

TITLE: A Royal Priesthood (Part 5)

PASSAGE: 1 Peter 2:6b-8

THEME: The Believer's Priesthood

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Read Passage

On Sunday July 8, 1741 in Enfield Conn. Jonathan Edwards preached his famous sermon, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God." His text was Deut. 32:35, "Their foot shall slide in due time." Some of t/more salient quotes from this most famous sermon include==>

"There is nothing that keeps wicked men at any one moment out of hell, but the mere pleasure of God. . . . There is a dreadful pit of the glowing flames of the wrath of God; there is hell's wide gaping mouth open; and you have nothing to stand upon, nor any thing to take hold of; there is nothing between you and hell but the air; it is only the power and mere pleasure of God that holds you up. . . . [You] have no more influence to uphold you and keep you out of hell than a spider's web would have to stop a fallen rock. . . . It is everlasting wrath. It would be dreadful to suffer this fierceness and wrath of Almighty God one moment; but you must suffer it to all eternity. There will be no end to this exquisite, horrible misery. When you look forward you shall see a long forever, a boundless duration before you, which will swallow up your thoughts, and amaze your soul; and you will absolutely despair of ever having any deliverance, any end, any mitigation, any rest at all. You will know certainly that you must wear out long ages, millions of millions of ages, in wrestling and conflicting with the almighty merciless vengeance; and then when you have so done, when so many ages have actually been spent by you in this manner, you will know that all is but a point to what remains. So that your punishment will indeed be infinite. Oh, what can express what the state of a soul in such circumstances is! All that we can possibly say about it is but a very feeble, faint representation of it; it is inexpressible and inconceivable: For 'who knows the power of God's anger?'

Edwards concludes with this invitation ==>

"Therefore, let everyone that is out of Christ, now awake and fly from the wrath to come. The wrath of Almighty God is now undoubtedly hanging over a great

part of his congregation. Let everyone fly out of Sodom: 'Haste and escape for your lives, look not behind you, escape to the mountain, let you be consumed.'"

Not exactly popular preaching. Not the sort of thing that draws the masses today. Benjamin Trumbull in his work, A Complete History of Connecticut, records that ==>

Edwards read his sermon in a monotone while he held his sermon book in his left hand. And, in spite of his calm, "there was such a breathing of distress, and weeping, that the preacher was obliged to speak to the people and desire silence that he might be heard." [cited in a Norton Anthology of American Literature, 145]

Testimony to t/work of t/H.S. in bringing conviction and revival; a work we seen not paralleled today.

Also testimony to one of t/great lines of demarcation in t/Bible; that is, contrast between God's treatment of t/righteous vs that of t/wicked. God's wrath is upon t/wicked & his blessings are upon the righteous (of course, righteous being defined as those who are savingly related to him thru X).

As one old preacher put it, the entire world can be divided into two groups: 'the saints and the aints.'

Ultimate division, or sorting out of those who belong to God vs. those who belong to Satan, is as t/end of t/age as recorded in Rev. 20 ==>

12 And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. . . . 15 And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

Those whose names were recorded in t/book of life from B4 t/found. of t/world receive t/fulness of t/K.D., eternal life; those whose names are absent inherit eternal destruction.

"The saints and the aints."

We see a similar line of demarcation in verses 6-9, esp verse 7.

This honor, therefore, is for you who believe. But for those who disbelieve: the stone which the builders rejected, this became the chief corner.

That's where we left off last week in this section ==>

I. The Church as a Royal Priesthood (2:4-10)

A. Established in the Living Stone (4) *The Source of our Priesthood*

B. Erected as a Spiritual Temple (5): *The Structure of our Priesthood*

C. Elected as the People of God (6-10) *This is the Security of our Priesthood*

Last week we began in verse 6 ==>

1. The Cornerstone of Our Belief (6a)

For it is contained in Scripture: BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A CHOSEN STONE, A PRECIOUS CORNERSTONE . . .

