

Further Thought Questions

- 1) We are called to “long for the pure milk of the word” (1st Peter 2:1), so that through reading, understanding, and embodying God’s Word, we will be transformed to be more like Christ. Do you sense this longing in your soul? Do you feed this longing? What can be done when you lose this longing?
- 2) It is humbling to think of ourselves as crying babies. How do we resist this metaphor in our relationship with God? Have you gotten caught “feeding yourself” rather than “being fed by God?” How can you assure that you are feeding from God’s source?
- 3) When I hold the stone (like the one we have you in church on Sunday) in my hand, it reminds me of something. I am reminded that I am part of something that is bigger than just me. It is easy to think of a relationship with God as “my” relationship, that God chose “me” and that it is all about how “I” relate to Him. But the Bible says “we” are chosen to be a “holy nation,” a “people for God’s own possession” (1st Peter 2:9). When I hold that stone in my hand I remember that I come from the Living Stone of Jesus Christ (2:4-5). Because He chose me, I am filled with a grateful heart which, in turn, chooses to follow Him and the example of Jesus (2:11-25). How can you put your hands on the stone of Jesus Christ on a regular basis?
- 4) In 1st Peter 2:8, it says that some people are “appointed” to doom. What does that mean? What are the implications?
- 5) 1st Peter 2:17 seems to say that we are to honor the leader of our nation (the President of the United States, in our case), as followers of Jesus Christ. Do you do this? How do you honor your leaders? Not just political leaders, but also spiritual leaders? Can you dishonor a leader if you don’t agree with them? How do you show honor in the midst of disagreement? How did Jesus handle this difficulty with the Roman and Jewish leadership of His day? What was His example, and how does it translate to our modern setting?

In His Steps

Long Beach Alliance Church • January 13th, 2008 • Pastor Chris Lankford

**FOR YOU HAVE BEEN CALLED FOR THIS PURPOSE, SINCE CHRIST ALSO SUFFERED FOR YOU, LEAVING YOU AN EXAMPLE FOR YOU TO FOLLOW IN HIS STEPS...
~ 1ST PETER 2:21 (NASB)**

1) Growing Strong On The Rock

- A) Continuing the theme of being “born again” (1st Peter 1:23), Peter contrasts the offensive self-seeking nature of sin (2:1) against the tender and sweet image of a newborn baby drawing nourishment from its mother (2:2).
- B) This stark contrast highlights the “kindness of the Lord” which He has provided to us in salvation (2:2-3). This lays the foundation (no pun intended) for a more corporate view of our salvation within the community of the church (2:4ff).

- C) Peter smoothly transitions from the growth a baby receives individually from its mother, to the larger picture of what God has been building throughout history with His people.

- D) Peter develops a well-established Older Testament image of the Messiah as a "building stone" or "cornerstone" (cf. Isaiah 28:16) for two key reasons:
 - i) To help make the connection for those who were "scattered" (cf. 1st Peter 1:1) that the Messiah is Jesus, the Living Stone (2:4).
 - ii) To illustrate the intimate connection between Christ and His followers through the Living Stone/living stones relationship (2:5ff).

- E) Peter accomplishes this through a series of comparisons* which illustrate the relationship which Christ has with those who follow Him and those who reject Him:

- 2:4 ~** Christ as The Living Stone
- 2:5a ~** followers of Christ as living stones
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- 2:5b ~** believers as a spiritual house
- 2:6a ~** Christ as The Cornerstone of the house
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- 2:6b ~** followers of Christ are never to be shamed
- 2:7a ~** The Cornerstone is honor to believers
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- 2:7b-8a ~** those who reject The Living Stone will fall
- 2:8b ~** the destiny of unbelievers is destruction
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- 2:9 ~** the new identity of believers is to be a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a special possession of God
- 2:10 ~** as believers receive God's mercy and are His people, so those who do not believe do not receive God's mercy and are not His people

* This structural analysis is presented (in a more exhaustive form) in Karen H. Jobes' *1st Peter, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*, pgs. 142-143.

2) We Are A Holy Nation, ACT LIKE IT!

- A) Peter shifts the focus from a foundation of living stones, a spiritual house, a holy nation, etc., into how we should then live. Peter calls on followers of Christ to live as visitors (2:11), for the sake of "lifestyle evangelism" (2:12).

- B) There is a tone, within Peter's encouragement, that believers will be maligned for following Jesus (2:12-20). This suffering was not "in spite of" being chosen by God, but because of being chosen. We are chosen for public suffering.

- C) There seemed to be a tendency on the part of believers to withdraw from society in order to honor God. Rather, God has called His people to sacrifice and suffer for what is right with a willing heart, hopeful that it will reflect well on Christ (2:20).

- D) An excellent summary of our behavior is summarized in 2:17 and final portion of 2:20. Living as guests in this world, treat others in the Lord's name and live with an audience of One!

3) Follow In The Steps Of The Shepherd!

- A) There are few sections of Scripture which so clearly state that we are to follow, emulate, duplicate, and embody the example of Jesus Christ in our own lives than 1st Peter 2:21-25. We are to follow in His steps (2:21)!

- B) The compelling motivation for living righteously in this world is never complete if Christ is not kept at the center of our conscious lives! He is our perfect example, He is our perfect Savior, He is our perfect Shepherd and Guardian (2:21-25). We are part of His "spiritual house," we are God's "living stones." There is no greater honor than to "share in His sufferings," for by His wounds we are healed.