

1 PETER 2:1-10

TOBY SUMPTER

TRINITY REFORMED CHURCH - MOSCOW, ID

A.D. OCTOBER 11, 2009

INTRODUCTION

We have noted numerous times that Peter is applying the Exodus story to his audience, the new Israel of God, and this becomes even more explicit here in chapter 2.

CHILDREN AND FAMILY

Running through the beginning of 1 Peter has been this notion of being “begotten again” (1:3), “children” (1:14), God as their “Father” (1:17), “love of the brethren” (1:22), and “born again” (1:23). And Peter picks this up again by exhorting his people to be “newborn babes” (2:2). Salvation is not merely an individual reality; it means being born again into the family of God, the household of faith (e.g. Gal. 6:10). This is where Jesus promises to be and where He promises to meet with His people. Notice that this is the second time Peter has exhorted his audience to be children (cf. 1:14), and notice that in both places it means putting away sin. One of the marks of a child-like faith is repentance, and here Peter particularly stresses being true and genuine (2:1-2).

A LIVING STONE

Peter says that they have begun to “draw near” to the Lord as a “living stone” (2:4) and this is likely yet another allusion to the Exodus. Peter ties this “stone” to the Isaiah 8 prophesy regarding the “rock of offense” (2:8) and Paul quotes the same passage in Romans 9. The prophecy in Isaiah 8 comes on the heels of the prophecy of Assyria coming up over the land of Israel like a flood (Is. 7:17, 8:7). Isaiah is warned by the Lord that things are going to get pretty rough when this happens, but the Lord promises to be Isaiah’s “sanctuary” while becoming a “stone of stumbling and a rock of offense” to Israel (Is. 8:14). Likewise, Paul seems to have this image in mind when he warns the Corinthians about being faithful (1 Cor. 10:4). Notice also that Jesus has been rejected by men but chosen by God (2:4), chosen just like they were (1:1). And because He is chosen, He is “precious” (2:6-7) just like their faith (1:7). This is why Peter can say that they are “living stones.” They are being built up into a “sanctuary,” a house of the Spirit (2:5). Thus the central question that divides all humanity is between belief and unbelief (2:7).

PEOPLE FOR PRAISE

Peter calls his audience a “priesthood” twice (2:5, 9), and this word is only used one other place in the Scriptures, in Exodus 19:6 where Yahweh declares that if Israel will be His covenant people they shall be a “kingdom of priests and a holy nation.” Peter blends this image into the first 2 chapters of Hosea where Israel is denounced for her harlotries, and Hosea’s children are named prophetically. Peter picks up on these prophecies, declaring them true for the Church. They are the new creation, the new light from darkness, and the mercy and love of God are the basis for their sacrifices of praise (2:5, 9-10).

CONCLUSION & APPLICATION

We need to remember that the Church is our first family (Mk. 3:33-34, Lk. 14:26). It is only in this family that our biological family is remade and renewed.

True repentance of sin results in heartfelt worship and praise. Putting off the sin (2:1), guzzling the milk of the word (2:2), and tasting the wonderful mercy and goodness of God must necessarily burst in praise. And if there is no praise, we have to wonder if we are stumbling on the rock of offense.

Finally, this building project that we call the Church is built out of people who need mercy, who need light, who need a family. This means that evangelism is central, and our delight in the goodness of God is all about filling the Church with more voices (cf. 2:12).



*PUBLISHED BY: CANON PRESS ? P.O. BOX 8729 ? 205 E. 5TH ST. ? MOSCOW, ID 83843
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PHONE 800-488-2034 ? FAX 208-882-1568*