

“A Glorious Temple of God”

REVIEW

Every verse or section of Scripture connects to a context that communicates a certain logical flow of God’s truth. The overall context for Peter’s letter to a group of displaced followers of Jesus trying to survive in a godless, hostile environment has to do with instructions on...

**Living well in a broken ungodly world.
Live different because you ARE different.**

So far, the logic goes like this.

I. Realize your new heritage as specially chosen children of God 1:3-12
He encouraged them to bless God for the blessing and extreme privilege of being born into God’s family.

II. Live out your heritage as specially chosen children of God 1:13-5:11

A. Live holy as Your Heavenly Father is holy 1:13-21

B. Love fervently as Christ loved us. 1:22-25

We can love, having had our hearts prepared to love when we were reborn.

We can love like this, having been born again through the Word of God.

C. Long intensely to grow by interaction with the word of God. 2:1-3

1. Prepare for growth

Having put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisies and envy and all slander... 1 Peter 2:1

2. Participate in growth

Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation— 1 Peter 2:2

You will grow spiritually ONLY “if you have actually experienced new birth.”

So Peter’s argument thus far in his letter goes something like this...

You have been specially chosen by God for living a life of obedience to Christ.

Take the time to bless Him for His multiplied grace and mercy.

He caused you to be born again to a living (continuous) hope

He promises a secure future inheritance.

He promises to protect you to the end.

These truths caused great joy in spite of various temporary tribulations which serve to test the genuineness of your commitment to Christ.

God planned this blessed salvation from the beginning, predicted it through the Old Testament prophets and proclaimed through the New Testament preachers.

On the basis of this birth into God's family, live like a child of God.

Live like God lives --- holy

Love like God loves – fervent and unhypocritical.

Long for the word of God that brings about growth and maturity.

If you have been reborn...

If you have experienced a new connection to God and his goodness...

Continually come to Him for continual growth into a vehicle for God to display His glory to a dark and dying world.

D. Come continually to Jesus for continual growth 2:4-10

As if the privileges of being children of God weren't enough to motivate godly behavior, Peter explored the privilege of being an integral part of God's temple.

And coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God, you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 1 Peter 2:4-5

Peter does not command his readers to come but explains what happens to those who do. He assumed that continual interaction with Jesus is the normal practice of those who have been born again. He shifted from the image of a baby growing by regular feeding on milk, to a building image. God is building a temple for serving Him and manifesting His glory.

The temple was a focal point for connection with God.

It was a place where God manifested His presence and His glory.

It was a place where people presented their offerings.

It was a place where God's word was proclaimed.

It was a place where God's wonders were proclaimed.

It was a place where sin was addressed and mercy dispensed.

It was a place where people communicated with God. God uniquely fashions and incorporates every born again follower of Jesus into a spiritual entity that serves all of those functions.

Peter identified Jesus as a “special stone” in God’s spiritual temple. He is the central stone in this glorious temple. He is the chief cornerstone to which all other stones align.

This passage may be organized into three movements.

- Facts regarding those continually coming to Christ the Living Stone
- Facts regarding those not coming to Christ the Living stone
- Facts regarding those coming to the Living stone - part two.

1. Facts regarding those continually coming to the stone 2:4-6

And coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God, you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For this is contained in Scripture: "BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A CHOICE STONE, A PRECIOUS CORNER stone, AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED."

Peter assumed the born again follower of Jesus will continue to engage in intimate relationship with Jesus on a consistent basis. “Coming to Him” is a present tense verb -- to come, approach, draw near, interact, worship, (tweet , Facebook) It was a term used to describe the priest’s approach to the altar of sacrifice. The following facts apply to those who make a habit of drawing near to Jesus.

Drawing near implies a sense of need.

Drawing near implies a heart desire.

Drawing near implies a realization of the benefits.

Drawing near implies a relationship.

Without these, drawing near will fall lower on our priority scale.

Peter described Jesus as a “Living Stone” in God’s “spiritual house”.

- He is a living stone.

This seems like a classic oxymoron. We normally view rocks as inanimate, stupid objects. The use of the word “stone” here indicates stable building material.

Peter used a term indicating a fashioned stone not just any old rock. Later He Peter identifies Him as the chief cornerstone. The corner stone was the stone laid to which the entire building aligned. Here we learn He is living. The term for living here bore the idea of life, alive, divine existence.

In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. John 1:4

Peter refers to Jesus as the life giver; the source of true life. Jesus is not just a historical figure that lived once. The foundation of Christianity is a RISEN Jesus alive and active in those who come.

- He was “rejected by men”

Peter clearly reminded the readers that not everyone viewed Jesus this way.

“Rejected” – disapproved, repudiated, rejected.

He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. John 1:10-13

Peter uses the same term a bit later. He employed a perfect tense verb indicating Jesus had been rejected at a point in time and is still being rejected by some today. Even though some men rejected and still reject Him; not so with God.

In God’s eyes he is...

- He was choice and precious to God.

