

A1 Peter 2:4-10 Part A

When I began studying this passage of Scripture, I was arrested by the way that Peter said something in v9. Notice what he said. He said **“But you are...that you may...”** I guess the question then is *“I am what that I may do what.”* Basically this passage is preparing Peter’s readers for rest of this letter which we will find is one exhortation after another exhortation. In fact, we can see in v11 how Peter begins his entry into the major exhortations when he says, **“Beloved, I beg you...”** I.e., when he reaches that point in his letter, it is as if he is somewhat pleading with his readers because of what he has just told them. He has told them things like they are **“living stones”**, they are a **“spiritual house”**, they are a **“holy priesthood”**, they are a **“chosen generation”**, they are a **“royal priesthood”**, they are a **“holy nation”**, they are God’s **“own special people”**, and they are **“the people of God”**. No wonder he feels compelled to **“beg”** them to do something. The word **“beg”** is the Greek word *“parakaleo”* and it means to beseech, to call for, to exhort, and to entreat someone. It is the root word that is often used of the Holy Spirit when He is called the *“Paraclete”*, or One who comes along side to help.

So, what Peter is doing in these seven (7) verses is that he is describing how God sees believers, describing what they are in reality. We are something **“positionally”**, but what we are positionally **MUST** always be worked out **“practically”**. It is always very important for an individual to behave in a manner that is consistent with what they are. I am a pastor, and that calling on my life creates specific boundaries within which I can live. There are certain areas of life, certain activities that I simply cannot touch because it would be a disgrace to my calling and to this church. You would be deeply grieved if you found out that I was an alcoholic, that I smoked pot, and that I actually cursed like a sailor. In Paul’s terms, I am something so that I may do something - **“you are...that you may”**. It is not that God has just called us, but that He has called us to live out our lives in such a way that our life honors Him and reflects Him to others. I remember several years ago when there was a local doctor who made the headline news for getting drunk and beating some woman in the Wagener area that he was having an affair with at the time. Now, what he does in his private life is his business, but it just so happened that my mother was being treated by him and I would have to take her to his office. I decided that I did not want her to see him any longer because his character did not seem to match his profession. I did not want my mother being treated by a drunk, adulterous, woman beating doctor.

Then to highlight this even more, Peter is also contrasting believers with unbelievers. He talks about unbelievers as being **“disobedient”** (v7-8) and as those who **“stumble”** (v8). To them, Christ is seen as **“a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense”** (v8). They are offended by Christ. The way that Paul makes the contrast is by using the conjunction **“but”** in v9-10. Whenever the word **“but”** is used, it generally is the writers way of making a contrast, of marking a difference between two completely different things. Notice how Peter does this. For instance, in [1 Peter 2:7](#) he says,

1Pe 2:7 (NKJV) **Therefore, to you who believe, *He is precious*; but to those who are disobedient...**

In [1 Peter 2:8-9](#) he says,

1Pe 2:8 (NKJV) **...They stumble, being disobedient to the word...⁹ But you are a chosen generation...**

In [1 Peter 2:10](#) he says,

1Pe 2:10 (NKJV) **who once were not a people but are now the people of God...**

Now, without sounding too over-simplistic in all of this, in order for Peter's exhortation to actually take place in a person's life they first have to "**come**" to Christ (v4). However, what is not immediately obvious in the phrase "**coming to Him**" (v4) is that the verb, or verbal participle, is in the present tense. So, it is not implying a believer's initial coming to Christ for salvation, but is rather addressing the idea of the believer constantly coming to Christ for intimate fellowship. It appears that this is a clear reference back to v2 which speaks of "**desiring and craving the pure milk of the word that you may grow thereby**". That is how a believer comes to Christ – through His Word. That is where He speaks to us, so that if a believer is not inclined to spend any meaningful time in God's Word, then in reality the exhortations that will follow will not really ever take root in the individual's life. You have to have something in which to be grounded so that "**you may grow thereby**".

