

Jesus Our Rock

1 Peter 2:4-8

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Let's read 1 Peter 2:4-8. Peter says, "To whom coming, as unto a living stone,"—there's our theme, Christ the living stone—"disallowed"—or rejected—"indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, 5 Ye also, as"—living or—"lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. 6 Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture,"—he's quoting from Isaiah 28:16—"Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded"—or put to shame. "Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed"—rejected—"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."

It's fascinating to me that Simon, who Jesus would change his name to Peter, which means stone, would in this passage of Scripture talk about Jesus the living stone. Peter must've had a thing for stones or for rocks. Now, it's fitting that Peter, a stone, would tell us about Jesus Christ, and notice what he calls him back in verse 4, ". . . a living stone." Jesus Christ is our Rock, He is a living stone. A living stone, of course, is an interesting concept—Jesus Christ is alive, He is not dead—and we're going to talk about that.

How does this transition from verses 1-3 down into verse 4? Well, Peter is still trying to encourage the discouraged, persecuted believers that they should stand in their salvation, and he wants them to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ and grow in their walk with the Lord. We saw in verses 1-3 there were three things that we need to do in order to grow. First, we need to, ". . . laying aside all malice . . . all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings." That's in verse 1. There's the negative of taking off or laying aside. It's painting a picture of taking off a piece of soiled garment.

The second was that we needed to desire, so key phrase, ". . . laying aside;" the second key phrase is verse 2, ". . . desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." If we're going to grow, we need to feed on the Word of God, and God needs to give us that desire for His Word. Thirdly, verse 3, "If"—or since—"ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious," we need to remember the goodness of God. So, those three steps. First of all, lay aside sin that deadens your appetite for God, then desire the Word of God, and thirdly, remember that the Lord is good or the Lord is gracious.

Having mentioned the Lord at the end of verse 3, notice how verse 4 starts, "To whom coming," is a reference to Jesus Christ who is a living stone. Jesus is the One who we are coming to. Jesus is that rock. I want to talk tonight about Jesus our Rock, and we are coming to Him. I want you to notice it in verse 4, "To whom coming." Ask, to whom are we coming? Jesus the Lord mentioned in verse 3. So, we've tasted and we know the Lord is good, and now we've come to Him. It's Jesus whom we have tasted His goodness. Peter moves from verse 3 as

Jesus our food and nourishment to now in verse 4, Jesus is our Rock. He's using these metaphors or images: the Word of God being like milk and we desire it as a newborn babe, now Jesus is our Rock. Notice in verse 4, we're coming to Him. That statement is actually in the present tense, so it means we keep on coming. After we've been saved, we must keep coming to Him to be sanctified. We come to Him for sustenance, He's the milk; we come to Him for strength, He's the stone or He's the Rock. You know, it's not enough just to come to Jesus to be saved, we have a whole lifetime of keep coming to Jesus to be sanctified. You come to Him for salvation, you keep coming to Him for sanctification. We're always seeking the Lord.

Paul the apostle, thirty years after his conversion said, "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death." We come to salvation, we live a life of pursuing God in sanctification, so we are coming to Him. He's my milk, I need His substance; and He's my Rock, I need His strength.

God as a rock is a very common metaphor used in the Bible, and a metaphor indeed it is. God is not actually a rock, but God is likened unto a rock here for several reasons, and we're going to look at that. In Psalm 18:2, the psalmist says, "The LORD is my rock, and my fortress." In Psalm 62:2, "He only is my rock and my salvation; he is my defence; I shall not be greatly moved." In Deuteronomy 32:4, "He is the Rock, his work is perfect."

