

# The Life and Letters of Peter

## Lesson Seven: Living Stones

### Review 1 Peter 1

The letter is written by \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ scattered all over Asia.  
They are \_\_\_\_\_ (v 2) by God, and will receive an \_\_\_\_\_ (v 4)  
They are \_\_\_\_\_ in trials (v 6) which are refining their \_\_\_\_\_ (v 7)  
They know the salvation that the \_\_\_\_\_ longed to understand. (v 10)  
They are to be \_\_\_\_\_ (v 15)  
They have been \_\_\_\_\_ (v 18) from the empty way of life of their forefathers by the \_\_\_\_\_ (v 19)  
of Jesus.

### Divide this section into paragraphs. Write a title for each in the margin.

1 Peter 2:1 Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind.  
2 Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation,  
3 now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.  
4 As you come to him, the living Stone--rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him--  
5 you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.  
6 For in Scripture it says: "See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame."  
7 Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe, "The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone,"  
8 and, "A stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall." They stumble because they disobey the message--which is also what they were destined for.  
9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.  
10 Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

In this section, Peter writes to the Jewish believers using prophetic scriptures they would be familiar with. List the key metaphors you notice in the passage.

## Grow in Salvation

<p>Therefore indicates a connection to something. What's the therefore there for?</p> <p>What are the believers supposed to get rid of?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.</li> <li>2.</li> <li>3.</li> <li>4.</li> <li>5.</li> </ol> <p>What do these attitudes have in common?</p>	<p>1 Peter 2:1 Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind.</p>									
<p>In Chapter 1, the believers were "born again". Chapter 2, v 2-3 refers to them as babies. What do newborn babies need to grow? How do they need it? What is the verb Peter uses?</p> <p>Examine the symbolism:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>"Grower"</th> <th>Need</th> <th>Result</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Babies</td> <td>Milk</td> <td>Grow up healthy and strong</td> </tr> <tr> <td>New Believers</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	"Grower"	Need	Result	Babies	Milk	Grow up healthy and strong	New Believers			<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2 Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation,</li> <li>3 now that you have tasted that the Lord is good</li> </ol>
"Grower"	Need	Result								
Babies	Milk	Grow up healthy and strong								
New Believers										

How have you tasted that the Lord is good?

## Living Stones

<p>Jesus is defined here as a "living Stone". What else does v 4 say about Him?</p> <p>The believers are also called living stones. How else are they described? What is the tense of the verbs?</p> <p>This is a reference to Isaiah 61:6 "And you will be called priests of the LORD, you will be named ministers of our God." What was the role of the priests?</p> <p>What are the believers to offer in v 5?</p> <p>In Romans 12:1-2 Paul teaches: "Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will."</p> <p>How do Peter's words in this chapter parallel this concept?</p>	<p>1 Peter 2:4-5</p> <p>4 As you come to him, the living Stone--rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him--</p> <p>5 you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.</p>
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<p>Paul teaches the same concept of the believers being built together on the foundation of Christ in Ephesians, but he includes a different group than Peter refers to. Who is Paul referring to?</p> <p>Who are the people referred to by "both"?</p> <p>What makes up the "building" in this illustration?</p>	<p>Ephesians 2:11-13, 18-22</p> <p>Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called "uncircumcised" by those who call themselves "the circumcision" (that done in the body by the hands of men)-- remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ... For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.</p>
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## Significant Rocks

<p>Peter refers to two special rocks in this illustration series: the cornerstone and the capstone. Capstone is sometimes translated as cornerstone, since it may be in a corner as well.</p>			
<p>A <b>cornerstone</b> is a foundational stone in a building</p>		<p>A <b>capstone</b> is an architectural term denoting the top stone in a building or wall. If it caps an arch it is called a keystone.</p>	
<p>Cornerstone</p>	<p>1 : a stone forming a part of a corner or angle in a wall; specifically : such a stone laid at a formal ceremony 2 : a basic element : foundation &lt;a ~ of foreign policy&gt;</p>	<p>capstone</p>	<p>1 : a coping stone : coping 2 : the high point : crowning achievement</p>
<p>Think back over the lessons we've had about Peter. What significance do stones (rocks) have for Peter? (<i>Hint: see Matt 16:13-20</i>)</p>			

## Precious Stones

Remember, Peter addresses Jews here, who would know the Old Testament well. Peter quotes scripture:

6 For in Scripture it says: "See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame."

Look at the passage quoted:

**Isaiah 28: 16-18** So this is what the Sovereign LORD says: "See, I lay a stone in Zion, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone for a sure foundation; the one who trusts will never be dismayed. I will make justice the measuring line and righteousness the plumb line; hail will sweep away your refuge, the lie, and water will overflow your hiding place. Your covenant with death will be annulled; your agreement with the grave will not stand."

