

Coming to Jesus, The Living Stone

1 Pet. 2:4-10

Introduction:

1. Since I was a little boy and heard the story of the Three Little Pigs I have liked stone houses.
2. There is an element of security and endurance inherent in a stone house that is not inherent in a house of straw or a house of sticks.
3. Even though wolves may huff and puff stone (brick) endures.
4. 1 Pet. 2:4ff describes a spiritual house constructed on a living stone and made up of living stones.
5. Reading of 2:4-8.

Discussion:

I. Jesus is a living stone (4).

A. "Living" stone.

1. The idea of a living stone is awkward. Who ever heard of a living stone?
2. Combined here is the security and endurance associated with stone and the life-giving power of Christ. The theme is not far off from the Three Little Pigs. It was the stone house that preserved life.

B. Stone imagery is certainly not foreign to Scripture.

1. In Dan. 2:44 a stone, representative of a kingdom established by God, destroys all the previous world kingdoms and lasts forever.
2. Jesus used the image of building one's house on a rock and contrasted it with building one's house on the sand (Matt. 7:24-27). Only the house built upon the rock survived.
3. In Psa. 18:2 David describes the Lord as his rock, his fortress and his refuge.
4. And in Matt. 16:18 Jesus says that He will build His church upon the rock of the confession of His being the Christ the Son of the living God.
5. Eph. 2:19-22 refers to the family of God as "having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit."
6. Elements of longevity, security, and life are inherent in all of these texts.

C. Two things are said of the living stone in 1 Pet. 2:4: It is rejected by men, but chosen and precious in the sight of God.

1. Psa. 118:22 will be quoted in vs. 7, but it is already in Peter's mind.
2. Jesus had used it of himself (Mk. 12:10-12) with similar observations regarding rejection by men, but having his origin as part of the Lord's work.
3. Peter quoted it with specific application to the leaders of the Jews and their rejection of Jesus (Acts 4:11).
4. In this contrast we see the "upside down" thinking of men contrasted with the "right side up" perception of God.

II. Coming to Jesus, we are living stones being built up as a spiritual house (4-10).

A. Our conversion involves our coming to Christ.

1. In Matt. 11:28-30 Jesus said, "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."
2. Heb. 7:25 says, "He is able to save forever, those who draw near to God through Him."

B. We are built up as a spiritual house.

1. The imagery reminds us of the temple of the O.T. that represented God's presence among the nation of Israel.
2. In this text it is those who come to Jesus that become the house of God. It is not a physical house as the stone image might suggest. Instead it is a spiritual house composed of people. Cf. David's house (the temple) with God building David a house (family). Cf. 2 Sam. 7:4-13.

C. This spiritual house built upon God's chosen stone was part of His plan for building, although not the expectation of men.

1. Three passages are quoted that indicate this.
 - a. Isa. 28:16.
 - b. Psa. 118:22.
 - c. Isa. 8:14.
2. Participation in God's plan leads to blessing while failure to do so results in doom.

D. The idea is that coming to Christ, we are built into a spiritual house, i.e., we enter into the family (household) of God. Those who reject the corner stone themselves become stones rejected by God.

1. Belief in the precious corner stone is critical.
2. Failure to believe evidenced in disobedience to the word leads to rejection.

III. But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession (9-10).

A. Verse 9 pulls together a series of O.T. designations of God's people and applies them to those who have come to the living stone.

1. A chosen race (Isa. 43:20-21; Deut. 7:6; 10:15; 14:2).
 - a. The nation of Israel was chosen out of all the peoples of the earth.
 - b. They had been the ones through whom the Messiah had come.
 - c. Now it is those who have come to Jesus who are the chosen race (Rom. 9:6ff; This includes Gentiles.).
 - d. It is relationship with Christ that defines this choosing (Eph. 1:4). In the language of 1 Pet. 2 it is those who have come to the living stone. Like He was chosen by God, so the other living stones are chosen by reason of their relationship with Him. Thus, they constitute the spiritual house.
2. A royal priesthood (Isa. 61:6; 66:21).
 - a. In the Messianic passage of Isa. 61:6 (Which is quoted by Jesus in Lk. 4:18-19

- in his hometown of Nazareth) God's people are identified as priests .
- b. Isa. 66:21 describes a time when God will bring all His people together in (new) Jerusalem, a new heavens and a new earth. It says He will take some of them for priests and Levites.
 - c. Peter's statement indicates that coming to Jesus as the living stone makes one part of God's royal priesthood.
3. A holy nation (Ex. 19:5-6; Deut. 7:6).
 - a. Israel's unique identity with God made them a holy nation. They were in covenant relationship with Him.
 - b. Joined together with Him they were separate from the world.
 - c. Those stones joined together with Christ are God's holy nation.
 4. A people for God's own possession (Ex. 19:5; Deut. 4:20; 14:2).
 - a. Ancient Israel was this people, but now all those who come to Jesus the living stone are God's own possession.
 - b. We are the people for God's own possession.
- B. We proclaim the excellencies of Him who called us out of darkness and into His marvelous light.
- C. We were once not a people but now are the people of God. Previously we had not received mercy, but now we have received the mercy of God (Hos. 1:11).
1. Mercy is received by coming to Jesus the living stone.
 2. He is the ransom of precious blood (1 Pet. 1:19).
- D. That there are moral implications to this unique relationship is evident in the rest of the book (cf. 1 Pet. 2:11-12 esp.).

Conclusion:

1. Jesus is the living stone, chosen by God.
2. Coming to Him we are built into a spiritual house (not a physical house), but the family of God.
3. This relationship with Him is what constitutes us a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession.
4. We, who were once not a people, have become the people of God.