

## What Do You Think of Jesus?

1 Peter 2:4-8

### Introduction

If someone were to ask you, “What is the most important thing about you?”, how would you answer that question? I first encountered this idea while reading a book by A. W. Tozer, entitled, *The Knowledge of the Holy*. Tozer begins his book with this statement, “What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.” In other words, what a person thinks about God is the determining factor in their life. I love Tozer’s statement, but I want to go one step further with it and say, “What comes into our minds when we think about Jesus is the most important thing about us.” What we think of Jesus will define and determine our eternal future.

And, as we will see from our passage this morning, Peter knew this as well. We cannot be indifferent to Jesus. Jesus is, as C. S. Lewis put, “either a liar, a lunatic, or Lord over all.” In other words, Jesus can never be someone of mild importance. Our lives will be defined by our relationship to Him in one way or another. And my aim this morning is to present Jesus to you in such a way that you will cherish Him and love Him and orient your life around Him and to awake you from your apathy toward Him. **Because Jesus is the greatest reality in the world, our lives ought to reflect His supremacy and importance.**

In order to accomplish my aim of presenting Jesus to you in such a way that you will cherish Him, love Him, and orient your life around Him, I want to work through our passage and consider what God the Father thinks about Jesus Christ, what Christians should think about Jesus Christ, and then close be considering the considering the different outcomes of trusting Jesus or reject Jesus...

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### **1 Peter 2:4-8**

<sup>4</sup> As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, <sup>5</sup> you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. <sup>6</sup> For it stands in Scripture:

“Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone,  
a cornerstone chosen and precious,  
and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.”

<sup>7</sup> So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe,

“The stone that the builders rejected  
has become the cornerstone,”

<sup>8</sup> and

“A stone of stumbling,  
and a rock of offense.”

They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.

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## **Exposition**

### **I. What Does God the Father think about Jesus? (Vs. 4)**

In verse 4, Peter begins with the statement, “as you come to him.” The context tells us that “him” refers back to the “Lord,” whom Peter’s readers have come to know as good (vs. 3). The Lord, in this case, is none other than Jesus Christ himself. According to verse 4, while Peter’s audience was said to be “coming to Jesus,” others within society had deemed Jesus to be worthy of rejection. God the Father, however, did not see it their way. On the contrary, while man’s opinion of Jesus was beyond low, God the Father considered Jesus to be “a living stone, chosen and precious.”

We will see more details about Jesus being a “living stone” in the following verses, but for now we need to see that humanity’s rejection of Jesus in no way thwarted God’s plan for Him. In fact, in Peter’s sermons, which are recorded for us in Acts 2 and Acts 4, we find that the Jews’ rejection of Jesus was actually part of God’s plan from the beginning. For if there had not been an initial rejection of Jesus by some, then there would have been no cross, no burial, and no resurrection. And without these realities, there would have been no gospel – no good news.

So, the answer to our first question, “What does God the Father think about Jesus?”, is that God the Father views Jesus, the Son of God, as the chosen one of infinite value. Peter’s point, then, in verse 4 is to teach his audience that in spite of men’s rejection of Jesus, God remains pleased with His Son as the One who is working out His purposes for the salvation of the world. In other words, the opinion of men is meaningless compared to God’s “opinion.”

**T.S. – Having now seen God the Father’s thoughts about His Son, Jesus, we now turn to our next question?**

### **II. What Should Christians Think about Jesus? (Vss. 5-6)**

In verses 5-6, we find Peter drawing a parallel between the believer’s experience and Jesus’ experience. Notice how Peter calls his readers “living stones.” Immediately, his readers should think back on what Peter said regarding Jesus as a “living stone.” By recalling Jesus’ status as a living stone and then applying the same language to his audience, Peter is teaching his readers to value God’s estimation of them more than the worlds. For Peter, he wants his audience to understand that if the world rejects you because of your obedience to God, that is okay! You are in good company! If they rejected Jesus, then do not be surprised for a second when they reject you!

So, what is God up to? In verse 4, Peter mentioned that God the Father regarded Jesus as chosen and valuable, but never tells us what He was chosen for or why He was valuable. In verse 5, we learn, with Peter’s audience, that God is doing something great with these world-rejected, but God-valued “living stones.”