Now, the picture of God as a rock has many kind of metaphorical implications, but let me mention a couple real quickly. It speaks of stability. If you're going to build a house, if you can build it on a rock, that's a good foundation, right? So, a rock speaks of stability. When we come to Jesus as our Rock and we stand on Him, we can be stable even in a time of storm. He's also our strength as a rock. We hide behind Him and shelter in Him. He's our strength. He's also our security. In a time of warfare, they would hide behind a rock. If you're in a war and they're shooting arrows at you, you want to be behind a rock not behind a bush, right? That rock speaks of strength, it speaks of stability, it speaks of security. Ask yourself, do you know Christ as your Rock? Are you looking to Jesus as the Rock who gives you stability, gives you strength, gives you security?

David cried in Psalm 61:2. He said, ". . . when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I." I love that. When my heart is overwhelmed, and how many times we get overwhelmed with the cares and the problems and the burdens of this world, and where do we run? We run, ". . . to the rock that is higher than I," Jesus Christ.

What kind of rock is Jesus? If you've got a pen and pencil, I'm going to give you eight aspects of Jesus as our Rock, many of them taken from this text. Write them down. First, Jesus is our Rock as a living stone. He's the living stone, we already read that, verse 4. Now, in this metaphor, we also have a paradox—living stone. We use the figure of speech, "dead as stone," or "dead as a rock." A rock is an inanimate object, and we don't think of rocks being alive. It kind of dates me, but remember back...you old folks back in the early 70s mid 70s, somebody came up with the bright idea to have what's called a "pet rock." Remember that? How many of you remember a "pet rock"? How many had a "pet rock"? Okay, we'll pray for you after church.

I had a friend that had a “pet rock.” I said, “What’s that?” He said, “That’s my pet rock.” He said, “It’s the best pet I ever had. It makes no noise, you don’t have to feed it, it doesn’t make a mess, no vet bills, just pet rock, and that’s my toy.”

A rock we don’t usually associate with living, but Jesus is the living stone. Jesus is the living stone because He is the living God, and God is not dead. Amen? God is not dead, He is alive. It’s impossible for God to die. Jesus rose from the dead, and He lives. Jesus said, “I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.” He’s not just a rock, but He’s the living Rock. When we put our trust in Jesus as the living stone, we have a living hope. Go back to 1 Peter 1:3 and remind yourself that as a believer, your hope is living hope because Jesus is the living, risen Savior. Have you trusted Jesus, the living stone? Do you have a living hope in Jesus Christ?

The second picture of a rock of Christ is that He’s the chief cornerstone, not only the living stone, but Jesus is the chief cornerstone. Look at verse 6 for just a moment, “Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture,” as I pointed out when I read that, that’s taken from Isaiah 28:16, and it says, “Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner stone,” stop right there. Jesus is a living stone; Jesus is the chief cornerstone. This is a messianic prophecy concerning Jesus the Messiah, the stone who would be rejected even though He was the chief cornerstone. It’s the most important stone in the building. It’s known as the cornerstone because it sets the direction of the walls and it lays and ties into the foundation.

Some scholars believe that it also is referring to what’s called the keystone; and you see the round arches where they would place the stones, the keystone would be that stone at the very top of the arch that held it all together. If you took out the keystone in an arch, all the stones fall or the bricks come down. Jesus is the center of our trust and our faith and our hope. He is the keystone or, as we said, the cornerstone. The theological truth conveyed there is that He is to have preeminence. Do you know that in the Bible Jesus Christ is the main theme. He’s found in Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, all the way through the Old Testament and the New Testament, all the way to the book of Revelation. Jesus said, “. . . I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me).” He said, “Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.” He’s to be the center. He’s to be the foundation. He’s to be the key of our lives, the center preeminent One, the center stone.

In Isaiah 28:16 it says, “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.” Jesus is that stone. Jesus is to be our fixed point and our foundation on which we stand. Colossians 1:18 says Christ is to have preeminence. He’s the foundation stone, He’s the cornerstone, He’s the keystone of everything.

The third, if you’re taking notes write this down, He is the chosen or choice and precious stone. I love that. Look at verse 4, “. . . chosen of God, and precious.” Verse 6, “. . . elect, precious,” so both verse 4 and verse 6, “. . . chosen of God, and precious,” “. . . elect, precious.”

