

## 1 Peter

We are now ready to move into chapter 2. As we do, let us note where we are in our outline. We have noted that this first epistle of Peter is primarily an epistle of exhortations. So, after a brief Introduction which is primarily doctrinal in nature, at verse 13 in chapter 1 we come to the first of the exhortations which continue throughout the epistle. So the outline, up to and including the first part of chapter 2, looks like this:

- I. Introduction (1 Peter 1:1-12).**
- II. The Exhortations (1 Peter 1:13-5:9).**
  - A. Section One (1:13-3:12).**
    - 1. Concerning the needs of individual believers (1:13-2:10).**
      - a. To have hope and to be holy (1:13-25).**
      - b. To grow spiritually (2:1-10).**

In the first part of the exhortations (1:13-25), the latter part of chapter 1, we have seen evidence that the believers to whom Peter was writing, were people of unusual maturity. In verse 14 he addressed them as “obedient children.” In verse 17 he commented on their praying. In verses 18 through 21 he wrote of their understanding of the Gospel. And in verses 22 and 23 he spoke of the purity of their lives and of the love that they had for each other. Even verse 15 seems to indicate that they were a holy people in their behavior, but that Peter wanted them to persevere in what they were already doing. Thus, this epistle is in marked contrast with Paul’s first letter to the church at Corinth which reveals that they had many problems and, consequently, that the church at Corinth had many needs.

April 24, 2006

However, with all of the good things that could be said about the believers to whom Peter was writing, they were experiencing some severe trials. Testings of various kinds, and especially opposition from the world, are to be expected by every child of God in every generation. And these are never easy. The life that a Christian is to live is do different from the way people in the world live, that it provokes opposition from the world. Unsaved people want us to live like they live, and when we don’t, they at first are confused, but then, when they see that we are not going to change, opposition sets in.

Peter’s concern for the believers who were living in the Roman province of Asia, was that the opposition would not cause them to react as they would have acted before they were saved. It is natural for us to want to get even, or at least to give the opposition a little bit of what they give us. But Peter insists that whatever people might do against us because we belong to the Lord, God’s people are react in ways that are pleasing to God and consistent with the Gospel.

And so in chapter 1 we have seen that he began by pointing out to the believers in Pontus, Galatia, etc., by his doxology (“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ . . .”), that their salvation was traceable to God. It was not something that they had asked for. It certainly was a salvation that they could never have deserved. It was all the result of their election by God and “according to His abundant mercy.” And it was a salvation which not only had present effects in their lives, but it extended on into heaven when salvation would be completed. And the change has been made in our lives by a new birth. It is God Who has “begotten us again unto a lively [living] hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”

This means that “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” has become our Father. We are born into the family of God. Therefore, as the children of God we are to be like God. And, since God is holy, we are to be holy. In our character we are to be like God, and in our conduct we are to be pleasing to God. So the Christian life is a life of fellowship with God.

But Peter also brings out in chapter 1 that God is not only our Father, but according to verse 17 He is our Judge. And, therefore, we are to “pass the time of our sojourning here in fear.” This “fear” is the recognition that our primary object in life is to please God. Our fear is the fear that we will not please Him. And so we exercise the greatest care in living each day that we please Him by obeying Him, and that we do not displease Him by disobeying Him. But this is a fear that is to be prompted by our love for God. We recognize that God is truly God and that He is infinitely worthy of our obedience. We revere Him. We worship Him. It is our greatest joy to be what He wants us to be, and to do what He wants us to do.

But how does all of this come about? Well, Peter mentioned in verse 2 the “sanctification of the Spirit.” And that is what Peter had in mind in verse 22 where he said that they had “purified” the “souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit.” What is “the truth” that Peter was talking about? It was, and is, the Word of God. We have been born again by the Word of God (v. 23), and now we are being “purified,” or *sanctified*, by the Word of God.

If we fear God, and want to please God by doing what pleases Him, where do we learn what is pleasing to Him? We learn that from the Word of God, from our Bibles. And, as Peter emphasized in verse 22, one of the first evidences that a person has truly been born again, is that he loves the people of God. He loves those who are members of the family of God.

This is where we are as we get to chapter 2. Our sanctification comes about through spiritual growth, but there can be no spiritual growth apart from the Word – reading it, understanding it, and obeying it.

