

## THE PEOPLE OF GOD'S SALVATION (I Peter 2:5)

Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

... **The Privilege of God's Salvation, The Power of God's Salvation** ...

This morning we are considering **The People of God's Salvation**. The apostle John had the privilege of looking into Heaven, and there He saw the King upon the Throne ... and around the Throne were the angels and the twenty-four elders, - signifying the Church throughout the Old and the New Testaments ... and he heard their new song, *Rev. 5:9 Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation*. This is the eternal cry of the Church, - we shall never grow tired singing and shouting it ... and our God and Saviour will never grow tired of hearing it!

If you are *saved*, if you know the Lord Jesus Christ in a personal way, if you have asked Him to come and take away your sin and if you are living to please Him in everything you do ... you are a child of the King and you belong to **the people of God's salvation**. How does the Holy Spirit direct Peter to describe this privilege to us? ...

**ALIVE**

Ye also, as lively stones ...

- \* Just look at the previous verse ... It is speaking about the Lord Jesus, - He is the *living stone* ... all other stones are shaped as He is (= the Model).
- \* He is the 'stone' upon which all the other stones are built around and built upon; He is the foundation stone, the chief cornerstone ... in order for the building to stand, all of these stones are firmly built upon Him.
- \* Peter was a Jew and he was one of those disciples standing outside the Temple when Jesus told them, *Mt. 24:2 There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down*. You can imagine how difficult it was for a Jew to understand the temple being destroyed again ... as it was when Nebuchadnezzar rode into the city 600 years earlier!
- \* The temple was the centre *of* their religion and *for* their religion. ... But Peter, - because of Jesus, - had come to understand the significance of a different temple in the prophecy of *Isaiah 28:16 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation*.
- \* To his fellow-Jews Jesus was (*Is. 8:14*) a stone of stumbling and ... a rock of offence, (*I Pet. 2:3*) disallowed indeed of men ... and yet chosen of God and separated to be the Foundation of the Church (*cf. 1:20*). ...

\* “The Church’s one foundation Is Jesus Christ her Lord, She is His new creation By water and the Word. From Heaven He came and sought her To be His holy bride; With His own blood He bought her And for her life He died.”

\* All the stones then, in the building of God’s living temple, are built after the fashion of the corner-stone. There is no new design for the twenty-first century church as being any different to the Church in any other age, and there is no design for young believers that is any different from the design for older believers, and it is the same design for all the nations everywhere ... for we are all one in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:28).

\* He used the analogy Himself, Mt. 16:18 *I will build my church*. He is its Architect, its Designer and its Constructor! He has the building rights for it. The ground upon which it is built belongs to Him. He keeps it fit for a King and fit for the King’s children. It is His Church because He has built it with His own sweat, pain and toil, and according to His own plans.

\* So the building all depends upon Him, - it is as likely to collapse as He is to fall! He is the Foundation stone of all our hopes and happiness.

\* When you walk in through the door of this temple you are in the holy presence of God. The unsaved have no place in this temple. The door is locked to them ... for there is only one entrance and His Name is Jesus.

\* The unsaved in their stubbornness disallow and reject Jesus, they slight Him, oppose and refuse Him ... but yet He is *chosen* of God, - God could have chosen an angel or one of the great prophets of the Old Testament but in the Council Room of Heaven God the Son was chosen to be the Foundation of this wonderful temple of God ... to which, believer, you and I are privileged to belong.

\* Far too often the world looks at a structure like St. Paul’s Cathedral or Westminster Abbey in London, or St. Peter’s Cathedral in Rome and for them *that* is the symbol of Christianity ... *but it is not!*

\* The symbol of the Christian Church is not made by earthly objects but the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ is the spiritual home of God, built upon the sacrificial work of Christ on the cross because *every* brick in that building has been purchased at the expense of His precious blood.

\* There is no one who can boast in their own salvation; you will never find a brick adding themselves to a building ... A brick is a dead piece of inanimate material, but Christ has picked us up, formed us into the right shape, placed us in His building and we have become *lively [living] stones* for His glory. Because He is alive, we are alive also!

\* That was how Peter draws this picture for us, and he continues ...

**ADORNED**

... are built up a spiritual house ...

