Introduction

When my son, David, got out of the Marines and was preparing to go to college, he told me that he wanted to get a degree in petroleum engineering. I counseled him against getting that degree. I told him that if he got a degree in petroleum engineering, he could get a job in the oil and gas industry, but it is a very cyclical industry. In down cycles, he would not be able to find a job in that industry, and other industries would be less likely to hire him. However, if he got a mechanical engineering degree, he could easily get hired as an engineer in the oil and gas industry, and he could also get a job outside the oil and gas industry. I told him that the mechanical engineering degree was far more versatile, and would be a better option. My son took my advice, and when he graduated, the oil and gas industry was in a slump and was not hiring. He was able to get an engineering job in the construction industry in Florida, so he was happy to have made the choice to study mechanical engineering.

Peter has just talked about those who have tasted the kindness of God, and he continues that line of thought by saying, “And coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God.” Peter is going to talk about three things, the precious cornerstone, the unbelievers who have rejected the stone, and the believers, who have tasted the kindness of God, and have to come to Christ, the living stone. Now, since they are in Christ, the stone, they are also called living stones.

> (1 Pet 2:4) “And coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God,”

Peter gives a contrast between those who believe in the Cornerstone and those who do not believe and reject the Cornerstone. Peter gives the consequences for rejecting the Cornerstone. Then, he gives the consequences for those that believe and accept the Cornerstone. It is a rich passage for believers, full of wonderful truths about our salvation, and we learn about our future, our purpose, and our identity in Christ.

The Cornerstone Decision

1. The Cornerstone
2. Those that reject the stone (by disbelief)
3. Those that believe in the stone

> (1 Pet 2:4-10) “And coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God, {5} you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. {6} For *this* is contained in Scripture: "BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A CHOICE STONE, A PRECIOUS CORNER *stone,* AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED." {7} This precious value, then, is for you who believe; but for those who disbelieve, "THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE VERY CORNER *stone,*" {8} and, "A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE"; for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this *doom* they were also appointed. {9} But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR *God's* OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; {10} for you once were NOT A PEOPLE, but now you are THE PEOPLE OF GOD; you had NOT RECEIVED MERCY, but now you have RECEIVED MERCY.”

1. The Cornerstone

Peter begins by saying they have come to Him, as to a living stone. We find several characteristics of this stone. First, He is a living stone; Jesus is the living stone. Second, He is a choice stone. He was chosen to die for our sins, and to reconcile us to God. Those who are in Christ, are also chosen, because they are in Him. Third, we find that He is a precious stone in the sight of God. This stone was rejected by men, but was choice and precious in the sight of God.

> (1 Pet 2:4) "And coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God,"

Next, Peter addresses those who have come to him, and he calls these believers, living stones. They are living stones, because Jesus is a living stone, and they are now like Christ. Believers are not the precious cornerstone; Jesus is, but we are living stones. Stones were used to construct the temple, but the temple in Jerusalem used stones that were not alive. The temples of the pagan gods where these aliens have scattered to were built with stones but they were not living stones. This is not a physical temple, but a spiritual temple, a spiritual house that God is building, and believers are the living stones that He is using to build that spiritual house.

> (1 Pe 2:5) "you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."

In Hebrews 3, we find that the builder of all things is God. Christ was faithful as a Son over His house, whose house we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end. God is the builder, and He is building a spiritual house with living stones, and we are the living stones that He is using to build it, and Christ is the Cornerstone of this spiritual house.

> (Heb 3:4–6) "For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God. {5} Now Moses was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken later; {6} but Christ *was faithful* as a Son over His house—whose house we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end."

The temple in Jerusalem was where the priests made sacrifices on behalf of the people. The sacrifices of bulls, goats, sheep, and pigeons did not atone for the sins of the people. The lives of the people were not changed. In Psalm 50, we find that God was not too pleased with their sacrifices because they were not living righteous lives. God told them to offer the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and to order their lives aright. God wants acceptable sacrifices, and in this spiritual house that God is building, acceptable sacrifices through Christ were going to be offered up.

