norman Hillyer, [1 and 2 Peter, Jude](#), Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 63.

²² Norman Hillyer, [1 and 2 Peter, Jude](#), Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 63.

brought many spiritual blessings to the lives of those who had faith in Him, Peter warns that rejecting Christ would lead to dire consequences!²³ Those who have heard the “Gospel-word” and have found Christ unworthy of their devotion and submission,²⁴ in their human pride²⁵ that they have a better way to obtain salvation will be greatly dismayed for salvation comes only from the Stone in which God has chosen.²⁶ “The leaders of Israel have been given great promises, symbolized by the stone laid in Zion, but they have chosen disobedience, apathy, and indulgence.”²⁷ Since salvation is found in “no other name” (Acts 4:12), Christ has become for them a stumbling block and a sign of their impending judgement and doom!²⁸

In essence, using the OT quotations of Isaiah 8:14, 28:16, Psalms 118:22 Peter masterfully conveys a message to the scattered believers across Asia Minor, urging them to find joy in the realization that one’s inclusion in God’s family did not hinge on the Temple, adherence to the Torah, or lineage, but rather on their faith in the risen Savior!

²³ Paul Barnett, [1 Peter: Living Hope](#), ed. Paul Barnett, Reading the Bible Today Series (Sydney, South NSW: Aquila Press, 2006), 36.

²⁴ Paul Barnett, [1 Peter: Living Hope](#), ed. Paul Barnett, Reading the Bible Today Series (Sydney, South NSW: Aquila Press, 2006), 35–36.

²⁵ Edmund P. Clowney, [The Message of 1 Peter: The Way of the Cross](#), The Bible Speaks Today (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 86.

²⁶ Scot McKnight, [1 Peter](#), The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 108.

Reflection. You stand at a crucial crossroad. Choosing to do nothing or outright rejecting God is like constructing your dwelling in the shifting sands of time, ultimately leading to eternal damnation upon your passing. On the other hand, building a spiritual house pleasing onto God necessitates placing your faith in its cornerstone, Jesus. Which path have you opted for?

Our Identity and Service in Christ

Peter joyfully proclaims the truth to all those dispersed in Asia Minor and the Gentiles excluded from the Jerusalem temple: God’s calling and consecration are not contingent on culture, age, or ethnic distinctions.²⁹ Instead, they are rooted in faith in a risen Savior rather than circumcision. The Gentiles nations who were aliens³⁰ and “not a people” have now received mercy and have the same opportunity as Israel to be included as God’s chosen people as His “inheritance and His personal and

²⁷ Scot McKnight, [1 Peter](#), The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 108.

²⁸ Edmund P. Clowney, [The Message of 1 Peter: The Way of the Cross](#), The Bible Speaks Today (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 85.

²⁹ Norman Hillyer, [1 and 2 Peter, Jude](#), Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 68.

³⁰ Edmund P. Clowney, [The Message of 1 Peter: The Way of the Cross](#), The Bible Speaks Today (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 90.

prized possession!”³¹ The fulfillment of the OT law is found in Christ’s atonement on the cross as the once and for all sacrifice (Hebrews 10:1-18) became the chief cornerstone of the new spiritual temple, “God’s sacred space.”³² Since the Spirit of God lives inside the believer there is no requirement to reconstruct the temple at Jerusalem.³³ This is because “we can’t get any closer to God than through faith in Christ!”³⁴ Furthermore, being part of this new church that encompasses both Jews and Gentiles results in a profound transformation of one’s identity and ministry!

In the OT it was only the priests were the “most intimately acquainted with God.”³⁵ However, in the NT covenant, those who were once bound by their sins have been liberated through their faith in the redeeming blood of the Lamb.

Consequently, God now recognizes them as His chosen people, a royal priesthood, and part of His holy nation (2:9). Those grafted into the vine should not take their position in God’s kingdom for granted. Rather, they should approach it with prayer, supplication, and gratitude, leading lives as consecrated

³¹ Edmund P. Clowney, *The Message of 1 Peter: The Way of the Cross*, The Bible Speaks Today (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 92.

³² David R. Helm, *1 & 2 Peter and Jude: Sharing Christ’s Sufferings*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2008), 76.

³³ David R. Helm, *1 & 2 Peter and Jude: Sharing Christ’s Sufferings*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2008), 76.



priests by practicing righteousness and engaging in good deed that direct attention to the heavenly Father (Matthew 5:16)! Therefore, let us then not become lukewarm spiritual giants sleeping on the pews of “comfortable churches.”

Instead, as exquisite manifestations of God’s grace and mercy, may we fearlessly live and declare, “God rescued a sinner like me, and He is both able and eager to rescue you as well!”

Conclusion

All our lives we are trying to build something. For some it is healthy relationships, for others it is to amass wealth and yet for others it is to obtain power and notoriety. Considering the truth that dust we are and dust we share return, King Solomon was correct in saying that striving to obtain temporal things truly is an exercise in futility! When this generation passes away, our achievements may naturally recede from collective memory, but

³⁴ David R. Helm, *1 & 2 Peter and Jude: Sharing Christ’s Sufferings*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2008), 76.

³⁵ David R. Helm, *1 & 2 Peter and Jude: Sharing Christ’s Sufferings*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2008), 76.

that does not render them inconsequential! Our Creator attaches great importance to the way we lead our lives. God sent His Son, Jesus, for a singular sacrifice, enabling us, the bearers of His image, to make the choice regarding the kind of dwelling we become part of. For those who chose to build a life without faith in Jesus, while their “success” on this earth might appear impressive, the shifting sands of time will inevitably crumble their build and lead to their damnation in hell. For those who chose to have faith in Christ they will be built into a spiritual house that will lead to their eternal inheritance as being part of God’s family. I want to finish this sermon with a challenge to both groups. If you have chosen the path that leads to destruction, I implore you on Christ’s behalf be reconciled unto God through faith in His Son Jesus! And if you are already in the process of being built into a spirit house as part of God’s family, then I implore you, as God’s chosen people, honor and glorify God through your thoughts, words, and deeds! You have but one life to live, so I ask: Are you constructing the right house?