So now, here in 1 Peter as we come to chapter 2, we find Peter exhorting them to grow in the Lord. They had grown, but they needed to continue growing. This is what I need, and this is what you need. We can see that as good as things seem to have been among the believers to whom Peter was writing, things can always be better. They not only can be better with all of us, but they need to be better, they must be better. We never get to the place in this life where we do not need to grow more in the Lord.

And so the next point in our outline is:

### **III. The Exhortations (1 Peter 1:13-5:9).**

#### **A. Section One (1:13-3:12).**

##### **1. Concerning the needs of individual believers (1:13-2:10).**

###### **a. To have hope and to be holy (1:13-25).**

###### **b. To grow spiritually (2:1-10).**

**2:1** “Wherefore,” or *therefore* - meaning that because of the truth that he had explained in chapter 1. So there is a logical connection between the truth of chapter 1, and what Peter was then preparing to say in chapter 2.

The form of the verb which Peter used here (an aorist participle), can mean that this “laying aside” is something that these believers needed to do as a definite act of the will, or something that they had already done (Lenski). Exactly the same word appears in Hebrews 12:2, where it is translated, “let us lay aside.” Either translation would fit here in 2 Peter 2:1, but the idea is that either they have done this, or it needs to be done. But it is not done progressively, but a definite thing to do, the knowledge that such things as Peter mentioned here do not belong in a Christian’s life. The presence of such sins will definitely affect a person’s hunger for the Word. So the presence of these sins in a believer’s life will definitely be a hindrance to his desire for the Word, and so to his spiritual growth.

One thing expositors are united on is that the sins mentioned here are sins against other people, and it is very likely that Peter was thinking especially about sins against other believers. A believer who tolerates such sins cannot be said to love his brothers and sisters in Christ. Lenski mentioned 1 John 4:20 as teaching what Peter was teaching here:

20 If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?

What are the sins which Peter mentioned?

“All malice” may be a title for all of the following because it can mean sin of any kind. It especially means sins where you intentionally are trying to hurt someone, hurt them in any way. “Guile” is deceit. It is an old used word which meant to catch with bait. “Hypocrisies” is in the singular in the better MSS, according to Robertson. This, of course, is pretending to be what you are not so as to deceive. A hypocrite has no credibility. “Envies” in the plural suggests the many different ways in which it can show itself. In hypocrisy we are claiming to have what we don’t have; in envy we deny the good that can obviously be seen in others. “And all evil speakings” refers to the many ways in which one person can slander another. It often takes the form of gossip. Hiebert says that it “deliberately assaults the character of another and usually takes place behind the victim’s back” (p. 122), meaning when the victim is not present. These words represent the regular behavior of people in the world, but the child of God who is intent on pleasing the Lord must lay these aside and have nothing more to do with them. Grudem summarizes this list by saying that “all these sins aim at harming other people, whereas love seeks the good of others” (p. 94). Lenski says that these sins have in common that they are, or can be, sins of the tongue. He does not deal with the sinful deeds which often follow them. But if we can stop the wrong kind of talk, we will usually stop the sinful behavior which usually goes along with them. This is what we learn from James, that if we can control the tongue, we won’t have trouble with the rest of our body. The tongue gets us into a lot of trouble.

Many a Christian suppresses any “desire” for the Word by his own sinful speech and/or behavior.

**2:2** Verses 1 through 3 give us a statement. Verse 1 is only the first part; verses 2 and 3 are the last part and show what the Apostle Peter wants to emphasize.

If a person claims to be a Christian, but does not take time to read the Word, or to go where he can hear it taught, his profession is probably false. But Peter in this verse was not talking about that. He was talking about *a desire for the Word*. The verb “desire” suggests an “an intense yearning” (Robertson, VI, 94). The verb is ἐπιποθέω. Paul used it in Philippians 1:8 to describe how he longed after the believers at Philippi, longed to be with them, longed to see them going on with the Lord. Peter was not calling his readers, “newborn babes,” but he was saying that just like a newborn desires the mother’s milk, and Grudem says that desire is “eager” and “constant,” believers should “desire the sincere milk of the Word.” Most expositors that I have consulted do not think that Peter was using milk here in contrast with meat, or solid food, as it is used in 1 Corinthians 8 and Hebrews 5, but he was simply indicating that all believers should always show the same kind of desire for the Word that a baby shows for milk. The baby has no idea that he, or she, needs the milk in order to grow; they just want the milk because they like it. And when they don’t feel right about things, they usually cry, and can only be quieted by getting some milk. What a wonderful thing it would be for all of us to know that, when things are not going like we want them to, or we are out of sorts, what we need is the Word. But we need it so that we will grow. We know that we need the milk of the Word for that purpose; the baby knows he *desires* milk, but he doesn’t know why. The Lord has put that desire in his “newborn” heart so that he will survive. The Word does for our souls what milk does for a newborn baby. Most people in the world spend most of their time satisfying their physical desires, but they give zero time to satisfying their souls. And it can’t

be satisfied by anything but the Word of God. And so most people are always dissatisfied, always looking for something else, but never really satisfied.

