

# AS YOU CONTINUE YOUR ADOPTED ROUTINES THIS WEEK...

Think about things you want to become normal for you in the weeks ahead. What do you want to get back to? What do you want to leave behind? What are some things you want to be resolute, determined and even stubborn about? What are some things you need to be willing to “die on the hill for?” The verses Kyle talked about on Sunday speak to potential purposes of God for us that are way beyond normal!

## **Work through these questions 1 Peter 2:4-10 raises.**

(Pastor Kyle’s sermon and Pastor Bob’s commentary below will help you.)

1. Why is our community, Red Mountain Community Church, so valuable in God’s estimation to this place, Mesa, Arizona?
2. As you look to your future, how would you like to be more of a priest to others?
3. What are some of your strengths and weaknesses when it comes to representing Jesus as King?
4. As you saw the word “precious” in verses 6-7, what are some things that occurred to you about the value of your personal faith in Jesus Christ?

5. Verses 7-8 talk about unbelief and unbelievers. What are some of the sad things that should move us deeply about unbelieving family members, acquaintances and people in general? What are some things you can easily do for them?

6. What are some of the excellent things about God that move you? How is He moving you mirror these to those you love and to strangers?

## **A HIGH-YIELDING, BONUS ACTIVITY**

There are two Psalms that serve us very well as personal vision statements. They are “moving-forward-I-want-to-be-this-person” kind of Psalms. The first is Psalm 16. It is messianic, meaning it describes the vision Jesus had as He tackled life among fallen people in a fallen world. The second is Psalm 101. It is the mindset David pursued during his years.

As you meditate on the words and phrases of Psalm 16 ask questions like these: Who or what is the big thing to me right now? Have I prayed about it? What is THE thing I must not let go of as I live? Who are the people I mimic, my heroes? What are some things that become like a god to me? What is my potential heritage in the Lord? What am I looking to as my source of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness?

As you meditate on Psalm 101 ask these questions: Do I regularly ask the Lord to meet me and minister to me? Do I live well at home with those I love? Do those of marginal faith influence me too much? Do I need to courageously face my own heart? What people do I need to give greater influence to? Who should have less influence?

Now, remember three things. First, these Psalms represent God’s vision for you. They can become true of you. Second, you need to pursue God’s vision with the Holy Spirit’s help. That’s where His book, His people and His stirrings inside you are all important. Third, the key thing with this godly vision is to see yourself falling short of it each day. Really! Because success in it is when you find yourself practicing confession and repentance. You will succeed through practicing confession and repentance over the long haul. Psalm 16:6 will come true and be your testimony as your life comes to a close!

# 1 PETER COMMENTARY

**2:4—And coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected by men, but choice and precious in the sight of God,**

There has been considerable interest over the years in the stone from which the water flowed that quenched the thirst of the Israelites on two occasions that we know of (Exodus 17, Numbers 20). There are two traditions, one that the stone was a large rock formation, and the second that the stone was “portable,” of a size that it could be transported with the Israelites on their journeys. There is a rock used in the ceremony of the coronation of the kings and queens of Scotland that is supposedly the rock carried by the Israelites in the wilderness. That particular tradition holds that the rock found its way into the British Isles through the 10 tribes who migrated northward following the Assyrian captivity. Like every tradition it has led to its excesses. The first tradition is the one usually held in the minds of most evangelicals. There doesn't seem to be Biblical data that would absolutely refute either of these traditions.

Aside from such traditions, the fact that the Israelites drank water that flowed from a rock, provided powerful imagery. This imagery is in view in the Old Testament passages when God is seen as a rock. We know the real power was not in the rock, but in God, and specifically in Christ who in His pre-incarnate state protected and provided for Israel in their journeys in the wilderness.

Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 10:4 tell us that Christ was a “spiritual rock,” whose presence was their provision in the wilderness. There was in Paul's words a different understanding of those events in the wilderness than we might have just from the Old Testament account. His imagery is similar to that used by Peter in calling Christ a “living stone.” All of this likely contributed to Peter's thoughts, even though the figure here seems to have more to do with a quarried rock used for a cornerstone in a building. That imagery was also used in the Old Testament.

The provider of Israel's sustenance in the Old Testament became the cornerstone of the Church in the New Testament. We come to Him not as a lifeless memory or a dead heroic martyr. He is alive and is still the source of the life that we seek to live and experience. He was rejected by men, the very ones whom He came to save. But He is chosen by God and He is precious to God. He is God's chosen ruler of the universe, the one chosen to deliver mankind, the chosen redeemer of God's family. As such a one who brings about the will of the Father, He is uniquely precious and valuable.

