

LECTIONARY GUIDES for I Peter 2:2-10 and John

I Peter 2:2-10

The writer of I Peter culminates his letter by speaking of our responsibility as children of God to seek “pure spiritual milk,” and to become “living stones” like Christ. For, though Jesus was rejected, he was not an inanimate stone, but came to life. Here the writer draws on Isaiah 43, Ezekiel 19, and Hosea 2. So, we are to come together as a “spiritual house.” In this house, a “holy priesthood” is to offer “spiritual sacrifices.” While others stumble, followers are to become “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation and God’s own people.” (v. 9) In ending, the writer says, once you were a people...now God’s people; once you had no mercy...now you received mercy.” (v. 10)

Ten Questions

1. How do we react to the letter of I Peter? Does the language of “pure spiritual milk” speak to us?
2. If we think of Christ as a “living stone,” are we ourselves living stones and the church a collection of living stones? If so, what can we do to become a “spiritual house”?
3. The writer describes Jesus as the “cornerstone,” referring to Isaiah 28:16. Some think the cornerstone is (only) at the corner of two walls at right angles; in fact, it also produces a perfect 90-degree so that the building can be constructed soundly. Is -- and how is -- Jesus the cornerstone of our church?
4. If our church is a collection of living stones, which ones stand out to us? More so, during our health pandemic, which ones continue to stand out as we make “resumptive plans” and phase into a “new normal”?
5. Keeping the stone image going, but not of living stones, the writer describes those stones that make us stumble or fall (v. 8) (“They stumble because they disobey the word”) It is clear that the writer is trying to separate the stones that follow Christ and those that do not. What behaviors could make us act as stumbling blocks to others?
6. In addition, to the above quote, the writer of I Peter adds, “...as they were destined to.” With this the writer shows that s/he believes in some kind of *predestination* about whether some were to become followers of Christ; others not. The strict Calvinist school of Christianity advanced the idea of “predestination” in which some are foreordained to be “saved” or not. Other schools, such as Arminius’, rejected

predestination, believing that each of us is responsible for how we exercise God's gift of free will. How do we feel about this theological notion of predestination?

7. According to commentator Joel Green, the writer of I Peter develops a parallel identity between Jesus and his followers. We can see it as follows:

Jesus is: a living stone	Jesus' follower are: living stones
rejected by humans	rejected by humans
in God's eyes, elect	in God's eyes, elect
in God's eyes, honored	in God's eyes, honored.

Sometimes referred to by theologians as the imitation of Christ (*imitation Dei*), this parallel is supposed to aid to our development in Christ. Does it? Whose or which qualities might it foster in us?

8. The writer calls Jesus' followers "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation and God's own people." What do each of these descriptions mean to us? Do any feel most fitting to us?

9. The writer describes Jesus as the One, who called us "out of darkness into his marvelous light." (v. 9) Describe the spiritual darkness out of which we feel we have been drawn. Describe the light into which we feel we have been called? What difference does this make to our lives?

10. The writer says we are to "proclaim Jesus' light" and mercy. How might we do this so others feel this light and mercy?

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John 14: 1-14

In the Gospel of John, we hear Jesus' Farewell to the disciples, Thomas and Phillip and others. Jesus says those famous words, "In my Father's house there are many dwelling places...so that where I am, there you may be also." Thomas asks the way, that is, the directions to this house. Jesus replies, "I *am* the way, and the truth, and the life." (v. 6) He adds, "no one comes to the Father except through me." (v. 6)

Phillip responds, then "show us the Father." Jesus replies, whoever has seen me has seen the Father." (v. 9) He says twice, "I am in the Father, and the Father is in me." (v. 10, 11) He goes on, telling the disciples that whoever believes in him will also do his works. He ends by saying (again) twice, "I will do whatever you ask in my name." (v. 13.14)

Ten Questions

1. Just before Chapter 14, Peter asks Jesus where he is going. Here follows Jesus' Farewell in which he says goodbye to his disciples. Listening to it, what do we find of lasting value?
2. Jesus says he is leaving and going to prepare a place for his disciples. In his Father's house, there will be many dwellings. What might it mean to have many dwellings...houses...a village?
3. Jesus assures us that he will come again to get us so that where he goes, we will also go. What does it mean that Jesus will *come again*?
4. In this typical Johannine disclosure of self-identity, Jesus declares, "I am the way, the truth and the life." Might John be telling us that for him Jesus is like God; Jesus *is* God?
5. In another typical form of what we call "high Christology" used by John, Jesus says, whoever has seen him has seen the Father." What does this mean? Might John be saying that for Jesus he and the Father are one-and-the-same?
6. Likewise, Jesus says twice, *I am in the Father and the Father is in me*. What does this mean to us? Is it a literal understanding of Christ and God? ...a metaphorical interpretation?
7. In the fourth century CE, the theological concept of God as three persons, known through the Trinity emerged. God was called Father, Son and Holy Ghost (Holy Spirit) then, and Creator, Redeemer and Comforter now. What does the Trinity say about the nature of God that makes a difference to us?
8. Towards the end, Jesus says that whoever believes in God and him will also do God's and his works. What does it mean to do divine work? Name some that we believe we have done?
9. Jesus asserts that whatever we ask through prayer in his name will be given to us. This is why our petitionary prayers often end, *we pray in Jesus name*. Do we truly believe that all prayers in Jesus' name are answered? Name some of ours that have been answered.,, for healing and comfort, solace and peace, joy and celebration, and our community and world?
10. Please pray with me and others around our globe – in Jesus' name -- that the world will soon be rid of our current viral scourge, which has resulted in massive fatalities, hospitalizations, dislocations, unemployment and starvation, and we will find the way, truth and life. Amen.