> (Ps 50:7–23) "Hear, O My people, and I will speak; O Israel, I will testify against you; I am God, your God. {8} "I do not reprove you for your sacrifices, and your burnt offerings are continually before Me…. {14} "Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving And pay your vows to the Most High;… {23} "He who offers a sacrifice of thanksgiving honors Me; and to him who orders *his* way *aright* I shall show the salvation of God."

Peter does not specify what all these acceptable sacrifices are, but here is a quick look at just a few of those sacrifices that God says are acceptable.

- (Ro 12:1) When we offer up our lives as living and holy sacrifices
- (Ps 50:23) When we offer sacrifices of thanksgiving

- (Heb 13:15) When we offer sacrifices of praise, doing good, and sharing with others
- (Ro 15:16) When we share the gospel with others
- (Eph 5:2) When we walk in love and lay our lives down for one another
- (Ph 4:18) When we financially support missions

Peter may have been a fisherman, but he has been trained by the Lord, and He knows the writings of the prophets and fathers. He quotes eleven different Old Testament verses in this passage, and he also quotes the writings of Paul, so he is very well read. He begins by quoting from Isaiah 28:16, "Behold, I lay in Zion a choice stone, a precious corner stone, and he who believes in Him will not be disappointed." It was a prophecy of Christ, who is the choice stone, the precious corner stone, that the spiritual house, the church, is being built upon. A cornerstone was a critical part of the foundation. All the angles of the building were determined with this stone. If it was not correct, the whole building would be out of line.

> (1 Pe 2:6) "For *this* is contained in Scripture: "BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A CHOICE STONE, A PRECIOUS CORNER *stone*, AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED."

> (Is 28:16) "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."

God said that He was 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." The KJV says that he who believes shall not make haste, which means that those who have built their lives on the precious cornerstone will not be alarmed, shaken, and flee when trouble comes. They are secure because they have built their lives on this costly cornerstone. Christ is this precious, costly cornerstone, and we must place our faith and our trust in Him.

In 1 Corinthians 3:10-11, Paul tells them that he laid a foundation and another is building on it. The other person he is referring to is Apollos. He had said that he planted and Apollos watered. People in the church were taking sides and some identified with Apollos and some with Paul. He tells them that they are just servants to whom God gave an opportunity. It was God who was causing the growth. Next, Paul tells them that he laid a foundation, and another is building on that foundation. He cautions us to build carefully on the foundation. What is the foundation? Paul tells us, "for no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. The foundation of the church is Jesus Christ. He is the cornerstone.

> (1 Cor 3:10-11) "According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But each man must be careful how he builds on it. {11} For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

In Matthew 16, Jesus asked His disciples, who they think He is. Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus responds back to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church..." Jesus is the rock that the church is built on; He is the Cornerstone. Jesus is the living stone, the choice stone.

(Mt 16:15-18) “He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" {16} Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." {17} And Jesus said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. {18} I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.”

When Karen and I lived in Orlando, a pastor moved into the house next to us. He pastored the Church of Prophecy. Their interpretation of that verse was that Jesus was going to build His church on the rock of revelation or prophecy. They completely missed the point. Peter had a revelation from God of who Jesus is, but that revelation is not the rock; Jesus is the rock. The church is built on Jesus Christ. Jesus is the living stone, the choice stone, the precious stone, the Cornerstone that the Jews rejected and stumbled over. The church is made up of living stones, who are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood.

2. Those that reject the stone (by disbelief)

I named the message, The Cornerstone Decision because in verse four, some men have rejected Christ, the Cornerstone. Believers, on the other hand, have tasted the kindness of the Lord, and believed in Christ. Peter addresses both groups, saying, “This precious value, then, is for you who believe; but for those who disbelieve, ‘the stone which the builders rejected, this became the very Cornerstone.’” This is a quote from Psalm 118. Disbelievers are those who have rejected Christ, the precious living stone.

