

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.

We have been enjoying Peter's letter to christians who are scattered up in the regions which would now be northern Turkey.

Have you discovered that Peter is nothing like Paul. Oh, ultimately, they say identical things, and we find ourselves often in Pauls letters reading things that sound just like what Peter has just said. We will this morning.

But Paul's analytical mind is ordered, and his letters and books are easy

to make a diagram and follow the logic and flow. He arranges his arguments like a trained lawyer

Peter is more emotional. His mind works different from Paul's. It is the Glory of God that He has created us with such diversity. We have the Paul's that organize like mathematicians with perfectly ordered logic building an argument piece by piece.

And we have the Peter's who also have a mountain of revelation they want to share with their hearers and they are like, how can I teach you these truths? I'll do it with pictures. Analogy's. Metaphor's.

And we have the John's, who frighten me the most because they are artistic. Their brains work like a man with a paintbrush dabbing dots of paint on a canvas that eventually becomes a beautiful image. My brain struggles with John's writings perhaps the most because his brilliance is so far above my intelligence. Yet we find ourselves quoting something he said in his extensive writing almost every week.

God, in His wisdom can use every kind of mind to glorify Himself. He can produce scripture where every word is the inspired word of God, but it still has the stamp of Peter's personality, or Paul's, or John's.

He created them all. And we have been reveling in the images and metaphors Peter has been using to explain to us the magnificence of who we are and what we have inherited when it pleased God to chose us and seperate us out of this world and make us His own possession.

Last week we looked at a fairly extensive review of the blacks and whites, the contrasts of the lost world, and the chosen believers. Peter uses metaphor's. Christians are like aliens. Strangers. We are fish out of water in this world. God has seperated us from this cosmos. This world system that is still ruled by Satan.

Then he uses the metaphor of birth. We're seperated from this world because we are born again. Spiritually born of God. It's a metaphor He heard directly from Jesus as He spoke to Nicodemus. Just like we were born physically, now we have been reborn, spiritually. We are new

creatures in Christ.

He uses the metaphor of wealth. An inheritance. I was looking at the retirement planning email from our work fund and it was saying you need to have about 10 times your yearly salary stored away waiting to be used before you retire. Me and Pam don't. We are late starters so we can't be early finishers. We could use an inheritance. It's not going to come.

Peter uses that common idea and he tells us, metaphorically, you've got this inheritance waiting for you. In heaven. Stored there in your account. Protected. The metaphor of inheritance. Something we understand and long for.

Then the metaphor of value. Just how rich am I? Well, all the gold and silver on earth cannot purchase what you've inherited. We are unfathomably rich! Our inheritance is so costly, gold and silver couldn't touch it, only the blood of the Son of God could purchase what we will inherit. Stay tuned. There's more about this in our passage this morning.

Then we have the metaphors of girding our minds like a soldier girds himself for battle, and the metaphor of being drunk. Peter says don't be drunk. Be sober. Keep yourselves spiritually sober. Action! Sobriety! Battle!

And we are children. Just like children are in subjection to their parents, if they have good parents, they must obey or pay the consequences. Peter uses the metaphor of children. Like children who obey their parents, we obey our heavenly Father and imitate His holiness.

He uses the metaphor of seed. Seed produces itself. Apricot seeds do not produce barley. Seed has within it the code of reproducing itself. And Peter says we are born again of seed that isn't perishable like this world's seeds, but is imperishable, and that seed is the living Word of God. As we look into the living seed of the word, it reproduces itself . . . in us.

Since our birth came from imperishable seed, we also like the seed, are imperishable. If we are reborn, spiritually by the seed which is the Word of God, we will live forever. A life apart from this world that is perishing.

And then finally, last week we looked at the beautiful metaphor of babies and the sweet milk that makes them thrive. The logikon. The reason that comes to us apart from this world. The revelation of God himself that separates us out of this world and makes us thrive apart from this world that we are aliens in.