. . . it is contained . . .

Word used in ancient lit. of the contents of a will. However, Peter uses the phrase here to point to the OT canon of Scripture

. . . it is contained in Scripture

a. ἐν γραφῇ

In t/NT word was a technical term used some 56x to indicate that they are quoting from t/O.T. Here, the quote is from Isaiah 28:16 (in part) ==>
BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A CHOSEN STONE, A PRECIOUS CORNERSTONE...

We spent a lot of time last week looking at the implications of this.

Last week was one of those messages that, if you missed it, I would strongly suggest that you get a copy. There's some stuff there that you need to know & we don't have time to go back over it all.

What we see is that JC is the cornerstone of our belief/very lives. He is t/Living Head of t/CH.

For it is contained in Scripture: BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A CHOSEN STONE, A PRECIOUS CORNERSTONE . . .

That is ==>

1. The Cornerstone of Our Belief (6a)

Note, Secondly ==>

2. The Confidence of Our Belief (6b)

Continues t/quote from Isaiah 28:16.

... AND THE ONE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NEVER BE PUT TO SHAME

As I said last week, "He is t/one who freed Bunyan's Faithful. He is the one who frees us, breaking t/chains of Sinai that we might dwell in Zion."

a. Note again what this is saying

... AND THE ONE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NEVER BE PUT TO SHAME

οὐ μὴ κατασχυυθη What's called a subjunctive of emphatic negation. Double negative. οὐ μὴ is used to strongly deny something will happen. It's like saying ==>

... THE ONE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NEVER, NEVER BE PUT TO SHAME

(1) "Shame" (or "disappointed") = Gk verb κατασχυυω

Carries more than the idea of shame (although that's included). Denotes "being deceived in some confidence, or placing hope in someone and having that hope dashed." [MacArthur, 122]

Paul, quotes t/same passage from Isa., in Rom. 9:33 (κατασχυνω translated "disappointed")

Life is filled w/disappointments. Life is filled w/people letting you down. I know what it's like to be shot in the back by those you consider friends. "*Et tu brute?*" You've had it happen! Stop and think about it. What is t/greatest disappointment you've had?

. . . THE ONE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NEVER, NEVER BE PUT TO SHAME

In Christ ==> No shame; no disappointment; no hopes dashed upon t/rocks of false expectation.

(2) To keep it in context ==>

These 1st century Xns were suffering under persecution for their faith. Something we don't know much about in 21st c. America. Most pulpits in our land would apply this passage something like this,

"You're disappointed that you didn't get that new 5 bedroom house, or that new car. Don't worry, God will heal your disappointment."

Or, here would be another popular approach. *"God never wants you to be disappointed in life. He's got your best at heart and he loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life that you should be happy, and have whatever you want."*

Yeah, right. Tell that to Peter's audience. Tell that to t/suffering Xns in t/Sudan, or in Morocco, or in China. Great American Fast-food Have it

Your way in the comfort of your own home theology. Has nothing to do w/Biblical theology. Sad to say that most CH's in American couldn't handle real biblical theology; if you tried to teach it you'd empty t/place.

Peter writes to those who are suffering. Not because they lost a bid on a new house, or didn't get a promotion at work. He writes to those who are suffering as a direct result of their testimony as Xns.

(a) Cf. 3:14-17

Note that in v. 16 Peter uses t/same word "shame" (καταίσχυω) that we just saw in v. 6. IOW - You may be persecuted by those who hate X. They will slander your name, they will talk about you behind your back, they will mock and ridicule you. Keep a good conscience, entrust your way to God, and let those who persecute you be put to shame.

I think that forms much of t/context of what Peter is talking about in v. 6
... AND THE ONE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NEVER BE PUT TO SHAME

That's ==>

2. The Confidence of Our Belief (6b)

Isaiah 54:4-5,10 4 "Fear not, for you will not be put to shame; Neither feel humiliated, for you will not be disgraced . . . 10 "For the mountains may be removed and the hills may shake, But My lovingkindness will not be removed from you, And My covenant of peace will not be shaken," Says the Lord who has compassion on you.

