

## Another Man's Treasure

### In Pursuit of Holiness, Part 8

*I Peter 2:6-8*

### Discussion Guide

#### Main Idea:

Jesus is a worthless stumbling block to those who refuse to believe but to those who obey the truth He is of infinite value and worth.

#### Discussion Points:

In verse 6 the Apostle Peter quotes Isaiah 28:16 and in so doing declares that Jesus is the chosen and precious cornerstone that has been laid in Zion and whoever believes in this “stone” will not be put to shame. Verse 7 and 8 tell us that there will be some who value Jesus as this precious cornerstone and there will be others who stumble over him in rejection.

- It seems that the world places great value upon temporal things. What specific examples of this do you see around you? In what ways is it obvious to see where people's value is placed?
- What does it mean for someone to count Jesus as more precious than anything else? In other words, what does it look like in someone's everyday life to treasure Jesus above all else?
- This verse promises us that whoever believes in Jesus will not be disappointed. In what way will you not be disappointed by placing your faith in Jesus? Does this mean that your life will be free from disappointment? Explain this.
- Verse 8 teaches that those who stumble over Jesus do so not out of ignorance but out of disobedience. In other words, it is not that they do not know the truth but that they refuse to submit to it. In light of this, is it possible for someone to want to believe in Jesus but not be able to do so? Why or why not?

## **Discussion Guide cont.**

In this sermon we were reminded of how important it is that God's promises to Israel remain intact. Verse 9 speaks of the church as "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession." There are many today who would use verses like this to teach that the church has replaced Israel and, therefore, national Israel has no future.

- When we talk about future promises for national Israel what promises are we referring to? Why is it important that God keep His promises to Israel? What is at stake?
- The Bible teaches that there will be a literal Kingdom on earth with Christ literally reigning on a throne. Take some time to reflect on that reality. How should this reality of the future change our perspective on the present?
- How should the reality that we are ambassadors of the rightful King and His future Kingdom change the way we witness and proclaim the gospel?

### **Gospel Connection:**

It is easy to slip into the mentality that the gospel is first and foremost about changing addresses. Understandably, we long to leave this place called earth for our new residence in heaven. However, the good news is not that we get to escape earth the good news is that all things will be restored and brought back under God's rightful rule so that God will be all in all (I Corinthians 15:28) At the center of this restoration is God's King, Jesus. He will reign and subdue all earthly kings and kingdoms. His rule will be established over the entire earth. While this reality is still future we should live today with Jesus as King and proclaim Him to be so as He has been given all authority in heaven and earth (Matthew 28).

### **Practical Implications:**

**Think:** Our thinking about the gospel and salvation needs to go beyond merely changing addresses from earth to heaven. We have been saved to be His holy representatives marching forth proclaiming the coming reign of our King.

**Pray:** Pray that God would open our eyes and the eyes of others to see Jesus as infinitely precious and valuable, more valuable than anything else this world could ever afford.

**Do:** As you have been thinking through the measureless value of Jesus there are at least two actions that you will be led to: First, it is time to do drastic amputation of those things that mean more to you than Jesus. You know what they are. Enlist the help of an accountability partner to encourage and keep you to this task. Second, we must proclaim His worth to those who stumble over Him. Who will you speak to this week about the coming King?

# Another Man's Treasure

## In Pursuit of Holiness, Part 8

*I Peter 2:6-9*

Three hundred years before the birth of Jesus Christ, a Greek author penned the phrase, beauty is in the eye of the beholder. About 100 years ago, an English author used the expression in one of her novels and ever since, it's been a perfect description of human nature.

Another more contemporary version of it – that I think of when I think of garage sales – it's the phrase, **one man's trash is another man's - ? – treasure.**

The truth is, we all have our unique treasures. They mean something special – to us – even if they may not mean all that much to others.

Go into a living room, or an executive office and you'll quickly observe nothing less than a display of what that person considers valuable.

Come into my office sometime and you'll be struck by several things; pictures of my wife and family, books – and more books, and a collection of things I've picked up from traveling the world – a pebble from Israel; a sword from Japan; a hand held clay lamp, centuries old; coins from India and other countries where the Lord has allowed me to preach.