(1 Pe 2:7) “This precious value, then, is for you who believe; but for those who disbelieve, “The stone which the builders rejected, this became the very corner stone,”

(Ps 118:22) “The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief corner stone.”

Peter continues by quoting Isaiah 8:14, that this precious Corner stone was to unbelievers a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense. They stumbled because they are disobedient to the word, and to this doom they were also appointed. He is speaking about the word that was preached to them, the gospel message. They have rejected the gospel message, and have not obeyed it. The Greek word for disobedient is apeitheo, which literally means not having faith, or not believing. When someone hears the gospel message, and does not believe it and obey the word, they are appointed to doom.

(1 Pe 2:8) “and, “A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense”; for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this doom they were also appointed.”

(Is 8:14) “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.”

All of us have sinned, and our sins have separated us from God, who is holy. The only hope for anyone is to receive Christ’s payment for our sins. Those that reject Christ are without hope and appointed to doom. They will be eternally separated from God, and will be appointed to the doom that was prepared for the devil and his angels. In Matthew 25, Jesus separated the sheep from the goats. The sheep represent the righteous, those who have believed in Christ, and the goats represent those who have not obeyed the gospel. He will say to the righteous, “Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”

> (Mt 25:31–34) "But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. {32} All the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; {33} and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left. {34} "Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.'"

Then, God judged the unrighteous, saying, "Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels." The unrighteous go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.

> (Mt 25:41–46) "Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels… {46} These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

I want to quickly highlight the words Peter used to describe unbelievers. They rejected the word. They were offended by Christ. They stumbled over the stone. They did not obey the word. They are appointed to doom. There are eternally bad consequences for rejecting Christ.

3. Those that believe in the stone

Third, Peter addresses those that have believed in Christ. They have not rejected Christ, the living stone, but have accepted Christ (1 Pe 2:3-4). They have tasted the kindness and mercy of the Lord (1 Pe 2:3). They are living stones (1 Pe 2:5). Since Christ is a living stone, those in Christ are living stones.

> (1 Pe 2:4–5) "And coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God, {5} you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."

A believer's identity is in Christ. Sometimes, believers are called saints or holy ones, and it is not by their own holiness; it is by faith in Christ that they are made holy. Sometimes, believers are called Christians, which means little Christs, or little anointed ones. Sometimes, believers were called disciples; they were disciples of Christ. The goal of a disciple is to become like his teacher. Here we are described as living stones. Peter gives several additional statements about the identity of believers.

Next, Peter wrote that they are a holy priesthood. In the Old Testament, Aaron, who was a Levite, and his sons were chosen to be priests. In Exodus 28, God told Moses to bring Aaron and his sons with him and for them to minister as priests to Him. Moses had to make holy garments for them, and then consecrate them, so that they could minister to God as priests.

> (Ex 28:1–3) "Then bring near to yourself Aaron your brother, and his sons with him, from among the sons of Israel, to minister as priest to Me—Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons. {2} You shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother, for glory and for beauty. {3} You shall speak to all the skillful persons whom I have endowed with the spirit of wisdom, that they make Aaron's garments to consecrate him, that he may minister as priest to Me."

God's desire was not just for Aaron and his sons to be priests. In Exodus 19, God had told Moses that if they would obey His voice and keep His covenant, they would be His own possession among all the peoples, and they would be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

> (Ex 19:5–6) "'Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; {6} and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel."

In Isaiah 61:6, he prophesied about us becoming priests. He wrote, "But you will be called the priests of the Lord; you will be spoken of as ministers of our God."

> (Is 61:6) "But you will be called the priests of the LORD; You will be spoken of *as* ministers of our God. You will eat the wealth of nations, and in their riches you will boast."