**2:5—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.**

What is true of Christ is true of us, because we are united with Him. This is the essence of a covenant relationship. Nothing is held independent of the other party. That is a remarkable thought. We can easily understand His being called a “living stone.” It is more of a wonder that here we are seen as such. But that is the life that flows from God through Christ and because of Christ to us.

Through this work carried out by Christ we are made like Him, and God is fitting us together and shaping us together into a living house. We are together a living organism that does two important things. First we are a priesthood, a special order of servants that represent God to people and people to God. We become a visible entity of the things of God in this world. Second, we do a sacrificial work on earth that is acceptable to God, in accordance with His will and mind. We present our bodies for His use, to whatever purpose He has in each moment. As we give ourselves to Him, He is pleased to carry out actions through us that bring about the furtherance of His plan and His glory.

It is important to remember that this all happens in community. In its essence and effectiveness, the spiritual process in us is a matter of our functioning as part of a “spiritual house.” This involves activity whereby we minister to others and strengthen them and whereby we are ministered to. It generally is not two distinctly separate activities, ministering to and being ministered to. It is best to understand them as happening simultaneously, like the behavior of electricity in an AC appliance. It flows both directions and switches 60 times per second.

**2:6—For this is contained in Scripture: ‘Behold I lay in Zion a choice stone, a precious stone, and he who believes in Him shall not be disappointed.’**

Christ is a rock. He is that from which spiritual life flows, like water from the rock in the wilderness. He is a place of refuge, a natural fortress. He is also that from which a life can be build because He is truth, and in His earthly life the perfect embodiment of truth who always spoke truth.

This is as God has intentionally planned it to be. His design before time itself was created was that He would become a man and supply that which was lost in humanity when they fell into sin. He would come into the human experience through Abraham’s children, those to whom Zion was given. It was a special and strategic place at the crossroads of three continents where east meets west. There in that special place He would live. His life that would reveal truth. There He would die as God’s sacrifice for humanity’s sin. He would be the cornerstone, the beginning, that person through whom all people in all places who believed would escape the empty way of life that sin had imposed on humanity. All who believe in Him will in Him find a life that fills and fulfills, when one day all things are subjected to Him. He is a choice stone—the one chosen by God to do for humanity what humanity could not do for themselves and to make known to humanity what they otherwise could not have known.

Because He is chosen and marked out for these things Jesus is precious to us. But He could do these things because He was inherently, by His very essence, precious. He is not precious because of what He did, but because it is part of His being. He did what He did because of who He is.

**2:7—This precious value, then, is for you who believe. But for those who disbelieve, “The stone which the builders rejected, this became the very cornerstone,”**

What we have gained in Christ through belief is precious. That is the greatest of understatements. It is the greatest of values. There is such little cost to us and so very much to be gained.

Because of this it is beyond belief that there are those who do not believe. But there are. They are building something for themselves. They, like the builders of Babel, have decided they want nothing of God's building or its process. They want it their way. The cornerstone that God has laid down, the implications of it, the type of building so far established in line with it, holds no interest to them. They believe nothing about its supposed significance and value. To them it is all a mere human effort and a feeble one at that. They want to build something better for themselves and so they reject Christ and set out to do it.

In this verse it is reinforced that their unbelief does not change the reality of the truth one iota. To those who disbelieve, Christ is still the cornerstone. He is still the one to which they must be conformed, the standard by which they will be judged and the One to whom they must answer, and to which they must bow.

Verses six and seven are Old Testament prophecies. Verse six is from Isaiah 28:16. Verse seven is from Psalm 118:22. God's plan foresaw and predicted that not all would believe. But it made certain to proclaim clearly ahead of time the consequences of both belief and disbelief. This proclamation can only be seen as an effort of grace to draw people into the family of God.

**2:8—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.**

Whatever a person's response, Christ is a rock. Here Peter combines Scripture from Isaiah 8:14 with what He has said from Isaiah and Psalms to speak to the kind of rock Christ becomes to those who disbelieve. He is to them a stone of stumbling. They cannot get past His presence in their path successfully. They stumble and go on stumbling. He is to them just something that impedes their pursuit of their agenda. Their disdain for Him can often increase as time goes by.

In other places Christ's suffering is presented as that which disinterests people (1 Corinthians 1:23). People want a savior, a deliverer and a conquering king who serves their interests, but not one who speaks to their sin and seeks their obedience. Christ is in this way offensive. His message offends before it endears. One must be obedient to the word before they find comfort in it. Until then they find in it all manner of things that offend them intellectually, personally and even “morally.”