We tend to purchase and, certainly, display the things we value.

I went online and did a search for some of the most expensive items ever auctioned off. And I wasn't surprised to find items that many of us wouldn't view as worth the kind of money that was spent on them. And then again, you might consider some of the items might be worth the money.

I brought you some pictures of several items.



This first item is a photograph of the first printed book in the United States – when we were called The Colonies. This is the very first printed book in this country and, interestingly enough, it was the

Book of Psalms. It was printed by the Puritans of the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1640. It sold last 2 years ago for \$14 million dollars.

I don't have a picture of it, but I learned that the highest price ever paid for a manuscript went to purchase one of Leonardo da Vinci's notebooks, which was purchased by Bill Gates, for \$30 million dollars.

By the way, I just think it's great that a computer guy would spend \$30 million dollars for a real book. You just can't get that stuff on Kindle.

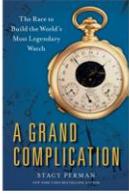
Now, if you're into diamonds, they are obviously considered a valuable treasure.



This 59 carat pink diamond, on the left side of the screen, set the world record price paid for a diamond when it was auctioned off a year ago for \$83 million dollars. If you're not into pink and you prefer orange diamonds, this one shown here is the record holder, and it sold at auction for \$35 million. Maybe you'd rather decorate your home – this rug was one of the 22 most expensive items ever auctioned



This one of a kind design was made in the 1700's in modern day Iran, was owned by an American banking and railroad executive. When he died in 1925, he left it to an art gallery. And then, in 2013, it was auctioned off for \$33 million dollars.



Here's a picture of the most expensive watch ever auctioned. It took a watch maker 6 years to craft it and it was completed in 1933. It features instruments that can gage the sunrise and sunset, the phases of the moon as well as a dial that shows the star chart of the skies over Manhattan. This watch sold, to an anonymous bidder, for \$11 million dollars.

If you have money to burn, or – shall we say, sit on – you can buy this chair



It was crafted by an Irish designer in the 1800's with lacquered wood and leather . . . it stayed in France for nearly 200 years until it was recently auctioned in Paris for \$28 million dollars. Twenty eight million dollars . . . for a chair.

If you don't need a chair, but you're looking for a dining room table



Here's one that was originally crafted in China out of rosewood . . . during the Ming dynasty.

It sold at auction for \$9 million dollars. I doubt it has a sticker on the bottom that says, "made in China."

Another item on this website showing the most expensive items sold at auction was this statue of a cat –



I'm not making this up – this was truly one of the 22 most expensive items featured.

Get this, it was crafted 2,100 years ago, in Egypt and it's carved out of bronze. When it was auctioned off a couple of years ago for \$2 million dollars – it set a record for an Egyptian carving of a cat.

Evidently there are a lot of them – this is the most expensive one – it's yours for \$2 million dollars!

Last, but not least . . . Jeffrey Koons created 5 stainless steel creations – called balloon dogs.



He then each of them five different colors – they're designed to look like balloon creations you get at the State Fair – although these are 12 feet tall.

This particular one is the most famous of the five; it's simply called The Orange Balloon Dog. The artist crafted it 25 years ago and it was auctioned off in November of 2013 for \$58 million dollars.

Can you imagine . . . and I like dogs . . . but a 12 foot tall balloon dog look-alike for \$58 million dollars? Goodness.

But it does make you wonder, doesn't it . . . a balloon dog sells for \$58 million and a bronze cat for \$2 million . . . there's a lesson there somewhere – I can't imagine what it is.

The truth is . . . beauty is in the eye of the beholder. One man's trash is another man's treasure.

Frankly, you can actually learn a lot about a person by what he holds dear.<sup>1</sup>

In his First Century, inspired letter, the Apostle Peter actually makes that point and he even makes it a principle of eternal significance.

Let me show you . . . turn back to **First Peter and chapter 2** . . . let's go back to where Peter introduces us as living stones; we're attached to a magnificent building which is none other than the Living Stone, our Lord Jesus.

