1 Peter 2 • “Living” Fulfillment of Prophecy

Introduction

Sometimes the term “prophecy” seems to mean only those things yet to come about; but the Bible is filled with prophecy that has already come true! Before the coming of Christ, the Old Testament Scripture quoted in this passage by Peter was “future, unfulfilled” prophecy, not fully understood. But now fulfillment has come through Jesus Christ and serves to guide our present lives.

Read through v.4-10 below and then consider the following Old Testament references, which would probably be very familiar to both Peter and his audience in the first century church.

**14** “Then He shall become a sanctuary; But to both the houses of Israel, a stone to strike and a rock to stumble over, And a snare and a trap for the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

Point: These are all meant to teach us something both about characteristics and roles of the Messiah, and of God’s overall plan. Paul is bringing together this teaching to show that we have been brought into God’s plan through Christ and that we are no longer outside observers, but living members of the work of God through Jesus as He fulfills each of these types of stone.

[Read Isaiah 8:14]

The Stumbling Stone

Q: What does this reveal to us about the mission and character of the Messiah?

**16** Therefore thus says the Lord God, “Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a tested stone, A costly cornerstone for the foundation, firmly placed. He who believes in it will not be disturbed.

[Read Isaiah 28:16]

The Foundation Stone

Q: What does this reveal to us about the mission and character of the Messiah?

**1st** Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness, Who seek the LORD: Look to the rock from which you were hewn And to the quarry from which you were dug.

[Read Isaiah 51:1]

The Parental Stone

Q: What does this reveal to us about the mission and character of the Messiah?

**22** The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief corner stone.

[Read Psalm 118:22]

The Rejected-but-Vindicated Building Stone

Q: What does this reveal to us about the mission and character of the Messiah?

**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. 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.

[Read Daniel 2:34-35]

The Supernatural Stone

Q: What does this reveal to us about the mission and character of the Messiah?
Point: Now that we know that Christ is the fulfillment of all these things, consider them altogether in terms of His Person and working throughout history. Also consider how difficult it might have been for believers in the centuries before Christ came to understand how all of these could apply to one coming Messiah. This helps explain why some tended to gravitate to one of these characteristics more than another, because they wanted or needed that aspect of the Messiah personally more than the others. Do we worship the “whole” Christ or just the parts that appeal to us?

Q: What is the picture that is being drawn in verse 4-5, and what is the point?
A: Christ is “the living stone.” His followers are “living stones” and God is building a “spiritual house” for “spiritual sacrifices”; that is, a new temple. The point here is that those who come to Jesus not only make up the new temple, but they are also the priests who offer the new sacrifices. “The great new truth Peter states here is the revelation that ‘through Jesus Christ,’ i.e., through His work on the cross, every Christian is part of a new priestly order…. It means that every Christian has immediate access to God, that he serves God personally, that he ministers to others, and that he has something to give” (Expositor’s Bible Commentary).

These sacrifices are manifested through good works and worship. “The OT spoke of the offerings of prayer, thanksgiving, praise and repentance (Psalms 50:14; 51:19; 107:22; 141:2) in addition to the material sacrifices and offerings. The NT speaks of the offering of ‘faith’ (Philippians 2:17), gifts as ‘a fragrant offering’ (Philippians 4:18), your bodies as living sacrifices’ (Romans 12:1), a sacrifice of praise’ (Hebrews 13:15), the conversion of the Gentiles as an offering acceptable to God’ (Romans 15:16), and Paul’s coming death as ‘a drink offering’ (2 Timothy 4:6)” (Expositor’s Bible Commentary).

Application: What are the spiritual sacrifices that we are offering up today?

Q: What is the image of the “corner stone” in verses 6-7?
A: From Expositor’s Bible Commentary: “The picture is from the building of a temple. At great cost and care the corner foundation stone was obtained, moved, and laid. (One archaeologist) mentions one stone in a quarry that was 69 feet by 12 ft. by 13 feet. There are similar large foundation stones in many sites in the Middle East. Once this large foundation corner stone was in place, the rest of the building was determined. Isaiah (28:16) uses this figure to encourage his people to build on the Lord Himself, the one who is immovable and unchangeable, rather than on lies and falsehood. The applications of Peter’s use of the figure are self-evident. God has set Jesus forth in Jerusalem as the foundation of the new temple. Whoever builds on this foundation will be established and will never be ashamed. (1 Corinthians 3:10; Eph. 2:20)”

Application: What things can we do to ensure that our lives are being built around the “cornerstone”?

Q: In verse 8, why is the stone a “stumbling” stone and “a rock of offense”?
A: Those stumbling over the stone is a picture of those who accept Jesus; those who become offended over the stone is a picture of those...
Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul. Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation.

Submit yourselves for the Lord’s sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right. For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men. Act as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but use it as bondslaves of God. Honor all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king.

Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable. For this finds favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a person bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly. For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God.

Q: Why do you think Peter listed some of the things he listed, such as “honor the king”? 

A: Christians were looked down on and looked at with suspicion. They had to prove they were genuine by doing what was right and proving to the world that the accusations against them were unjust. These admonitions would help them overcome that negative image.

Application: Are Christians today in a similar situation today, and how should our lifestyle and behavior reflect Christ?
1 Therefore, putting aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, 2 like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, 3 if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord.

Final question: In your own words, how does all this relate to v.1-3?