

Epistle of First Peter VI

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Let's just review a few things. Let's go back and cover several key verses that we have in chapter one before we get on into chapter two again. 1-Peter 1:2: "*Who have been chosen according to the predetermined knowledge of God the Father...*" God has a plan. He has a purpose and He's called us for that. We're going to see how absolutely tremendous this is when we get into more in 1-Peter.

Peter said right here in v 1: "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ..." No pope, no supremacy, no over other ministers at all—no one. And when we get into 2-Peter you're going to see that he had a perfect opportunity to make it known what he would be if he would have been pope.

This is 1-Peter 1:2—so God has called us and we're going to learn something interesting about that calling, even more than we've understood in the past. "...by sanctification through *the Spirit, unto obedience...* [Let's understand something about keeping the laws and commandments of God in relationship to how they should be kept.] ...and sprinkling of *the blood of Jesus Christ...* [which gets right down into the Passover, and the whole meaning of the New Covenant] ...Grace and peace be multiplied to you."

What does grace do for obedience? *and* Law-keeping? What does grace do? *Quite the opposite as to what people think!* Grace is not license to sin—we all know that. Let's see what *grace* does.

- Grace gives us life!
- Grace gives us God's Spirit!
- Grace gives us access to God!
- Grace is what gives us the relationship to God the Father!

and believe it or not

- grace gives us the capacity to keep the laws and commandments of God properly.

Not many people have really understood that. That's why we have obedience and grace and the sprinkling of blood of Jesus Christ altogether in the same place.

Romans 3:31 "Are we, then, abolishing law through faith? MAY IT NEVER BE! Rather, we are establishing law." The Greek word for *establish* is 'histemi'—which means *to make stand*. Quite different—isn't it? Not just establish but *to make stand firm* the law. That's something—isn't it?

Then let's answer the other question here. Here's the whole key, brethren. We are going see that Peter preaches the Gospel of grace and growth as intensely as does Paul. Paul writes here: Romans 6:1: "What then shall we say? Shall we continue in

sin, so that grace may abound?... [They were saying, if you sin you've got grace and it's automatic and so go sin the more; since God is glorified in grace, go sin more so that we have more grace.] ...He says, "[God forbid!] MAY IT NEVER BE! We who died to sin, how shall we live any longer therein?" (vs 1-2). That's the whole point.

I'm going to bring a sermon before Passover: *What Does it Mean, Dead?* I think you're going to be amazed. Based upon the statement that Jesus made, 'Let the dead bury their dead.' What does it mean?

1-Peter 1:2: "...Grace and peace be multiplied to you." I'm going to bring a sermon on the *Covenant of Peace*.

- What is the New Covenant anyway?
- How does it operate anyhow?
- What are we to do?
- What does this do with the relationship between us and God?

When you get *The Christian Passover* book you can read the chapter in there: *The Superiority of the New Covenant*.

Verse 3: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who, according to His abundant mercy, has begotten us again into a living hope..." That's the whole thing that Peter is expressing here: *living hope!* What kind of hope? What kind of time was it in? *It was in a time much like we are in today.* We are being battered and bruised on every side! Tried and tested and, in some points, to the almost the extreme breaking point!

We have a *living hope* so that regardless of the difficulties that we have to go through. Remember the Church at Smyrna? They had an organized synagogue of Satan against them to chase them; to persecute them; to throw them in jail and kill them! And as I've said sarcastically before, all of these arrogant ministers that want to go out and proclaim whatever church they are in, let's have someone stand up and say, 'I'm from Smyrna.' I haven't heard anybody say that yet; because now they want all the blessings. They want all the goodness; but they don't want the work, they don't want the faith and they don't want the hope, and they don't want the death.

So, we have a *living hope*: "...through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead..." [What do we get our minds on when we're in these times of troubles and difficulties?] ...into an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and unfading, reserved in heaven for us... [As Christ said, 'where thieves

can't break through and steal.' Where it doesn't rot. Where it doesn't corrupt.] ...who are being safeguarded by the power of God through faith, for salvation *that is* ready to be revealed in the last time..." (vs 3-5)—that's referring to the resurrection. We're safeguarded by the power of God through faith.