Peter has metaphors within metaphors. Just like the baby desires and longs for its mother's milk, and lets you know in no uncertain terms that he or she needs and wants that milk, we are to long for the word of God. We are to crave it and insist upon it so that we can be satisfied and thrive and grow.

All of these metaphors point to something. For lack of a better word, and a metaphor we can understand, the overriding theme of all that Peter has taught us so far can be summed up in the word privilege.

Let's consider a dictionary definition of privilege; *a special right, advantage, or immunity granted or available only to a particular person or group of people.*

I would say that fits. Christians are a group of people who have special privilege. Purchased out of a world that is slated for destruction. Given an inheritance we cannot yet even fathom or fully understand. Chosen. Elect. Sanctified. Separated. Bought. Made spiritually alive. Imperishable yet living in a perishing world. Given the full revelation of God in His book. All of that and more is unspeakable privilege.

I was listening to an interview of Todd Friel, the radio host on Wretched Radio and he was sharing all of these things with some fellow and the guy said, OK, I understand all that, but I don't want it. I want exactly what I have, which is uninterrupted sin. I'll keep the pleasures of sin. Thanks but no thanks.

Incredible! Yet we are surrounded by that mindset. You can have your pie in the sky, I'll be satisfied in the present with my sin.

Truly, God is the one who quickens the minds of those who will believe. It is a miracle of God every time a sinner is snatched out of this world and made an alien here and a citizen of another place. A place waiting for us that we can not even fully imagine. In the presence of our God. Holy, and possessing a righteousness not our own, but the righteousness of Christ, imputed to us.

OK, it's time to press on. Peter wants to take us to more metaphors that can help us begin to understand our unfathomable privilege.

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.

And here we have what at first seems like an obscure metaphor. Stones. But even before that, we need to pause and talk about the first four words, which also have a metaphor.

And coming to Him . . .

What does it mean to come to Christ? The resurrected Christ is in heaven. How do I come to Him. And even that thought involves a metaphoric coming. He's in heaven. I'm on earth which is perishing. How is it that I come to Him.

The first passage that comes to our minds almost instantly is Matthew 11.

28“Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. 29“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. 30“For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”

Jesus himself called people to "come to" Him. All the time. How often

He would engage with someone and He would say, Follow me. Same thing.

In the temple; 37 *On the last and greatest day of the feast, Jesus stood up and called out in a loud voice, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. Jn. 7:27*

The concept is not a new one. In the Old Testament, God extends the invitation through Isaiah, his mouthpiece; 1 *"Ho! Every one who thirsts, come to the waters; And you who have no money come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk Without money and without cost. 2" Why do you spend money for what is not bread, And your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, And delight yourself in abundance.... Is. 55:1,2*

One of the final words written in this book is in Revelation 22:17 and it repeats Isaiah's call almost word for word; *The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" Let the one who hears say, "Come!" And let the one who is thirsty come, and the one who desires the water of life drink freely.*

What does it mean to "Come to Christ". It means all of the things we've just talked about in 1 Peter chapter 1. By faith, we respond to Jesus call to come, and it is a coming that leaves this perishing world behind.

We are purchased out of this world. We by faith, leave our sin and our old self at the cross, and we are baptized into Christ. We come out from under the control of Satan and his world systems and we belong to a new Master. Jesus is Lord of us. In this world ruled by Satan, we are aliens. Enemy combatants. Our new Master is at war with the ruler of this world.

Jesus alludes to this transaction in the Matthew 11 invitation. 28 *"Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. 29 "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. 30 "For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."*

There is a yoke of ownership. In this world, whether we realized it or

not, we were under ownership. Sin and Satan had ownership. We bore a heavy burden of sin. Rejected by God, living in rebellion against Him, we were dead to Him. Judgement loomed. Most people just put it out of their mind.

Jesus says Come to Me. Take my yoke upon you. His yoke is a yoke of delight. His burden is easy. He carries it for us. We leave this world behind. We are transferred out of Satan's realm and into God's authority. New ownership. We belong to God. Our sin is left at the cross.

