

Living Stones

Key Verse: “Ye also, as [living] stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.”
—I Peter 2:5

Selected Scripture:
I Peter 2:1-12

BEING CONSIDERED AS

“God’s people” has had different meanings and bore different results throughout mankind’s history. In the Old Testament writings, for example, we learn about the nation of Israel, who constituted God’s people for many centuries, with their alternating periods of faithfulness and unfaithfulness. (Exod. 6:7) In God’s coming kingdom here on earth the entire redeemed

human race will be given the opportunity to become the people of God.—Rev. 21:3-7

In today’s lesson the Apostle Peter addresses God’s people during the present age, since Pentecost—those who are sacrificing their earthly ambitions for the hope of a heavenly reward in the “first resurrection.” (Rev. 20:6) Peter explains that these are being built as a “spiritual house.” They are “elect [chosen] according to the foreknowledge of God.”—I Pet. 2:5; 1:2

God’s people during this present time have the responsibility further noted by Peter, saying “that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.” (I Pet. 2:9) We were once in darkness, separated from God, but were called to be his people. As a result, one of our great privileges is to “shew forth” God’s praises by proclaiming the glad

tidings of the Gospel, and as Jesus instructed, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”—Matt. 24:14; 5:16

As a “holy priesthood,” God’s people are separated from the world for the purpose of service. Being part of this priesthood is the result of our coming to the Lord Jesus Christ, laying aside the fallen tendencies of our flesh, and then engaging in sacrifice. (I Pet. 2:1,5) We are in the world, yet are “not of the world,” Jesus said. (John 17:14) Those who continue faithful unto death will become part of the “royal priesthood” in the kingdom, when the glorified church, with Jesus as its Head, will become instructors in righteousness to the world of mankind.—I Pet. 2:9

As noted in our Key Verse, by coming to Jesus, we are being prepared as living stones, which are being “built up a spiritual house.” Peter does not say we will build this spiritual house, but that we will be “built up” into it. Each stone will be shaped, chiseled, and polished to fit perfectly in place according to God’s design. As part of this spiritual house which is being built upon the solid foundation of Jesus as a ransom for all, we become precious in God’s sight.

In addition, God’s people at the present time are called “a peculiar people.” (I Pet. 2:9; Tit. 2:14) The thought denoted by the word “peculiar” is that of a “people for God’s possession,” or a “people for a purpose,” implying that God has a special mission in life for them.

These have been redeemed with “the precious blood of Christ.” (I Pet. 1:18,19) They have consecrated, or dedicated, themselves fully to the Lord, and have offered their life to him in sacrifice, having been made acceptable through Christ. (Rom. 12:1) Their lives are completely dedicated to God. They are “now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy,” so that God considers them his special treasure.—I Pet. 2:10■