Verse 6: "In this you yourselves are greatly rejoicing; *but* if it is necessary, at the present time you have been in distress for a little while by various trials." I know, you know, that we have varying degrees of trials that come up before the Passover. And I pray for God's mercy on everyone. But life goes on. For what purpose?

Verse 7: "In order that the proving of your faith... [that's what it is—*faith*, brethren—*your belief*, your absolute and deep and profound and eternal, spiritual belief in God and Jesus Christ and what They have called us for.] ...which is much more precious than gold that is perishing... [we can add all kinds of stories there, but we won't] ...*even* though it is being tested by fire, may be found unto praise and honor and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

I want you to understand something: *Even Jesus Christ, to overcome death, died for us!* We need to really let that sink in, deeply. And I want you to read, before the Passover, about the foot-washing, the full meaning of the foot-washing; the full meaning of the body of Christ; and the full meaning of the blood of Christ.

Verse 8: "Whom, not having seen, you love... [How are we to be loving God? With all our heart and mind and soul and being—aren't we?] ...on Whom, though at the present time you do not see Him, you are believing, *and* are rejoicing with unspeakable joy..." No one can take that away! Remember what Jesus said the Passover night, to His disciples? He said, 'My joy I give you, not as the world gives it, give I it to you.'

The whole thing is, even in a time of trial and difficulty and absolute, almost overbearing oppressive things that come upon us, *God is there!* What did Paul say? He said, 'I rejoice that I am weak, because when I am weak, then I am strong in Christ.' That's what it's all about, brethren.

So, even though we go through all of this, v 9: "*And are receiving the fulfillment of your faith—even the salvation of your souls; concerning which salvation the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you...*" (vs 9-10). How profound is this that God has called us to? It's not some exercise in 'religion' that we go to church on Saturday, because we're better people than those who go to church on Sunday. He hasn't called us to play religion. He has called us to everlasting life! I'll

repeat that: *God has not called us to 'play religion,' but He has called us to everlasting life!* It's so profound that He didn't even let the prophets—that He inspired—know what exactly that was. Isn't that something! He could not let it be known until Christ came.

"...prophesied of the grace *that would come to you* have diligently searched out and intently inquired, searching into what *way* and what manner of time the Spirit of Christ *which was* in them was indicating, *and* testifying beforehand of the sufferings of Christ, and those glories that would follow... [Isn't that something? So great is salvation that it could not be revealed until the Author of salvation came and gave His life. That's something! Absolutely powerful!] ...to whom it was revealed that, not for themselves, but to us they were ministering these things, which now have been announced to you by those who have preached the Gospel to you by the Holy Spirit, sent from heaven—into which things the angels are desiring to look" (vs 10-12).

Think of that, brethren! I mean, if you get down and discouraged sometime, you just go read this first chapter of Peter. So profound and so marvelous and so great and so awesome is what God is going to give to us that the angels want to know what it is.

Verse 13: "For this reason, have your minds ready... [Yes, spiritual action!] ...be self-controlled, *and* be fully hoping in the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children... [children of God, obedient to God] ...do not be conforming yourselves to your former lusts, *as* in *your former* ignorance. But according as He Who has called you is Holy, you yourselves also be Holy in all your conduct; for it has been written, 'You be Holy because I am Holy.' And if you are calling upon the Father, Who judges according to each man's work without respect of persons, be conducting the time of your *life's* journey in *the fear of God*; knowing that you were not redeemed by corruptible things, by silver or gold, your futile way of living, inherited *by tradition* from your forefathers; but by the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot; Who truly was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but was manifested in these last times for your sake; *even for you* who through Him are believing in God, Who raised Him up from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope might be in God" (vs 13-21).

That's what it needs to be. Not in any man, not in any minister. As I've said before, it is time for the ministers of God to be pointing the people of God *to God* and not to themselves.

Verse 22: "Having purified your souls by

obedience to the Truth unto unfeigned brotherly love through *the* Spirit, be loving one another fervently with a pure heart. *For* you have been begotten again, not from corruptible seed, but from incorruptible seed, by the living Word of God..." (vs 22-23). We've got

- a living hope
- a living God
- the living Word
- the living Christ
- the living Savior

—who what? *Gives us life!* Aren't we glad that we know about the second resurrection. Not just the first resurrection. We're happy and glad because of the first resurrection and hopefully that we will be there.