Remember when Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist when He came out of the water and the heavens opened and the dove came down, which was representing the Holy Spirit, and the Father spoke from heaven audibly and said, “This is my beloved Son, in whom,”—my soul delights. That’s what this means, that He’s precious, that He’s valuable, that He’s choice, that He’s the chosen One. Jesus is my only beloved Son, unique Son. It’s the Father’s estimate of His own Son. Jesus is the only Son of God, so He’s choice and He’s very precious. He came from heaven, He was born of a virgin, He lived a sinless life, He died a substitutionary death, He rose from the dead, He ascended back to heaven, and He will return again to reign forever and ever. Amen. For ever and ever.

He’s more precious than any other stone—any diamonds, any rubies, any emeralds. He’s more precious than gold or silver. He’s the precious stone. When you find Christ, you’ve found this valuable, precious stone. Do you desire Him more than anything that earth can afford? He’s more precious than life.

The fourth, if you’re taking notes, He’s the dependable stone. I love this, verse 6, “. . . he that believeth on him shall not be confounded,”—or shall not be disgraced, or shall not be put to shame. I love the concept that if you trust in the Lord and you put your faith in the Lord, He will not disappoint you. Have you ever had a friend disappoint you? You guys are all sleeping tonight. Yes. Have you ever disappointed a friend? Yes. People will disappoint you. Friends will let you down. They’ll promise, but they won’t perform. Guess what? Jesus Christ will never disappoint you. He’ll never let you down. He is the faithful, dependable stone, and if you trust in Him, you will not be disgraced or put to shame. I love that. You can depend on Him, you can trust Him. He’s the rock that doesn’t roll. I love that. Now, I’m not anti-rock and roll, but He’s the rock that doesn’t roll. Someone said, “He’s the rock, and He rolled my blues away.” Jesus Christ is that solid rock that doesn’t move. He’s a sure thing. We can trust in Him.

I like the idea, too, that rocks in the ancient world were used for shade and shelter. They were used in times of storm, and they were used in times of attack by the enemy. I don’t know if you’ve ever been out to Joshua Tree National Park, but there are some honkin’ rocks out there (that means big), huge. I went out there years ago to hike with my son and another friend and his son. It just made me dizzy to walk around on those things, they’re just so trippy-looking, these huge rocks. The warmth and the heat of the sun, you can get down behind a rock or in between rocks, and you can find shade and it’s cool. Amen? He shelters us from the storms of life and from the sun when it beats down.

Psalms 27:5, “For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock.” They really valued rocks when there was a flood or a storm or the sun or the wind, and they would use those rocks to hide behind. Psalm 61:2, the psalmist says, “. . . when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I.” What a blessing to be able to run to the dependable Rock, Peter tells us, Jesus Christ.

The fifth, He’s the rejected stone, verse 4, “. . . disallowed”—rejected—“indeed of men.” My

King James Bible has, “. . . disallowed indeed of men,” which means that He’s rejected or set aside or set at nought. Jesus Christ, in spite of His majesty and glory, was rejected by many. In verse 4 it says, “. . . chosen of God, and precious,” but men rejected Him. There’s the contrast there. In verse 7, “. . . the stone which the builders,” rejected. This concept is drawing from another messianic psalm, Psalm 118:22. In Psalm 118:22 it talks about, “The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner,” the chief cornerstone.

There’s a parable that Jesus gave in Matthew 21. It’s known as the parable of the wicked farmers. He tells the story about a man who was a wealthy landowner and owned great land. He lent his land out to farmers to farm the land. When the time came when he would send his servants to collect the rent for his land, when they saw the servants coming, they mistreated them, they beat and abused them, and they sent them back empty-handed. The landowner again sent another servant, and the other servant also was rejected and beaten and sent back empty. Then the landowner said, “What shall I do? I know what I’ll do, I’ll send my son. They will respect or reverence him.” He sends his son, and the renters on the land, the farmers, said, “This is the heir. Let’s kill him and the land and the inheritance will be ours,” so they killed the son.

