

meaning of the terms Peter uses are not certain.

The ESV has cornerstone in both verses 6 and 7 and that is a concept we understand, the cornerstone was a large stone from which the others took their line, and on which many were rested. But the two verses actually use different words - "lithon akrogoniaion" in verse 6 and "kephalen gonias" in verse 7. Some translate the latter as "capstone" meaning the stone on top of a pillar, but equally possible is the large stone on which a pillar rests.

14. This question is partly answered in the one that follows.

In case it comes us - we still use the word priest of ministers (but sparingly) because the English word "priest", "priest" in Anglo-Saxon, is a shortening of the Biblical word "presbyter" meaning elder and used of ministers. When our Bibles translate other words as priest they are sacerdotal priests, or sacrificers.

The confusion about the nature of Christian ministry has led to people associating the word priest with sacrificer. Whilst it may be simpler today to avoid the word priest we run the risk of thinking that some of our English forebears who wrote about priests were in error when in fact they held to the proper original meaning as presbyter, not the distorted meaning of sacrificer.

*David Phillips,
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The First letter of Peter

LEADERS NOTES

Week 4 (1 Pt 2.1-8)

There are several minor issues of translation and meaning in these verses where English translations take different options which makes it more difficult to ask questions about their meaning without delving into translation and textual issues. I have indicated some of these in the notes in case they come up.

1. As we have seen before the Bible has a lot of these linking words showing the flow of an argument and how exhortations to how we conduct ourselves follows from what we know of God's grace to us.

Chapter does include instruction about conduct but it is particularly about what God has done for us in Christ.

2. This may be overstating the case but newborn infants, though not free from sin, are largely without malice, deceit etc. Jesus encourages us to childlike trust and humility. Peter seems to be using the picture of growing on pure spiritual milk without losing that innocence and purity.

4. I think there are 8.

Peter's name can be a bit confusing.

His birth name was apparently the Hebrew name **Simeon** which he uses in 2 Pt 1.1 and James uses in Acts 15.14. Simeon was a popular name being one of the sons of Jacob and 12 tribes. But in the New Testament he is mostly referred to by the Greek equivalent which is **Simon** in English. It is not known how familiar Peter himself was with Greek as a young man although the region he was brought up was probably a majority Greek speaking Gentile area.

Jesus nicknamed him "**Cephas**" (Jn 1.42) which is Aramaic for rock

and is used half a dozen times in the New Testament though always spelt Kephias which would be a hard “k”, whereas we usually pronounce it as a soft “c” as in “see-fas”.

But the name by which he is best known is not Cephas but the Greek **Petros** (Peter in English) from the word *petra* meaning rock. Although Jesus apparently spoke Aramaic his words are recorded in Scripture in Greek translation. In Matthew 16 verse 18 it is the name *Petros* and word *petra* that are used.

In Peter’s first letter, which seems to have been dictated, almost certainly in Greek, and written down by Silvanus (1 Pet 5.12), the word for stone is used 7 times in chapter 1

8. It can make it easier knowing that God had spoken about this beforehand because we recognise that it will happen. Also we can take such rejection personally and think it is our fault, when in fact people are usually rejecting Christ (as long as we don’t make ourselves the stumbling block).

On the other hand it can be harder, because we can fall into thinking that people are a lost cause. We have to then keep remembering that God does not let us know His secret counsels. We also need to remember that there are many examples of people who only come to faith after years of sometimes very hostile opposition to the gospel and even participation in persecution - such as happened with Saul of Tarsus.

9. This verse can be taken as saying that some people are destined to stumble whereas others, as chapter 1 verse 1 says, are elect. Whilst this is indicated elsewhere in Scripture it is generally not given a high profile.

If this is the meaning then we can wonder what place evangelism has. But, since God’s counsels are hidden from us, we simply do not know who will respond and who will not. We are given the task of spreading the seed, the result is not in our hands, but God’s.

Others suggest this verse should be read as saying people are destined to stumble because they disobey, as if stumbling is the predetermined consequence of disobedience. That doesn’t seem to

me to be a very good explanation of the meaning.

10. The end of verse 6 says “whoever believes in him will not be put to shame”. This, and other such promises, should remind us that no matter how others treat us because of our faith in Christ, we will ultimately not be put to shame.

The slightly difficult issue here is that the words “will not be put to shame” are not in the Hebrew of Isaiah 28.16. The ESV translation of that verse has “whoever believes will not be in haste” which is a bit of a strange statement.

Peter’s wording however agrees with the ancient Greek translation, the Septuagint, made more than a century earlier. It is quite difficult to account for these difficulties. One possibility is that the original Hebrew was a bit obscure and the Septuagint attempts to make sense of it. Another is that the surviving Hebrew manuscripts have lost something of the original which the early Greek translators still had.

Whatever the background I lean to the view that the New Testament writers, being guided by the Holy Spirit, give a faithful, if not always literal translation of the meaning of the original Hebrew. Though I concede that it is not always easy to make sense of the differences.

11. “Precious saviour” comes from What A Friend We Have in Jesus. “Precious Lamb of God” from There Is A Redeemer.

12. I hope this makes sense. English has largely lost the plural second person meanings.

When it says “you like living stones are being built...”, which is a literal meaning, the “you” is a plural pronoun and the “are being built” is a plural verb, so it is to saying that I am becoming a spiritual house but we together are being built into a spiritual house.

13. A final issue of the text is the what architectural features are being referred to in verses 6 and 7. This is not important for getting the basic point of how fundamental Christ is, but the precise