But as the Apostle Paul said, 'I keep myself and beat myself under control that lest I preach to others, I myself would be a castaway.' So we will say, 'Ok, we will make it there because Christ said, 'I will not lose one, save the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.' So, we'll conclude, yes, we will make it to the first resurrection. But aren't you glad you know about the second resurrection? Just think of the accidents; just think of the death; just think of the mayhem. It is something, brethren, that God is so great and His plan is so marvelous that all of those who died who never had an opportunity for salvation—because He didn't call them—He's going to resurrect them back to a second physical life for an opportunity for salvation. That is marvelous! You talk about grace and mercy and love—incredible! Absolutely incredible!

"...by the living Word of God *which* remains forever. For all flesh is like grass, and the glory of man *is* like the flower of the field; the grass withered, and its flower fell away.... [That is proper translation: punctiliar—aorist tense—fell off; fell away.] ...But the Word of God remains forever; and this is the message that was preached to you through the Gospel" (vs 23-25).

We'll come down through v 3, because that's as far as we got last time. 2-Peter 2:3: "Therefore... [That is light of all this which was said before] ...having put away all wickedness, and all deceit... [and that could also be translated *guile*—the little hypocritical, nit-picking things that people do to one another] ...and hypocrisies and jealousies, and all slanders, as newborn babes..." (vs 1-2). That is let your mind be as clean as a newborn babe. Why? *Because it hasn't been exercised in evil, yet!* That's why. Not that you are newborn babes—we went through *born again* several times.

"...yearn after..." (v 2). Be as hungry as a newborn babe. And I tell you what, all you mothers know and all you fathers know, too—don't you?—that when the newborns are ready to eat they want to

eat and eat NOW! And if you don't do it NOW—whether it's two in the morning, one in the morning, four in the afternoon, they're going to let you know and they're not going to quit crying until you feed them. And the best food is? *Mama's!*

"...the pure spiritual milk..." (v 2). To have what? *Strong meat!* (Heb. 5.)] ...that by it you may grow... [and I inserted the two words]: *...in character...* [You might want to put *Godliness*, because that's what it's for.] ...If you yourselves did indeed taste that the Lord is gracious" (vs 2-3). And everything that God does is by His grace. Everything you do for God you do because of God's grace.

Let's go to Romans, the second chapter, and here's the same word—*God is gracious*. What does that do? What is that supposed to do for us? *That's supposed to lead us to repentance*. Romans 2:1: "Therefore, you are without excuse, O man..." This just means any human. In the Greek this is what is called the *vocatives*—wherever you see the 'o' that's a vocative tense, which means 'Oh' human being or man or person.

"...everyone who judges *another*; for in that in which you judge the other, you are condemning your own self; for you who judge *another* are doing the same things. But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth upon those who commit such things" (vs 1-2). Yes, we can stand up and condemn for these sins—right? *Right!*

But he says, v 3: "Now do you think yourself, O man, whoever is judging those who commit such things, and you are practicing them *yourself*, that you shall escape the judgment of God? Or do you despise the riches of His [graciousness] kindness and forbearance and long-suffering... [Why does God put up with so many things for so long? *Hopefully, that the people will repent!*] ...not knowing that the graciousness of God leads you... [notice the 'eth' (*KJV*)—is leading you] ...to repentance?" (vs 3-4).

Maybe we can set our spiritual goal, come to deeper conversion and deeper repentance. Not that we go to God and say, 'Oh God, now I'm so good that I'm going to be more deeply converted this year.' No, you ask God, by His mercy and grace, that you can be—and let it be merciful.

Verse 5: "But you, according to your own hardness and unrepentant heart, are storing up wrath for yourself against *the* day of wrath and revelation of God's righteous judgment, Who will render to each one according to his own works: On the one hand, to those who with patient endurance... [patiently doing the things in well-doing] ...in good works are seeking glory and honor and immortality—...[those are the ones He's going to give] ...eternal life" (vs 5-7).

Now that's why Peter wrote and said—1-Peter 2:3: “If you yourselves did indeed taste that the Lord is gracious.” Because what is it we deserve? We have earned? *Death!* The ‘wages of sin is death.’