We find the fulfillment of Exodus 19:6 and Isaiah 61:6 in in Revelation 1:6. John wrote that God loves us and has released us from our sins by the blood of Jesus, and He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father.

> (Re 1:5–6) "and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood— {6} and He has made us *to be* a kingdom, priests to His God and Father—to Him *be* the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen."

Then, in Revelation 5:10, the twenty-four elders were worshipping the Lamb, each one holding a harp and golden bowls of incense, which are the prayers of the saints, and they sang to the Lord. In that song, they sang, "You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth." Jesus is the great High Priest, and believers have been made royal priests.

> (Re 5:10) "You have made them *to be* a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth."

What do priests do? They minister to God and they minister to others. In the Old Testament, priests brought sacrifices to God on behalf of themselves and others. In the New Testament, there was a one-time sacrifice for sins made by Jesus, so we as priests do not bring those sacrifices to God. There are other acceptable and pleasing sacrifices that we bring to Him. Believers now offer spiritual sacrifices in this spiritual house that the Lord is building, which is made up of living stones, the saints. The church is to offer up spiritual sacrifices to the Lord, because the church is made up of holy priests. This spiritual house is also called a house of prayers for all nations. As priests, all of us are called to intercede for others. God calls us to intercede and pray for one another.

A few years ago, the Holy Spirit impressed on me to pray for my neighbors. I memorized the names of every family in our subdivision, including all the children. As I take my walks, I pray for everyone by name. I have different prayer focuses on different days. That is just one aspect of accepting my role of being a priest; I offer up sacrifices on behalf of others. We saw earlier that there are a number of other acceptable sacrifices. When you serve others, and lay your life down for them, you are fulfilling your God-given role as royal priests. When you worship God with songs of praise and thanksgiving you are fulfilling your role as a priest.

In verse nine, Peter tells believers that they are a chosen race. The Jews were God's chosen people. In Deuteronomy 7, God said that the Jews were a holy people to the Lord, and that He had chosen them to be a people for His own possession out of all the people who are on the face of the earth. But now these believers are called the chosen race.

> (1 Pe 2:9a) "But you are A CHOSEN RACE…"

> (Dt 7:6) "For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth."

Peter did not clarify how believers are now called a chosen race, but the Apostle Paul wrote that it is the children of faith that are the sons of Abraham. He wrote that Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness (Gen 15:6). Therefore, it those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham. It is those who are of faith that are blessed with Abraham, the believer.

> (Ga 3:6–9) "Even so Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness. {7} Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham. {8} The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "All the nations will be blessed in you." {9} So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer."

I want to make just a few comments on the word chosen. We saw in Deuteronomy 7:6 that the Jews were chosen to be God's people. In Romans 9, Paul said that God chose Isaac to be the children of promise. God was choosing the lineage of Christ, and that was not for everybody; it was God's choice. Then, God chose Jacob over Esau. Paul quoted Malachi, saying, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated." God did not hate Esau; it was that His love for Jacob was so much greater. God loves the world, and sent His Son to die for the sins of the world that whosoever would believe would have eternal life. God was choosing the lineage of Christ. He was doing what some scholars call, nation building. Many people today think in terms of individual choice, saying that God chooses who He will save and who He created to go to eternal damnation. The truth is that God does not want any to perish, but for all to come to repentance. God desires all men to be saved. God chose His Son to die for our sins. He chose the lineage of His Son. And whoever believes in the Son, who was chosen, is chosen. It is in Christ that we have every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.

> (Ro 9:6–13) "But *it is* not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are *descended* from Israel; {7} nor are they all children because they are Abraham's descendants, but: "THROUGH ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS WILL BE NAMED." {8} That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants. {9} For this is the word of promise: "AT THIS TIME I WILL COME, AND SARAH SHALL HAVE A SON." {10} And not only this, but there was Rebekah also, when she had conceived *twins* by one man, our father Isaac; {11} for though *the twins* were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad, so that God's purpose according to *His* choice would stand, not because of works but because of Him who calls, {12} it was said to her, "THE OLDER WILL SERVE THE YOUNGER." {13} Just as it is written, "JACOB I LOVED, BUT ESAU I HATED."