What follows next, and we'll pick it up here, is a series of quotations from the Old Testament.

The first quote, Peter delivers is from **Isaiah 28:16** – let's pick it up at **verse 6 of First Peter chapter 2** – **For this is contained in Scripture: Behold, I lay in Zion a choice stone, a precious**

**corner stone, and he who believes in Him will not be disappointed.**

Peter here is referring to Jesus Christ, the Living Stone who is now referred to as corner stone, placed in Zion. Zion is Israel, the nation and the land of promise.

Our Lord came to offer His kingdom to the nation Israel. They rejected Him and, according to the plan of God, by the way, He wasn't taken by surprise – this earthly, literal kingdom was postponed until the return of Christ and His church to reign upon the earth in that 1,000 year, or Millennial, kingdom. (Revelation 20:1-7).<sup>ii</sup>

The first time Jesus came, nearly 2,000 years ago, the nation Israel rejected Him. Peter refers to that in his second and third quotations – **notice verse 7** where Peter now quotes from *Psalm 118:22-23* – ***The stone which the builders rejected, this became the very corner stone.***

Peter is referring to the national rejection of Christ by the builders –the leaders of Israel – and of course, the nation along with them, including the Roman Empire.

Peter goes further to quote next from *Isaiah 8:14* and deliver a fresh warning to all who read this prophecy about Christ – notice **verse 8** as Peter describes Him as – ***A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense.***

In other words, those who reject Jesus don't build their lives upon Him, they trip and fall over Him and thus ruin their lives.

This happened at the first coming of Jesus Christ. The nation Israel didn't build their future on His offer of the kingdom, they were **offended**, literally – scandalized – by His offer . . . I mean, who does this son of a carpenter think He is? He can't be the royal Son of David – the long awaited Messiah. And if He is, he certainly isn't going to die.

Which is why the Apostle Paul clarified that the cross was a stumbling block and an offense (1Corinthians 1:23).

Our covenant friends – those who don't believe in a future, national Israel, or a rapture, or for many of them, a literal kingdom; they would argue that Peter's use of Old Testament passages like these – which are originally delivered in the Old Testament concerning Israel – which Peter now uses to describe the church – especially **verse 9** where we're called a chosen race and a holy nation; well that can only mean, they would argue, that God is finished with Israel and the church has replaced her.

So all the prophecies of Israel's future are now null and void.

Not only is that an exegetical leap from Peter's use of prophecy to illustrate some of the blessings of the church, it more seriously spiritualizes away the prophecies and as a result denies so many other passages where the literal promises of God are given to the nation Israel;

- promises regarding their return to the land of Israel
- promises regarding a coming king
- promises of establishment in the land of promise
- promises of a coming, literal kingdom and the reign of the Son of David in Jerusalem.

And let me add to that – if the church replaces Israel, then the church erases the glorious hope and promise of a repentant Israel, following a future 7 year period the Bible calls The Tribulation.

Israel has been given a glorious promise that they, as a nation, following the judgment and wrath of God, will repent and welcome their Messiah when He returns to rule over them.

By the way, one of the primary purposes of the Tribulation is to prepare Israel for this second coming of Christ to rule and reign.

Beloved, the purpose of the Tribulation is not to purify the church by making her suffer. Just read your newspapers and your history books and tell me if the church around the world hasn't been and is not even now under terrible suffering and persecution.

Don't read the Bible like an American; read the Bible like Chinese underground worshipper; like North Korean believer – several of whom were recently martyred (which our news media never reports); read the Bible like an Iraqi believer or a Turkish or Sudanese Christian who is suffering.

Are they to understand that the blessed hope and word of comfort – to be rescued from suffering – means that only after they suffer even more – this time, not from unbelievers, but from the wrath of God – then they'll be rescued?

And don't slip into a-kind-of medieval theology that the church needs to be purged of sins in some kind of fiery purgatory before she can ever hope to enter heaven.

The church is already purified! The church is already made righteous and blameless by the perfection of her Savior. The church is ready for Heaven now.