As I said earlier, there is a great contrast in t/Bible between t/blessing of belief and the curse of unbelief.

Brings us to v. 7 and what I call ==>

3. The Contrast of Unbelief (7-8a)

This honor, therefore, is for you who believe. But for those who disbelieve: THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME

THE CHIEF CORNER. And: A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE.

a. Do you see the contrast that's being addressed here?

For those who believe, there's honor. For those who don't ==>
THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED (CHRIST), THIS BECAME THE CHIEF CORNER. A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE.

b. But the "honor is for you who believe"

(1) Translation Issue Before us

Relates to t/first part of v. 7 and t/word τιμη (translated variously as "honor," "precious," "value").

Some translators make t/word τιμη t/subject of the sentence: "The honor, therefore, is for you who believe." Other translate it as an Adj. "To you who believe, [He] is precious."

KJV - Unto you therefore which believe he is precious

NIV - Now to you who believe, this stone is precious.

RSV - To you therefore who believe, he is precious,

ESV - So the honor is for you who believe

NASB - This precious value, then, is for you who believe.

The majority of scholars believe that τιμη should be understood as t/subject translating it as does the ESV {cite}.

The Greek sentence contains no verb & lit. says, '*Therefore the honor to you, the believers!*' Quite natural in Gk. to supply a linking verb so that t/sentence reads, '*Therefore the honor is to you, the believers!*'

So we have, as I would render it ==>

This honor, therefore, is for you who believe.

(2) What “honor” or “value” is in mind?

Would include the entire context of what we've seen so far {summarize vv. 5 - 6} Also includes what will follow in vv. 9-10 {cite}

There's great honor, value in that! Scottish Puritan Robert Leighton writes: "Consider it your happiness to form part of this building, and consider the empty nature of other comforts and privileges. Happy indeed are those God chooses to be living stones in this spiritual house or temple. Even though they are hammered and hewn in order to be polished for it through afflictions . . . it is worth enduring everything in order to be made suitable for this building. Such people are happier than all others, even though they are not laden with honors, kingdoms, or wealth. For all other buildings and all the parts of them will be demolished and will come to nothing . . ." [Leighton, 85]

Remember, we're talking about a contrast ==>

3. *The Contrast of Unbelief (7-8a)*

This honor, therefore, is for you who believe. But [here's the contrast] **for those who disbelieve: THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE CHIEF CORNER. And: A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE.**

c. That's the contrast of unbelief vs. belief

It's the same gospel message, right? The message goes out, it's one message, but it brings two different kinds of response. For some: honor unto eternal life; For others, a stone of stumbling & a rock of offense.

(1) Always been that way . . .

1 Corinthians 1:23-24 **23 but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block, and to Gentiles foolishness, 24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.**

2 Corinthians 2:15-16 15 For we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing; 16 to the one an aroma from death to death, to the other an aroma from life to life.

John 9:39 And Jesus said, "For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see; and that those who see may become blind."

For those who see ==>

MAT 13:44-46 "The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid; and from joy over it he goes and sells all that he has, and buys that field. "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls, and upon finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it.

d. Peter is quoting two O.T. Passages here

Psalm 118:22 (sung by Jews during Passover) The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief corner stone.

Part of Isaiah 8:14 . . . a stone to strike and a rock to stumble over . . .

In quoting these two texts, Peter is using a common Jewish principle of interpretation known as *gezerah shavah* which linked together passages that share a common key word (in this case the word "stone").

e. I want to focus on the first quote from Psalm 118

(1) Interpreted by the Jews to be Israel

Might find it interesting that this passage ==>

. . . THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE CHIEF CORNER.

not generally thought by t/Jews to be messianic. They applied it to nation of Israel. Israel was t/stone rejected by t/builders. Powers of t/world tossed t/nation aside, considered it useless; but God had another purpose for Israel as t/cornerstone of His K.D. Stone = Israel; Builders = World

(2) In fact, the Psalm was Messianic

Jesus correctly applied that same Psalm to himself during his earthly min.