All of that is encompassed into Peter's first metaphor. Coming to Christ. Transferred out of the authority to reign of Satan and sin and darkness and into the authority to reign of Christ. We come to Christ and we are citizens of the Kingdom of God over which Christ reigns.

And then Peter launches into this metaphor of stones.

A stone seems to us a cold dead thing from which to develop a metaphor. It seems obscure.

Not so to Israel. Yes, that Israel, the historic people of God who came back into possession of their land in 1948.

Beginning with Jacob in his wanderings, when he had dreamed about the ladder with angels ascending and descending, when he awoke, it says in Genesis 28: 16 *Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely the LORD is in this place, and I did not know it." 17 He was afraid and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." 18 So Jacob rose early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put under his head and set it up as a pillar and poured oil on its top....*

Again in Genesis, a Stone, capitol S in 49:24 when Jacob is blessing his children for the final time, and as he blesses Joseph, this; *24 But his bow remained firm, And his arms were agile, From the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob (From there is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel)*

The Mighty One, The Shepherd, The Stone of Israel. 3 names for Messiah who would ultimately deliver. He is Mighty One. He is Shepherd, and He is Stone.

In their wanderings with Moses, listen to Paul in 1 Corinthians 10:4
...3a They all ate the same spiritual food 4 and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ.

In Psalms 118 we read the familiar words that Peter will quote; Psalms 118:
*22 The stone which the builders rejected
Has become the chief corner stone.*

*23 This is the LORD'S doing;
It is marvelous in our eyes.*

*24 This is the day which the LORD has made;
Let us rejoice and be glad in it.*

*25 O LORD, do save, we beseech You;
O LORD, we beseech You, do send prosperity!*

26 Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the LORD;

And the ultimate view of the Stone of Israel is in Daniel chapter 2.
We've looked at it before. Nebuchadnezzar's dream;

31 "You, O king, were looking and behold, there was a single great statue; that statue, which was large and of extraordinary splendor, was standing in front of you, and its appearance was awesome. 32 "The head of that statue was made of fine gold, its breast and its arms of silver, its belly and its thighs of bronze, 33 its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. 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. 35 "Then 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.

This great statue is a view of all of the great empires where there was one world rule. Beginning with the Assyrian King, Nebuchadnezzar the head of gold, the Medo Persians, the breast and arms of silver, Greece, the belly and thighs of bronze, Rome, the legs of iron, and the and final one world rule, a revived Roman empire which is the feet of iron and clay.

That image reaches all the way from antiquity to today. We see Israel surrounded by enemies and we see that second form of the roman empire, a one world rule, we believe, being readied and formed in our time.

But in the vision, none of the worlds empires lasts. What we want to see is the Stone. *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. 35“Then 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.*

All of the worlds empires become chaff in the wind. Crushed by the Stone cut out without hands. And then the Stone fills the earth. Hold those thoughts as we return to Peter's words.

You might think Peter is a flighty little guy whose teaching flits from one place to another, and without the Holy Spirit, that might have been the case, but Peter is going to give us a metaphor, that we are included in, that has ties all the way back to the Stone that became a mountain and filled the earth.

Peter is no flighty teacher. The depth of these things is profound. It encompasses all of history. Israel is part of the image. And so are we.

*25 O LORD, do save, we beseech You;
O LORD, we beseech You, do send prosperity!*

26 Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the LORD

How exciting it is that we are included in this vast picture of God smashing the kingdoms of men under the ruler of this world, and setting up an everlasting Kingdom of peace.

That's our introduction. With all of that fresh in your minds, let's return again to Peter's words to his poor bedraggled and pressed aliens.

4 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, 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.

Remember, Peter is reaching out to pilgrims who have been made aliens in this world by Rome who had started the great persecution of christians after Nero burned Rome and blamed the christians. Christians were outcasts. The offscouring of the world.

They were suffering in a world that rejected and hated them. Aliens. No longer belonging to this world. Citizens of another world rejected by this one. And Peter says; You're in good company.

The Stone of Israel was rejected by this world.

