

A Royal Priesthood

1 Peter 2:1-10

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1/5/2025



1 Peter 2:1-10 (NIV)

Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. ² Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, ³ now that you have tasted that the Lord is good. ⁴ As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him— ⁵ you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁶ For in Scripture it says: “See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame.” ⁷ Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe, “The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone,” ⁸ and, “A stone that causes people to stumble and a rock that makes them fall.” They stumble because they disobey the message—which is also what they were destined for. ⁹ But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. ¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

v1 – What is the “therefore” there for?

Peter has just demonstrated the glory and eternal character of God’s word. Now **therefore**, in light of what God’s word is to us, we should receive the word and receive it with a particular heart.

What should we be doing as followers of Jesus?

To be characterized by no *malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander*.

Why is it important to lay aside *all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander*?

This described the attitude of heart that receives the word and grows by the word. This is a humble, honest heart, willing to do what the Word of God says.

v2 – What else should characterize us as followers of Jesus?

As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word: The word desire is strong. In the Septuagint (an ancient Greek translation of the Old Testament) it is used for man’s deepest longing for God:

Psalm 42:1 – *As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for You, O God*

It speaks of the desire each believer should have for the word of God.

- A healthy new baby has an instinctive yearning for its mother’s milk. When things are right, you don’t have to tell it to want the milk.

What happens when Christians do not crave God’s Word?

The failure to either **desire** or to *receive* this **pure milk of the word** is the reason for so many problems in both individual Christian lives and in congregations.

- the Church of God too much resembles the wards of a children’s hospital

Why is the Word of God so important in the life of a Christian?

That you may grow thereby: The Word of God is necessary for the growth of the Christian.

- We should all desire the pure milk of the word, even though Paul rebukes the Corinthians for being able to only receive milk (1 Corinthians 3:1-2), the Christian should never get tired of the simple truths of the Gospel simply presented.

Who are the newborn babes?

In a sense, we all are. The most advanced among us, in knowledge and attainment, are, in comparison with what they shall be, only as babes.

v3 – How have we tasted that the Lord is good?

If we have tasted (personally experienced) that the Lord is gracious, then we have great reason and responsibility to receive the Word in the enthusiastic way that babies receive their milk.

- To drink the milk of the Word is to ‘taste’ again and again what He is like.
- In the hearing of the Lord’s words, believers experience the joy of personal fellowship with the Lord himself.

v4-5 – What is the picture described here?

Peter's picture here is that God is building a spiritual temple (a **spiritual house**) using **living stones** (Christians), those who have come to the ultimate **living stone** (Jesus).

- This **spiritual house** shows that as much as Israel had a temple, Christians also have one. Yet the Christian's temple is **spiritual**, and they themselves are the temple.

What is the significance of both Jesus and His followers being referred to as living stones?

We live because we are connected with Him who is the source of life.

- It is in union with him that they live, and answer the end of their regeneration; as stones of a building are of no use but as they occupy their proper places in a building, and rest on the foundation.

Who is chosen by God?

As God the Son was chosen by God the Father to be our Redeemer, He chose us to be the redeemed. And as much as God chose Israel, so the church is also **chosen**.

- As much as Israel had a priesthood, so Christians are a **holy priesthood**. And as much as Israel had sacrifices, so Christians **offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God**.

Who are the priests of the New Covenant?

The believer is his own priest before God. He does not need any mediator except his great High Priest, Jesus.

What are priests?

Priests are those who represent God to the people and represent the people before God.

Does this mean the church has replaced Israel?

No, God is working through the church as His representatives on earth but the day is coming when the church is complete and God resumes working through Israel...

Romans 11:25 – I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.

What are these spiritual sacrifices we offer to God?

Doing what is pleasing to Him... setting aside our own agenda to get on board with what He is doing.

- Even a living stone cannot build something great for God as it sits all on its own. What God does in us *together* is important. He is building something out of us *together*.

- We can only serve as priests as we do it **through Jesus Christ**. In ourselves, we have no priestly authority, but only in Jesus.

v6 – What is this Chief Cornerstone?

If we are being built into a *spiritual house*, there is no doubt who our **Chief Cornerstone** is. Even though men **rejected** Jesus, He has become the **Chief Cornerstone** in the work of building the church.