But what did Peter mean by “the sincere milk of the Word”? What does “sincere” mean? The word translated “sincere” is only found this one place in all of the NT. It means *pure, genuine, unadulterated*. This is why we are naturally suspicious of new translations of the Bible. The Living Bible is a paraphrase of the Bible. It is a tampered copy of the Bible. But the Bible can also be tampered with by the translation that is given to it. There are good study Bibles that are available, but there are also some that are not good. We can be thankful that after all of these years we still possess translations of the original Hebrew and Greek that are “sincere,” pure, unadulterated. And this is what we want. It is good to have books *about* the Bible, but they should never take the place of the Bible itself. If you know what the Bible says, then you will be able to judge whether a particular commentary is reliable.

I have frequently said that I don’t believe anyone is ever truly saved apart from the Word of God. I want to go on record as also saying that no one can really “grow” in the Lord without a knowledge of the Bible, a growing knowledge of the Bible.

Now this verse applies just as much to me now as it did fifty years ago. Why do I say that? I say that because we never outgrow our need to grow. We should be growing constantly as long as we live, or until the Lord comes. We feed our souls on the Word of God. We read it. We seek the Lord’s blessing in understanding it. And we seek the help of the Holy Spirit in applying it to our lives. It takes time to grow. We may reach a certain height in our physical growth in the first twenty years of our lives, more or less, but our maturity takes a lifetime. When people are saved, they need to be told that they need to grow in the Lord.

But then what did Peter add in verse 3?

“If so be that . . .”

Do you remember that back in verse 17 where the word “if” occurs, we talked about conditional sentences in Greek? I won’t both you about all of the conditional sentences that are found in Greek, except for what are called *first class conditions*. *This is a sentence which begins with “if.”* Now in interpreting the Bible we are faced with the question, Was Peter questioning their salvation, the salvation of those who whom this letter was originally sent? If so, then he was saying you need to grow unless you have never tasted that the Lord is gracious. Now that statement is true. You can’t grow in the Lord until you are first born again, born into the family of God. But Peter has said so much about the believers in those places mentioned in chapter 1, verse 1, that we know he was assured that he was writing to people who had really been saved. So then we know that the “if” in this case means *since*. So then, verses 2 and 3 read, “As newborn babes . . . since ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.” To taste that the Lord is gracious, is to be saved. And so being saved, Peter said, you need to grow. He did not want that reader who may not have been saved to think that he could grow when he had not been born again.

But what does it mean to “have tasted that the Lord is gracious”?

This expression describes salvation. Peter took this expression from Psalm 34:6 where we read, “O taste and see that the Lord is good.” What Peter wrote is not an exact quote because he wanted to emphasize the tasting part. In the latter part of Psalm 34:6 David went on to say, “blessed is the man that trusteth in Him,” that is, in the Lord. So to taste is not just to sip, or to sample in some way the Word of God. But it is to appropriate, to partake of, to trust in the Word of God. But Peter didn’t say that you will find that the Word is good. He said, “that the Lord is good.” How do we explain the difference? Well, there actually is no difference. When you

trust in the Word, you are trusting in the Lord. The Lord and His Word are inseparable. Do I want to learn more about the Lord? Then I must go to the Word. By faith in the Word of God I get my first taste of the Lord, and my taste has given me life and a delight to know more of the Lord.

The Greek word translated “gracious” can mean *kind*, or *good*. In Arndt & Gingrich’s lexicon they use also the words *loving* and *benevolent*. One commentator (Bengel) said, “A taste excites the appetite” (quoted in Robertson, VI, 95).

