

PETER'S EPISTLES

1 Peter: Living In Conflict With The Culture

VIII. Serving As God's Holy Priesthood In A Godless World

(1 Peter 2:4-10)

I. Introduction

- A. Several believers in different states of the nation have reported on the increasing difficulty they face in living in accord with Bible truth since doing so conflicts with the godless world's deteriorating culture around them.
- B. "First Peter was written to Christians . . . whose stand for Jesus Christ made them aliens and strangers in the midst of a pagan society" (Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 837), so we study 1 Peter for insight and edification.
- C. 1 Peter 2:4-10 calls us to serve as God's Holy Priesthood in a godless world, and we view it for our insight:

II. Serving As God's Holy Priesthood In A Godless World, 1 Peter 2:4-10.

- A. The KJV phrase "To whom coming" uses the present participle of *proserchomai* in the N. T. Greek text (U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 794; The Analyt. Grk. Lex. (Zon.), 1972, p. 348) for "coming" ("come or go to, approach," Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 720), so Peter was not here referring to people coming to Christ for salvation, but of believers habitually approaching the Lord in "intimate association of communion and fellowship" related to the Christian walk, 1 Peter 2:4a; Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 844.
- B. In thus fellowshiping with Christ, the believer communes with One Who is metaphorically likened to several different Scripture likenesses as a "Stone" with differing applications (1 Peter 2:4b-8), and we explain:
 1. Christ is the Living Stone (1 Peter 2:4b), so we believers fellowship with One Who is spiritually alive and Chosen of God, precious, resulting in us being also chosen and precious, spiritually living stones being built up by God into a spiritual temple, an abode of the Lord as also a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices of praise acceptable to God by Jesus Christ, 1 Peter 2:4c-5. This verse teaches the the spiritual priesthood of **EVERY** believer as opposed to a hierarchy of priests composed of a special class of people!
 2. Christ is the Cornerstone (1 Peter 2:6), so we fellowship with the Support upon which the rest of the Church rests, causing us never to be put to shame due to our instabilities. (Ibid., B. K. C., N. T., p. 845)
 3. Christ is the Headstone (1 Peter 2:7), so though we believers view Him as Precious, He is the stone the builders of Israel rejected as Messiah, separating Christ and His people from the ungodly lost world!
 4. Christ is the Stumbling-Stone (1 Peter 2:8), so His righteousness and truth, being rejected by the lost world, creates for the lost a stumbling into an eternal destiny of eternal condemnation, Ibid.
- C. Accordingly, in great contrast to the lost world that will be put to eternal shame and condemnation due to its rejection of Jesus Christ, we believers who have received Him as Savior and who fellowship with Him have an entirely different, wonderful, holy ministry, 1 Peter 2:9-10:
 1. We are a chosen generation, chosen and hence favored of the Lord, what used to apply only to Old Testament Israel but is now used of both saved Jews and Gentiles in Christ, 1 Peter 2:9a; Ibid.
 2. We are a royal priesthood, that is, kings and priests who will both rule with Christ in His coming Kingdom and who minister as priests in going to God in prayer in behalf of men and going to men with the Gospel in behalf of God, 1 Peter 2:9b. In Old Testament Israel, only the descendants of Aaron of the tribe of Levi were priests, and only one man at a time of the seed of David was Israel's king, but in Christ, every believer, be he male or female, Jew or Gentile, bond or free, is a king and a priest, Galatians 3:27-29!
 3. We are a holy nation, 1 Peter 2:9c, a group of people in Christ who are part of His coming Messianic Millennial Kingdom, cf. Revelation 20:1-6.
 4. We are a peculiar people, 1 Peter 2:9d, a description used of Old Testament believers in Israel but now applicable to believers in the Church as a people distinct from the lost world around us.
 5. The purpose of these titles of a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation and a peculiar people is that we are to show forth the praises of the God of grace Who has called us out of the world's spiritual darkness into His marvelous light. We were once were without God's mercy, but now in Christ we have been shown His mercy as the people of God, 1 Peter 2:10.

Lesson: *We believers fellowship with a Great Savior in Jesus Christ Whom the world rejected but Whom God chose as precious, so our fellowship is wonderfully lofty but utterly separate from and unappreciated by the world.*

Application: *If our fellowship with Christ is great but separate from and unappreciated by the world, may we not be discouraged by the world's negative attitude toward us and God, but praise the Lord for His grace unto us.*