

In the previous verses Peter has been describing the eternal nature of the word of God and thus the eternal nature of the gospel by which we've been redeemed. Based on that, he continues to stress the importance of living a holy life that is acceptable to God and that reflects the fact that we belong to Him.

1 Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, 2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: 3 If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

“Wherefore laying aside [casting away]” - Because we have been born-again by the word of God (the eternal incorruptible seed of 1 Peter 1:22-25), we should cast away from ourselves the old sinful behaviors from before we were saved. The wording in the Greek is what is often used of taking off an article of dirty clothing and tossing it aside.

“all malice [ill-will], and all guile [deceit], and hypocrisies [acting of a stage player], and envies, and all evil speakings” - The sinful behaviors from our old life that we should toss aside include having ill will toward others, being deceitful and hypocritical. The word for “hypocrisies” is used of actors playing a part on a stage. The idea is that we should not act one way to someone's face and then another behind their back. Rather, we should always be genuine in our love, not pretenders. Peter also mentions envies (jealousy) and evil speakings (saying bad things about others). These behaviors should never be a part of a Christian's life.

“As newborn babes desire the sincere [pure; unmixed] milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby” - We have been born again and have left the old sinful life behind. Thus we should be like newborn babies in our desire for the “sincere milk of the word.” Just as babies desire milk, Christians should have an insatiable desire for the pure truths of God's word. A Christian cannot grow in the Lord without a steady diet of God's word any more than a baby can grow without milk.

“If so be [if indeed; since] ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious [good; kind; benevolent]” - Tasting something that is not food speaks of experiencing it firsthand. Peter wants to remind his readers that they have experienced the goodness of God firsthand. If we have been saved by the blood of Jesus Christ and have our names written in the Lamb's Book of Life, then we have indeed “tasted” the benevolence of a good God Who has redeemed us from death and blessed us beyond our imagination and worth.

4 To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, 5 Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

“To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed [rejected] indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious” - In Greek, the word for “coming” means to come and stay. Since the “to whom” refers to Christ (v. 3), Peter says we have come to Christ in order to remain with Him forever. Peter describes Christ as a “living stone” (not a cold hard and dead rock but one that is alive), a metaphor that leads into the quotations from Isaiah and the Psalms in vs. 6-8. Christ was indeed rejected by men (both in His earthly ministry and continuing even today) but God has chosen to provide salvation through Him.

“Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house,” - Peter describes Christ as the chief cornerstone (part of the foundation of a building) and extends the building metaphor to each of us who have believed on Christ. We also are living stones for we have been given life by Christ. As stones, we are being used to build on the foundation of Christ to create a spiritual house (a temple) for the worship of God. Collectively and individually, we are to be a temple of the Holy Spirit where the Lord can abide.

“an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ” - Peter also describes his readers as being a holy priesthood, which is what the LORD said to Israel at Mt. Sinai: **Ex. 19:6a** “*And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.*” Priests were to be the intermediaries between God and men, a role that believers now occupy as witnesses of God's grace. We offer spiritual sacrifices by giving ourselves to Him in obedience to His will. Doing this is acceptable to God and is only possible through Jesus Christ. Our good works done by the power of flesh are not acceptable to God but the things done by Jesus Christ through us will be. Paul describes this in **1 Cor. 3:11-15**: “*11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; 13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. 14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. 15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.*”

6 Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.

“Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture” - Peter now quotes three passages from Isaiah and Psalms in vs. 6-8 to show Christ compared to a stone in the OT.

“Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded [disgraced; put to shame]” - This quote is from **Isa. 28:16** where the LORD is declaring what He is going to do by predicting the coming of the Messiah, Who Peter's quote describes as being elect (chosen) and precious, obviously the source of Peter's description of Christ in v. 4. Peter is showing us God's testimony from the OT that we will not regret trusting Christ as our Savior. Peter's quotation is from the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the OT Hebrew scriptures.

Isa. 28:16 “*Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.*”

7 Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, 8 And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.

Peter now compares what Christ is to believers and the disobedient (unbelievers):

“Unto you therefore which believe he is precious” - What Isaiah said of Christ being precious (of great value) is certainly true for believers, for they love Him and have chosen to follow Him. They would not trade Him for all the money in the world.

“but unto them which be disobedient” - In contrast to Christ being of great value to believers, Peter now quotes a scripture describing those who rebel against God’s will and what this cornerstone (Christ) is to them.

“the stone which the builders disallowed [rejected], the same is made the head of the corner” - A quote from Psalm 118:22 summarizing the rebellion of men against the will of God in that they reject Christ and His authority over their lives, but that doesn’t prevent God’s plan to exalt the Messiah, Jesus Christ. He is the foundational cornerstone on which the Father builds everything else. This speaks of Christ’s prominence, importance and glory.

Psalm 118:22 *“The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner.”*

“And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence” - A description drawn from Isa. 8:14, a passage where the LORD declares Himself to be Isaiah’s sanctuary but to the disobedient house of Israel He would be a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense (something to trip over). The picture Peter is painting is one of contrast: Christ can either be the means of your salvation or the means of your destruction; He can be either your Savior or your judge.

Isa. 8:14 *“And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.”*

“even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient” - Those who are disobedient to God’s word will find it to be an obstruction for them to trip and stumble over and fall to their destruction. God’s word cannot be ignored; you can look to it find mercy or it will spell out your guilt and condemnation.

“whereunto also they were appointed” - God has appointed the disobedient for destruction. His mercy is for those who repent and believe the gospel but the rebellious will be destroyed.

9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: 10 Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

Peter turns back to the believers, again contrasting them to the disobedient. These verses have a distinctly Jewish flavor, either because Peter is writing to Jewish believers or else because he is using expressions from OT scripture, this time from Exodus and Hosea.

“But ye are a chosen generation [kindred; family line]” - The Greek word for “generation” is *génos*, which means a family line and related to the English word “genealogy.” Because we are all birthed of God through the new birth (John 3:3), we are all part of the family of God. Peter is drawing these descriptions from Ex. 19:5 where God is speaking of His choosing Israel out of the nations of the world.

Ex. 19:5-6 *“5 Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: 6 And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.”*

“a royal priesthood, an holy nation [éthnos; race of people or tribe], a peculiar [an acquired possession] people” - These are the same things that the LORD said of Israel in Ex. 19:5-6. Just as the LORD wanted Israel to lead the other nations to God (and one day they will do so during Christ’s millennial reign on earth), we Christians today are to be priests to the unbelievers around us. We are a holy nation of people with a spiritual ethnicity different from the rest of the world. The word “peculiar” in Greek doesn’t mean “weird” or “unique” but that we are God’s own people that He has acquired for Himself, just as He said of Israel in Ex. 19:5.

“that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light” - We are to glorify and praise the One Who loved us enough to not leave us in the darkness of sin but called us out into the marvelous light of His grace. We glorify Him with our conduct and obedience, as Peter describes later in this chapter (v. 12).

“Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy” - While this is true of all believers who at one time did not belong to God but now do, Peter seems to be borrowing from Hosea 1:6-10, where Hosea’s wife has a child and the LORD has Hosea give it a name that means “not my people” because at the time Israel was in rebellion against Him. When Hosea’s wife has a second child, the name given to it meant “no mercy.” Later in Hosea 2:23, the LORD speaks of a day of grace when He will again claim Israel as His people and show them mercy. Peter is making the point that his readers have received mercy from the Lord and now belong to Him as the people of God.