

## XVI. I Peter in Biblical Perspective

### *The Elect in the Exile*

#### “Foundations, Part 1”

#### I Peter 2:4–10

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This is our 16<sup>th</sup> study and were in the second chapter of I Peter as we start into a new section. I will start by reading the three verses that precede our text for this study. This is God’s Word and it’s the truth. I Peter 2:1–3 says *[1] So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander. [2] Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk (pure, wordy milk), that by it you may grow up into salvation— [3] if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.*

The grass withers, the flower fades, God’s Word abides forever and by His grace and mercy may His Word be preached for you.

I am calling this section of I Peter 2 foundations. If I want to know how big or tall a building is going to be all I have to do is look at the foundation. The foundation is the giveaway for the size, width, height and breadth of any building. Peter, having laid a foundation for elect exiles of your life in and for Christ, is going to make it weightier, dig a little deeper and he’ll add something to it in this text. In so doing we’ll take two studies in I Peter 2:4–10 and there are a couple of things that are benefiting us right away.

Here’s one. The first thing is a crucial pattern that is essential for the Christian life is being restated and reinforced. Secondly, the relationship of the Old and New Testament is being reaffirmed for clarity. There is a third thing that is extremely crucial is that we are going to find out something about our relationship to Christ and our identity in this world. So let’s jump into this.

All of you have a world view. When something happens you have a filter that you put it through. If it’s raining then I will find out by the way you look through your prism whether you think that is good weather or bad weather. In other words, we all have world views through which we interpret prosperity, adversity, challenges, opportunities and everything in life.

If we were to take a study in it the –isms in worldviews are countless. For instance, there is humanism, secularism, positivism, materialism, consumerism and on and on. Since I’m a simple person I’m going to help you simplify and the simplification is that there really is only two –isms for all the –isms are just various expressions of the one. The key to it is the words Jesus gave to the Apostles in generally and Peter in particular. This happened when they were on the road to Caesarea Philippi.

Matthew 16:21–23 says *[21] From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. [22] And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him (through the lenses of his world and life view), saying, “Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you.” [23] But he turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.”*

Jesus is not telling Peter he is Satan but that his statement is the personification of Satan’s desire to stop Him from this redeeming work. Peter had arrived at this statement because of his world and life view and we see what his world and life view was by how Jesus responded to him

as he told him he set his mind on man's interest and not upon God's. Basically our two world views are the sovereign self or the sovereign God. All the other world views are just manifestations of the sovereign self. Peter had looked at this through his own eyes, the sovereign self instead of the purposes of a sovereign God. Peter had decided that what was about to be the greatest thing in history should be avoided and forbidden – God forbid, because of his worldview.

This leads to another simplification. If you were to list the religions of the world the list would be enormous but I would simply say there are two religions – either the true (pure) religion which is what the book of James tells us or false religion. All the other religions are simply manifestations that comes from a world and life view of the sovereign self, applied to a religion. All of the false religions all have in common this; they all tell you what you have to do or give to obtain salvation. That means they're all about the sovereign self – self-reliance, self-righteousness, self-exaltation. It's my sincerity that saves me or my giving or my deeds or my works or my rituals.

True religion is not what you do or give to obtain salvation. In fact true religion tells you what you do or give is part of the problem to obtaining salvation because even our righteousness is like filthy rags. True religion says it's what God does and gives that obtains salvation for us, not by us. That doesn't mean in true religion we don't do and give, but it changes our doing and our giving. We do not do and give to be saved or to stay saved or to help God save us, for we do and give because of the fact that God has saved us. We do and give for the Savior who has secured our salvation. That Gospel blessing of what God has done to save you must be understood before Gospel commands are applied and it's a crucial pattern that's going to be reaffirmed in what we are about to look at in I Peter 2:4–10.

Paul and Peter are both unalterably committed to this pattern. Peter says we are elect exiles. Elect is who we are before the foundation of the world and exiles is who we are for Christ in this world. You are resident aliens, ambassadors for Christ, on a mission, with a message, in ministry and your supreme allegiance is to the King of Kings and Lord of Lords as you reside in the nations of this world. The reason you have that calling is because God has called you before the foundation of the world. This is why Peter takes great pains to tell you who you are in Christ before he ever tells you what you do for Christ. We find no Gospel commands until he articulates with clarity the Gospels blessings that we saw in I Peter 1:3–12.

