

14. What do you think he means by what he says about being “a holy priesthood”?

15. Look up some of the following verses to see what we can offer as spiritual sacrifices to God. How do we do each?

Romans 12.1-2

Hebrews 13.15

Hebrews 13.16

2 Timothy 4.6

Pray

Pray for boldness in evangelism and for perseverance when people reject the good news about Jesus, remembering that some like Paul who kick against the goads (Acts 26.14) eventually turn to Christ.

Give thanks for your church fellowship and pray that you might be built together into a spiritual house and offer spiritual sacrifices to God. Pray this not only for yourselves, but also for the world-wide fellowship of those who believe in Christ.

Pray for those who have been rejected by family and friends and for those who perhaps don't have much opportunity for Christian fellowship, because Christ is precious to them.

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1 Peter

Week 4 : What Kind of Stone?

1 Peter 2.1-8

These verses show the sharp division Jesus causes, he becomes for everyone either their cornerstone and so a precious stone, or a stone over which they stumble and therefore reject.

Read 1 Peter 2.1-3

1. Verse 1 begins “so” or “therefore”. How does what follows flow from what has already been said?

2. Elsewhere people are rebuked for being on milk when they should be on solids (1 Cor 3.2 & Heb 5.12-13) but Peter uses the picture of infancy and spiritual milk in a different way. What similarity is there between newborn infants and what he writes in verse 1? (Note also Mtt 18.3.)

3. **Read Psalm 34.8** What would you say to someone who asked you what it means to “taste and see that the Lord is good”?

Read 1 Peter 2.4-8

4. How many times can you find the words stone, rock and so on in these verses? The author had been given a nickname (Jn 1.42), meaning “rock”. It may be a bit fanciful but perhaps you can imagine him chuckling in his beard as he dictated these verses to Silvanus.

Rejected

5. Jesus is chosen and precious in the sight of God (v4) why then do so many people reject Him and stumble over Him?

6. In verse 4 Peter could be writing about how most of his fellow Israelites had rejected Jesus. But how had Peter also experienced people rejecting Jesus by rejecting the gospel message? (See for example Acts 4.11-18.)

7. How does it make you feel when you try to tell people about Jesus, and pray for them, but they keep rejecting the message and so rejecting Jesus?

8. Look at the prophecies quoted in verses 7 and 8 (from Psalm 118.22 and Isa 8.14). Does the fact that God had revealed these things beforehand make it harder or easier to accept when people reject Jesus?

9. What does the end of verse 8 mean? Does this mean we should just give up on evangelism?

Precious

10. Peter himself had experienced rejection for the sake of Christ, as do many disciples. What promises are contained in verse 6 and how can this help us when facing such rejection?

11. Verses 4 and 6 call Jesus a “precious” “stone” and the start of verse 7 literally translates “to you, therefore, who are believing [is] the preciousness”. We sing of Jesus as “Precious Saviour”, “Precious Lamb of God” and so on but what does it mean to you to describe Him as such?

A Spiritual House

Verse 7 echoes Acts 4.11-12 which are on our 2016 motto card.

The Temple and the Levitical Priesthood were understandably important to Israel because they both came from the command of God, yet Peter here is showing how Christ (and so we in Him) takes the place of both.

12. The “you” and “yourselves” of verse 5 are plural so they mean the same thing as Ephesians 4.21-22; that we are being built together. What does this say about the purpose and importance of a local congregation?

13. Without getting bogged down about the precise meaning of “cornerstone” in verses 6 & 7 (because their exact meaning in these verses is not certain and translations vary) what is being asserted about the importance of Christ and how is this worked out in a local church?