

## Lesson # 1 - The Priorities Regarding the Lord Jesus Christ.

### Introduction

- A. Biblical priorities may be compared to blueprints, or patterns of life which insure our success.
- B. However, these priorities are not simply formulas for spiritual progress. They are derived from the greatness of God's person, His sovereign working, and His eternal goals. They are inseparably related to the very essence of Christianity itself.
- C. All of this indicates the importance of these priorities. They are not only valuable to us because they show how we may grow in fellowship with God. These priorities must be recognized as indications or characteristics of what it means for God to be God, of the nature of the kingdom of God, and of the meaning of truth.
- D. Where does one begin in speaking of Biblical priorities? We must start with what is number 1 in God's list of priorities - the Lord Jesus Christ.

### I. The Background.

- A. The created design of God.

The Biblical material can be summarized very briefly. God created us in His image. We were created into a living relationship with God. This relationship was highly personal - God was at the very center of all our life. We were designed to live in a fellowship with God in which He would be our authority, our motivation, and our goal for all of life. Today, as sinful people, we can only guess as to how wonderful, how free, and how fulfilling such a life could have been.

- B. The sinful choice of man.

In the Fall this created design was deliberately repudiated and rejected. Essentially sin is the substituting of self for the place of God. We made the choice, in Adam, to be our own authority, our own motivation, and our own goal. This is our basic problem.

### II. The Explanation.

- A. The cornerstone passages.

- 1. Isaiah 28:14-18.

In these days of Isaiah the leaders of Israel sought to find political security in alliances with Egypt and Assyria. By such alliances the leaders believed they were free from danger (v.15). The prophetic announcement regarding Jesus Christ as the cornerstone is to remind Israel that true security is only found through a right relationship with God. This principle holds in our personal lives today.

2. Psalm 118:22,23.

This is probably a Psalm written to be used in the temple which was rebuilt following the Exile. It is an expression of praise to God for His deliverance. The cornerstone prophecy (v. 22) indicates how the builders of the world empires despised "little Israel". The writer, under inspiration, indicates that the nation, through the Lord Jesus, would become the key to God's plan for the future. It is interesting to see in the New Testament how all that Israel meant before God was summarized and fulfilled in Jesus Christ. He is the way-truth-life-light-key (John 14:6; 8:12; Luke 11:52).

3. Matthew 21:33

These verses were spoken by the Lord Jesus to the religious leaders of His day. These men believed they were building God's kingdom. They were working, however, without a correct cornerstone. They had rejected Jesus Christ. Their refusal to accept the Savior as Messiah caused the kingdom of God to be taken from them. Sin has blinded us to the real issues of life.

4. Acts 4:10-12.

Peter is here giving an interpretation of the events related to the Crucifixion and Resurrection of the Lord Jesus. He reminds the Jewish people that their rejection of Jesus Christ resulted in the Crucifixion. In the Resurrection, however, God vindicated His Son and made Him to be the cornerstone in His kingdom. This concept should mean everything to the believer. The evidence for the truthfulness and the power behind these priorities are all found in the Crucifixion and Resurrection. No wonder the Apostle Peter said that we had a "living hope" through the Resurrection (I Peter 1:3).

5. Romans 9:30-33.

Paul is explaining, in these verses, the unbelief of Israel. Essentially it was due to their failure to accept the Lord Jesus as the Messiah. This led to their inability to find a righteousness acceptable with God. In not believing in Jesus Christ the Son of God became a stumbling block to them. There is no other provision once the gift of God in Jesus Christ is rejected.

6. Ephesians 2:19-22.

These verses indicate how Jesus Christ, the cornerstone, is the very foundation of all of life. Everything God has said in the Old and New Testaments find its origin, basis and fulfillment in Him. The believer is likened to a building with the Lord Jesus being the foundation.

B. The summary of the cornerstone passages: I Peter 2:4-9.

1. V4 - a description of the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. V5 - a description of the believer.
3. Vs 6,7a - a description of God's plan and promise.
4. Vs 7,8 - a description of the unbeliever.
5. V9 - a description of the believer.
  - a. His election - "a chosen generation".
  - b. His office - "a royal priesthood".
  - c. His character - "a holy nation".
  - d. His value - "a peculiar people".
  - e. His purpose - "to show forth God's praise".

III. The Application.

- A. The summary statement: Jesus Christ is the divine cornerstone. As such He is the key - for success or for failure. He is precious to God the Father.
- B. The summary exhortation: We must give Jesus Christ His rightful place.
  1. He is absolute in love - we must reject all selfishness, self-seeking, egoism and the drawing of attention to ourselves. We must express genuine love. I Peter 2:1
  2. He is absolute in holiness - we must reject all sensuality, impurity, and fleshly, proud living. We must live as holy men and women before God. I Peter 2:11
  3. He is absolute in truth - we must reject all pretense, hypocrisy, lies, and dishonesty. We must live according to the truth. I Peter 2:12

Conclusion: The evidence of the place of Jesus Christ, in our daily life, is found in our actions - not our words!