How is this stone described?

What happens to the one who trusts in him in Peter's letter and in the Isaiah passage?

In Zechariah 10:3-7 God had promised something else about the cornerstone. Where would the cornerstone be from?

Why would he (the cornerstone) come?

Who is being restored? Why?

### **Zechariah 10: 3-7**

3 "My anger burns against the shepherds, and I will punish the leaders; for the LORD Almighty will care for his flock, the house of Judah, and make them like a proud horse in battle.

4 From Judah will come the cornerstone, from him the tent peg, from him the battle bow, from him every ruler.

5 Together they will be like mighty men trampling the muddy streets in battle. Because the LORD is with them, they will fight and overthrow the horsemen.

6 "I will strengthen the house of Judah and save the house of Joseph. I will restore them because I have compassion on them. They will be as though I had not rejected them, for I am the LORD their God and I will answer them.

7 The Ephraimites will become like mighty men, and their hearts will be glad as with wine. Their children will see it and be joyful; their hearts will rejoice in the Lord.

Peter says in v 7 "Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe, "The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone,"

This is a quote from Psalm 118:

- 19 Open for me the gates of righteousness; I will enter and give thanks to the LORD.
- 20 This is the gate of the LORD through which the righteous may enter.
- 21 I will give you thanks, for you answered me; you have become my salvation.
- 22 The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone;
- 23 the LORD has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes.
- 24 This is the day the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.
- 25 O LORD, save us; O LORD, grant us success.
- 26 Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD. From the house of the LORD we bless you.
- 27 The LORD is God, and he has made his light shine upon us. With boughs in hand, join in the festal procession up to the horns of the altar.

What is the mood of the people (in regard to this concept) in the Psalm? Why?

There are variations in how the word "capstone" used in 2:7 in the NIV is translated in other versions:

New Living: Yes, he is very precious to you who believe. But for those who reject him, "The stone that was rejected by the builders has now become the **cornerstone**."

NASB: 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,}"

NRSV: To you then who believe, he is precious; but for those who do not believe, "The stone that the builders rejected has become the **very head of the corner**,"

KJV: Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the **head of the corner**,

NKJV: Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, "The stone which the builders rejected has become the **chief cornerstone**,"

The actual Greek words used are **kefalē** *kephale*, which is "head or chief" and **gwnia** <sup>2</sup> (*gonia*) which is "a corner, or external angle". Either way, (capstone, cornerstone, chief corner, head corner) it indicates that something was of great importance.

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<sup>1</sup>Thomas, Robert L., Th.D., General Editor, *New American Standard Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek Dictionaries, Updated Edition*, (Anaheim, CA: Foundation Publications, Inc.) 1999, c1998.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*

Peter quotes one more thing in v 8:

... and, "A stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall." They stumble because they disobey the message--which is also what they were destined for.

This is quoted from Isaiah 8:12-15

"Do not call conspiracy everything that these people call conspiracy; do not fear what they fear, and do not dread it. The LORD Almighty is the one you are to regard as holy, he is the one you are to fear, he is the one you are to dread, and he will be a sanctuary; but for both houses of Israel he will be a stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall. And for the people of Jerusalem he will be a trap and a snare. Many of them will stumble; they will fall and be broken, they will be snared and captured."

What does it say the Lord will be in Isaiah?

Who will he be a problem for?

Why does Peter say will cause them to stumble over the stone?