I know that's a little long review, but let's pick it up here in 1-Peter 2:4—let's read on down here to v 8 and then we'll come back and study these four verses: “To Whom coming [present tense] *as to* a living Stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God, *and* precious. You also, as living stones, are yourselves being built up *as* a spiritual house—a holy priesthood—to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For this reason it says in the Scripture, ‘Behold, I place in Zion the chief Cornerstone, chosen *and* precious; and the one who is believing on Him... [active, ongoing faithizing as it were] ...will never be put to shame’.... [which means it doesn't matter what people think or do or say—it's how you stand before God.] ...The preciousness *is* to you, therefore, who are believing; but to those [of you] who are disobeying, *the* Stone that the builders rejected, this one became *the* Head of the corner; even a Stone of stumbling and a Rock of offense to those who are stumbling at the Word, *and* are disobeying, unto which [destruction] *unbelief* also they were appointed” (vs 4-8).

What he's doing here, he's making some very distinct contrasts. We're going to see that he's contrasting us and our calling and we are people of God and the world. And he's going to show us that there's friction and confrontation and trials that you go through. So he wants us to really understand what we need to do.

Verse 4: “**To Whom you are coming as to a living Stone...**”—Christ is the living Stone.

Now let's go back to the book of Isaiah and let's look at some of the Scriptures from whence this comes. Isaiah 8:11: “For thus the LORD spoke to me with a strong hand, and warned me against walking in the way of this people... [Isn't that the same way that God has called us? We're not to walk in the way of this people.] ...saying, ‘Do not say, “A conspiracy!” to everything of which this people says, “A conspiracy!”...’” (vs 11-12). That's exactly what we're seeing politically, today. Oh, we've got the Rainbow Coalition—that's a confederacy.

“...And do not fear their fear, nor be afraid. The LORD of hosts, Him shall you sanctify, and let Him *be* your fear, and let Him be your dread. And He shall be a sanctuary *for you*—but for a stone of stumbling, and for a rock of offence to **both the houses of Israel**... [Both—not just the Jews, but BOTH! Is that not a true prophecy? *Yes, it is.*] ...and for a trap and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem” (vs 12-14). So much so, that the rabbis,

Supreme Court of so-called Israel and Judah, ordered Messianic Jews out of the country—they are not welcome in Israel. Is that not a stumbling stone—see what happens?

Verse 15: “And many among them shall stumble and fall and be broken, and be snared, and be taken. Bind up the testimony, seal the Law among My disciples.’... [Which is what? *It is a prophecy of the writing of the New Testament!* It's exactly what it is.] ...And I will wait upon the LORD, who hides His face from the house of Jacob; and I will trust in Him. Behold, I and the children whom the LORD has given me *are* for signs and for wonders in Israel from the LORD of hosts, Who dwells in Mount Zion” (vs 15-18). That's exactly what it is.

Then it goes on talking about the demonism there, what we're confronted with today, v 19: “And when they shall say to you, ‘Seek unto them that have familiar spirits and to wizards who peep and mutter’... [then this is a parenthetical thought that is in there]: ...—*but* should not a people seek unto their God? *Should* the dead *be sought* on behalf of the living?... [That's a reason for doing what they are doing.] (So here's the answer to it): ...To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this Word, *it is* because *there is* no light in them” (vs 19-20). What is the testimony—the greatest testimony on earth? *Jesus Christ!* That is the testimony it's talking about. It's talking about here ‘the Stone of Stumbling, the Rock of offense.’ To us, we are to be coming—on an ongoing basis.

Now back to 1-Peter 2:4: “**...coming...** [on an ongoing basis] **...as to a living Stone...**” It's very interesting what a stone is. We are also called ‘stones’—right? *Yes!* Notice, we have:

- the living hope
- the living word
- the living God
- now, living stone

What are we to reflect? We'll see here in just a minute. “**...rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God, and precious**” (v 4) What does chosen mean? Very interesting.

How many of you can remember the Greek word for *church* or *assembly*? ‘ekklesia’—right?—some of you knew that right off—which means *the called out* or *the chosen ones*. Christ was the ‘eklektos’ of God. So it's no wonder that we are called the ‘ekklesia’ or the ‘ekkleto’ of God—*chosen ones of God*. In what way? *The same way as Christ!* Think on that!