- We are clothed in His righteousness now (*Philippians 3:9*);
- There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ (*Romans 8:1*);
- We are justified and freed from the penalty of every sin, even now we have peace with God (*Romans 5:1*)

The purpose of the Tribulation isn't to purify the church, it is to purify Israel and reposition Israel so that Israel will repent as a nation.

Zechariah 13 describes the Tribulation to a tee when he writes of Israel's experience in the judgment of the Tribulation; he writes, *Two-thirds of the people in the land will be cut off and die, says the Lord. But a third will be left in the land. I will bring that group through the fire and make them pure, just as gold and silver are refined and purified by fire. They (that is Israel) will call on my name, and I will answer them. I will say, "These are my people," and they will say, "The Lord is our God."* (*Zechariah 13:8-9*)

These prophecies of purifying judgment on Israel and their national repentance will be fulfilled just as carefully as the prophecies were fulfilled regarding the first coming of the Messiah.

And listen to this prophecy, which will also be fulfilled by the regathered and repentant nation of Israel, as *Zechariah*, the prophet speaks for God and His future promise – *I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son. They will look upon Him whom they have pierced (Zechariah 12:10)*; in other words, they're going to welcome the Lord back the second time – they pierced Him the first time – they will crown Him the second time as their sovereign King.

*And the people will live in the land and Jerusalem will dwell in security. (Zechariah 14:12).*

As far as I can tell, that hasn't happened yet, has it?! Is Israel enjoying the land in security? Not yet.

Have they welcomed the Messiah they rejected and pierced? Not yet.

So is God finished with Israel? Not hardly.

In fact, when Jesus returns and sets up His kingdom – headquartered in Jerusalem, and we with Him (*Revelation 20*); among other literal promises

yet to be fulfilled, the Apostles were given a promise for a special role in Israel – a promise that really ought to end the debate. Jesus promised this when He spoke of setting up His kingdom – *The Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne – you also (He's speaking to the apostles) will sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Matthew 19:28).*

In that one statement, which charges your imagination with a 1,000 volts of promise – Jesus refers to a literal kingdom; a literal glorious throne; 12 literal thrones upon which are seated 12 literal Apostles; ruling uniquely over 12 literal tribes of Israel.

Revelation reveals this amazing revival among the tribes of Israel as Jesus Christ's anointed evangelists from each of the tribes of Israel blanket the earth, during the Tribulation – just read *Revelation chapter 7* sometime – not now – there will be an incredible host of Jewish converts who will be saved and survive the Tribulation and welcome Christ back as He returns and reconstitutes Israel as a believing nation.

Peter preached in *Acts chapter 3* about this future time as a time of – quote – *"restoration . . . which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient times"* (*Acts 3:21*).

Beloved, God's promises, purposes and prophecies to the nation Israel have not been canceled by the church, but postponed for the creation of the church.

When you put the timeline together;

- when the church is completed (*Romans 11*) –
- the church will be raptured to the Father's House (*1 Thessalonians 4*) –
- then the Lord will turn again in judgment and yet mercy toward the world in general – and the unbelieving nation of Israel in particular (*Zachariah 13*) –
- and a multitude among the Jewish people will come to repentance and faith (*Revelation 7*)
- and at the end of the Tribulation they will welcome Jesus back as He descends to set up His Kingdom (*Zachariah 12-14*)

Listen, the Christians who were reading this letter from the Apostle Peter, both Gentile and Jewish believers now in the church – they were wondering the same thing as the Apostle Peter and the Apostle

Paul both refer to the cornerstone of the Messiah who was rejected by Israel.

They would be asking– what’s happening to Israel now that the cornerstone has been rejected by the nation.

Let me read to you what Paul wrote to the Roman believers, in clear – unmistakably clear – language – that, for now – and I quote him – ***I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery . . . that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in and so all Israel will be saved (Romans 11:25-26).***

God hasn’t taken back His covenant promise to the nation Israel beginning with Abraham in Genesis 13. God hasn’t changed His mind. His promises are still, to this day, irrevocable.

Now for the church, this period of time – primarily – of Gentile conversion and blessing – there is a genuine and spiritual rule of Christ in the hearts of those who believe today.