Jesus asked the people in the crowd, “What will the landowner do when these farmers kill his son?” They said, “Well, he’ll come and judge them and destroy them and then lend the fields out to another.” Jesus actually then said these words, “Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?” He painted this picture of how God would send His Son to the nation of Israel, instead of believing in Him and receiving Him, He would be rejected, and it turns out that He would be the cornerstone, the most important.

Now, there’s a tradition, I don’t know if it’s a true story or not, that when they were building Solomon’s temple that they were quarrying out under...I don’t think it’s open or available for the people to go into and visit it today, but when I went to Israel in the early 70s, we went into the quarries of Solomon’s temple under the temple mount. There’s these big quarries that are open down there where they hewn out the stones and sent them up for the construction of Solomon’s temple. The story is, as they were building the temple, the guys in the quarry sent a stone up for them that didn’t seem to fit at the part of wall that they were building, so they kind of discarded it and ended up pushing it off the mountain down into a valley below. They kept building and kept building.

Some months later, they came to a point where they sent word to the quarry, “We need the chief cornerstone. We need the keystone.” The guys in the quarry said, “We sent that up to you months ago.” They went searching around and finally discovered, sure enough, that stone that they had rejected, thrown down into the valley below overgrown with weeds, was actually the chief cornerstone, the most important stone, that would fit in the temple there. It was a prophecy of Jesus Christ who would be rejected by the nation of Israel, and the vineyard led out to others would be the Word of God going to the Gentiles.

The Jewish leaders of Jesus' day rejected Him. This chosen stone, this precious stone, this chief cornerstone, rejected by His own people and His own nation, as many still do today, reject Jesus Christ. It doesn't change who He is or what God's purpose and plan is either for Israel or for Gentiles or for the Church. Jesus Christ is still the Redeemer. Amen?

Here's the sixth, if you're taking notes, Jesus is the smitten stone. Now, this is not taken from my text, but I just had to include it in this list. Write down Exodus 17. In the Old Testament when the nation of Israel came out of the exodus and were wandering in the wilderness, they all became thirsty. Remember that? There was no place to stop and get a drink. There were no In-N-Outs, no Carl's Jr.—praise God—no restaurants, no drinking fountains. They started crying to Moses, "I'm thirsty! I'm thirsty! I'm thirsty!" Moses was seeking the Lord, and the Lord said, "Moses, you just have to speak to the rock, and the rock will bring forth water." Moses got angry, and instead of speaking to the rock, he took his staff and struck the rock, right? It's the smitten rock. Well, what happened? Out of the rock came gushing the water, and they got their drink.

The Bible tells us in 1 Corinthians 10:4, ". . . and that Rock was Christ." Jesus Christ was that Rock, that you strike the rock the water came out, and Jesus Christ was smitten on the cross, died in our place. It's interesting that Jesus in John 7, when He was in the temple at the feast stood up and cried, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." Jesus is that smitten rock. Actually, he smote the rock and then later would just speak to the rock, and the rock would bring forth the water.

Here's the seventh. Write it down as we jam through these points. He is the, ". . . stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence," verse 8. A stumbling is an obstacle you strike by accident and stumble on. The, ". . . rock of offence," is actually the word skándalon, we get our word "scandal" from it. It means a trap that would catch someone, a trap. Jesus is the stone that people stumble on, and they stumble or they're scanded by Him.

Why are they stumbling? Verse 8, ". . . being disobedient," to the Word. ". . . even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient,"—which is another term for unbelief—"whereunto also they were appointed," because they didn't believe the gospel, they didn't receive the Word, thus they were appointed to judgment and the wrath of God would come upon them. But He's now a skándalon, a stumbling stone. As a result, they will stumble and fall in judgment.