Hiebert says this in concluding his comments on verse 3:

Their eager appropriation of the milk of the Word has brought them into direct contact with the Lord Who gave the Word. “He and His Word form a unity” [quoting George Williams]. The true aim of Bible study is never a mere mastery of its contents, but a transforming experience with the Lord Who revealed Himself in His Word (Hiebert, p.126).

May 1, 2006

This Greek word (χρηστός) which is translated “gracious” here in 1 Peter 2:3, is rendered as “goodness” in Romans 2:4. In Ephesians 4:32 it is “kind.” And so this is why Bengel said that “a taste excites the appetite,” as quoted above. It is the goodness and kindness of God in saving us, that makes us want to learn more about Him.

Digression: It is important when studying any book of the Bible, or any portion of any book of the Bible, to observe the development, or progression, of truth which is always to be observed. But only the Holy Spirit can enable us to see, and then to understand, the way in which the writers of Scripture move from one point to another. But it is not only the thought of the writers that we want to observe, but, in reading Scripture, we need to remember that each writer of Scripture was being led by the Holy Spirit in his writing, down to the very words that the writers used. The Holy Spirit did not dictate to the writers what they wrote, but he used their knowledge, and often their experiences, and, to be sure, their personalities, and yet He did it so that what each man wrote can truly be called the Word of God. Paul said in 2 Timothy 3:16 that “all Scripture is given by inspiration of God.” And Peter himself said in his second epistle, regarding how we got the Bible, that “men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit” (2 Peter 1:21). This is what makes the Bible so important. It was all given to us by God. And yet, with the help of the Holy Spirit, we read the Bible like we would in trying to understand it, we think about what we are reading by reading it over and over, and we pray for the Lord’s help in seeking to understand it, and to believe it. Then we seek, again with the help of the Spirit, to obey what it tells us to do, or not to do, as the case may be.

Now, in reading chapter 1 we need to ask ourselves, Is this teaching about salvation, or the new birth, descriptive of me? Have I been born again? Do I love Jesus Christ? Do I want to be holy? Is that my main objective in life? Do I love the people of God, and do I enjoy being with them? If so, then I need to praise the Lord like Peter did beginning with verse 3 of chapter 1. If not, then I need to ask myself, Why not? Peter in chapter 1 was writing about salvation. So I go back to the chapter to learn specifically how I can be saved to make sure that Peter could have been writing this epistle *to me!* *Make sure that you know what it means to be born again!*

*Then, coming to chapter 2, from what Peter wrote in this chapter, we need to ask ourselves, If I am a Christian, am I a growing Christian?* And again I need to ask myself, How can I tell if I am growing? Well, in the verses we have covered at the beginning of chapter 2 we can see that it is by the Word of God that I can grow, “the sincere milk of the Word.” A growing Christian will be growing in his love for the Word. A growing Christian will be growing in his desire to obey the Word. A growing Christian will be growing in his love for other true Christians. And, most important of all, a growing Christian will growing in his love for the Lord, and for

God, and for the Holy Spirit. And along with all of this, as verse 1 of chapter 2 indicates that a growing Christian will seek to avoid any and everything that the Bible calls sin.

So, you and I need to ask, Is Peter talking about me in these verses at the beginning of chapter 2. If not, why not? If a baby is born into this world, but he does not grow, the parents get concerned. The doctors get concerned, and they do everything possible to find out why, and to remedy the problem, if it possible to do so. I think we all understand, or should understand, that not everyone who claims to be a Christian, is a Christian in the true meaning of the word, Christian. Many people think that because they go to church, at least once in a while, they are Christians. Others think if you try to live a good life, you are a Christian. A true Christian does seek to live a good life, but the good life is the life that is described in the Bible, not just by society. But a person who really knows the Lord Jesus Christ as his, or her, Savior, wants to grow. And yet I believe that there are some Christians who are not growing. Let's make sure that we are not one of them.

So let us all make sure that we understand what Peter was talking about, and that we are making the application of what he has written *to ourselves!* If you have experienced the graciousness of the Lord in salvation, you are going to want to know more, and so to grow. This was so important to Peter that it was the last thing that he mentioned in his second epistle. See 2 Peter 3:18.

So I trust that, as we have come to the second chapter, we all know that we are saved, and we all know that we want to be growing

Not let us go on to verse 4.