Rem. in Luke chapt. 20, Jesus tells a parable about a man who planted a vineyard. He rented it out to some vine-growers while he went away on a journey for a long time. Land owner is gone, but he sends his servant to collect a portion of t/produce from the vine-growers. What do they do? They beat him and sent him away empty-handed. So, the owner sends another servant; they beat him up also; he sends a third, they mistreated him also. [BTW - these servants represent t/OT prophets & they vine-growers t/unrepentant Jews]

So then t/owner of the vineyard says, 'What shall I do? I will send my beloved son; they will respect him.' "But when the vine-growers saw t/son, they conspired against him and said, 'He's the heir; let's kill him so that t/inheritance be ours.' So they threw him out of t/vineyard and killed him. [catching on? Son is whom?]

Jesus goes on ==>

What, therefore, will the owner of the vineyard do to them? What's he going to do when these measly good-for-nothings murder his son? He's going to come & He's going to destroy t/vine-growers & then He's going to give t/vineyard to someone else. And when t/people heard that, they said, "May it never be!" Get t/idea that these guys are really getting into the story!

Jesus concludes by saying ==>

17 "What then is this that is written, 'The stone which the builders rejected, This became the chief corner stone'?"

Luke records in v. 19 ==>

19 And the scribes and the chief priests tried to lay hands on Him that very hour, and they feared the people; for they understood that He spoke this parable against them.

Stone is Christ; Builders who rejected that stone, Nation of Israel. Ironic that those who believed themselves to be t/chosen stone actually turn out to be t/builders that reject t/stone.

Following this example, Peter, speaking to t/Jewish rulers following his arrest in Acts chapter 4 ==>

"He is the \stone which was rejected\ by you, \the builders\, {but} \which became the very corner\ {stone.} "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved."

Peter says, you are the builders who rejected t/very cornerstone of t/building. If you reject t/cornerstone, t/stone by which every other part of t/building is measured and aligned, you are no builders, you have no building. You have nothing, but empty, blood-stained hands.

(3) That's not only true of the first century Jewish leaders

In quoting this passage here, mainly to Gentiles o/s of Israel, Peter implies that all who reject X – Jew/Gentile; 1st c. or 21st c. – are t/builders.

But for those who disbelieve: THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE CHIEF CORNER. And: A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE.

(a) "Disbelieve" = Present Tense

This applies to all who are disbelieving; those who refuse to submit to X on his terms. Might wonder, if they're t/builders, what are they building?

As far as this once-great nation is concerned, they're building a godless society. One built upon a cornerstone of secularism; atheism; sexual perversions of every kind. They're attempting to build a nation of X-rejecters; blasphemers.

Past few months have celebrated this. What movie was just released last Friday? This movie has been called "the most vicious attack on Xnty in t/history of Hollywood." That's not all. Had t/rediscovery of t/so-called gospel of Judas that received all sorts of hype. National Geographic

Channel aired a two hour special about it at least 4 different times. "The Jesus Papers" based on a book by Michael Baigent aired on NBC April 2. "The Jesus Dynasty" based on t/book by James Tabor was featured on CNN and ABC. May 11 ABC scheduled a two hour presentation on gospel of Judas.

That's okay ==>

THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE CHIEF CORNER.

God's plan will go forward w/o even a hiccup.

As one commentator observes ==>

"The point of the quotation is to show that those who reject Christ have been proved exactly wrong by Gods exaltation of him to the place of greatest prominence, the heard of the corner." [Grudem, 105]

Rem. what we saw in v. 4 "Rejected by men, precious in God's sight."