Now, it's a sin of unbelief because they did not believe in Jesus that they would be appointed to this judgment. John 3:18 says, "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." They weren't appointed to condemnation, they were condemned because they did not believe. Some people, even though Jesus is precious and more valuable than any other stone, they stumble over Him. They reject Him.

One of the main reasons why Jews reject and stumble over Jesus is because of the cross.

They're looking for a reigning, conquering Messiah, and they stumble over this concept of He's suffering and dying; but they don't understand that He came the first time as the Lamb of God to atone for the sins of the world. He'll come back the second time as the Lion of the tribe of Judah to reign in power and majesty and glory. But they stumble over Jesus Christ the skándalon, the stumbling stone. Many people today are still stumbling over Jesus and the gospel.

Here's the eighth, He will one day be the smiting stone. Again, this is not taken from my text, but I had to include it. He will be the smiting stone. They stumble over Him, but one day Jesus will be the smiting stone. In the same parable of the wicked farmers that I just mentioned to you in Matthew 21, Jesus said in verse 44, listen carefully, "And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken,"—He's talking about Christ, the chief cornerstone. If you fall on that stone, you're broken, " . . . but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder." A lot of people are mystified by what Jesus is talking about. Jesus is talking about that if you fall on Him in repentance and you fall on Him in faith, you fall on Him in belief, you receive Him as your Savior, you'll be saved. But if you don't, one day when He comes back in His Second Coming, He will fall on you, and He will be the smiting stone. So, He's either the salvation stone, if you fall on Him in faith and humility, or He is the smiting stone and He will fall on you.

We don't have time to turn there and do a whole study on it, but write down Daniel 2. There we find a story of Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, had a dream. This king had this dream where he was wondering about his future kingdom. He was ruling the world, the great Babylonian Empire, and he was wondering, "What does the future hold?" He went to bed that night and had a dream of a man who was a great big image of a man with a head of gold, breast and arms of silver, belly of brass, legs of iron, and feet and toe of iron and clay. He was troubled by this vision. In this vision (I'm trying to make a long story short), God was telling the king all the world ruling empires from Babylon down until the time of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

Daniel interpreted the dream and explained the dream to the king. He said, "You're the head of gold, but your kingdom will be taken over by the arms, the breast, of silver, that's the Medo-Persian Empire, which will be overtaken by the belly of brass, which is the Grecian Empire under Alexander the Great, and that would be overtaken by the iron, the two legs of Rome, the iron is the Roman Empire. Then, the feet of iron and clay would represent the kingdom who would rule in the last days when Christ returns, which would be a revived Roman Empire.

All this talk about globalism today, the stage is set for the last world empire when Christ will return. It'll be a one-world government with the Antichrist head. So, this mixture of iron and clay, it's a revived Roman Empire.

As he saw that image, he saw—here it is—a stone. And it made this distinction that the stone was not cut with hands, it was cut without hands. This stone is none other than Jesus Christ who will come back in His Second Coming as the smiting stone. It says that the stone struck the image at the feet, and this whole image crumbled; so all the kingdoms of man will come to

an end, but the stone began to grow and grow and grow and grow and grow and grow until it covered the whole earth. It's a picture of God's Kingdom. Jesus Christ is coming back again. Amen? And, He will establish His Kingdom in righteousness and truth. He's the smiting stone. He will judge those who have rejected Him, and He will establish His Kingdom and He will reign forever and ever and ever, " . . . and of his kingdom there shall be no end."

I'm so glad Jesus is my Rock. Amen? Is Jesus your Rock? When your heart is overwhelmed, do you run to Him? Do you pray and say, "Lord, lead me to the rock that is higher than I?" Do you hide in Him? Do you find shelter in Him? Do you find strength and protection in Him?

I love the song, My hope is built on nothing less, Than Jesus' blood and righteousness, I dare not trust the sweetest frame, But wholly lean on Jesus' name, On Christ the solid rock I stand, right? All other ground is sinking sand. Let's pray.