**2:4** “To whom coming.” Who was Peter talking about? He was talking about two people. The one who comes is a reference to all true believers. The One to Whom we come is the Lord, the Lord Jesus Christ. And the participle “coming” is a present participle, meaning that *we keep coming* to Him. We are always “looking unto Jesus.” This is not just daily, but many times each day. Our living can be described as continually coming to the Lord. We came to Him to be saved; we continue coming to Him as we grow.

Now our translators have added the words, *as unto*, but they are not in the original. The Greek says, “to Whom coming, a living stone.” Now we do not usually speak of stones as *living*. So we know that Peter has something special in mind. He speaks of the Lord as a “living stone.” But even though our Lord is stone, presumably because of His strength, yet a stone fittingly represents our Lord because like a stone, He is unchanging. But from Peter's perspective as he wrote, and from ours as we read, our Lord had been raised from the dead (see the latter part of 1:3). So from the language used here we see that our Lord as a stone is strong, is unchanging, and is living. And He will never die again. So this agrees with the hope that we have in Him. We change, but He never changes. Our hope in Him is secure.

But we find that there is a difference between the way men generally evaluate the Lord, as compared with the way God considers Him. Concerning the attitude of men toward the Lord, Peter used the word “disallowed.” This amounts to a total rejection. Men disapprove of Him. They feel no need of Him, but want nothing to do with Him. It was prophesied that He would be despised and rejected, and that is exactly what happened to Him when He came into this world. This is still the way that people generally treat Him. “Men” is without the article *the*, and so “men” would here support the translation, *mankind*.

But what about God? We have in the preceding statement a *μὲν* and *δέ* which means that this verse can be translated, *on the one hand* and *on the other*. The Lord Jesus was disallowed indeed of men, on the one hand, but on the other hand, chosen of God, and precious. Peter was anticipating here what he was going to say in

verse 6 where we have a quotation from Psalm 118:22 which we will get to in a moment. “Chosen” shows the Lord’s preference of His Son above all others, but it also speaks of His choice to be the One to come Who would reveal the Father and carry out the Father’s will in securing the salvation of sinners. The Lord Jesus was the One in Whom the Father found all of His delight. “Precious” speaks of the special love that the Father had, and has, for His Son, and that He was the only One Who in becoming a Man would qualify to be a Substitute for sinners. And we can testify that the more we know of the Lord Jesus, the more we can understand why it is that the Father has such a love for His Son. But this also helps us to understand how much the Father loves us in that He would send His only begotten Son, His Son in Whom He found all of His delight, to come to bear our sins on the Cross.

**2:5** “Ye also” – Peter was not writing to believers just as individuals, but as a group. The pronouns and verbs are plural. Peter spoke here of us as believers using the same words which he used of the Lord in verse 4. He is “a living stone”; we “also” are “living stones.” To God we bear the likeness of Christ. On the word “are built up,” Hiebert had this to say:

Furthermore, a house is not a jumbled pile of stones. The image implies the orderly and purposeful arrangement of the individual stones, each shaped and placed to fulfil its assigned task (p. 132).

This is similar to what Paul said about us being members of the body of Christ in 1 Corinthians 12. And especially to what he wrote in the Ephesian epistle about us being “an habitation of God through the Spirit.” Listen to the following words which are found in Eph 2:19-22

19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;

20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;

21 In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:

22 In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

In OT times, after the descendants of Abraham had become a nation, God’s dwelling place was first in the Tabernacle, and later in the Temple. This is stated very clearly in Exodus 25:8 where we read, “And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them.” And then later in Exodus 29 it is recorded that the Lord said this:

45 And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God.

46 And they shall know that I am the LORD their God, that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them: I am the LORD their God (Ex. 29:45-46).

And so it is apparent in both the OT and the NT that God delights to dwell with His people. We know from the NT that all three Members of the Godhead dwell within each one of us personally, but there is a special way in which, when we are gathered together as His church, the presence of the Lord is manifested in a very special way. And it is always to His glory and for His glory that we recognize His presence. As amazing as it is, the Lord delights in us, and not only is “with us,” but He, more than any of us, looks forward with great anticipation and joy to the time when we will all be in heaven with Him. Cf. John 17:24. What a glorious day that will be for our Lord Jesus Christ and for God Himself, but we should also anticipate it because of what it is going to mean to us! What an awesome thing it is for us to recognize the Lord’s presence with us today! Remember what Habakkuk told the children of Israel about the presence of the Lord. We find these words in Habakkuk 2:20: “But the LORD is in his holy temple : let all the earth keep silence before him.”