## Peter's Earlier Teaching on the Stone

<p>Peter had used this message regarding the Jews and the stone before. Read Acts 4:5-18.</p> <p>Who is Peter's audience?</p> <p>Who does he say is the stone?</p> <p>Who rejected the stone?</p> <p>How did his audience react to his message?</p> <p>What causes them to "stumble"?</p> <p>Remember Isaiah's prophecy we just looked at. Who did he say would stumble?</p>	<p>Acts 4: 5-18</p> <p>The next day the rulers, elders and teachers of the law met in Jerusalem. Annas the high priest was there, and so were Caiaphas, John, Alexander and the other men of the high priest's family. They had Peter and John brought before them and began to question them: "By what power or what name did you do this?"</p> <p>Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: "Rulers and elders of the people! If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a cripple and are asked how he was healed, then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. He is "'the stone you builders rejected, which has become the capstone.' Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."</p> <p>When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus. But since they could see the man who had been healed standing there with them, there was nothing they could say. So they ordered them to withdraw from the Sanhedrin and then conferred together. "What are we going to do with these men?" they asked. "Everybody living in Jerusalem knows they have done an outstanding miracle, and we cannot deny it. But to stop this thing from spreading any further among the people, we must warn these men to speak no longer to anyone in this name." Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.</p>
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## Jesus' Teaching on the Stones

Jesus had also taught this very passage, referred to in three of the four gospels. Let's see how He used it.

<p>Matthew 21:33-46</p> <p>33 "Listen to another parable: There was a landowner who planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a winepress in it and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and went away on a journey.</p> <p>34 When the harvest time approached, he sent his servants to the tenants to collect his fruit.</p> <p>35 "The tenants seized his servants; they beat one, killed another, and stoned a third.</p> <p>36 Then he sent other servants to them, more than the first time, and the tenants treated them the same way.</p> <p>37 Last of all, he sent his son to them. 'They will respect my son,' he said.</p> <p>38 "But when the tenants saw the son, they said to each other, 'This is the heir. Come, let's kill him and take his inheritance.'</p> <p>39 So they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.</p> <p>40 "Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?"</p> <p>41 "He will bring those wretches to a wretched end," they replied, "and he will rent the vineyard to other tenants, who will give him his share of the crop at harvest time."</p> <p>42 Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: "'The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone ; the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes'?"</p> <p>43 "Therefore I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit.</p> <p>44 He who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces, but he on whom it falls will be crushed."</p> <p>45 When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard Jesus' parables, they knew he was talking about them.</p> <p>46 They looked for a way to arrest him, but they were afraid of the crowd because the people held that he was a prophet.</p>	<p>Mark 12:1-12</p> <p>12:1 He then began to speak to them in parables: "A man planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a pit for the winepress and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and went away on a journey.</p> <p>2 At harvest time he sent a servant to the tenants to collect from them some of the fruit of the vineyard.</p> <p>3 But they seized him, beat him and sent him away empty-handed.</p> <p>4 Then he sent another servant to them; they struck this man on the head and treated him shamefully.</p> <p>5 He sent still another, and that one they killed. He sent many others; some of them they beat, others they killed.</p> <p>6 "He had one left to send, a son, whom he loved. He sent him last of all, saying, 'They will respect my son.'</p> <p>7 "But the tenants said to one another, 'This is the heir. Come, let's kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.'</p> <p>8 So they took him and killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard.</p> <p>9 "What then will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and kill those tenants and give the vineyard to others.</p> <p>10 Haven't you read this scripture: "'The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone ;</p> <p>11 the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes'?"</p> <p>12 Then they looked for a way to arrest him because they knew he had spoken the parable against them. But they were afraid of the crowd; so they left him and went away.</p>	<p>Luke 20:9-19</p> <p>9 He went on to tell the people this parable: "A man planted a vineyard, rented it to some farmers and went away for a long time.</p> <p>10 At harvest time he sent a servant to the tenants so they would give him some of the fruit of the vineyard. But the tenants beat him and sent him away empty-handed.</p> <p>11 He sent another servant, but that one also they beat and treated shamefully and sent away empty-handed.</p> <p>12 He sent still a third, and they wounded him and threw him out.</p> <p>13 "Then the owner of the vineyard said, 'What shall I do? I will send my son, whom I love; perhaps they will respect him.'</p> <p>14 "But when the tenants saw him, they talked the matter over. 'This is the heir,' they said. 'Let's kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.'</p> <p>15 So they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. "What then will the owner of the vineyard do to them?"</p> <p>16 He will come and kill those tenants and give the vineyard to others." When the people heard this, they said, "May this never be!"</p> <p>17 Jesus looked directly at them and asked, "Then what is the meaning of that which is written: "'The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone '?"</p> <p>18 Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, but he on whom it falls will be crushed."</p> <p>19 The teachers of the law and the chief priests looked for a way to arrest him immediately, because they knew he had spoken this parable against them. But they were afraid of the people.</p>
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What was Jesus' point in quoting the verse?