Precious to us as well who are ==>

I. . . A Royal Priesthood (2:4-10)

A. Established in the Living Stone (4)

B. Erected as a Spiritual Temple (5)

C. Elected as the People of God (vv. 6-10)

We've seen t/Cornerstone and Confidence of our Belief & t/Contrast of Unbelief. Brings us to our 4th point under this heading ==>

4. The Cause of Unbelief (8b)

They stumble because they are disobedient to the word, unto which [ends] they were appointed.

a. Difficult verse

You have man's responsibility & God's sovereignty dovetailed together.
As far as man's responsibility is concerned ==>

(1) What's the cause of unbelief?

They stumble [why?] because they are disobedient to the word . . .

What's that mean? To be disobedient to t/Word is to reject t/Gospel.

3:1 In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives.

1 Peter 4:17 For *it is* time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if *it begins* with us first, what *will be* the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?

Could put it this way, "Unbelief is at the root of all disobedience and disobedience flows from unbelief."

That's man's respons./account. before God.

(2) Note the second half of the verse

. . . unto which [ends] they were appointed.

(a) Word "appointed" τιθημι

Is commonly used for that which God has predestined to occur. Used that way in Acts 1:7; 1 Cor. 12:18,28; 1 Thess. 5:9; 1 Tim. 2:7. That's the way it's also used here.

(b) Question is, "In what way is it being used?"

What does it mean when it says ==>

They stumble because they are disobedient to the word, unto which [ends] they were appointed.

i. Three Options

(i) First View

Means that those who stumble (the disbelievers of v. 7) do so because God actively predetermined that they would do so. He predestined their unbelief.

(ii) Second View

It means that those who stumble (those who willfully & finally reject gospel) do so because God passively predetermined that they would do so.

What's the difference? In t/first case, Some would argue that God predestines some to hell, just as he predestines some to heaven.

In t/second case, some would argue that yes, God predestines some to heaven (these are the elect). In so doing he opens the blind eyes of some and passes over the rest. Those whose eyes are opened believe & are saved; those whose eyes are not opened remain in their rebellion and sin.

IOW - everyone is lost and hell bound, but by God's grace he chooses to save some leaving t/rest to their just consequences.

(iii) Third View

Those who stumble are predestined to receive the consequences of their actions. IOW - God has determined that those who reject t/gospel will suffer t/consequences of that rejection & this says nothing about God's sovereign choice in the matter. ((How many think #1 - #2 - #3?))

(c) I'm going to argue that Peter has the second view in mind

This is referred to as preterition or reprobation. Grudem: "The sovereign decision of God to pass over some persons, in sorrow deciding not to save them . . . and thereby to manifest his justice."

Grammatically this seems to be t/case. Simply what t/passage says. Also note t/context (v. 9).

It's not that God is responsible for t/rebellion & disbelief of those who reject X. Not that God has destined their disbelief. He doesn't have to. Everyone is born in that condition; everyone is lost // blind // dead.

Not that t/Gospel goes out to people and 50% want it, but God chooses to save 25%. God will save all who desire to be saved. Everyone in whose heart dwells genuine repentance will be saved. But we know that not all desire that. We're not universalists!

We also know that man in his fallen state cannot resurrect himself from his fallen condition. We call this the doctrine of total depravity - that sin has adversely affected every facet of who we are (minds; affections; will)

i. 10 truths about who we were before we came to faith in JC

1. Alienated, hostile, engaged in evil deeds (Col. 1:21); 2. Dead in sin, by nature a child of God's wrath (Eph. 2:1 ff.); 3. Under a curse - [the curse of the law] (Gal. 3:10-13); 4. An enemy of God (Rom. 5:10); 5. Darkened in understanding (Eph. 4:18); 6. Unable to please God, hostile to Him (Rom. 8:5-7); 7. Unable to understand the gospel (1 Cor. 2:14); 8. Unable to truly seek God (Rom. 3:11); 9. Blinded by Satan (2 Cor. 4:4); 10. Destined for hell--eternal separation from God (Rev 20:13).