He says the Father loves you with the same love that He loved Me. I think, brethren—and I hope and pray that, obviously we can't until the resurrection; but between now and then because it says, “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord

and Savior”—that we can come to a full and deep and profound understanding of God’s way and what He’s done.

“...chosen [by God] *and* precious as **living stones**... [Isn’t that something! It’s what we are to be—*living stones*. You yourselves] ...are being built up *as a spiritual house—a Holy priesthood...*” (vs 4-5). All right, let’s see how all of this fits together: *Jesus is the living Stone*—right?

Now, let’s look at some things referring to Christ. I will refer you to it because you know the Scriptures: Matt. 16:18, Jesus said to Peter: ‘On this Rock [which is Christ] I will build My church.’ But what did He say to Peter just before that? He said, ‘You are Peter’—which is ‘petros,’ *little stone*. Here’s a perfect place for Peter to say, ‘I am the stone to build the Church on and I am the first pope’—right? So, if it were in fact so, there’s where it should be in Scripture. If anyone challenges you on that, just remember 1-Pet. 2; Matt. 16:18.

One more Scripture to write down and remember: John 1:43^[transcriber’s correction]—when Jesus first saw Peter, He said, ‘You are Cephus—which is being interpreted: *a stone*.’ Peter did not claim to be anymore than a part of the living stones.

Let’s go to Ephesians, the second chapter, and let’s see how this is to be built up; and how it is all in Christ. Then we will look at some of the other Scriptures again in the Old Testament referring to Christ again. We’re learning the same thing out of Peter that we did out of James—there’s a whole lot more here than we figured.

Ephesians 2:18—we see the same thing: “For through Him we both have *direct* access by one Spirit to the Father. So then, you are no longer aliens and foreigners; but you *are* fellow citizens with the saints, and *are of the household of God*.... [that’s what’s important] ...You are being built up on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being *the* chief Cornerstone In Whom all the building, being conjointly fitted together, is increasing... [grows—so as living stones; we are to grow] ...into a Holy temple in *the* Lord... [So what God is doing in our lives is something— isn’t it? *Yes, indeed!*] ...In Whom you also are being built together for a habitation of God in *the* Spirit” (vs 18-22).

Ephesians 4:12—here’s the whole purpose of everything we have. I’m going to give a sermon on the Government of God here somewhere down the road, not to far distant future, which really will be eye-opening, but we’ll save it for then. “For the perfecting of the saints, for *the* work of *the* ministry, for *the* edifying [up-building] of the body of Christ.”

Verse 16: “From Whom all the body, fitly

framed and compacted together by *that which* every joint supplies... [We’re going to see, brethren, that that is not, as we have been told before, tithes and offerings. That is what you supply, what God gives you and what you do in spiritual sacrifices. And I think the only way that we’re going to grow is that we start tending to those spiritual sacrifices—and we’ll get into that a little later.] ...according to *its* inner working in *the* measure of each individual part, is making the increase of the body unto *the* edifying of itself in love.”

So, we see that we have here: We’ve got Christ, Who is the Chief Stone. We are the living stones. He is the ‘eklektos’ and we are the eklekto’—the plural, chosen, precious.

- We see that Christ is the Rock
- We see that Peter is a stone—Cephus
- We see that we are stones—and it is a living stone; and we are to be living stones.

Now let’s look at what happens when people again reject Christ. Just put down in your notes, or if you’re listening to this, go ahead and read all the way through the whole Psalm, because it shows the relationship that you have with God.

Psalm 118:6: “The LORD is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me?... [It’s interesting how then Peter is talking about the stone of stumbling and the trials we go through.] ...The LORD is for me as my helper; therefore I will look in triumph upon those who hate me. It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust in the LORD than to trust in princes” (vs 6-9).

Verse 21: “I will praise You, for You have answered me and have become my salvation. The Stone which the builders rejected has become the Head Stone of the corner. This is the LORD’S doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day which the LORD has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it” (vs 21-24).

One more Old Testament Scripture, and then we’ll go to the New Testament. Isaiah 28:14: “Therefore, hear the Word of the LORD, you scornful men who rule this people in Jerusalem. Because you have said, ‘We have made a covenant with death, and we have made an agreement...’” (vs 14-15). Sounds like the New Covenant that was made—right? Remember the election? Yeah, people would rather stick to their ways of death than to turn to God.