This is wonderful truth, and we need to recognize it and to enjoy it. Dr. Grudem has expressed the thought of verse 5 in these words: “As you (keep on) coming to Christ (in worship, and prayer and praise), you are (continually) being built up into a spiritual temple, a place in which God more and more fully dwells” (p. 100). So as we grow spiritually, our experience of the very presence of God among us becomes more and more of a

spiritual reality. May the Lord bless us with the enjoyment of the very truth that Peter was describing here. What a blessing we will miss if we are not meeting regularly with the people of God.

But then Peter adds another title to describe the people of God. We are not only “a spiritual house,” but “an holy priesthood.” If we contrast the ministry of the prophet with the ministry of the priest, it will help us to have a clearer idea of Peter’s teaching in this verse. A prophet ministered from God to man; a priest ministered from man to God. And as we are now priests to God on behalf of people, we have “spiritual sacrifices” to offer to God which can only be “acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Our only right to approach God even to worship Him is “by Jesus Christ.”

What are the spiritual sacrifices that we are to offer to God?

- 1) Our bodies, *i.e.*, ourselves (Rom. 12:1-2).
- 2) Our money (Phil. 4:18). Also Heb. 13:16m).
- 3) Praise and thanksgiving in prayer to God by Jesus Christ (Heb. 13:15).
- 4) Good works (Heb. 13:16a).

May 2, 2006

At this point the Apostle Paul quotes from the OT three times, once in each of the next three verses:

- 1) In verse 6 from Isaiah 28:16.
- 2) In verse 7 from Psalm 118:22.
- 3) In verse 8 from Isaiah 8:14.

And these three OT passages are cited in proof of what the Apostle Peter has written in verses 4 and 5 of this chapter.

**2:6** Isaiah 28:16 is a prophecy of the very thing that Peter was discussing.

This is what Isaiah 28:16 tells us:

16 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.

Peter was quoting from the Greek translation of the OT, not the Hebrew text, which explains the words, “he that believeth shall not make haste,” as meaning that “he that believeth on Him shall not be confounded.” This is the idea expressed in several passages in Scripture that those who trust in this One Who is to be the Chief Cornerstone, will not be disappointed nor ashamed. This will surely come to pass.

The temple had already been built by Solomon. Zion is not heaven; Zion was in Jerusalem. And we know from the NT, especially the book of Acts, that the church began in Jerusalem, and that it was gradually extended to “all Judaea,” and then to “Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

Again, as in verse 4, our Lord Jesus Christ is called “elect” and “precious.” The Lord Jesus was chosen by God the Father for the unique place that He has always held in the plan and purpose of God, and in this sense (but also in many others) He is “precious,” given a place of special honor, unlike and higher than the honor given to anyone else, whether angel or man.

**4:7** Moving on to verse 7, the quotation is from Psalm 118:22, where we read: “The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner.” Peter’s quotation is, “the Stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner,” or the cornerstone. This speaks of Israel’s

rejection of their Messiah. They repudiated Him, and this rejection was culminated in the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus. But God sovereignly overruled the people, and has made the Lord Jesus the foundation of this new and living temple.

The first part of verse 7 should probably read as a better translation, “Unto you therefore which believe, is the preciousness.” What Jesus is to God, He becomes to those of us who believe. We honor Him as the Father does. We do not reject Him, but give Him full honors for being the One Whom the Father has said that He is, “My Beloved Son.” And this is our glory.

But not all have received Him. However, that has not ruined the divinely ordained plan of God. Over the objections of Jews and Gentiles, the Father has made the Lord Jesus “the head of the corner,” the chief cornerstone, the foundation stone for the whole building in which God is pleased to manifest His presence. So the evidence for the supremely exalted position of the Lord Jesus Christ is to be seen in the church which is His body.

In verse 8 Peter went on to speak of those who were disobedient, those who have rejected Christ in the past, and the same applies to those who continue to reject Him in the present. So the acceptance or rejection of Jesus Christ is the dividing point for the whole human race.

**2:8** Here Peter quoted from Isaiah again, Isaiah 8:14. It says this:

14 And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

The Apostle Paul touched on this very way in which the Lord Jesus was held by Jews and Gentiles alike where he wrote in 1 Corinthians 1:21-24:

21 For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

22 For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom:

23 But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness;

24 But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

Why have there always been those who believe in Jesus Christ? It is, Paul said, because they are “called.” Who does the calling? God does. Whom does He call? Those whom He has chosen. Why are there people who never accept Christ? Peter says it is because this was their appointment, their appointment by God. This is a difficult truth for all of us to handle, but it is the teaching of Scripture.