"Why do people reject JC?" They choose to! Why do they choose to? Because they are: Alienated, hostile, Dead in sin, children of wrath, under a curse, darkened in understanding, unable to please God, hostile to Him, unable to understand the gospel, unable to truly seek God, blinded by Satan. Do we need any more reasons?!

Why I've said that every X'n is a spiritual Lazarus (John 11). Could have

screamed at Lazarus for all eternity ("Lazarus, come out; Lazarus wake up; Lazarus make a decision for X") all to no avail. Takes a miracle to make a physical Resurrection. ISW it takes a miracle to make a spiritual Ress.

That's why you have Acts 13:48 >>>

And when the Gentiles heard this (that t/gospel wasn't only for t/Jews), they *began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord; and as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.*

Acts 16:14 >>> (Lydia).

And a certain woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God, was listening; and the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul.

John 6:44 "No one can come to Me, unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day.

These in 1 Peter 2:8 are those whom God has passed by. It isn't that God predestines their rebellion and disbelief, per se. Rather, he determines to leave them in their rebellion and disbelief.

Thomas Schreiner, a NT scholar of the first order ==>

"The worldview of the Scriptures is that God is sovereignly in control of all things, from the decisions made by kings (Prov. 21:1) to the throw of the dice (Prov. 16:33; cf. Isa 46:9-11). Even the cruelest and most vicious act in history—the execution of Jesus of Nazareth, was predestined by God (Acts 2:23; 4:27-28)." [Schreiner, 113]

(d) Romans 9:14-24

Closest parallel to what Peter is saying here is found in Romans 9. Several parallels between these two passages. Both quote Psalm 118 and Isaiah 8. Both speak of election and reprobation. {read passage}

"Election of some to eternal life and the passing over of others is never viewed in the same way in Scripture. Election to salvation is viewed as a cause for rejoicing and praise to God, who is worthy of praise and receives all the credit for our salvation . . . God is viewed as actively choosing us for salvation, and

doing so with delight. But 'reprobation' (the passing over of those who are not chosen, and just leaving them in their rebellion) is viewed as something which brings God sorrow, not delight (note Ezk. 33:33, and cf. Paul's sorrow in Rom. 9:1-2), and in which the blame is always put on the men or angels who rebel, no on God (Jn. 3:18-19; 5:40)." [Grudem, 110]

Does that mean there's no hope for those who reject X? Of course not! We all were among those who once rejected X.

The verbs are present tense (presently not believing, stumbling, disobeying). What's true of t/present isn't always true of t/future. Why we pray for t/lost and we share t/Gospel w/the lost that they may be saved.

We need to leave God's sovereignty and man's responsibility t/way it's presented in Scripture; in tension w/one another. To pervert one is to pervert both and to pervert both is to pervert God's very Word.

Listen, you would not hear this in 98% of t/CHs out there. But I am called to preach t/whole counsel of God, popular or unpopular; hard or easy.

"Peter articulated a common theme in the Scriptures that human beings are responsible for their sin and sin willingly, and yet God controls all events in history. The Scriptures do not resolve how these two themes fit together philosophically, though today we would call it a 'compatibilist' worldview. We must admit, however, that how this fits together logically eludes us, and hence theologians have often fallen prey to the temptation to deny one or the other truth. Why did Peter emphasize the theme of God's sovereignty here? He did so to comfort his readers, assuring them that the evil in the world is not sundered from God's control. God still reigns, even over those who oppose him and the Petrine believers." [Schreiner, 113-14]

Edwards' conclusion earlier ==>

"Therefore, let everyone that is out of Christ, now awake and fly from the wrath to come. The wrath of Almighty God is now undoubtedly hanging over a great part of his congregation. Let everyone fly out of Sodom: 'Haste and escape for your lives, look not behind you, escape to the mountain, let you be consumed.'"