- \* Christ is a living stone in God's temple, and Christians are like Him, - living stones, - and His purpose for them is to make a [spiritual house](#).
- \* It is God's will for each born-again believer to be an intricate part of that building ... serving his/her own individual function within that grand structure.
- \* It is a sad fact of the Church, - and we all contribute to it, - that it seems (on the outside at least) we are not built with the same type of stone.
- \* When you pass the various building sites that have sprung up round Kirkcaldy you will notice many of the homes are built with different bricks. While variation is often good, in the Church variation has so often created dissension and strife. Instead of making the building stronger, it has threatened to weaken it and even topple it.
- \* I have been a pastor for over twenty years and I have seen and heard of churches collapsing from the inside and having to close because there is no vision, or because its members are more intent in destroying each other than they are in destroying the enemy.
- \* Our God and Saviour has the best of all quarries from which He chooses the stones for His temple; He is the best of Master Craftsmen to create the most ornate structures ... and despite the machinations of man ... He will see to it that we [are built up a spiritual house](#) ... and oh, how we ought not to obstruct His work!
- \* You will notice that Peter wrote this epistle to five different provinces, - [1:1 Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia](#), - and yet he made it clear they all belonged to the [one](#) spiritual house ... [Gal. 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female ... 29 if ye be Christ's, then are ye ... heirs according to the promise.](#)
- \* There is a unity of God's people that transcends all local and individual assemblies and fellowships. We belong to each other because we belong to Christ. There are points of doctrine at which we might differ but we must not permit the devil to enjoy our differences destroying the spiritual unity Christ died on Calvary to maintain.
- \* When stones in a building are not very well put together, they become unstable and the structure inevitably collapses.
- \* This [spiritual house](#) does not need the elaborateness of man's inventions, - spiritual inventions or otherwise. This is the Lord's temple, - [Ps. 118:23 This is the LORD'S doing; it is marvellous in our eyes.](#)

\* It is built according to His dimensions and His specifications ... and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it (Mt. 16:18).

**APPROVED** ... an holy priesthood ...

\* Who counts it holy? God counts it holy! In 1:1 Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia the priesthood in the various temples were associated with all types of fleshly pursuits such as temple prostitution, temple drunkenness, and temple orgies.

\* Peter, of course, was making reference to the Old Testament **holy priesthood**. It was inaugurated under the supervision of Moses and Aaron and tight regulations were in place to maintain this **holy priesthood**.

\* In the 'old days' God's people had a priesthood, but Peter was teaching them that because of Christ, God's people today are a priesthood!

\* In v. 5 we are described as belonging to **an holy priesthood**, and in v.9 a **royal priesthood**. This corresponds to the Heavenly priesthood of our Lord, - He is both Priest and King (cf. Heb. 7).

\* In the Old Testament, no king in Israel served as a priest (and the one king who tried to was judged by God, i.e. Uzziah, II Chron. 26:16-21).

\* We have a Mediator Who is both King of Kings and our great High Priest ... and we are privileged as priests together with Him.

\* Each of us has the privilege of coming into the presence of God through the Name of Christ, our Intercessor. Through Him, - according to His will, - is made available the power of Heaven and of God.

\* Each of the priests works together for the purpose of the High Priest, - there can be no squabbling in the ranks, there can be none with higher aspirations than that which God has blessed them with.

\* Gen. 14:18 and Heb. 7:1 both speak about **Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God**. The life we have is all because of God.

\* Once we were 'dead' stones, inanimate, unmoving and unfeeling ... but God made us to become living stones, - alive to Him by regeneration and the working of the Holy Spirit.

\* The Church of God is a **spiritual house** because it is the abiding-place of spiritual people. The Foundation is Christ, its beauty and decoration is all to His glory. Everything about the building has all to do with Him.

\* Instead of paying a rent or a mortgage to live there, we are part of this building for *free* ... privileged that the greatest sacrifice ever offered on any human altar was the Sacrifice that was offered more supremely on God's holy altar and the price we never could have afforded was paid in full, on our behalf, for all eternity.

\* In his hymn, "Glorious things of Thee are spoken, Zion, city of our God" John Newton writes, "Blest inhabitants of Zion, Washed in the Redeemer's blood! Jesus, whom their souls rely on, Makes them kings and priests to God. 'Tis His love His people raises, Over self to reign as kings, And as priests, His solemn praises Each for a thank offering brings." And yes, this [holy priesthood](#) is **approved** and also ...

### **APPOINTED** ... to offer up spiritual sacrifices ...

\* These priests are uniquely and particularly **appointed** by God. In just the same way the sons of Levi were chosen to be the priests in the Old Testament economy, God's choice is to the fore again.

\* He has [an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices](#). Position in society or degrees after your name or belonging to a particular family does not merit you with being **appointed** to salvation, - it is simply and only because of God's sovereign and saving grace you are a priest in this [holy priesthood](#).

\* Whilst the old days of the sacrifices of lambs and goats are over, the born-again people of God are continually expected to offer up spiritual sacrifices, holy and [acceptable unto God, which is \[our\] reasonable service \(Rom. 12:1\)](#).