- Jesus Christ is the cornerstone of Psalm 118, the stumbling stone of Isaiah 8, the foundation stone of Isaiah 28, the supernatural stone of Daniel 2, and the rock that miraculously gave Israel water in the wilderness (1 Corinthians 10:4).

What is the importance of Zion?

Zion is another term for Jerusalem. This is where Israel's temple was located, it is where Jesus revealed Himself as the Messiah, it is where He paid the penalty for our sin. It is where He will return and it is from where He will rule the world.

v7 – To whom is Jesus precious?

Though this **chief cornerstone** is rejected by the **disobedient** and unbelieving, undeniably **He is precious** to those who **believe**.

- One way to know if a person has truly biblical faith is to see if Jesus is truly **precious** to them.

How do we know if Jesus is precious to us?

- We have a strong desire to get to know Him.
- We have a hunger for God's Word.
- We have a desire to help others get to know Him.

v8 – What will happen to those rejecting the Chief Cornerstone?

Those who reject the Chief Cornerstone and refuse to build on Him instead **stumble** over Him. Instead of being their salvation, Jesus becomes to them a **rock of offense**.

Why is the Chief Cornerstone a good analogy of Jesus?

A **chief cornerstone** is the starting point of a building; everything is laid out according to its connection to the **chief cornerstone**. Because it stands at the *corner*, the same stone is the starting place for two walls.

- Thus, Jesus set out the course for both Jew and Gentile to be joined together into one glorious house for God.
- This in itself was a **stone of stumbling and a rock of offense** for the Jews, who thought that Gentiles should not have equal share with the Jews into God's great house.

What must the Jews have thought of the Messiah reaching out to Gentiles?

In the thinking of many Jews of that time, God should not have built a new building with both Jew and Gentile. He should have simply renovated the present structure of Judaism (adding Jesus as the Messiah) and invited Gentiles to come into that structure.

- But God did something different, and it was a **stone of stumbling and a rock of offense** for many first-century Jews.

What causes unbelievers to stumble?

They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed: It is **appointed** that those who are **disobedient to the word** should stumble over Jesus.

- When Jesus spoke of Himself as the **stone** of Psalm 118, He spoke of what those who rejected Him are **appointed** to: “*And whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder.*” (Matthew 21:44)

v9 – Who are the chosen people?

The things that once exclusively belonged to Israel — their election (**chosen**), **priesthood**, and calling are now no longer the property of Israel alone. These are now the property of every Christian, and we have them in a greater and spiritual sense.

What is the significance of being a royal priesthood?

The offices of *royalty* and **priesthood** were jealously separated in Israel. But Jesus, who is our King and Priest, has brought them together for His people.

How will we exercise our royalty?

Jesus promised that we would rule with Him...

Revelation 3:21 – *To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne*

That is why the church will sing in heaven...

Revelation 5:9-10 – *You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth.*

What does it mean we will reign on the earth?

We return with Jesus when He returns to earth so it is likely we will have governing responsibilities in the Millennial Kingdom (Parable of the Minas, Luke 19:11–27).

- Since the Millennial Kingdom foreshadows the Eternal State, we will likely have some role in administering God’s creation is eternity.

How are God’s people special?

We are **special** because we belong to God. A museum may be filled with quite ordinary things: hats, canes, shoes, and so forth; but they may be significant because they once belonged to someone famous.

- God takes ordinary people; and because He works in them, they are **special**.
- These same titles were applied to Israel (Exodus 19:5-6, Deuteronomy 4:20, Deuteronomy 7:6, and Isaiah 43:20-21). Now in Jesus we belong to God as His own special people.

What is the purpose of our being special, royal and priestly?

That you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light: The purpose for these high privileges is not so we can grow proud, but so that we can proclaim the praises of Him who has done such great things for us.

v10 – What does it mean we were not a people?

We once were without these privileges, and were not even a **people** before God. We had not seen the mercy of God, but **now have obtained mercy**.

- You didn’t used to belong, but now you belong to God and among God’s people.

What is the mercy we have received?

Eternal life... the privilege of being with our Creator in a blissful environment.

What applications come to mind from this passage?

- Christians hunger for God’s Word; feast on it!
- We are part of what God is building, chosen!
- We are a royal priesthood; act like it!