

The Ancient Future

Thomas Robinson, *Born to a Living Hope 4*, April 24, 2016

1 Peter 2:1-10

¹ As you lay aside all **malice** and all **guile** and forms of **hypocrisy** and **envy** and all **speaking of evil**, ² as newborn **infants**, long for the guileless **milk** flowing from **the word**, that by it you may **grow up into salvation** [Ps 118:21] – ³ if indeed “*you have **tasted that the Lord is good.***” [Ps 34:8]

⁴ As you come to him, a **living stone** *rejected* by men [Ps 118:22] but in the sight of God **chosen and highly honored** [Isa 28:16], ⁵ you yourselves like **living stones** are being **built up** as a **spiritual house**, to be a *holy priesthood* [Exod 19:5], to offer *spiritual sacrifices* [Ps 51:17] acceptable to God through Jesus Messiah.

⁶ For it stands in Scripture: “*Behold, I am laying in Zion a **stone**, | a **cornerstone** chosen and highly honored, | and whoever **believes in him** will not be put to shame.*” [Isa 28:16]

⁷ So this ‘*honor*’ is in relation to you who believe, but for those who do not believe, “*The stone that the **builders rejected** | has become a **head of a corner**,*” [Ps 118:22] ⁸ and “*A **stone of stumbling**, | and a **rock of offense.***” [Isa 8:14] They stumble at the word/message since they do not believe/obey it, the very course on which they were set.

⁹ But you are a **chosen family** [Isa 43:20], a **royal priesthood**, a **holy nation**, a *people for his own possession* [Exod 19:5-6], that *you may **proclaim the saving deeds of him*** [Isa 43:21] who called you **out of darkness** into his marvelous **light**. [Isa 9:2] ¹⁰ Once you were *not a people*, but now you are **God's people**; once you had *not received mercy*, but now you have **received mercy**. [Hos 2:23]

1 Peter 1:22-23

²² As you have purified your lives by hearkening to the truth, which results in a love of brothers and sisters that is without hypocrisy, then love one another eagerly from a pure heart, ²³ since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God.

Psalm 34:8 (Cf. 1 Pet 3:10-12 where Peter quotes Ps 34:12-16)

⁸ Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good! | Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him!

Deuteronomy 32:18 (Cf. 2 Sam 22:47; Ps 89:26)

¹⁸ You were unmindful of the Rock that bore you, and you forgot the God who gave birth to you.

Isaiah 8:14-15, 22; 9:2, 6 (Cf. Rom 9:33)

¹⁴ And the LORD will become a sanctuary and a stone of offense and a rock of stumbling to both houses of Israel ¹⁵ And many shall stumble on it. They shall fall and be broken ²² And they will be thrust into thick darkness. ... **9:**² But the people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone. ... ⁶ For to us a child is born, to us a son is given....

Isaiah 28:16 LXX (Cf. Rom 9:33)

¹⁶ [The LORD says,] “Behold, I have laid in Zion, | a precious, chosen stone, | a cornerstone highly honored for its foundation: | and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.”

Psalm 118:21-22, 25-26 (Cf. Mt 21:9, 42)

²¹ I thank you that you ... have become salvation for me. | ²² A stone that the builders rejected | has become head of a corner. ... ²⁵ Hosanna, O LORD! ... ²⁶ Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD!

Exodus 19:4-6 LXX (Cf. Deut 7:6; 14:2)

⁴ You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, | and how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself. | ⁵ Now, if you will indeed hear my voice ... | you shall be a people of my own among all nations, | for all the earth is mine; | ⁶ and you shall be to me a royal priesthood | a holy nation.

Isaiah 43:20-21 (Cf. Isa 42:6-9)

²⁰ I give water in the wilderness to ... to my chosen family, ²¹ the people I have made my own that they may proclaim my saving deeds.

Hosea 2:23 (Cf. Hos 1:6-10; Rom 9:25)

²³ ... “And I will have mercy on Received-No-Mercy, and I will say to Not-My-People, ‘You are my people.’”

1 Peter 1:10

¹⁰ Concerning this salvation/deliverance, the prophets searched and inquired carefully, those who prophesied about the grace that was to be given to you.

Learning a Living Hope – Following the Prophets

Peter is leading believers under stress to grasp what it means that they've been “*born again into a living hope*” by Jesus' resurrection from death. He's talked of their future imperishable inheritance and that even as they face present persecution they're *guarded* by *God's power* for *salvation*. It all centers around Jesus, who brings *inexpressible joy* and a present experience of that salvation [1:3-9].

Peter knows how hard it is to become spiritual “*resident aliens*” in a vast empire with contrary values. He want them to know the depth of the story, the ancient past, that's now theirs. In fact, what they are experiencing through Jesus' resurrection is the fulfilment of the deepest promises of that past.

He doesn't tell stories. They've probably learned them. He weaves together reflections on those stories in the language of scriptures they can study to help them understand their own life and identity.

What they experience in their 'modern' time corresponds to what prophets saw in Israel's life. He leads them into the rich poetic language of scripture to express the transformation they experience.

How does a New Birth Change Things?

How does an adult experience new birth? It starts from God's action in Jesus which sets off responses.

You start undressing from your old ways down to your 'birthday suit' – *guile, hypocrisies, envies*...

Jesus had no *guile* [2:22, Isa 53:9]; seeking life rejects *guile* [3:10, Ps 34:13] and gives a taste that the Lord is good [2:3; Ps 34:8]. You find yourself a new baby with a lot of growing, learning to do. You long for milk, real nourishment that doesn't deceive, that comes from the logos/word: the event of Jesus that we receive as good news, God's living word [1:23]. You listen, follow, purify, love, grow.

The taste of that milk is like no other. It is personal experience of the deep goodness of God as giver of life, Jesus as redeemer, renewer of life. The taste of divine life given by the Spirit. Nothing compares.

A Life Built between Human Rejection and God's Delight

Peter shifts from the Lord as nursing mother to *living stone* – a big metaphorical jump! But in Moses' great song in Deut 32 God is called the *Rock*...*who gave birth to you*. A much used image.

Peter wants to talk about the solidity of the new life of hope in Jesus and also the experience of conflict, rejection, and vulnerability that has hit these disciples. He builds on three passages: Isa 8-9; 28, and Psa 118. The stone/rock is God, the life-giving Rock. In Jesus he comes among humans and is vulnerable to human rejection. God's wisdom and power are radically different from human.

They've come to Jesus, this living stone foundation of a spiritual house where God and human meet, and they find themselves part of that sanctuary, living stones, a priesthood bringing people into relationship with God through Jesus. This living stone is honored by God but rejected by people.

This living stone doesn't look like most people's image of God. Thus the problem that has always been there, in Israel and now among Gentiles: Can I bring myself to trust God when he doesn't show himself with the trappings of human glory. When God humbles himself in Jesus, am I offended?

Called into a Marvelous Light

Peter affirms their choice and identity as disciples: They're like God's people at Mt. Sinai. God is giving them new identity and new purpose. Their experience of birth, taste, identity, light is for sharing.

Our future flows from the great, ancient, ongoing story of God's people, God's mercy: a Living Hope.