

Study 4

Purposeful People

1 Peter 2:4-10

A Living Hope

1 Peter

In this section Peter uses two familiar Old Testament ideas as metaphors to describe Christians. First, Christians are the temple of the Lord and a holy priesthood (2:4-8). Second, Christians are the people of God, heirs of the privileges and responsibilities that belonged to Ancient Israel. At the heart of both of these descriptions is the work that God has done in Jesus Christ. Christ is the precious cornerstone, the new place where God can be met and known. For some of course, the idea that God can be known only in and through Christ is unacceptable and as a result they reject God's chosen stone (2:7). The consequence of this is that they themselves will be rejected and stumble (in the original a reference to a fatal trip). By contrast those who accept the cornerstone that God has provided (2:4) will never be ashamed and have a firm foundation for a lasting relationship with God (2:6).

In the second metaphor, Peter applies Exodus 19:1-6 to Christians reminding them that they now belong to God because of His mercy in Christ. Consequently they are called to declare the praises of God who called them out of darkness and into light. What that means in practice is the subject of the rest of Peter's letter.



Read 1 Peter 2:4-10

1. What is the theological and practical significance of Peter describing Christ and believers in terms drawn from the Old Testament temple and its worship?

2. How does the context of the Old Testament quotations help us understand Peter's message?

3. In what way does the coming of Jesus divide humankind?

4. What aspect of our identity as God's people in v9-10 stands out for you?



5. The three most important offices in Ancient Israel were that of Prophet, Priest and King. The prophet declared God's word to his people and called them back to faithfulness to God's covenant. The priest mercifully represented the people to God and God to the people. The king ruled God's people according to God's law. In some sense each one of God's people was called to act in each one of these roles (Ex. 19.6). What do each of these three roles practically mean for us today?

Prophet ("declare the praises"):

Priest ("priesthood"):

King ("royal"):