Peter adds that “to this doom they were also appointed.” Some Christians adopt and embrace a doctrine of preterition. This teaches that certain people are chosen to be condemned. These summon both logical and Scriptural support (see for example Romans 9:6-32). But Scripture does not demand such a doctrine.

In this verse for example, the word “doom” does not appear in the original language. If we remove this particular word the statement reads simply “and to this they were also appointed.” The word “this” can simply be understood as their stumbling, to which they are appointed due to their failure to believe. The thing they are specifically appointed to is not disbelief, but stumbling in this case. They are appointed to this because it is the God-ordained consequence of their unbelief. They have exercised their will under the sovereignty of God and so experience their appointment. It is an appointment of consequence, one they have brought on themselves by their own choice.

So the doctrine of election which says that God has chosen certain ones for salvation, does not demand the doctrine of preterition, that says that God has chosen others to be eternally punished. Election teaches simply that all were condemned and God chose some to be saved, period. And it need not say that. One can believe as many do, that God chose to save all people and provided for that, but that many choose not to accept His free offer.

In addition, it seems that to add a doctrine of preterition implies that humanity is morally neutral. Scripture teaches that they are not. They are born sinners, condemned by their very essence to separation from God.

It is best to keep the lines drawn quite precisely in the matter of election and to say no more than Scripture demands. A healthy position demands that a tension be maintained between the sovereignty of God and the free will of man. A healthy position is what should be sought rather than a “right” position in this matter.

**2:9—But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;**

Four privileges are cited here by Peter that are true of those who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ. They are referred to as a chosen race, even though individually they come from many races. The New Testament writers, though mostly Jews, all embraced the idea that faith in Christ superseded ethnic origin. They speak with one voice on this matter.

Believers are chosen, a select group and a group that therefore owes its existence to the choice made by God. They are not a select group due to their own moral, intellectual or physical merits. They are said to be a royal priesthood. This also was the consistent message of the apostles that all believers are priests and that all will rule with Christ. This is because we are united with Him and He is both a king and a priest. These two roles were separate opportunities originally presented to certain ethnic Israelites and from certain family lines within that ethnicity until Christ (see Ex. 19:5-6). We share Christ’s privilege of priest and king with Him.

We are a holy nation, set apart and unique. Every people group is unique, but together we are unique in that we are uniquely loved and uniquely designated by God for special use in His plan, and that makes us holy. The word holy means separated, or set aside. It came to be used to describe the “unique uniqueness” of God and those things and people that were specially designated by Him for honorable use. To say someone is holy or some thing is holy is to give it a very special designation. It is to say that God has embraced that thing or person as exclusively His.

The fourth privilege expresses that standing, we are people for God’s own possession. He has marked us out as His own, to be objects of His love and goodness and examples of His mercy and power for all eternity. We are those through whom He will demonstrate the fact that He is all in all.

Our transformation from objects of wrath to “living stones” who are a part of a kingdom that functions in the midst of the kingdom of darkness and a fallen creation stands as an eternal testimony to the greatness of His many excellencies. Our lives are to be a proclamation each day of all that is excellent in Him, from His mercy to His justice, from His righteous anger to His compassion, from His forgiveness to His zeal to make wrongs right. This is the goal of our salvation, that we should be “becoming” a living example of these perfections of God to all, for His glory.

**2:10—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.**

The people of God were not different at birth than others. They have never been genetically superior so as to be more capable morally. This is everywhere taught in Scripture. Abraham's offspring were eventually assigned by Yahweh the name Israel, which means "he fights with God." Rather than being selected due to moral superiority, we are gathered up by God from among the rank-and-file of normal worldly, immoral people. By His grace we are made to belong to His family. We were indistinguishable from the masses before this great act of grace. Now we are uniquely His, united to Him and to each other by His Spirit. That is what it means to be the people of God.

We were objects of wrath (Eph. 2:1-4). We have, by His grace, become objects of mercy. We no longer receive from Him what we deserve, either as payment for past deeds or present deeds. We are right with Him. He will take corrective action towards us as a loving father would, and we will inherit the consequences of our deeds, but He will not take punitive action against us. This is all true because of the kindness of the Lord that we have tasted (verse 2).

Peter wishes to remind us of all this and does so frequently as he instructs us in how we should live. We have been blessed beyond what we can possibly comprehend as Yahweh's people and as objects of His mercy. In this we are very different from most of those surrounding us. As we grasp who we are our lives will reflect that difference. And that is what Peter will describe next.