

1 Peter 2 • “Living” Fulfillment of Prophecy

Introduction

Sometimes the term “prophecy” seems to mean only those things yet to come about; but the Bible is filled with prophecy that has already come true! Before the coming of Christ, the Old Testament Scripture quoted in this passage by Peter was “future, unfulfilled” prophecy, not fully understood. But now fulfillment has come through Jesus Christ and serves to guide our present lives.

Read through v.4-10 below and then consider the following Old Testament references, which would probably be very familiar to both Peter and his audience in the first century church.

Point: *These are all meant to teach us something both about characteristics and roles of the Messiah, and of God’s overall plan. Paul is bringing together this teaching to show that we have been brought into God’s plan through Christ and that we are no longer outside observers, but living members of the work of God through Jesus as He fulfills each of these types of stone.*

¹⁴“Then He shall become a sanctuary;
But to both the houses of Israel, a stone
to strike and a rock to stumble over,
And a snare and a trap for the
inhabitants of Jerusalem.

[Read Isaiah 8:14]

The Stumbling Stone

Q: What does this reveal to us about the mission and character of the Messiah?

¹⁶Therefore thus says the Lord GOD,
“Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a
tested stone,
A costly cornerstone for the
foundation, firmly placed.
He who believes in it will not be
disturbed.

[Read Isaiah 28:16]

The Foundation Stone

Q: What does this reveal to us about the mission and character of the Messiah?

¹“Listen to me, you who pursue
righteousness,
Who seek the LORD:
Look to the rock from which you were
hewn
And to the quarry from which you
were dug.

[Read Isaiah 51:1]

The Parental Stone

Q: What does this reveal to us about the mission and character of the Messiah?

²²The stone which the builders rejected
Has become the chief corner stone.

[Read Psalm 118:22]

The Rejected-but-Vindicated Building Stone

Q: What does this reveal to us about the mission and character of the Messiah?

³⁴“You continued looking until a stone
was cut out without hands, and it struck
the statue on its feet of iron and clay and
crushed them. ³⁵Then the iron, the clay,
the bronze, the silver and the gold were
crushed all at the same time and became
like chaff from the summer threshing
floors; and the wind carried them away so
that not a trace of them was found. But
the stone that struck the statue became a
great mountain and filled the whole earth.

[Read Daniel 2:34-35]

The Supernatural Stone

Q: What does this reveal to us about the mission and character of the Messiah?

Point: Now that we know that Christ is the fulfillment of all these things, consider them altogether in terms of His Person and working throughout history. Also consider how difficult it might have been for believers in the centuries before Christ came to understand how all of these could apply to one coming Messiah. This helps explain why some tended to gravitate to one of these characteristics more than another, because they wanted or needed that aspect of the Messiah personally more than the others. Do we worship the “whole” Christ or just the parts that appeal to us?

⁴And coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God, ⁵you 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. ⁶For 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.”

⁷This 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,”

⁸and,

“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.

⁹But 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; ¹⁰for 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.

[Read v.4-10]

Q: What is the picture that is being drawn in verse 4-5, and what is the point?

A: Christ is “the living stone.” His followers are “living stones” and God is building a “spiritual house” for “spiritual sacrifices”; that is, a new temple. The point here is that those who come to Jesus not only make up the new temple, but they are also the priests who offer the new sacrifices. “The great new truth Peter states here is the revelation that ‘through Jesus Christ,’ i.e., through His work on the cross, every Christian is part of a new priestly order.... It means that every Christian has immediate access to God, that he serves God personally, that he ministers to others, and that he has something to give” (*Expositor’s Bible Commentary*).

These sacrifices are manifested through good works and worship. “The OT spoke of the offerings of prayer, thanksgiving, praise and repentance (Psalms 50:14; 51:19; 107:22; 141:2) in addition to the material sacrifices and offerings. The NT speaks of the offering of ‘faith’ (Philippians 2:17), gifts as ‘a fragrant offering’ (Philippians 4:18), ‘your bodies as living sacrifices’ (Romans 12:1), ‘a sacrifice of praise’ (Hebrews 13:15), the conversion of the Gentiles as ‘an offering acceptable to God’ (Romans 15:16), and Paul’s coming death as ‘a drink offering’ (2 Timothy 4:6)” (*Expositor’s Bible Commentary*).