Most of us were raised believing that our wills are free – that we are the ones who determine what our eternal destiny is to be. If we accept Christ, we will go to heaven; if we reject Christ, we will go to hell. People urged us to believe in Christ, and we have urged others to believe in Christ. And it is right that we should. But the truth is that our wills are not free. Our wills are in bondage to our sinful nature. Philippians 2:13 tells us that “it is God which [or Who] worketh in us to will and to do of His good pleasure.” Salvation is His work, not ours. We have also been taught that not even God knows who is going to be saved. But that displays a terrible ignorance of the character of God. Is He not infinite in His wisdom? Doesn’t He know the end of all things from the beginning?

The truth is that we all deserve to go to hell. But God knowing our hearts, in eternity past chose those who were to be saved. This is the doctrine of election which Peter mentioned at the very beginning of this epistle.

But He not only chose us for salvation, He calls us, He draws us to Himself, He saves us, and He keeps us. If God had not done all of that for us, we would never make it to heaven.

But what about those who are never saved? Is it that God just ignores them, and lets them go their own way? Even many of those who believe in the election of the saved, believe that is the case. But Peter here in 1 Peter chapter 2 and verse 8, says that the disobedient and unbelieving “were appointed” to damnation. Paul taught the same thing in Romans chapter 9. God’s sovereignty extends to every person who has ever lived, or who will ever live to the end of time. He was not obligated to save anyone. But He has chosen to save some, but not all. And we need to realize, as Paul teaches in Romans 9, that He as God has that right, that authority.

Now we don’t know who the elect are, or who the reprobates are. And so we are commanded to preach the Gospel to every creature. God uses His Word to save whom He will. It is our responsibility to preach the Gospel, to spread the good news of salvation. And people are responsible for their response to the Gospel. But we know from Scripture that when anyone trusts in Christ, it is not because of our ability to convince them that they need to be saved and/or that Christ can save them. When anyone trusts in Christ it is because God in eternity past chose them, then He calls them, and draws them to Himself, He saves them, and keeps them, and guarantees that they will never die. God’s purposes never fail because He cannot fail. He has chosen some to be saved; others He has appointed for eternal judgment. Thank God, this appointment does not apply to all or no one would ever be saved. But God in His grace has appointed millions to be saved; the rest are appointed for eternal death. Christ is the “stone of stumbling,” and he is the “rock of offence” to Jews and Gentiles alike. But to those of us who are saved He is “the power of God, and the wisdom of God.”

The doctrine that Peter was dealing with here is called *reprobation*, which even the dictionary defines as *rejection by God’s decree*. As Ezekiel tells us, God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked. See Ezekiel 33:11. But for His own glory [whether we understand it or not], God has chosen to save the elect (whom the Lord spoke of in John 17 as those whom the Father had given to Him); the rest He has appointed for eternal judgment.

Now why did Peter bring this up in this epistle. We need to remember that the believers to whom he was writing, were suffering terribly at the hands of wicked men. Many had been imprisoned, and many had died for their faith. But Peter wanted them to know that they had not been abandoned by God, that He was in control of the wicked just as He was of the righteous. And that everything was being carried out in their day in accordance with the sovereign will of God.

I heard the other day about a Father who didn’t want his little boy to go to church because, as he said, *nobody was ever raised from the dead*. That father was stumbling over Christ; he was offended by the teaching of Christ’s resurrection. Is that father “appointed” to God’s wrath? I don’t know. But unless God has mercy upon him, and shows him that Jesus Christ is alive, and that He was raised from the dead, that father will suffer the judgment of the reprobates. The Lord Jesus Christ is the issue. The elect will believe all that the Bible teaches about Christ; the reprobates reject it all. Those who believe in Christ will go to heaven because they have been chosen by God. Those who do not believe in Christ are appointed to remain under the judgment of God, and will spend eternity in hell.

I hope that you all will be so convinced that God is God, and that God’s Word is true, that you will not reject any part of the Word, even that which may be very difficult to understand, and that that Word will give you peace. The Psalmist in Psalm 119:165 said, “Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them.” Nothing will make those who love God’s Word to stumble. Whatever we find in the Word of God, we believe. We may not understand it all, but we believe it all. And this brings peace to our hearts.