Now, without being overly technical, the word "**coming**" is what is known as an "antecedent participle" which is where a participle, in this case the word "**coming**", is viewed as occurring prior to the main verbal action of the immediate clause. I.e., what is the main force of this sentence is not the "**coming**" – which obviously is very important, but the main force of v4-5 is that of being "**built up**" so that we can "**offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ**". Having a hunger for the Word of God, craving the Word of God, and desiring the Word of God is a pre-requisite for being "**built up**". I say this with as much grace as I can, but I have never met a believer who was having any kind of substantial impact in their Christian life who simply ignored the Word of God in their life and had no real desire for it. For instance, there are a lot of people who come to church because they think it is the right thing to do, but in reality they never gain much from it and generally find it as somewhat of a necessary inconvenience on their life. Why is that? Well, it is because they have no "**desire**", no "**craving**" for the Word of God. They have rationalized and made excuses for so long regarding this area of their life that they no longer have any hunger for the things of God and have never developed any meaningful discipline in their life for studying God's Word. They have become satisfied with just a minimal input by someone else of God's Word into their life. Without sounding overly harsh, this is very normative for many professing believers.

If we understand what Peter is addressing in this passage, then we must be committed to "**coming**" to Christ in the present tense. One of the primary goals of our Christian life is that of growing and maturing in Christ, but that cannot and will not happen apart from this idea of "**coming**" to Him. The Greek word is "*proserchomai*" and simply means to come, to approach, to draw near to.¹ It means to move towards someone, to seek an association with them, and to go towards them.² It is the idea that when you come to Christ in the present tense that your life has a willingness to embrace, to accept, and to grasp and hold on to what He desires for your life. The verb "*proserchomai*" is composed of the prefix "*pros*" and the verb "*erchomai*". The prefix "*pros*" is a preposition of direction, of motion towards, and it greatly intensifies the verb "*erchomai*" which simply means to come. It denotes a continual drawing near to Christ in a very intimate, abiding, and personal fellowship.³ Because this is a present tense verb, it already assumes that someone is saved, so it is not talking about coming to Christ for salvation which would be either an aorist tense verb or a perfect tense verb. It is talking about how we treat Christ after we have been saved. For instance, [Hebrews 4:16](#) uses the verb and says,

Heb 4:16 (NKJV) **Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.**

Hebrews 10:22 says,

Heb 10:22 (NKJV) **let us draw near (*proserchomai*) with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.**

That is the idea and meaning of the word – to draw near to God with a very genuine and sincere heart. What Peter is expressing with this verb is that the believer is to constantly be moving into an intimate communion with Christ, and in the context of these verses, that most likely occurs as they hunger and thirst for the Word of God. The main idea of v4-5 could be read this way – “**as you continually come to Christ...you yourself...are being built up and growing**”. Then, the reference to a “**spiritual house**” in v5 adds another dimension to the value of “**coming**” to Christ for fellowship. The more devoted that someone is to Christ through His Word, the more that he or she will be integrated into His church.⁴ Very often those who spend very little time in the Word of God have little desire to be fully integrated into their local church – and seldom are. However, we are being built up as a “**spiritual house**”, or as a group of faithful and committed believers who are continually coming to Christ for His fellowship and for His wisdom and truth. We realize that v1-3 are dealing with the believer’s personal responsibility to grow in their salvation, but it must be understood that spiritual growth is never just an individual matter – never. We can never grow spiritually and yet remain in isolation from other believers.⁵ It should be more than evident to anyone who has known people who have withdrawn themselves from meaningful fellowship in a local body of believers that they slowly drift away from Christ and from the things of God. Their life begins to take on a commitment to other things, their time begins to be absorbed by other things, and eventually they are gone and for the most part cease to grow spiritually.

It must be understood what Peter says in v4 when he says that Christ, the One that you are personally called on to come to, is “**rejected indeed by men**”. Being committed to Christ will not win you friends or make you popular. Why? It is because men reject Christ. The word “**rejected**” is the Greek word “*apodokimazo*” and it means to disallow, to disapprove.⁶ It is the idea that men have examined Christ, considered His claims, and tested His qualifications based on their standards and they reject everything about Him.⁷ It literally implies that they regard Him as being unworthy. Unfortunately for them, however, is that the result of men disqualifying Christ is that they are ultimately disqualifying themselves. They fail to realize that they are not the ones making the final judgment. Of the nine (9) times this word is used in the New Testament, eight (8) of those times are in direct reference to men rejecting Christ. I have said it often, but Christians are the minority. We are the hunted, and we have become the target and the scapegoat for man’s unbelief and hatred of both God the Father and Christ. Man’s estimate of Christ and God’s estimate of Christ are two entirely different things, so if you as a believer side with God, you will be opposed by men.