Paul refers to us as ambassadors of Christ . . . we represent His kingdom. The terms kingdom and rule often appear in relationship to the believer.

But that doesn’t mean a literal kingdom has been erased for just a spiritual kingdom. That doesn’t mean a literal future kingdom and a literal future nation of Israel has been eliminated.

It simply means that we, right now, as a church – in this dispensation of God’s administration, happen to be included in so many of these promises . . . we, today are a nation of priests – ministering directly for and unto God (***1 Peter 2***) we are, even now – ambassadors of the kingdom and the rule of our Lord in our lives (***Ephesians 6:20***).

Now, with all that in mind . . . and I’m aware that I’ve backed up the prophetic truck and dumped it all out.

With that in mind, what Peter does here in these quotations, is add his commentary which, effectively informs us that some things never change. One of those happens to be the Person of the Cornerstone.

From the Old Testament Book of Isaiah to this letter from Peter, the Cornerstone is the Messiah, the Son of God, Jesus Christ our Lord.

And another thing that doesn’t change is the attitude of mankind *about* the Cornerstone – the value people attach to the priceless treasure of Christ.

To some people, Jesus is worthless . . . to those of us who believe, He is precious – ***notice verse 7. This precious value, then, is for you who believe.***

To unbelievers Jesus is unwanted and worthless – and we should expect that opinion of Him . . . but to us, Jesus is a treasure.

In fact, what Peter does here is describe the different impact the Lord has on the lives of people – based on their value of Him.

In other words, even though to some people He’s trash and to other’s He’s treasure, what Peter adds here, is that your valuation of Jesus is going to determine your eternal destiny!

If I could outline my final comments along 2 points, to bring this all together, the first point would be *reception and vindication*; my second point would be, *rejection and condemnation*.

### 1. Reception and vindication

***Notice verse 6 again – Behold, I lay in Zion a choice stone, a precious corner stone.*** The corner stone was the key stone in the construction of a building during the days of Peter.

It served as the buildings plumb line – that is, it would be used to measure and determine all the angles of the building, vertically and horizontally. It was like the building’s plumb line and it needed to be perfectly square in order to make the angles of the building flawless.<sup>iii</sup>

Peter ties the corner stone back to Christ in this chapter. The Apostle Paul also wrote to the Ephesian believers that Jesus ***Christ is the corner stone (Ephesians 2:20).***

To us, who believe, Peter writes in ***verse 7, – He is precious.***

That word can be translated, *costly – valuable – of great worth.*<sup>iv</sup>

If Jesus were auctioned off to the world, He’d never bring as much interest or a sticker price that a pink diamond or a leather chair or a Ming dynasty dining room table or a stainless steel dog would bring.

To the world, that’s real treasure. But to the believer, it’s just stuff . . . it gets rusty and breaks down and wears out . . . but Jesus Christ is an eternal treasure!

And would you notice what happens to those who consider Jesus valuable? The last part of ***verse 6 – and He who believes in Him will not be disappointed.***

Do these first century believers – and believers around the world to this day – ever need to hear this? *You will not be disappointed in Him.*

This corner stone will not fail you. He is faithful . . . He is rock solid . . . He is priceless.

And one day He will be vindicated . . . and the gospel will be vindicated . . . the prophecies inform us that when the kingdoms of this earth have passed away, His kingdom will endure forever – on through the Millennial kingdom and then on forever in the glorious new heaven and new earth.

Even though life is often filled with disappointments . . . you never need to wonder – you will never be disappointed in your Corner Stone. And the best is yet to come.

For those of us, Peter wrote earlier in this chapter, who have *tasted that the Lord is good* . . . we know the truth . . . we know the value of our Treasure.

Peter now ends these quotations regarding the corner stone of Christ with a warning to those who don't believe.