**2:9** At this point returned to talk about the people of God, and he describes them with four different titles which apply to all the people of God.

They are:

- 1) "A chosen generation."
- 2) "A royal priesthood."
- 3) "An holy nation."
- 4) "A peculiar people."

What do these titles mean?

"A chosen generation" brings before us again that we are what we are by God's sovereign choice. We are God's because He had chosen us to be His. The word "generation" suggests how we became what we are. We all have a common heritage. We have been born into God's family. We all have His life. We have a closer and more enduring relationship than any human relationship we might have. Dr. Hiebert says that this "new race transcends all natural distinctions of ancestry, languages, or cultures" (p. 142). This also "removes all boasting and yet establishes a dignity of heredity that enables a chosen one to point to 'God as the Father of his race'" (Adams, quoted by Hiebert, p. 142). We belong to a new race of people.

"A royal priesthood" – This follows from Peter's statement in verse 5 that we are "an holy priesthood." As priests we have direct access to God. Also, as we have seen already, we are "to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." Jesus Christ is our "great high priest" (Heb. 4:14). We serve as priests "by" Him, and under Him. Since He is not only our Savior, but also our Lord and King, not only sovereign over us, but over all men, nations, and circumstances over every kind throughout the whole world, and so we are "a royal priesthood." Many different explanations have been given to this term, but this seems to satisfy the thought that Peter was expressing.

"An holy nation" speaks of believers who make up the church as "fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God" (Eph. 2:19), and in Philippians 3:20 believers as those who have their citizenship in heaven. As such we are distinct from any nation on the face of the earth; we are "an holy nation."

"A peculiar people" – This word "peculiar" is an old English expression brought into the English from the Latin, *peculium*, which means "private property . . . belonging to an individual; privately owned" (Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, p. 730). The Greek is εἰς περιποίησιν, which means *to acquire by purchase*. It is the idea expressed in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20:

19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

Paul used the verb from which this word "peculiar" comes as he spoke to the Ephesian elders in Acts 20:28:

28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

Christ purchased us for God. We belong to Him.

All of these expressions taken together show that those of us who belong to the Lord, and so have these exalted positions, are honored above all other people, and even above the angels. This, too, would have been very comforting to the suffering, outcast believers to whom the Apostle Peter was writing. We need to stop and think of what all of these terms mean until our own souls are blessed by them.

But these are not to make us proud so that we feel better than others. These are what we are by grace, and the

Lord has made us what we are for the purpose stated in the latter part of this verse: “. . . that we should show forth the praises of Him Who hath called us out of darkness into His marvelous light.” What are His praises? They are the reasons for which He should be praised – His glorious attributes, all of the aspects of His Deity. We are to show them forth? What does this mean? It means that we are to proclaim what they are, to proclaim them to those who do not know them and to do it in a joyful manner, like a celebration. But how does Peter here describe our salvation. The praise goes to the One Who has called us. That One is the Father. And He has called us out of something, and into something else – out of the darkness of this world with all of its ignorance and corruption due to sin, into the light of His presence where our lives have been forever changed. And notice that Peter called this light “marvelous”! That is because when men see it, they marvel, they wonder that anything could possibly be that wonderful.

The thought of verse 9 is carried on into verse 10.

**2:10** Here Peter added to the word “people” which he had used in verse 10. Verse 9 says that now we are His people; verse 10 tells us that we were not always His “people.” In time past we were just like the people of this world. But now we are the people of God. And the difference that has taken place in our lives was not due to any merit on our part, but solely due to the “mercy” of God.

Peter’s language here is reminiscent of the way Hosea preached to Israel and Judah, but especially to Israel. Cf. Hosea 1:8 through 10.

Charles Erdman, in his comments on these last two verses, said:

Such boundless privileges imply great responsibilities. Christians are expected to show for by life and word, “the excellencies,” the virtues, the goodness, the wisdom “of Him Who called” them, by His Spirit and providence, “out of darkness,” the ignorance and night of moral ignorance and unbelief, “into His marvelous light” as revealed in His Son; in time past, whatever nationality, they really “were no people, but now are the people of God”; they “had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy” (p. 64).

Notice the words, “Such boundless privileges imply great responsibilities.” In verse 11 the Apostle Peter began to spell out what some of those responsibilities were, and still are.