Peter used the same term as earlier regarding election; specially chosen. He was God’s choice stone in the building of His special temple. He was also “precious” meaning valued, honored, dear, more honorable. In contrast to how people view Jesus today, the Father values Him above all. All creation will eventually recognize His value.

Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created. Revelation 4:11
Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing.

To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever. Rev 5:12, 13

Those coming to this precious stone understand His value. They understand the privilege of continually drawing near to Him.

The Peter describes those coming as “living stones”.

- We are living stones similar in function to Jesus

We are a valuable part of God's temple construction project. We are also living. We are alive with the very life of the chief stone. Here is the main action of this passage.

- We are being built up as a spiritual house (temple) housing a holy priesthood

Peter used a present passive which means continual action being done TO us. We are continually being built up by coming to the chief stone. The word means to build, construct, confirm, embolden. What is God doing with us? He is building up a special body for a special function. We are not an outhouse but a special spiritual house. We are a TEMPLE unto God intended to be the focal place for all of the functions previously mentioned. Paul amplified this image in his letter to the Ephesians.

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. Ephesians 2:19-22

- We are a priesthood offering acceptable sacrifices to God through Christ.

As a group, we comprise a visible display of God's glory.

As a group, we continually offer our service to God.

Through Jesus then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name. And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased. Hebrews 13:15-16

- We (the ones believing in Him) will not be ashamed

For this is contained in Scripture: "BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A CHOICE STONE, A PRECIOUS CORNER stone, AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT by any means BE DISAPPOINTED

"disappointed" to be ashamed, dishonored, confounded, humiliated.

With the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. For the Scripture says, "Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame." Romans 10:10-11

Those who continually cultivate this connection with Jesus and understand their unique place in God's temple will never regret it or have reason to be ashamed.

Application

Being the means by which God displays His glory carried great responsibility.

What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, "I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you, and I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty."

Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God. 2 Corinthians 6:16-7:1

Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body. 1 Corinthians 6:18-20

This is both a privilege and a responsibility; an opportunity and an obligation.

The more we draw near to Jesus the more effectively we will display God's glory.

2. Facts regarding those NOT coming to the stone 2:7-8

This precious value, then, is for you who believe; but for those who disbelieve, "THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE VERY CORNER stone," and, "A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE"; for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this doom they were also appointed.

For those believing and becoming a living stone in God's temple is a high honor, a powerful privilege, an honor, a most valuable distinction. It is like chosen to represent Chico at the National council of the C&MA.

On the flip side however it doesn't look good for those not believing. Peter touched earlier on the consequences of those who rejected this precious stone. What about them? To them this stone became something to trip over. Jesus becomes either a choice stone to which we align in the construction of a grand and glorious temple of God or He becomes a stone over which one trips and falls and will eventually be what crushes.

Included here is a troubling phrase.

for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this they were also appointed. 1 Peter 2:8

The "this" refers back to the stumbling not the disobedience. God laid out the rules. Anyone who refuses to obey the word will stumble over Jesus the

cornerstone. Jesus said if they reject the law and the prophets nothing will convince them. Peter used two word for rock. A specially fashioned stone. A large rock cliff. Those who refuse to obey the Word will not align themselves with Christ as the chief cornerstone but will actually stumble over Him and encounter a fall into judgment.

Again we encounter the contrast is between the obedient to the truth and the disobedient to the word. Faith and believing the word of God CANNOT be divorced from obedience to the word of God.

3. Those coming to the stone - part two 2:9-10

Peter encouraged his readers by contrasting glorious benefit of obedience with the crushing consequences of disobedience. Again, he sought to motivate them to live a certain way because of who they were or more importantly who GOD made them.

But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; for you once were NOT A PEOPLE, but now you are THE PEOPLE OF GOD; you had NOT RECEIVED MERCY, but now you have RECEIVED MERCY.

Why did God so bless us? He called us for a specific purpose. He called us, elected us, chose us. He made us as a special race (Children of God.) He made us as a royal priesthood speaking to God on behalf of humankind. He gave us national identity as a nation living a specific way of life. He delights in us as His special people.

Jesus gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds. Titus 2:14

He did this so that we would proclaim, "How great is our God!" We had NO identity but now we are God's priceless children. We were under judgment without mercy but now we received His mercy and still have it. His mercies are NEW every morning.

Have you tasted the goodness of God? You should be longing for the word to grow more. You should be coming to Jesus to be built up for a strategic place in His temple. What is your place in God's temple? Are you fighting Him or aligning to Him. In order to be equipped to function effectively requires continually coming to Him.

I write so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth. 1 Timothy 3:15

We either attract people to the truth by our actions or distract.

The next passage actually applies this passage.

Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul. Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation. 1 Peter 2:11-12

What kind of sacrifices are you offering as a priest in His holy temple?

Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. Romans 12:1

Through Christ then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name. And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased. Hebrews 13:15-16

Jesus invites us to come to Him today.

Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” Matt 11:28-30

Make it your practice to come to Jesus. Alight to Him. Yoke up with Him.

Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. Hebrews 4:16

Remember God’s choosing and calling you.

Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. Matt 5:16

Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, even Jesus our Lord, equip you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen. Hebrews 13:20-21