

CHAPTER TWO OF FIRST PETER

I. PETER LAYS DOWN FIVE BASIC PREMISES IN CHAPTER TWO:

1. These Christians Were To Grow Up Into Spiritual Maturity.

A. Verses 1-3 "Have done, then, with all evil and deceit, all pretense and jealousy and slander. You are babies, newborn in God's family, and you should be crying out for unadulterated spiritual milk to make you grow up to salvation. And so you will, if you have already tasted the goodness of the Lord."

(Phillips, Trans.)

B. The King James translation of the "sincere milk of the word" is not a proper translation especially since "word" does not appear there.

"Peter tries to convey the idea that the Christian is moving up naturally and properly through instruction by way of the divinely given nourishment supplied by the gospel."

Dolos - Deceitfulness. The two facedness, the trickery, the conscious deception of the man who is out to deceive others to attain his own ends. Dolos is the vice of the man whose motives are always adulterated and never pure.

Hypokrisis - Hypocrisy A man who all the time is concealing his real motives, a man who meets you with a face which is very different from his heart. And with words which are very different from his real feelings.

Phthonos - Envy. It may well be said that envy is the last sin to die. It reared its ugly head even in the apostolic band....So long as self remains active within the heart there will be envy in his life. Envy can die only when self dies.

Katalalia - Evil speaking. It is almost always the fruit of envy in the heart; and it usually takes place when the victim of it is not there to defend himself. There is nothing so attractive as listening to spicy gossip, unless it be repeating the slanderous and malicious tale. "Disparaging gossip is something which everyone deprecates, and which everyone admits to be wrong, and which at the same time almost everyone enjoys; and yet there is nothing more productive of trouble and of heartbreak, and nothing which is so destructive of brotherly love and Christian unity.

These are the things which the reborn man must strip off, for, if he continues to allow them to have a grip upon his life, the unity of the brethren cannot but be injured and destroyed.

2. Secondly, Peter Uses The Metaphor Of Christians Being Spiritual Stones In God's Temple.

A. Verses 4 - 10 "To change the metaphor, you come to Him, as living stones to the immensely valuable Living Stone (Which men rejected but God chose), to be built up into a spiritual House of God, in which you, like holy priests, can offer those spiritual sacrifices which are acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. There is a passage to this effect in Scripture, and it runs like this:

*From Jan 28:14
And Peter is
Propagating Quoting
From Matt 21:42*

"Behold I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious:
And he that believeth on Him shall not be put to shame."

It is to you who believe in Him that He is 'precious,' but to those who disobey God it is true that

"The stone which the builders rejected,
The same was made the head of the corner"

And He is, to them,

A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense.

Yes, they stumble at the word of God for in their hearts they are unwilling to obey it - which makes stumbling a foregone conclusion. But you are God's 'chosen generation,' His 'royal priesthood,' His 'holy nation,' His 'peculiar people' - all the old titles of God's People now belong to you. It is for you now to demonstrate the goodness of Him Who has called you out of darkness into His amazing Light. In the past you were not " a people" at all: now you are the People of God. In the past you had no experience of His mercy, but now it is intimately yours."

(Phillips, Trans.)

*Christians
And Peter
Quoting
From Matt 21:42*

Lithos - stone. Is used to designate a precious stone, or a stone used for a specific purpose. This word is consistently used in the resurrection story for the stone rolled across a tomb. It may be used for building stones. It may be contrasted with petros, a detached fragment of rock, as contrasted with petra, a cliff or rocky promontory such as Gibraltar.

B. Jesus Christ Is The Cornerstone Of The Building.

- (1) Matt. 21:42 "Jesus said unto them, Did ye never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: (Mark 12:10, Luke 20:17)
- (2) Acts 4:11-12 "He is the stone which was set at naught of you builders, which was made the head of the corner. And in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved."
Isa. 28:16
See also: Isa. 61:6, Ex. 19:6, Matt. 21:44

Note: God was not trying to get, here and there, a separate moral person to prepare to enjoy eternal glory. He was trying to obtain a race of holy persons; "a chosen race, a holy nation, a people belonging to God."

C. We Learn Three Things From This Passage In Chapter Two:

(1) Every Christian Is A Part Of A Community. He Cannot Stand Aloof.

C.E. Be Canfield wrote long ago "The Christian is likened to a living stone, and the Church is likened into a living edifice into which he is built (verse 5). Clearly that means that Christianity is community. The individual Christian only finds his true place when he is built into the edifice of the Church. 'The free-lance Christian, who would be a Christian but is too superior to belong to the visible Church upon earth is simply a contradiction in terms.'

(2) Christians Are A Holy Priesthood.

- a. The priest is the man who himself has access to God, and whose task it is to bring others to God.
- b. The priest is the man who brings an offering to God.

1. Rom. 12:1 "Present your bodies a living sacrifices"

(a) He is to offer himself.

(3) The Function of the Church Is To Tell Forth The Excellencies of God.

- a. "That you may proclaim the mighty deeds of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."

D. To Summarize this passage:

- (1) Christians Are Living Stones
(2) " A Chosen Generation
(3) " A Royal Priesthood
(4) " A Holy Nation
(5) " A Peculiar People

- a. These Gentile Christians who in times past had not been a people of God were an integral part of the Christian community.

3. Thirdly: Peter Admonishes These Christian Communities To Set The Right Examples Before The Pagan Communities.

- A. Verses 11 - 17 "I beg you, as those whom I love, who live in this world as strangers and 'temporary residents,' to keep clear of the desires of your lower natures, for they are always at war with your souls. Your conduct among the surrounding peoples in your different countries should always be good and right, so that although they may in the usual way slander you as evildoers, yet when disasters come they may glorify God when they see how well you conduct yourselves.