Application: What are the spiritual sacrifices that we are offering up today?

Q: What is the image of the “corner stone” in verses 6-7?

A: From *Expositor’s Bible Commentary*: “The picture is from the building of a temple. At great cost and care the corner foundation stone was obtained, moved, and laid. (One archaeologist) mentions one stone in a quarry that was 69 feet by 12 ft. by 13 feet. There are similar large foundation stones in many sites in the Middle East. Once this large foundation corner stone was in place, the rest of the building was determined. Isaiah (28:16) uses this figure to encourage his people to build on the Lord Himself, the one who is immovable and unchangeable, rather than on lies and falsehood. The applications of Peter’s use of the figure are self-evident. God has set Jesus forth in Jerusalem as the foundation of the new temple. Whoever builds on this foundation will be established and will never be ashamed. (1 Corinthians 3:10; Eph. 2:20)”

Application: What things can we do to ensure that our lives are being built around the “cornerstone”?

Q: In verse 8, why is the stone a “stumbling” stone and “a rock of offense”?

A: Those stumbling over the stone is a picture of those who accept Jesus; those who become offended over the stone is a picture of those

who reject Him.

*“And blessed is he who does not take offense at Me.”
–Matthew 11:6*

*“And they took offense at Him. But Jesus said to them, ‘A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and in his own household.’”
–Matthew 13:57*

Application: *Have you ever offended someone by trying to share the Gospel? How did they react? How did you react?*

Q: What do verses 9-10 say about the identity of the believer, and what does verse 9 say is the purpose for that new identity?

A: Those who accept the “stone” receive a new identity. Instead of being destined for doom, they are destined for priesthood. The purpose is to proclaim the “excellencies of Him” and what He has done for us.

Application: *In what ways do you see yourself as a “priest?” If you come from a Roman Catholic background, how do you feel about being called a “priest?”*

[Read v.11-25]

Q: What is the general message of verses 11-25?

A: As a holy priesthood, it is our responsibility to live accordingly.

Q: How many things can you find that specify the behaviors and lifestyle of “the holy priesthood”?

1. Abstain from fleshly lusts (v.11)
2. Keep excellent behavior, which is comprised of doing good deeds (v.12)
3. Be in submission to governmental institutions; do what is right (v.13)
4. Act as freedmen, but do not turn freedom into opportunities for the flesh (cf. Galatians 5:13)(v.16)
5. Be bondslaves of God (v.16)
6. Honor all people (v.17)
7. Love the brotherhood (v.17)
8. Fear God (v.17)
9. Honor the king (v.17)
10. If a servant, be submissive even to unreasonable masters (v.18)
11. Accept suffering as Christ accepted suffering (v.19-25)

Q: Why do you think Peter listed some of the things he listed, such as “honor the king”?

A: Christians were looked down on and looked at with suspicion. They had to prove they were genuine by doing what was right and proving to the world that the accusations against them were unjust. These admonitions would help them overcome that negative image.

Application: *Are Christians today in a similar situation today, and how should our lifestyle and behavior reflect Christ?*

¹¹Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul. ¹²Keep 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.

¹³Submit yourselves for the Lord’s sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, ¹⁴or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right. ¹⁵For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men. ¹⁶Act as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but use it as bondslaves of God. ¹⁷Honor all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king.

¹⁸Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable. ¹⁹For this finds favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a person bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly. ²⁰For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God.

²¹For you have been called for this

purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, ²²who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth; ²³and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously; ²⁴and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed. ²⁵For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls.

¹Therefore, putting aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, ²like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, ³if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord.

Final question: In your own words, how does all this relate to v.1-3?