For those who believe in Christ, there is reception and vindication; but for those who do not believe, there is:

## 2. Rejection and condemnation

*Verse 7 – This precious value, then, is for you who believe; but for those who disbelieve, the stone which the builders rejected, this became the very corner stone,” and, “a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense.”*

In other words instead of receiving Christ they trip over Him. Instead of standing, they stumble and fall.<sup>v</sup>

The unbeliever who rejects Jesus Christ as corner stone ends up – in this analogy – both tripping over Him and then being crushed in judgment by Him.<sup>vi</sup>

Notice the latter part of *verse 8. For they stumble because they are disobedient to the word.* Would you notice that the problem isn't that they don't understand the truth; the problem is they don't want to obey the truth.

It isn't a problem of ignorance, it is a problem of defiance.

Peter ends this verse by writing, *and to this doom they were also appointed.*

Now it sounds at first like unbelievers are ordained to judgment apart from their own choice. But Peter has just described their choice.

To them, Jesus isn't wanted – He doesn't have any market value – He isn't worth having.

What Peter is saying here is that the consequence of judgment and doom – for their unbelief – is appointed.

In other words, they are appointed to judgment because of their unbelief.

People today trip over Christ, not because they can't believe, but because they won't believe.<sup>vii</sup>

John MacArthur writes it well in his commentary on this text that God doesn't actively destine people to unbelief, but He does appoint judgment and doom on every unbeliever as a consequence of their disobedience and refusal to believe.<sup>viii</sup>

I would agree that is a warning to those who don't believe – you're doom is certain and unchangeable . . . without Christ.

One day they will stand before this Living Corner Stone who sits in that day as their final Judge (*Revelation 20:11-15*) – and they will give an account, not to their helplessness in being unable to believe, but to their willful defiance of the law of God, written on their heart (*Romans chapter 2*).

But even in the warning, I can't help but sense that Peter here is actually sending an indirect encouragement to the believer; you are facing rejection by your world – take heart, you belong to the One who was rejected by His world – and is still rejected today.

To them He is trash . . . but to us, He is lasting treasure. And one day He will be vindicated . . . and enthroned as King of Kings.

I have read of an interesting incident at a Divinity school in the Midwest, where the practice was to invite lecturers to come and speak to the students while the students ate their lunch. The community would be invited as well to spend their lunch hour hearing from a lecturer . . . some renowned author or scholar.

On one occasion they invited liberal theologian who had taught for years at several liberal seminaries on the east coast; when he came to speak, his topic was why a literal resurrection of Jesus Christ wasn't true – that Jesus merely lived on in the memories of his disciples through the metaphor and symbol of resurrection.

He quoted scholar after scholar and book after book. He concluded that, since there was no such thing as a literal historical resurrection of Jesus, the religion of the church needed rethinking.

He then asked if there were any questions. After about 30 seconds of silence, an older gentleman stood up near the back of the auditorium. “Doctor

Tillich, I have just one question,” he said as all eyes turned toward him.

He reached into his crumpled sack lunch and pulled out an apple and took a bite. “Dr. Tillich . . . my question is a simple question . . .” as he continued eating his apple; “I haven’t read the books you quoted and I can’t recite the Scripture as you have been able to do so in several languages . . .”

He took another bite of his apple . . . “I don’t know much about Niebuhr and Heidegger and other scholars you quoted from. . .” he finished his apple

and said, “All I want know is this; tell me, was the apple I just ate bitter or sweet?”

Dr. Tillich answered, “I cannot possibly know the answer that question – I haven’t tasted your apple.” The white-haired believer dropped the core of his apple into his paper bag, looked up and calmly said, “Neither have you tasted my Jesus.”

To those of us who have . . . He is precious . . . faithful . . . worthy . . . priceless.

This manuscript is from a sermon preached on 01/22/2017 by Stephen Davey.

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i John Phillips, Exploring the Epistles of Peter (Kregel, 2005), p. 90

ii Adapted from John MacArthur, 1 Peter (Moody Publishers, 2004), p. 120

iii MacArthur, p. 121

iv D. Edmond Hiebert, 1 Peter (BMH Books, 1984), p. 13

v R.C. Sproul, 1-2 Peter (Crossway, 2011), p. 64

vi Adapted from MacArthur, p. 123

vii Mounce, quoted in Hiebert, p. 141

viii Ibid, p. 123