"Obey every man-made authority for the Lord's sake - whether it is the Emperor, as the supreme ruler, or the Governors whom he has appointed to punish evildoers and reward those who do good service. It is the Will of God that you may thus silence the ill-informed criticisms of the foolish. As free men you should never use your freedom as an excuse for doing something that is wrong, for you are at all times the servants of God. You should have respect for everyone; you should love our brotherhood, fear God and honor the Emperor."

B. Both Peter And Paul Believed That A Christian Community Should Be Law-Abiding.

(1) Rom. 13: 3-4

Elvis Cochran well says just here:

"Neither writer, Paul or Peter, intended to convey that the Christian's duty was to a man, as such, that is, to Nero or Domitian, but rather to the office which he held. Governmental offices and the authority invested in them are to be held in honor as ordained by God but ~~XX~~ a very reprehensible character might get power of which we have numerous illustrations throughout history. Peter's admonition, "honor the Emperor" did not refer to the person of Nero, a most dissolute character, but rather to the office which he held and the authority of that office."

The Epistles of Peter, p. 44

C. CHRISTIANS WERE TO OFFSET SLANDEROUS ACCUSATIONS BY RIGHT LIVING.

Barclay says:

"The early Church was a Church under fire. Slanderous and untrue charges were continually being made against the Christians; and the only effective way to refute these charges was to live so love a life that they would be proved to be obviously untrue....Here, then, is the great timeless truth. The best argument for Christianity is a real Christian; and, therefore, whether we like it or not, every Christian is an advertisement for Christianity. By his life he recommends or makes people think less of it. The strongest missionary force in the world is a christian life."

Note: When Plato was told that a certain man had been making certain slanderous charges against him, his answer was: "I will live in such a way that no one will believe what he says."

D. The Early Church Actually Did Follow The Admonition of Peter In This Regard.

In the first half of the fourth century, Eusebius, the great Church historian, could write:

"But the splendour of the catholic and only true Church, which is always the same, grew in magnitude and power, and reflected its piety and simplicity and freedom, and the modesty and purity of its inspired life and philosophy to every nation both of Greeks and barians. At the same time slanderous accusations which had been brought against the whole church also vanished, and there remained our teaching alone, which has prevailed over all, and which is acknowledged to be superior to all in dignity and temperance, and in divine and philosophical doctrines. So that none of them now ventures to affix a base calumny upon our faith, or any such slander as our ancient enemies formerly delighted to utter."

The Ecclesiastical History 4.7.15

4. Fourthly, Christians Who Were Servants Were To Set The Right Example Also.

A. Verses 18-20 "You who are servants should submit to your masters with proper respect - not only to the good and kind, but also to the difficult. A man does something valuable when he endures pain, as in the sight of God, though he knows he is suffering unjustly. After all, it is no credit to you if you are patient in bearing a punishment which you have richly deserved! But if you do your duty and are punished for it and can still accept it patiently, you are doing something worthwhile in God's sight. Indeed this is a part of your calling." (Phillips, Trans.)

B. Barclay says again:

"Here is the passage which would be relevant to by far the greatest numbers of the readers and hearers of this letter, for here Peter writes to servants and slaves, who formed by far the greatest part of the early church. The word which Peter uses for servants is not douloi, which is the commonest and widest word for slaves; it is oiketai; and the oiketai were mainly the household and the domestic slaves."

"To understand the real meaning of what Peter is saying we must understand something of the nature of slavery and servitude in the time of the early church. In the Roman Empire there were as many as 60,000,000 slaves. In very early times there had been few slaves in Rome; slavery began with Roman conquests, for slaves were originally mainly prisoners taken in war..... By New Testament times, as we have said, slaves were counted by the millions; It was by no means only menial tasks which were performed by slaves. Doctors, teachers, musicians, actors, secretaries, stewards were slaves. In fact, all the work of Rome was done by slaves. By this time the Roman attitude was that there was no point in being master of the world and doing one's own work. Let the slaves do that, and let the citizens live in pampered idleness.slaves were not allowed to marry sometimes - but they cohabited; and the children born of such a partnership were the property of the master, not of the parents, just as the lambs born to the sheep belonged to the owner of the flock, and not to the sheep.

"In Roman law a slave was not a person; he was a thing; and he had absolutely no legal rights whatsoever. However well he might be treated, he remained a thing with nothing in the world to call his own, not even himself. For that reason there could be no such thing as justice where a slave was concerned."

C. The Writings of Paul Show That Slaves Constituted A Large Part Of The Church.

- (1) Eph. 6:5-8 "Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh...."
- (2) Col. 3:22 "Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh;
- (3) I Tim. 6:1-2 "Let us many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, that the name of God, and his doctrine not be blasphemed. And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren; but rather do service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit."

NOTE: Paul's letter to Philemon and the application of the principles of Christ completely eradicated slavery in the area where Christianity went. At least, for awhile.

5. Fifthly, Christ Is Our Example For Sufferings.

- A. Verses 21-25 "For Christ suffered for you and left you a personal Example, and wants you to follow in His Steps. He was guilty of no sin or the slightest prevarication. Yet when He was insulted He offered no insult in return. When He suffered He made no threats of revenge. He simply committed His cause to the One Who judges fairly. And He personally bore our sins in His own body on the Cross, so that we might be dead to sin and be alive to all that is good. It was the suffering that He bore that has healed you. You had wandered away like so many sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls."

ISA. 40:11

Ezek. 34:23, 37:24

John 10:1-18