We learned in I Peter 1 that God has an inheritance that He is keeping for you. We also learned that we are an inheritance and that He is keeping us for our inheritance. These are the Gospel blessings that are secured for us by Jesus Christ. Then he tells us that we are right with God because of the imperishable blood of Jesus Christ, not because of the perishable things we have. He also tells us we are right with God and God is right with us because we have been born again by the imperishable Seed, the Word of God, in the hands of the Spirit of God. You are born again, justified, have an inheritance, kept by God and settling these blessings of the Gospel of Christ now he gives us our Gospel commands which are given to us in I Peter 1:13 through I Peter 2:4.

In those verses he gives three framing commands that I have called axioms that lay out the Christian life as a pilgrimage in the wilderness of this world, on mission, on message and in ministry for Christ. The first axiom we learned about is a Divine summons to the personal pursuit of a pervasive holiness. He wants us to be holy in all of our conduct because He is holy. He doesn't say do it for your salvation because Jesus has provided that holiness and it's perfect. You do it for your Savior because He is holy and increasingly in your life you want everything in

your life to be His. This is His marriage, His children, His job where you do your work heartily as unto the Lord and you raise your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. I engage in my relationship with my husband or wife in and for Christ. My hobbies belong to Him. I Corinthians 10:31 says [31] *So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.* I am on this pursuit of holiness as an offering to my Savior, not to be saved for I already have the Gospel blessings – I am saved.

The second axiom is a Divine summons to sincerely and earnestly love one another from the heart. The third axiom is a Divine summons to nurture a relentless appetite for the preaching of God's Word. All flesh is like glass. The glory withers. Have you looked in the mirror recently? I Peter 1:24–25 says [24] *for "All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, [25] but the word of the Lord remains forever."* *And this word is the good news that was preached to you.*

Now long for the pure, wordy milk of the Word. That means you have to get rid of some appetite suppressants. *So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander* (I Peter 2:1). If you make peace treaties with those that will suppress your appetite for the Word of God preached. Crave a longing for the Word preached to you so that by it you may grow if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord. Now we are ready to go to the next section in I Peter. Now he takes a break from the commands to go back to the foundation for there is more that he wants to put in the foundation to solidify it. There are more Gospel blessings that are yours in Christ that you need to know.

I Peter 2:4–10 says [4] *As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, [5] you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. [6] For it stands in Scripture:*

*"Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone,  
a cornerstone chosen and precious,  
and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame."*

[7] *So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe,*

*"The stone that the builders rejected  
has become the cornerstone,"*

[8] *and "A stone of stumbling,  
and a rock of offense."*

*They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.*

[9] *But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. [10] Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.*

First, what does it mean to 'come to Him'? Let's put it into context here. When you prioritize a craving appetite for the Word of God preached you're not coming to the preacher, you're coming to Him. Romans 10:17 says [17] *So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.* It's interesting to see how come is so synonymous with saving faith and living by faith. Matthew 11:28 says [28] *Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.* John 6:37 says [37] *All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.*

We don't just come in our conversion to Him but we do it as a way of life. When you crave an appetite for the Word you are actually saying that coming to Jesus is more important

than anything in my life. I am empty without Him. I am discouraged without Him. I can't live this life without hearing Him and this is where He has said in John 10:27, *[27] My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.* That is why these passages are so challenging to me as a preacher but so instructive as well. Take Romans 10.

Romans 10:13–17 says *[13] For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”*

*[14] How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? [15] And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!” [16] But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?” [17] So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.*

Forget the preacher for a minute. That is why the preachers used to be clothed in black robes. The black robes communicated two things. One, this man didn't send himself for he bears the credentials of having been prepared and tested. Secondly, the robe said the man is nothing. I Corinthians 1:21 says *[21] For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe.* It is not through the preacher but the message (the Word) preached that we are being saved.

Coming to Christ is prioritizing His Word which was given to you to be read but was designed to be preached. The preaching of the Word becomes that which He begins to feed you with. So when you develop that appetite for that wordy milk, now as a way of life you come to Him continually and Peter now is getting ready to tell us who Jesus is. It is not an exhaustive statement of Jesus and notice Peter gives no commands. He isn't telling you what to do but he is going back to the foundation to tell you who you are.