So, believers are a chosen race. We saw earlier that they are a royal priesthood. The next thing that we see is that they are a holy nation. Earlier, we looked at Exodus 19, where God spoke to

Moses about being a kingdom of priests. He also said that they would be a holy nation, and a people for God's own possession. They would be a nation that was set apart from all the other nations that were serving pagan gods. This nation would be God's own possession, a people that would obey His voice, and keep His covenant. This holy nation is made up of believers, those who by faith in God, have believed in Jesus Christ.

> (1 Pe 2:9) "But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR *God's* OWN POSSESSION…"

> (Ex 19:5–6) "'Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; {6} and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel."

Next, Peter states what believers have been called to do. He said that believers are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession SO that believers may proclaim the excellencies of Him who called them out of darkness into His marvelous light. We have been chosen and called to worship God, to proclaim the excellencies of Christ, who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light.

> (1 Pe 2:9–10) "But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR *God's* OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; {10} for you once were NOT A PEOPLE, but now you are THE PEOPLE OF GOD; you had NOT RECEIVED MERCY, but now you have RECEIVED MERCY."

Worship is not something that prepares us to hear a Sunday message. Worship is not a time to enjoy some talented musicians entertain us. Believers have been called to proclaim the excellencies of Christ. Worship is a time to honor God! We have been called to worship Him. Proclaiming the excellencies of Him does not just happen in a Sunday worship service; it is worshipping God every day. We are worshippers; we are proclaimers of His excellencies.

Peter also talks about the reason and motivation behind our worship. He said that we were once not a people, but now we are the people of God. We had not received mercy, but now we have received mercy. You and I have very much to be thankful to God about. I want to go to Ephesians for just a minute, where Paul expounds on this idea. We were formerly dead in or trespasses and sins. We formerly walked according to the course of this world, and were sons of disobedience. We were by nature children of wrath. But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. We were walking in darkness, and God had mercy on us and called us out of darkness into His marvelous light. We have so much to be thankful for.

> (Eph 2:1–6) "And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, {2} in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. {3} Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. {4} But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, {5} even when we were dead in our transgressions,

> made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), {6} and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,"

Paul went on to say that we were separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. We are now the people of God!

> (Eph 2:12–13) "*remember* that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. {13} But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ."

We were not a people for God's own possession. We were not a holy nation; we were excluded from that. We were without hope. But God called us out of darkness into His marvelous light. He made us His people. He forgave us of our sins. He clothed us in His righteousness. He gave us a new identity in Him. He brought us to Himself and we now have fellowship with Him. We have an inheritance reserved for us, one that is undefiled, imperishable, and will not fade away. We have so much to be grateful for. We are to be full of gratitude and to proclaim His excellencies.

Conclusion and Applications

While many use this passage to talk about the identity of Christians and what God is building, and God does teach us a lot about that, the passage has so much more to it than that. We find that Jesus is the Corner Stone. He is building a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, and He is the Corner Stone of that spiritual house. He is the precious and choice stone. He is also a choice that we make.

Some men have rejected Christ. To them Jesus is a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense. They stumble because they are unbelieving and disobedient to the gospel message. Because they have rejected Christ, they are appointed to doom. God did not choose some to be appointed to doom. He appointed doom to those that reject Christ, as He is our only hope for salvation.

Those that have believed in Christ have a new identity. Believers are now living stones. They are a holy priesthood. They are a chosen race, They are a royal priesthood. They are a holy nation, and a people for God's own possession.

Believers have a new purpose in life. They are being built into a spiritual house for a holy priesthood. They are to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. They are to walk in the kingdom of light. They are to proclaim His excellencies, and to worship God.