\* Becoming a Christian is not an insurance policy that guarantees you do not go to Hell, ... becoming a Christian is becoming a *servant* of the most High God. ... Each Christian is not simply a believer ... each Christian is a *servi*ng believer.

\* There is no such thing as becoming a Christian and it stopping there, - all true believers belong to the [holy priesthood, \[who\] offer up spiritual sacrifices](#). It is part of what you become when Christ saves you. It is not an addition, it is a privilege and a joy.

\* As a priest in God's service, what do you offer Him? You offer Him your body, your soul, your affections, your prayers, your praises ... *everything you are and have, you offer Him!*

\* What do you bring a person who has everything? ... We often ask that at birthdays and Christmas times ... In an even far greater way, what do you bring to God ... what *can* you bring to Him?

- \* There is only one thing He requires ... and that is yourself, - all of yourself, holding nothing back, not even the least little bit. *He must be the Lord of all or else He will not be the Lord at all.*
- \* The priesthood is wholly committed, - you cannot be a priest unless you are wholly committed.
- \* In a certain period in the Old Testament times the children of Israel were not tithing their money and the priests had to work in the fields to earn their living ... and obviously the work of God was suffering. You cannot have your mind divided!
- \* When God saves you it is a privilege you and I do not deserve so therefore, says the writer to the Hebrews, [13:15 let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.](#)
- \* **The People of God's Salvation** are **Alive, Adorned, Approved, Appointed** ... and lastly, they are ...

#### **ACCEPTED** ... acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

- \* When you come to God His way, and when you live your life His way the promise is that you are **acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.**
- \* There are absolutely no guarantees you are acceptable any other way.
- \* The children's chorus says, "One way God says to get to Heaven, Jesus is the only way. No other way, no other way. One way God says to get to Heaven, Jesus is the only way".
- \* When you invite Him into your heart and life, *that* is just the beginning. When a baby is born, it is only the start. When you come by faith to Christ He leads you along a path that will one day bring you into Heaven where you will be forever. Along that path you mature.
- \* Think of someone who just goes so far along the path and stops growing, - their growth is stunted ... something is not quite right ... and there is something not quite right about a Christian who does not grow ... so make sure you take all the nourishments of God's Word so that you will grow. Make sure to be obedient to God's Word and grow alongside your brother and sister in Christ.
- \* Paul said the same truth as Peter, [Eph. 1:5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, 6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us \*\*accepted in the beloved.\*\*](#) These, he says, are **spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ (v.3).** These can only be understood by **the people of God's salvation** ... those Whom Christ has redeemed through the shedding of His precious blood at Calvary!

\* Being acceptable to God by Jesus Christ determines our behaviour and our manner of life, our interests, the places we go to and the conversations we share. Matthew Henry wrote, “The glory of God is His own end, and it should be ours in all that we do”.

\* Jesus Christ is the Beloved of His Father (Mt. 3:17), as well as the angels in Heaven and all the sinners saved by grace. It is our great privilege therefore to be accepted of God ... taken into His care and into His Family ... and we are accepted only through Christ. ... God loves His people for the sake of His Beloved Son.

\* And that is the sole reason the sinner is saved by grace ... acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

**CONCLUSION** Brothers and sisters in Christ ... **The Privilege of God’s Salvation, The Power of God’s Salvation** ... and what a joy to belong to **The People of God’s Salvation**.

\* **Alive, Adorned, Approved, Appointed, Accepted** ... Rev. Augustus Toplady of the Orange Street Congregational Church behind Trafalgar Square in London wrote, “While I draw this fleeting breath, When mine eyes shall close in death, [*originally*, When my eye-strings break in death] When I soar to worlds unknown, See Thee on Thy judgment throne, Rock of Ages, cleft for me, Let me hide myself in Thee”.

\* Again I turn in closing to those who are not yet part of this Family of God. To belong to any family you must be born into it. A wise theologian and teacher asked Jesus, **Jn. 3:4 How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?**

\* The best answer I can give is the answer Jesus gave, **Jn. 3:7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.**

\* By faith you must come to God and when you are confronted with His holiness you will recognise the awfulness of your sin. You will see it is leading you along a path that, - if you do not accept Christ as Saviour, - you will be forever in the fires of Hell when you leave this scene of time.

\* Believe on Jesus. Believe and repent and accept that He died for you at Calvary to take away your sin. Then confess and own Him as your Saviour and Lord, as the Bible says, **Rom. 10:9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.**

\* And then you too will have this greatest of privileges of belonging to **THE PEOPLE OF GOD’S SALVATION**.