“...with the grave; when the overwhelming rod shall pass through, it shall not come to us... [That’s what they’re saying: ‘Oh yes, we’ll bypass all this stuff.’] ...for we have made lies our refuge,

and we have hidden ourselves under falsehood.’... [directly referring to rejecting Jesus Christ] ...Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD, ‘Behold, I place in Zion a Stone for a foundation, a tried Stone, a precious Cornerstone, a sure Foundation...’ (vs 15-16).

We can go through the New Testament and find all kinds of Scriptures relating to this. What is the foundation upon which we are to build? *No other foundation can any man lay other than that which is been laid, which is Christ Jesus! Right? Yes!*

(go to track the next track)

Matthew 21:33: “Hear another parable: There was a certain man, a master of a house, who planted a vineyard, and put a fence around it, and dug a winepress in it, and built a tower, and *then* leased it to husbandmen and left the country. Now, when the season of the fruits was drawing near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen to receive his fruits” (vs 33-34). Which then, obviously, the fruit of it was the wine—right? *Because he dug the winepress!*

The only thing that you’re going to get out of a harvest of grapes is wine and raisins. That’s it! Today we can get grape juice because we have bottling, pasteurizing and hermetically sealing which keeps the grape juice from turning into wine. So, when he came back for the fruits of it, it has to be because he has a wine-tower, and then the only other fruit would be what? *Raisins*—because he was far off.

Verse 35: “But the husbandmen took his servants and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again he sent other servants, more than the first *time*; and they did the same thing to them. Then at last he sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will have respect for my son.’ But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, ‘This is the heir; come, let us murder him and gain possession of his inheritance’” (vs 35-38). To steal a kingdom—right?

Verse 39: “Then they took him, *and cast him* out of the vineyard, and murdered *him*.... [Christ was slain where? *Without the camp!*] ...Therefore, when the lord of the vineyard shall come, what will he do to those husbandmen? They said to Him, ‘*Evil men!* He will utterly destroy them, and he will lease his vineyard to other husbandmen, who will render to him the fruits in their seasons’” (vs 39-41).

I want you think about what we are to do then, brethren. Are we not in the vine of Christ? *Yes, we are!* Jesus said, ‘I am the vine; My Father is the husbandman; and you are the branches’—bring forth fruit.

Verse 42: “Jesus said to them, ‘Have you

never read in the Scriptures... [Isn’t that true of all religionists? *Yes!* Do they read the Scriptures? *No!* *They use them and manipulate them for their own end.*] ...“*The Stone that the builders rejected, this has become the head of the corner. This was from the Lord, and it is wonderful in our eyes*”? Because of this, I say to you, the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and it shall be given to a nation *that produces the fruits of it*” (vs 42-43). That’s *us*, brethren!

Verse 44: “And the one who falls on this Stone shall be broken... [in repentance, you might add there.] ...but on whomever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.’ Now after hearing His parables, the chief priests and the Pharisees knew that He was speaking about them.... [Now you know why Jesus warned them about the unpardonable sin. Did they know? Here, brethren, is the greatest manifestation of God to His entire creation. God in the flesh! ‘Jesus Christ in person came to His own, and His own received Him not’—right?] ...And they sought to arrest Him, but they were afraid of the multitudes, because they held Him as a prophet” (vs 44-46).

I’ll have to bring a little sermon on the intrigue of the arrest of Jesus; and who was Judas? Very interesting! One sermon I want to give somewhere down the road (I don’t know when it will be): what a church of the Pharisees be like? I’ve been reading this book while I was doing the copies for the special edition of the book; I would sit there while the copies were going through (because I have a slow copier), and I’ve been reading this book: *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*. It showed what a Pharisee community was like. And I think you will be amazed! How that that’s how the Church of God was run for many years. I’ll just wet your appetite with that.

Let’s go to Luke 20_[transcriber’s correction]—here’s another similar parable given; only this time in the way of talents. It’s the same parallel one there; it begins in v 9 and it follows right on down through the same one—read the verses from 9-16.

Luke 20:17: “But He looked at them *and* said, ‘What then is this that is written: “*The Stone that the builders rejected, this one has become the head of the corner?*”’”

We have a similar one over here in Luke 19:14: “But his citizens hated him... [Brethren, it is true that the biggest problem the Jews have today is Jesus Christ. He’s been their biggest problem for 1900 years.] ...and sent an ambassador after him, saying, ‘We are not willing to have this man reign over us.’”