As you have heard the contrast between those that believe and those that do not believe, what has God spoken to you about? Is Christ the Cornerstone of your life, or is He a stone of stumbling? Is Jesus a rock of offense? The future for those that reject Christ is doom. But it does not have to be. God does not want any to perish, but for all to come to repentance. He does not want you or anyone else to suffer doom. He is full of mercy and wants to give you life. He wants to have you as His possession. He wants you to come out of darkness into His light. The question for you today is, will you believe in Christ and put your trust in Him? If you believe that Jesus is the Son of God, that He died for our sins, and was raised from the dead, and you would like to receive

Him today, simply ask Jesus to come into your life, forgive you of your sins, and confess Him as the Lord or ruler of your life. It will be the best decision of your life.

> "Jesus, I believe that You are the Son of God. I believe that You came in the flesh and died for our sins. I believe that You were raised from the dead. I ask You to come into my life and forgive me of my sins. I yield my life to You right now, and I confess You as Lord of my life. Help me to follow and obey you. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen."

There are others that God may have been speaking to you about your identity in Christ. You may not have realized that you are a priest. You are a royal priest and God wants you to offer acceptable sacrifices to Him. He wants you to minister to Him and to proclaim His excellencies. God wants you to be a worshipper, not just on Sundays, but to continually offer up praise and thanksgiving to Him. He wants you to offer prayers, thanksgivings, gifts, service, and many other acceptable sacrifices to Him. I encourage you to make a fresh commitment to the Lord that you will worship Him.

There may be others listening or watching that are still walking in darkness. God has called you out of darkness, and He wants you to walk in His marvelous light. You are part of a holy nation, so you need to repent and begin to live a holy life. If God has put a finger on an area of your life, let me encourage you to confess the sin to him, and to turn away from it.

Closing Prayer

Father, thank You for sending Jesus to die for our sins. Thank You for Your love and mercy and forgiveness. Thank You for calling us out of darkness into Your marvelous light. Thank You for the privilege of being Your royal priests. We want to honor and glorify You. We want to offer acceptable spiritual sacrifices to you. We want to proclaim Your excellencies. Help us to become true worshippers of You. Help us to walk in Your light. Help us, as living stones, to do our part in building this spiritual house. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Discussion Questions

- Why did God choose the term, Cornerstone, to describe Christ?
- What is the significance for us of the term, Cornerstone?
- What is it mean to be a living stone?
- Do you see yourself as a royal priest? If not why not? If you do, how has this impacted the way that you live your life?
- What is the significance of being called a holy nation?
- What are some things that Peter mentions that help motivate us to be worshippers of God?
- If those that reject Christ are appointed to doom, and they are, what are some things that we should be doing for our family, friends, and others that do not yet believe in Christ?
- If we have been called out of darkness, why are many in the church still walking in darkness?
- The believers that Peter is writing to are living as aliens, and are suffering for their faith. Peter wrote this exhortation so that they would stand firm in the true grace of God. How does our passage today, the Cornerstone Decision, help them stand firm in God's grace?

The Cornerstone Decision (1 Pe 2:4-10)

Introduction (1 Pet 2:4-10)

1. **The Cornerstone** (1 Pet 2:4-65, Heb 3:4–6, Ps 50:7–23, Ro 12:1, Ps 50:23, Heb 13:15, Ro 15:16, Eph 5:2, Php 4:18, Is 28:16, 1 Cor 3:10-11, Mt 16:15-18)

2. **Those that reject the stone (by disbelief)** (1 Pe 2:7-8, Ps 118:22, Is 8:14, Mt 25:31-46)

3. **Those that believe in the stone** (1 Pe 2:3-10, Ex 28:1–3, 19:5-6, Is 61:6, Re 1:5-6, 5:10, Ga 3:6–9, Ro 9:6–13, Eph 2:1–13)

Conclusion and Applications