## Foolish Stones

<p>Paul repeats this concept to the Corinthians. To some it is power, some salvation, some a stumbling block and to others foolishness. What is the message of Christ to you?</p> <p>Do you know someone who stumbles over the message of the gospel? Pray for the Holy Spirit to enlighten them to the power and wisdom of God in Christ.</p>	<p>1 Corinthians 1:20-25</p> <p>Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe. Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength.</p>
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## Characteristics of Believers

<p>Peter describes these believers in 4 ways. List them.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.</li> <li>2.</li> <li>3.</li> <li>4.</li> </ol> <p>What are they to do?</p>	<p>1 Peter 2:9</p> <p>But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.</p>
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## More Old Testament Connections

<p>Peter calls the believers names promised to the Jews in the Old Testament. Match the name to the prophecy that mentions it.</p>	
<p>Chosen people Royal priesthood Holy nation People belonging to God</p>	<p>Deuteronomy 7:6 For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession.</p>
	<p>Deuteronomy 10:15 Yet the LORD set his affection on your forefathers and loved them, and he chose you, their descendants, above all the nations, as it is today.</p>
	<p>Exodus 19:5-6 Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites."</p>
	<p>Isaiah 62:11-12 The LORD has made proclamation to the ends of the earth: "Say to the Daughter of Zion, 'See, your Savior comes! See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him.'" They will be called the Holy People, the Redeemed of the LORD; and you will be called Sought After, the City No Longer Deserted.</p>
<p><b>Parallel Symbolism</b> In Revelation 1:4-6 John uses the same symbolism, calling the believers priests. What are the priests to do here?</p> <p>Paul uses the symbolism of light and dark in Ephesians. How are the children of light to live?</p> <p>How does this reinforce the message Peter has written in his letter?</p>	<p>Revelation 1:4-6 Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits before his throne, and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father--to him be glory and power forever and ever! Amen.</p> <p>Ephesians 5:8-10 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) and find out what pleases the Lord.</p>

## Before and After

1 Peter 2:9-10

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

List the three sets of contrasts occurring in these people that are mentioned in these verses.

What they were	What they are

## More Old Testament Connections!

In his contrasts, Peter refers back to the time of the prophet Hosea, who illustrated Israel's spiritual adultery by marrying an adulterous wife. He had several children, and each one was given a name that meant something about the condition of the nation.

**Jezreel** means "God scatters"

**Lo-Ruhmamah** means "not pitied, she has not obtained compassion"

**Lo-Ammi** means "not my people"

Which two names connect to Peter's message?

Hosea 1: 2-10

When the LORD began to speak through Hosea, the LORD said to him, "Go, take to yourself an adulterous wife and children of unfaithfulness, because the land is guilty of the vilest adultery in departing from the LORD." So he married Gomer daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son. Then the LORD said to Hosea, "Call him Jezreel, because I will soon punish the house of Jehu for the massacre at Jezreel, and I will put an end to the kingdom of Israel. In that day I will break Israel's bow in the Valley of Jezreel." Gomer conceived again and gave birth to a daughter. Then the LORD said to Hosea, "Call her Lo-Ruhamah, for I will no longer show love to the house of Israel, that I should at all forgive them. Yet I will show love to the house of Judah; and I will save them--not by bow, sword or battle, or by horses and horsemen, but by the LORD their God." After she had weaned Lo-Ruhamah, Gomer had another son. Then the LORD said, "Call him Lo-Ammi, for you are not my people, and I am not your God. "Yet the Israelites will be like the sand on the seashore, which cannot be measured or counted. In the place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people,' they will be called 'sons of the living God.'

## Mercy

Peter says, "once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy."

He opened his letter saying: "*Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade--kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.*"

Paul teaches the same concept to Titus in his letter. How have we received mercy, and what do we gain as a result?

Titus 3:4 -7

But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.

## Declare his praises!

What things can you declare as praises to God that we have studied in this section? List them, then declare them!