

7. 1 Peter 2 of a Verse by Verse Study of James, 1 Peter, and 2 Peter

The conclusion of 1 Peter 1 establishes that those who obey the truth are purified and born again. 1 Peter 1:22-23:

22 Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart. 23 For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.

The word, *therefore*, in 1 Peter 2:1, relates what follows to purified, born-again Christians. These Christians, obedient to the truth, must now desire the more to grow up in their salvation. A series of admonitions follow.

Grow Up in Your Salvation

1 Peter 2

2:1 *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.*

Christians must rid themselves of every kind of evil intent. This is not to exclude the requirement to live moral lives, but it focuses on the necessity for Christians, like Christ, to live without guile. This theme follows throughout the chapter to climax 1 Peter 2:22, "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth." Malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander are sins that fester in the inward man. In order to grow to salvation, we must replace such sins with the pure, spiritual milk.

Come to Him the Living Stone

4 *As you come to him, the living Stone – rejected by men 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 capstone,"

8 *and,*

"A stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall."

They stumble because they disobey the message – which is also what they were destined for.

Just as men reject some of the literal corner stones, so have they rejected Christ. Christ is the chief corner stone selected by God. Corner stones, in the days of the Lord, were tested by dropping one stone on the other. The builders rejected the one that shattered. According to Matt 21:44, the Lord as a cornerstone will survive all assaults, "44 He who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces, but he on whom it falls will be crushed." Peter directly related this metaphor to Jesus, and Jesus to our salvation, in Acts 4:10-12:

It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. 11 He is

"the stone you builders rejected,

which has become the capstone.'

12 *Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."*

Jesus as the tried and true capstone causes men to fall. They stumble when they disobey his message.

Christians are like living stones “built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” The Revelation of John uses the same extended metaphor of living stones, a spiritual house, and a holy priesthood to describe Christians and their heavenly home. The priesthood idea repeats in verse 9. Priests are not denominational offices appointed by men. They are all Christians made to be priests by the God in Heaven. In Rev 1:6, John recorded, “6 and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father – to him be glory and power for ever and ever!” In Rev 5:9-10, the eternal voices in Heaven sing:

"You are worthy to take the scroll
and to open its seals,
because you were slain,
and with your blood you purchased men for God
from every tribe and language and people and nation.
10 You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God,
and they will reign on the earth."

Those who are priests are those who here have purified themselves by obeying the truth. When we so obey the truth, we are buried with Christ in the likeness of his death. Paul taught in Rom 6:5-7

5 If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. 6 For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin— 7 because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.

This is the first resurrection for Christians, and it makes them priests, and the second death has no power over them according to Rev 20:6: “6 Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.”

As spiritual stones, we are the spiritual house of God. Paul wrote in 1 Tim 3:14-15, “Although I hope to come to you soon, I am writing you these instructions so that, 15 if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth.” The house of God, the church, the New Jerusalem, and the holy city are all synonymous for the eternal and spiritual home in earth now and heaven when the Lord comes. The Hebrew writer combines these metaphors in a single beautiful statement in Heb 12:22-24:

22 But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, 23 to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the judge of all men, to the spirits of righteous men made perfect, 24 to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

These spiritual stones (Christians) are those that construct the very foundation of the holy city of God in Rev 21:19-21:

19 The foundations of the city walls were decorated with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, 20 the fifth sardonyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoptase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. 21 The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each gate made of a single pearl. The great street of the city was of pure gold, like transparent glass.

9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, 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.

Who are those, purified by their obedience of the truth (Christians)? They are a chosen people of God, a royal priesthood, holy nation, a people belonging to God. What do they do? They declare the praises of him who called them. What will they receive? They receive mercy from God.

Abstain from Sinful Desires

11 Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul. 12 Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.

Once having established spiritual and priestly nature of Christians, Peter turns to the practical matters of maintaining the Christian life in this present world. The teachings here were not only taught by Christ but by the writers of the New Testament. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus spoke to the spiritual necessarily to not lust after a woman or not to hate or be angry, as two examples among many. He, in effect, always spoke of the need to control desires and, therefore control sin. Paul described this war against our souls in Gal 5:16-21:

16 So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. 17 For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law.

19 The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; 20 idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions 21 and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Submit to Every Authority

13 Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men: whether to the king, as the supreme authority, 14 or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. 15 For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish men. 16 Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as servants of God. 17 Show proper respect to everyone: Love the brotherhood of believers, fear God, honor the king.

Jesus established the eternal principle that governs our relationship to civil authorities when he said in Luke 20:25, "He said to them, 'Then give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's.'" Paul taught this same teaching in Rom 13:1-5:

13:1 Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. 2 Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. 3 For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you. 4 For he is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. 5 Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience.

Submit Yourself to Your masters

18 Slaves, submit yourselves to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh. 19 For it is commendable if a man bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because he is conscious of God. 20 But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. 21 To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.

In many parables, Christ taught the proper relationship of servants and masters. Today, we may think employers and employees. Paul also taught the necessity for masters and slaves to live in the example of Christ in these relationships. In Eph 6:5-9, Paul wrote:

5 Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. 6 Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. 7 Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, 8 because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free.

9 And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him.

Follow the Example of Christ

22 *"He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth."*

23 *When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. 24 He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. 25 For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.*

The end of the matter is that we should follow the example of Christ. He died that we might die to sins and live for righteousness.