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

Inherent in coming to Him is the rejection of this world. Again we quote John, the poet; 1 Jn. 3:13 *So do not be surprised, brothers, if the world hates you.* And Jesus said in the upper room before His death these words; Jn. 15:18 *If the world hates you, understand that it hated Me first.*

It is natural for this world that rejects God, to also reject those who belong to God. The world rejected the living Stone of Israel. But what the world rejects is precious to God.

Jesus said, in the beatitudes; 10 *“Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11“Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. 12 “Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*

This Living Stone theme may be obscure to us, but it was so solid in Peter's mind that in Acts 4, it encompasses his second sermon which was delivered to the very men who were the so-called builders. The ruling council of Israel. Listen to Peter;

10 then let this be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. 11 He is ‘the stone you builders rejected, which has become the cornerstone.’ 12 Salvation exists in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”... What holy boldness!

Peter gives them Psalm 118 . . . in first person. Ps. 118 looked forward. Peter takes it and looks backwards. How terrifying. You crucified Him. God raised Him up again. He is the Stone. You are the builders who rejected Him. God made Him the cornerstone.

The word for stone is lithos. And it means a cut stone. A formed stone. We cut an image into a stone, put ink on it, and make a lithograph. Lithos.

The word can mean any cut stone from a diamond to a piece of sandstone in the court house. But always the idea of a stone cut out.

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.

We began this morning talking about privilege. A privileged class. We look at rich kids driving in BMW convertibles they didn't work a day in their life for and we think of the world's definition for privilege.

Go too fast and get a ticket, daddy will pay the judge. If it gets too bad, daddy will hire a lawyer. The world calls that privilege. Let me show you real privilege in vs. 5.

You also! Just to be included in a verse about the Stone of Israel is incredible privilege. You also, Peter says. We're IN this verse!!

The Stone of Israel, the Stone cut out without hands, the living stone, rejected by men but precious to God, the Stone I came to. The Stone that snatched me out of this perishing world and gave me life when I was dead. I'm in the sentence.

I can't read it enough. Listen to it again; *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.*

It just gets better and better. Not only am I in the verse, "you also", but the next part is just crazy talk. *5you also, as living stones* I'm not only IN the verse, I'm a living stone! Jesus is The Stone of Israel. I belong to Him. I'm a living stone.

We're going to look at this passage of privilege more next week, but to finish up this morning I want to look at one aspect that struck me.

5you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house

In Daniel 2 we saw the Stone become a mountain that encompassed the earth. Here the picture is of stones building a house. I believe it's the same picture. We ultimately are the household of God who will rule and reign with Him in this world.

The Kingdom comes. Satan is deposed. Jesus rules in Jerusalem for a

thousand years. Picture that as a grand house that God is building.

OK, now picture yourself as one stone in the makeup of that house.

I've been thinking lately about this word, continuum. Webster's dictionary (my wife is a Webster, but that's another story) says; continuum: a coherent whole characterized as a collection, sequence, or progression of values or elements varying by minute degrees

I'm a stone with a continuum that goes back through all the centuries of the saints who preceeded me, all the way back to the apostles who walked this earth with Jesus, and yes, I'm a stone in the building that Jesus is the cornerstone of.

Continuum. I'm a stone in the building that originates in the Stone cut out without hands in Daniel 2. The Stone that crushed all of the other stones that claimed to rule this earth. He ultimately rules. My continuum goes all the way back to Daniel.

And it goes even further than that. Before the foundations of this world, He knew me, and chose me, and loved me, and set my salvation in motion.

I am a stone in the house that God is building. We'll look at that more next week. Paul will chime in and say the same exact thing as Peter.

No other religion has that kind of continuum where you are included in a common structure of all the saints that preceeded you, centuries and centuries of them.

Our book takes the big picture, the statue that was all the kingdoms of the world including the day we're alive in, the Stone cut out without hands, and takes it all the way from the giant picture all the way down to me. I'm a stone in this building that God is putting together that will glorify Him forever. Talk about privilege!