Please appreciate that what man chooses or what man thinks has nothing to do with the spiritual realities of God’s kingdom. God and Christ are utterly and eternally supreme. They are in utter and complete sovereign control of all things that are taking place. All of history is moving redemptively on God’s timetable in accordance with God’s will. Nothing can stop Him. He is all sufficient and completely self-sufficient to accomplish all that He has ordained to pass. What men fail to understand is that God the Father has “**chosen**” Christ. I say it this way often, but man did not get a vote. Man’s opinion about Christ changes nothing. Man’s ideas about life, salvation, eternity, sin, judgment, sin, and hell have no

bearing whatsoever on the reality and certainty of what will actually take place. In reality, man is totally inconsequential in anything that he thinks or even imagines to be true. The only truth about any issue of life is what God says is true about it. This is the great tragedy that man faces – thinking that his ideas, understanding, and opinions have some kind of deep spiritual value in the final outcome. The reality is that they are completely unimportant and worthless and have no value or merit whatsoever. Yet in his arrogance, man has convinced himself that he has some measure of importance in the final determination. Nothing, literally nothing, could be any further from the truth.

So, this word “**chosen**” is a very significant word in that what it acknowledges is that what men think of Christ has virtually nothing whatsoever to do with spiritual reality or the ultimate spiritual outcome. If I can say it this way, who cares what man thinks about God. What a ludicrous and outrageously foolish position to deem as important – that my opinion and ideas have any value relative to God’s decisions. On the larger stage of eternity, my life is not even a “blip” in time. The word “**chosen**” appears to be a verb, and obviously it does have a verbal form, but it is actually an adjective in this verse. For instance, v9 calls believers a “**chosen generation**” and is used as an adjective in that case as well. The NASB seems to glean the meaning the best when it says “**but is choice and precious in the sight of God**”. Christ is the One that was chosen by God to accomplish the work of salvation for others. He is the chosen One of God, and we better get this right. God did not choose religion, God did not choose good works, God did not choose Baptists, God did not choose Buddha, and God did not choose Mohammed. **GOD CHOSE CHRIST!** If God the Father chose Christ, it would do me well to choose Christ.

Peter says that Christ is “**precious**” – “*entimos*”. The Greek prefix “*en*” is a preposition that refers to something being in a fixed position or state. The verb “*time*” refers to value and esteem of the highest possible nature.⁸ It is something that is costly, and something or someone to be held in honor and adoration.⁹ Now, the problem that men will face is simple. They may look at Christ and they may examine Christ and His claims, but they will reject Him. Here is the One who is the most honorable, the One who is to be the most highly esteemed, the One who has the greatest value possible, and the One chosen and selected by God - and yet men completely reject Him. Listen very carefully. You would be wise, you would be smart, you would be intelligent, and you would be prudent to completely ignore, disregard, and reject everything that the lost man says about Christ. Do not even take it into account, take no notice of it, and pay no heed to it. Why? It is because it literally has no value and no worth whatsoever. **GOD CHOSE CHRIST**, and so must you! Man’s ideas about God, man’s philosophies about God, man’s personal beliefs about God, and man’s viewpoints and counter arguments about God will lead you completely away from the realities of God’s truth. They will lead a person into eternal judgment and damnation. They have no value – none, zero. That is the ultimate insult to man, and because of your personal faith in Christ, you will become the ultimate insult to the lost man. It is of utmost importance that we fully embrace that which is “**precious**” to God.

ENDNOTES

¹ Strong, *proserchomai*, #4334.

² Logos, *1 Peter 2:4*, Word by Word.

³ MacArthur, 104.

⁴ Grudem, 98.

⁵ Vaughn, 43.

⁶ Strong, *apodokimazo*, #593.

⁷ Zodhiates, 223.

⁸ Strong, *entimos*, #1784.

⁹ Zodhiates, 594.

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