So, when He comes to His Kingdom; after He gives the reward to those who had the pounds

and did what they should have, v 27 “Moreover, bring my enemies, those who were not willing for me to reign over them, and slay *them* here before me.” When it talks about a *Stone of Offense* going to grind them to powder, it’s exactly what’s going to happen.

1-Peter 2:5: “**You also, as living stones...**” That means we are to be living this way of life. Now, let’s put just a couple of other Scriptures in here to show how this will work together. That ties into ‘offer up spiritual sacrifices.

Romans 12 tells us how we are to be *living stones*. What is it that gives us life? It’s the Spirit that gives life—right? And how are we to worship God? *In Spirit and in Truth!*

Romans 12:1: “I exhort you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice... [and as Paul said, ‘those who are alive from the dead.’] ...Holy and well pleasing to God, which is your spiritual service. Do not conform yourselves to this world, but be transformed... [that’s where conversion takes place; that’s how you are a living stone.] ...by the renewing of your mind... [through the Spirit of God] ...in order that you may prove what *is* well pleasing and good, and the perfect will of God” (vs 1-2). That’s how we are to be, having our lives conducted as a living sacrifices.

Let’s go to John, the sixth chapter, and let’s see where all of this comes from.

- We have a *living stone*
- We have the *living Word*
- We have the *living Christ*
- We have the *living Father*

John 6:51—It’s interesting because the Greek there for *living* is the same word for *eternal life*. Jesus said, “I am the **living bread**... [that’s why it’s so important that we keep the Passover the way that God shows.] ...which came down from heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread that I will give is even My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.” He’s the *living bread*—He gives *life!*

Verse 57: “As the living Father has sent Me... [That’s why we are to have a *living faith* with *living works*, with *living belief!* That’s what it is that God gives to us.] ...and **I live by the Father**; so also the one who eats Me shall live by Me.” That ties in exactly with what Peter is writing here and is showing us what to do and how to do and how to live.

Let’s go to Hebrews, the thirteenth chapter, and let’s see some more of these spiritual sacrifices, which we are to offer up. Now this, after Paul writes

all about the animal sacrifices and everything in the book of Hebrews, this becomes very important, and there’s quite a bit of material in here to show that what some of these Jews were doing: they were giving up on Christ, they were giving up on the New Testament Passover, they were going back to circumcision, going back to sacrifices—and everything—rejecting Christ because Jesus didn’t come when they wanted Him to. So they went back to what they had, and were rejecting Christ.

Hebrews 13:15: “Accordingly, let us offer *the* sacrifice of praise continually to God through Him; that is, *with the* fruit of *our* lips openly professing *our faith* in His name. Now do not forget to do good and to fellowship, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased” (vs 15-16).

So, it gets right down into our daily conduct. We have Jesus Christ, Who is the living Stone—right? We are to be *living stones*. We then are to follow Christ’s way. When you read that, it does just like it did with the book of James, it puts a little dagger in the heart—doesn’t it? *Yes, it does!* Why? *You find yourself falling short!* *Yes!* So do I. Everyone does. And that’s why we have the Sabbath. That’s why we can be inspired on the Sabbath, because probably on Monday it’s going to be a downer! Maybe it will and maybe it won’t! But if it is, we’re not to go ahead and be like the world. So those are pleasing to God.

Let’s see some other things that are also pleasing to God. Just put in your notes: Gal. 5:22 (you should have that memorized) ‘For the fruit of the Spirit is love and faith and hope and meekness and temperance and patience; against such there is no law.’ Those are spiritual sacrifices to God.