Notice he doesn't tell you to build yourself up but in I Peter 2:5 he tells us we are being built up. This text is telling you who you are in Christ, the Living Stone. You are being built up as a spiritual house. You are a royal priesthood. You are offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God. You are honored. You are a chosen race. You are a holy nation. You are His people for His own possession. You once were not a people and now you're God's people. You once had not received mercy and you now are recipients of mercy. You are a living stone. You are a holy temple where God resides. You are His chosen people. You are precious in His sight. That is who you are because of who Jesus is. You are in Him and He is in you.

Peter is digging the foundation deep because He wants your life to go up higher. By the way, there is one difference. In I Peter 1 the focus was what He was doing in your personally. You are born again. You're justified. Now in I Peter 2 it is what He is doing in us corporately, meaning all His people are living stones, a holy priesthood (singular priesthood), all are spiritual sacrifices, all are His dwelling places but you can't get into the Kingdom until you personally commit your life to Jesus.

When you commit your life to Christ you don't live the lone ranger individual life, you live it connected to one another in Christ and for Christ. To think you can live the Christian life disconnected from the body of Christ in a local church is like thinking that an arm can go on and live by itself without the rest of the body. We are connected to one another. Together we're a spiritual house. Together we're a holy priesthood. Together we're offering spiritual sacrifices. We are doing those things together in and for Christ. That is the foundation Peter is laying here.

So what does God say about Jesus in the text? He calls Him a Rock. God's evaluation of His Son is that His Son is a Living Stone. Secondly, He is a Chosen Stone. Thirdly, He is a Precious Stone. Fourthly, He is the Corner Stone. I was able to show people this on my recent trip to Israel. They would building a foundation with a huge boulder that would be deeply embedded in the ground and then stones would be laid in 90 degree angles from that stone and all the stones would lean on that corner stone as the foundation was laid upon the stones.

I would like to show you this from Ephesians 2. This is Paul telling you what Peter has just told us. Ephesians 2:19–22 says *[19] So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, [20] built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, [21] in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. [22] In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.* This is Paul's succinct statement of what Peter has just told us.

So what is Christ according to unregenerate men? What is man's evaluation of Him? One, He is a rejected Stone. The word rejected in the original language has to do with making an evaluation and discarding it. This is similar to a person who works in a quality control job. They are the ones who decide if the product gets put out to the public with their name on it. That is the picture of this. You reject or set aside the ones that don't go out to the store. What does man do with the call of Christ?

God says His Son is a Living Stone. Do you think of living and stone together? It's kind of like jumbo shrimp or when we say 'he's stone dead.' You wouldn't plant a seed in a stone, but Jesus while all of the blessings of the strength and stability of the Rock, is not a dead stone but a Living Stone. Everything He is in and everything in Him lives! What do men say when they look at Jesus? They say 'no' and reject Him. Secondly, He is a stumbling stone to men. They stumble over Him. Thirdly, He is an offending stone and those are man's evaluation of Jesus.

For those who are in Christ, what are you? Peter says you are living stones, a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, and you are bringing living, spiritual sacrifices. You and I are born in this world stone dead but if Christ is in you and you are in Christ, Christ the Living Stone makes you a living stone and then with His people He is building you up into a place with His dwelling, a spiritual house, a temple. This is My Father's house and wherever you have a temple you have a priesthood. A priesthood brings sacrifices.

You can't have a religion without a dwelling place for God. You have to have a temple. We don't go back to the Old Testament temple for that's fulfilled in Jesus. You are the temple now. You are the spiritual house that He is building up together as His dwelling place and there is not a class of priests for all of us are the priesthood. In other words, if you want to send me over the edge call me a priest. I'm not one but I'm a pastor. There is no class of priests because all those who are His people are priests. If you have a religion that is true and secured you have to have a dwelling place of God and all His people are the dwelling place of God. We are all bringing the sacrifices because we're all the sacrifices.

Romans 12:1 says *[1] I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by (not for) the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.* Do you see the trajectory with all these Old Testament terms – stones, temples, priests, sacrifices? We don't take Christianity back to the Old Testament for the whole purpose of the Old Testament was to bring the truth fulfilled in Christ and Christ the Living Stone has made us living stones. Christ the High Priest has made us all priests. Christ the Temple of God, the

dwelling place of God, in all of His perfections has made us His dwelling place – the dwelling place of God. We are bringing spiritual sacrifices and that’s what is happening here for those who are in Christ. The trajectory of the Old Testament is bringing you to the fulfillment of Jesus Christ and then you in Christ reveal who He is in life.

