

# A Study Through the First Epistle of Peter

1Peter 2:4–5

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## A Spiritual House of Living Stones

### Review – 1Pet 2:1–3

- Having died with the Messiah and being born again, we have a new life in Messiah.
  - We put off the old life which is characterized by malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander.
  - Like new borns, we long for the spiritual nourishment we receive from the Bible.
  - As we feed upon the word and apply it to our daily lives, we make progress toward our goal of becoming more and more like Yeshua.

### 1Peter 2:4–5

*And coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God, you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Yeshua Messiah.*

*And coming to Him as to a living stone...*

- This reflects the very words of Yeshua in Matt 11:28, “Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.”
- The Greek word translated “coming to” (προσέρχομαι, *proserxomai*) is regularly used in the Lxx to translate קָרַב, *qārav*, “to draw near,” “to bring a sacrifice.”
- The verb is present participle, meaning that we do not simply come to Him once, but that our lives are characterized by a constant “coming to Him.”
- Our whole life is bound up in Yeshua.
- This is a fundamental truth and we must never lose sight of it.
  - We have not come to a religion for salvation.
  - We have not come to the Torah for salvation.
  - We have not joined a “people group” for salvation.
- We have come to Yeshua because He alone is the source of salvation.

- Why does Peter picture Yeshua as a stone?
  - The Greek word use here for “stone” is λίθος, *lithos*. It denotes a worked stone, i.e., a stone cut for a special purpose, for building or even for jewelry.
  - *Petros* is the word for a loose stone in a field or on the roadside.
  - *Petra* is the word for a rocky outcropping or stone cliff of a mountain.
- Peter refers to Yeshua as a lithos, stone, because:
  - only Yeshua is qualified to accomplish divine forgiveness and redemption for those who are saved. His alone is fit for this purpose.
  - Peter will be quoting from Is 28:16 and Ps 118:22, both of which are messianic texts using a “stone” as a metaphor for the Messiah as the cornerstone.
  - Since all true believers are becoming like Yeshua, Peter pictures them also as “living stones.”
- But in Peter’s metaphor, this Stone is alive!
  - He is a living stone in contrast to the pagan temples that worship “dead idols,” which have no breath (spirit) in them (cf. Jer 10:14; 51:17; Hab 2:19)
  - He is building a spiritual temple out of “living stones” in contrast to the “dead stones” of pagan temples.

*...to a living stone which has been rejected by men...*

- John writes:

He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name... (Jn 1:11–12)

- Just as Isaiah prophesied:

He was despised and forsaken of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and like one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. (Is 53:3)

*but is choice and precious in the sight of God,*

- “choice” – literally, “chosen,” “elect” (ἐκλεκτός, *eklektos*)
- This parallels what Peter wrote in chapter one:

“For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you....” (1Pet 1:20)

- “precious” = “honored,” “of high value,” “to have a unique status.”

and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.” (Matt 3:17)

While he was still speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud said, “This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!” (Matt 17:5)

## 1Peter 2:5

*you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Yeshua Messiah.*

- We too are “living stones”
  - We are becoming conformed to Yeshua.
  - We have been given eternal life.
  - We have been given the Ruach (“breath” = “life”)
- As “living stones,” Yeshua is using us to “build” His “house,” as He promised, using a “stone” metaphor.

I also say to you that you are Peter (*petros*), and upon this rock (*petra*) I will build My *ekklesia*; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it. (Matt 16:18)

- The “spiritual house” Yeshua is building is His *ekklesia*.
- Its purpose is to offer acceptable sacrifices of praise and worship to God.
- This is why we named our community Beit Hallel, “House of Praise.”
- What are “spiritual sacrifices”?
  - First, we must offer ourselves, meaning that we seek to use all that we are to give praise and honor to Him.

Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. (Rom 12:1)

- Second, we offer sacrifices of praise when we publicly honor Him and extol His greatness.

He who offers a sacrifice of thanksgiving honors Me; (Ps 50:23)

Through Him [Yeshua] then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name. (Heb 13:15)

- Finally, we offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God when we live in accordance with His mitzvot.

Bear one another’s burdens and thereby fulfill the Torah of Messiah. (Gal 6:2)

- Prayer offered through Yeshua, our heavenly High Priest, is a way of offering a “spiritual sacrifice.”

May my prayer be counted as incense before You; The lifting up of my hands as the evening offering. (Ps 141:2)

Another angel came and stood at the altar, holding a golden censer; and much incense was given to him, so that he might add it to the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel's hand. (Rev 8:3-4)

- It is in this way, through offering spiritual sacrifices through our High Priest, Yeshua, that we function as a spiritual house or Temple built of “living stones.”
- Yeshua, as our heavenly High Priest, takes our sacrifices of praise, worship, and obedience, and presents them to the Father.

### **Summary & Application**

- Having been saved through the work of our Messiah, Yeshua, we are being part of the fulfillment of His words when He promised: “I will build My *ekklesia*.”
- We are “living stones” that He, the Master Builder, is using to fashion a spiritual house (temple) in which spiritual sacrifices are offered.
- This means that each of us are important for the overall structure of this “spiritual house/temple.”
- Even as the stones of the altar in the Tabernacle and Temple bore the sacrifices offered by the people, so we, as living stones, offer up sacrifices to God through Yeshua.
- These spiritual sacrifices include:
  - ourselves – using all that we are to honor God
  - the fruit of our lips – publicly giving praise, honor, and thanksgiving to God for all His is and all He has done for us.
  - prayer, both individual and corporate
  - obeying God – every opportunity to fulfill a mitzvah is an opportunity to offer to God a spiritual sacrifice.
- All of the spiritual sacrifices we offer must be given through our heavenly High Priest, Yeshua.
- It is only by His priestly mediation that we are able to offer spiritual sacrifices that are acceptable to the Father.

*Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name.*

*And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased. (Heb 13:15-16)*