What is the hardest thing in the world to do? I’ll tell you what the hardest thing in the world to do is: *to be nice when you’ve been wronged!* And I would have to say that I think I’ve failed that test more than anybody I know. Maybe that’s why we have such tough times once in while; so we can learn that lesson. I always remember what Christ said when He was dying—He said: ‘Father, forgive them, for they know not what they are doing.’ Amazing! I mean, **amazing!** When you think about that; and you think, boy, some of the situations that you’ve been put in, that I’ve been put in, where we’ve been much more short, much quicker, and haven’t even thought of that. That thought was so far from us we couldn’t even understand it—right? While we’re still yet Christians—right? *Right!*

Let’s go to Colossians, the first chapter, because these spiritual sacrifices and these things are to perfect us through Christ. And that’s the only perfection there’s going to be, and that’s the only way we’re going to have the

- living faith
- the living hope
- the living Word
- the living Christ
- the living Father

Colossians 1:26: “*Even* the mystery... [secret of God] ...that has been hidden from ages and from generations...”—not even the prophets; not even the angels. *It sure is true!* Now you know why the Laodiceans get rich and increased with goods; because they have the Word of God, they’ve got everything; they’ve got it comfortable, they have all of this and they lose site of the tremendous thing that God has done; that there would have been people who would have willingly *given their lives* to know what we know. And then we go, ‘Oh hum!’ No wonder God is about ready to spit some out.

“...but has now been revealed to His saints... [God has revealed it though His Spirit] ...to whom God did will to make known what *is* the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory” (vs 26-27). Amazing, brethren!

We talk about the resurrection kind of as an off-handed thing. But I tell you what, when you see death, or you’re staring death in the face, or when one of your relatives dies, and you go by yourself in your little-ole corner or closet and you really realize how a little an infinitesimal thing that we are. Then the resurrection means a lot—doesn’t it? I mean, think about it, ***God is going to resurrect us from the dead!*** Or change us “in the moment, in the twinkling of an eye at the last trump”—if we make it alive ’til then. And He is going to ‘change this vile body made like unto His glorious body.’ Boy, that’s something!

And I will tell you one thing: I don’t think the times around us are going to get much better. So we’ve got to keep that focus right in mind—right there! And the next time some difficult thing comes upon you, put that right there—right smack between your forehead; deep in your heart, let Christ in you, because He’s the “hope of glory.”

Verse 28: “Whom we preach, [warning] admonishing every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, so that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.... [Isn’t that what Peter’s preaching over here: as ‘living stones’; ‘spiritual sacrifices’; as ‘spiritual house unto God’? *Yes, indeed!*] ...For this cause I also labor, striving according to His inner working, which works in me with power” (vs 28-29). It would be wonderful, brethren, if we had 10,000 Apostle Pauls around to preach today—wouldn’t it? *Yes, it would!*

Now, let’s go back to 1-Peter, the second chapter, and we’ll talk a little bit about Zion next time, but we’ll finish here with 1-Peter 2:6—for this reason: “Wherefore, also it is contained in the Scripture, ‘Behold, I lay in Sion a Chief Corner Stone, [chosen] elect, precious: and he that believes on Him shall not be [put to shame] confounded’—and that means before God; maybe before men, in a trial.

But before God, *no!* What is it that men can do to you, anyway? Well, they can take your life; but ***God’s going to resurrect you!*** You know, sometimes that sound a little fatalistic. But I tell you what, when we stare the jaws of death right down the throat, and see those teeth opening up, that means a lot—doesn’t it? *Yes, it does!*

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

- ✓ Exception: 1-Peter, from *The Seven General Epistles* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) 1-Peter 1:2, 1
- 2) Romans 3:31
- 3) Romans 6:1-2
- 4) 1 Peter 1:2-25
- 5) 2 Peter 2:1-3
- 6) Romans 2:1-7
- 7) 1-Peter 2:3-8
- 8) Isaiah 8:11-20
- 9) 1-Peter 2:4-5
- 10) Ephesians 2:18-22
- 11) Ephesians 4:12, 16
- 12) Psalm 118:6-9, 21-24
- 13) Isaiah 28:14-16
- 14) Matthew 21:33-46
- 15) Luke 20:17
- 16) Luke 19:14, 27
- 17) 1-Peter 2:5
- 18) Romans 12:1-2
- 19) John 6:51, 57
- 20) Hebrews 13:15-16
- 21) Colossians 1:26-29
- 22) 1-Peter 2:6

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Hebrews 5
- Matt. 16:18
- John 1:43
- Luke 20:9-16
- Galatians 5:22

Also referenced:

Sermons:

- *What Does it Mean, Dead?*
- *Covenant of Peace*

Books:

- *The Christian Passover* by Fred R. Coulter
- *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus* by Joachim Jeremias

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