Here are the takeaways. One, is a nurturing a relentless craving for the preaching and reading of the Word of God is actually “coming to Christ.” Please don’t think you have to get better to come to Him, His Word and preaching. Come just as you are and I assure you if you do you will never leave just as you are. As you come you will be forgiven, redeemed and transformed by the power of the Spirit with His Word. Make not only coming to Christ what you did at your conversion but a way of life. Come to Him daily, consistently and make sure there is nothing more important than coming to Him.

The second takeaway is the Old Testament is fulfilled in Christ and the New Testament expounds Christ. I like to look at it with this illustration. Both my grandmothers knit and one even made a living out of knitting. If you had a sweater they had knitted for you and there was a snag (pick) in the sweater, don’t pull it! If you pull it you will no longer have a sweater but a ball of yarn. That’s your Bible – Habakkuk, I Peter, John, Romans, etc. Wherever you reach in and pick it’s the glory of the Triune God revealed in the preeminence of Jesus as Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer.

Augustine was right when he said the Old Testament is the New Testament concealed and the New Testament is the Old Testament revealed. The Old Testament is a beautifully furnished room and all I can see are the shadows. The New Testament turns the light on and you see the beauty of it in our fairest Lord Jesus.

The third takeaway is the question – so whose evaluation of Christ do you believe? Men’s evaluation rejects Christ for to them He is the rock of offense, a stone of stone. God’s evaluation is that Christ is His precious, chosen, living Stone – a Cornerstone. He is not your rock of offense but the Rock of your salvation. The hymn *My Hope is Built on Nothing Less* sums this up in its chorus;

*On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;  
All other ground is sinking sand,  
All other ground is sinking sand.*

Today, what is your evaluation?

You might be thinking that you haven’t made an evaluation yet but you have. Jesus has made it clear that if you’re not for Him then you’re against Him. So will you take the evaluation of man-made religion in its self-righteousness, self-exaltation and self-reliance or will you take humility and say ‘I’m a sinner for Jesus is not a Rock I’m stumbling over or a Rock of offense but He is the Rock of my salvation’?

Who is telling you that you are a priesthood and Jesus is the Rock? It is the Spirit of God through Peter but I call him Rocky. Jesus says in Matthew 16:18, [18] *And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.* Peter means rock. If you want to know what the rock is go ask Rocky but you don’t have to go ask him for he just told you. Peter says ‘I’m not the rock, there’s no class of priests.’ Peter just told us that Jesus is the Rock and when we come to Him we are rocks. So the question is, is He your Rock? If He is, are you coming to Him every day? He’s your salvation and He’s your life. Let’s pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You so much for the time we could be together in Your Word. Holy Spirit speak to our hearts now. To those who are reading this today, God, I ask You may they come just as they are, tossed about with many conflicts and many doubts, fighting fears within and without but Jesus have them come poor, wretched blind to come for sight and healing of the mind. Yes I believe the evaluation of God of His Son for all I need in Thee I find. Jesus, I come. I thank You Jesus that You take us who are dead stones and change us to come to Christ, the Living Stone, becoming our Cornerstone and together You make us living stones, fashioned into the dwelling place of the Spirit of God together, priests serving a Savior together, all of us, bringing spiritual sacrifices of praise and giving but bringing the living sacrifice, ourselves. Jesus we come, Amen.

### Power Point

#### THREE AXIOMS FOR ELECT EXILES

##### AXIOM #1

A Divine summons to the personal pursuit of a pervasive holiness.

##### AXIOM #2

A Divine summons to sincerely and earnestly Love One Another from the heart.

##### AXIOM #3

A Divine summons to nurture a relentless appetite for the preaching of God's Word.

#### AN OVERVIEW OF THE TEXT

##### I. Who is Christ according to God

- Living Stone
- Chosen Stone
- Precious Stone
- Corner Stone

##### II. Who is Christ according to Men

- Rejected Stone
- Stumbling Stone
- Offending Stone

##### III. Who are those coming to Christ

- Living Stones
- Spiritual House
- Holy Priesthood
- Spiritual Sacrifices

#### LIFE TAKEAWAYS

*I. Nurturing a relentless craving for the preaching and reading of the Word of God is actually "coming to Christ."*

*II. The Old Testament is fulfilled in Christ and the New Testament expounds Christ.*

*III. The Question! So whose evaluation of Christ do you believe?*