

Studies in I Peter (30)

The Privilege of Salvation -- The Christian is a Believer

Introduction

- A. One of the most important questions in life has to do with value. Every person must give an answer: "What is valuable enough to live for -- what must I include -- and exclude from my life?"
- B. While we may not wish to state our answers verbally -- all of us clearly reveal what is valuable to us - by how we live. We cannot hide our answers. Our daily life is an expression of our priorities.
- C. The Christian has been given a gift of great value -- he has been made a believer. God's gift of eternal life brings Him into a living relationship with God Himself -- the source of every good.

D. The text:

Now to you who believe, this stone (Jesus Christ) is precious. But to those who do not believe, "The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone," and, "A stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall." They stumble because they disobey the message--which is also what they were destined for. I Peter 2:7,8

I. The Amazing Description of the Christian.

A. The Christian is a believer -- "Unto you therefore which believe."

1. There are many reasons why the Christian is called a "believer." One of the most important is that Christianity is based on a divine revelation. God has spoken to us in nature (Romans 1:20), and primarily in Jesus Christ, as recorded in Scripture (Heb. 1:1-3). It is the responsibility of every person to believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and in His Word (I John 3:23).
2. That which distinguishes the Christian from the non-Christian is not religion or even good works - but believing in the Lord Jesus as the Son of God in a very personal way.

I told you that you would die in your sins, if you do not believe that I am the one I claim to be ... John 8:24 NIV

3. We must remind ourselves that believing is not related primarily to our emotions, or even to the truth of the Bible -- but to a Person, the Lord Jesus. It is important for us to ask as to whether we believe in Him as the Son of God, as our Redeemer, and do so as our own personal choice.
4. Every person is accountable to Jesus Christ and for the truth He has given us. We may not live as though believing in Him is one option among many. And we may not live as though God has not spoken - as though we did not have the Bible!

It is written: "'As surely as I live,' says the Lord, 'every knee will bow before me; every tongue will confess to God.'" Romans 14:11

B. The Christian, as a believer, honors Jesus Christ -- "He is precious."

1. By the word "precious" Peter indicates the greatest of all value has to do with the Lord Jesus. And that the Christian is one who not only recognizes that truth -- but lives accordingly.
 - a. As "precious" Jesus Christ is the Son of God -- we owe Him worship.
 - b. As "precious" Jesus Christ is the Sovereign Lord -- we owe Him trust.
 - c. As "precious" Jesus Christ is the Redeemer -- we own Him confession.
 - d. As "precious" Jesus Christ is the Truth -- we owe Him obedience.
 - e. As "precious" Jesus Christ is Love -- we owe Him devotion.
 - f. As "precious" Jesus Christ is Holiness -- we owe Him purity.
2. What are we to say of our disobedience, our inconsistency, our doubt, our hypocrisy, our self-centeredness, our laziness and all our other sins? We must call ourselves what we are when we live that way -- double-minded, and we must change our way of life! And we must ask if we are truly believers. James 1:8

II. The Frightening Description of the Non-Christian.

But to those who do not believe, "The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone," and, "A stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall." They stumble because they disobey the message -- which is also what they were destined for. I Peter 2:7,8

A. The non-Christian is disobedient (unbelieving).

1. In these words the emphasis is again on belief. The Christian affirms that God exists, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and Redeemer, and that the Bible is our final authority. The non-Christian does not make that affirmation -- at least not in a personal and life-changing way.
2. The issue is authority. For the Christian the authority is God -- for the non-Christian -- himself.

B. The non-Christian rejects the plan of God.

1. Using the Pharisees as an illustration (builders), Peter quotes the Lord Jesus (Matthew 21:42) to show how every non-Christian rejects God's plan as revealed in the Lord Jesus. The Pharisees knew the Savior would not fit into their plans -- and so rejected Him. Every non-Christian does the same and keeps stumbling against Him, being offended by Him, in their disobedience.
2. However, God has made Jesus Christ the "head of the corner" as the source of all authority and value. Every person will bow and confess that He is number one (Philippians 2:10,11; Colossians 1:18).

C. The non-Christian has been appointed to such condemnation.

The "appointment" here is not to unbelief -- but to live a life stumbling against the Lord Jesus as one stumbles against a stone (Rom. 9:22; Jude 4). God has determined the effects of such unbelief -- the non-Christian cannot escape the judgment he has brought upon himself.