

“Living Stones in a Spiritual House” – 1 Peter 2:1-5

- **Author:** Peter the apostle (v1), one of “the Twelve” (Mark 10:32, 14:10) and the inner three of Peter/James/John (Mark 5:37, 9:2, 14:33). Written via Silvanus as amanuensis/secretary (1 Pet 5:12).
- **Time:** Peter wrote this epistle near end of his life in the early/mid 60s AD while persecution under Nero is present (1 Pet 2:20, 4:12) but will later intensify. Eventually, Peter himself will be martyred.
- **Genre:** This is a *general epistle* to all sorts of believers dispersed across the Roman Empire (1 Pet 1:1).
- **Theme:** Believers are “elect exiles” -- though they are in this world, it is not their home (1 Pet 4:1-11). Being chosen and set apart by God as holy, we are to live w/ our neighbors confidently (Jer 29:7, Jn 17:5, Jn 18:36, Phil 3:20, Heb 13:14, Rev 18:4) even as we suffer (Mt 5:11-12, Acts 7:52, 1 Pet 1:6).
- 1-2 – “So” (v1) links Peter’s exhortation here to what has come before (i.e., the imperishable seed of God’s Word at work in believers, 1 Pet 1:19-25). Peter is saying to *put away* like an old, dirty garment what does not accord with the new birth God has given you (1 Pet 1:3, Eph 4:29-32). When he compares believers with “newborn infants” it refers back to the idea of the new birth found in our living hope in 1:3, *not* merely referring to immature believers as the Scriptures do elsewhere (cf. 1 Cor 14:20, Heb 5:13-14). The idea is that just as a newborn infant longs for nourishment, so Christians ought to long for God’s blessed word to feed their souls. And what does this nourishment accomplish? Growth! Growth in the Christian life is not optional (Rom 6:1-5, 2 Pet 3:18). Putting on love and putting off the works of the flesh that harm our neighbor in the household of faith is the growth here that God’s eternal word accomplishes in His people. The sins in v1 destroy Christian *community* (Prov 6:16-19, 16:28, Gal 5:19-21, Eph 4:25-32, Jas 3:1-12).
 - App: The true church of Christ *feeds the sheep* the eternal word. Our souls need bread, not stones! Woe to those who let the flock starve spiritually (Ezek 34, Jn 10:11-18, 27-28).
- 3 – Taste and see the Lord’s goodness (Ps 34:8)! App: His goodness satisfies our souls so that we do not envy others, covet what they have, etc. (Jas 4:2-3). Has God’s goodness worked in you so that the old behaviors of v1 no longer seem as sweet? God changes people via *the heart*.
- 4-5 – Mixing metaphors, Peter now turns to two new images: He calls believers “living stones” based on the ultimate “Living Stone” Jesus Himself, who has all life in and of Himself and is the chief cornerstone (v6-7, cf. Psalm 118:22, Isa 28:16) as *He* builds us into a “spiritual house” (Mt 16:18). Just as Christ is the heir that is killed in the parable of the tenants (Mt 21:33-46), believers are “elect exiles” who are rejected by men and yet have sure hope – we live as surely as Christ!
 - And using another OT image, Peter says we made living stones in a spiritual house *in order to be* “priests” that offer what really pleases God: Lives of praise rather than malice/envy/slander (v1). App: Our lives are to be living sacrifices, transformed by God’s word (Rom 12:1-2). May our thoughts, words and actions flow from a heart of praise, given to us by Him (Ps 19:14). We may approach God because of the work of Christ as our great high priest, and we may offer worship in spirit and in truth because of the Holy Spirit’s sanctifying work in the “spiritual house” of Christ’s body.
 - App: Sanctification is intended for the *whole* spiritual house of the church, not just individuals. God is glorified by our oneness in displaying *His* character (John 17:21). May Scots Kirk be one as our Triune God is One, loving one another as His Spirit sanctifies us together (Mt 22:34-40, Jn 13:34-35, 1 Cor 13:4-7, 1 Jn 4:7-8).