According to verse 5, God is “building up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” In other words, just as Jesus was chosen and valuable to God the Father, so all believers are chosen and valuable to God specifically for the purpose of “being built” into the very dwelling place of God. Have you ever wondered what you were chosen by God to do? Have you ever wondered if you were valuable in God’s sight? Doubt no more! While the world might have rejected you for following Jesus, God the Father regards you as chosen and precious for the work of building a place for His presence. And according to verse 6, Jesus Christ is at the very center of God’s plan for this “spiritual building.” Look at how Peter loosely quotes from Isaiah 28 and applies it to Jesus:

Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone,  
a cornerstone chosen and precious,  
and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.

In its original context, the prophet Isaiah was delivering a message of warning to the people of Israel for their unbelief. Instead of trusting in their covenant with God, Isaiah says that they were trusting in other things. Peter interprets Isaiah 28 as a referring to Jesus, which means that in Peter’s mind, all other allegiances had to be dropped and all hope had to be placed in Jesus Christ.

So, in thinking about what the believer is to believe about Jesus, it’s clear that Peter wants us (and his readers) to understand that God is doing something very great in their life and that Jesus is right at the center of it all. Jesus’ rejection and our own rejection is not contrary to God’s plan, but it is essential to God’s plan. Thus, when believers think of Jesus, they must not despise Him, but embrace Him. They are to trust in Him as the One who is trustworthy, merciful, good and gracious.

**T.S. – Yet, not everyone thinks this way about Jesus. While some have trusted in Jesus, other reject Him. So, Peter concludes this passage by addressing what happens when we trust Jesus and what happens when we reject Jesus...**

### **III. The Different Outcomes of Trusting Jesus or Rejecting Jesus (Vss. 7-8)**

Essentially, two choices are before the one that encounters Jesus and his claims. You either trust him or reject him. There is no middle ground. What we find in verses 7-8 are the outcomes of those decisions. According to Peter, the outcome of trusting Jesus is honor. God has destined all those who trust in Jesus Christ to honor, and according to chapter 1 verse 7, praise and glory as well at the revelation of Jesus Christ. The key at this point is to see that while believers might live in a temporary state of rejection in this world (much like Jesus did during his first coming on earth), eternal honor and glory await them with Christ’s return.

So, what's the outcome of rejecting Jesus according to these verses? Quoting from Isaiah 8:13-15, Peter tells his readers what the outcome of rejecting Jesus is ruin. He writes, "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone," and "A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense." In other words, some will embrace Jesus and receive honor, while others will reject Him to their own dishonor. And why will they reject Him? Because they "stumble over Him," which means that they cannot get over His claims and His demands. They feel as though He is too extreme at times. They do not like His message that offers grace to the tax collector, prostitute, and the sinner. They do not like His message that challenges all of their religious traditionalism. They do not like the way that Jesus threatened their political opinions and retirement plans. Jesus was not safe enough for them, and as a result, they stumbled over him. They rejected Him.

At first, the language of "stumbling" might seem weak, but the context of Isaiah 8, from which Peter is quoting, shows that no mere stumble is in mind. Instead, it is catastrophic. In almost a passing manner, Peter concludes verse 8 by paralleling the guarantee of honor for those who believe with the guarantee of judgment for those who do not believe. Peter says, "they (the unbelievers) were destined for this." Destined to stumble. Destined to be judged for their unbelief. In other words, there is no middle ground. There is no place for apathy toward Jesus. You will either trust Him or stumble over Him. And those who trust Him are destined to eternal honor. And those who reject Him are destined to catastrophic stumbling. If only they would believe, then they could escape this judgment, but if they don't and they continue to reject Jesus Christ, they will be broken!

As we will see in the weeks to come, for much of the rest of the letter, Peter teaches believers how to live so that unbelievers might come to know Jesus instead of persisting in their rejection of him. Peter recognizes that there is hope for those who stumble over Jesus if they repent and trust in Him.

## **Conclusion**

Peter has made it abundantly clear: there is no middle ground with Jesus Christ. To quote one theologian, "We must either build on him, or be dashed against him." Jesus will either be the "God of Our Refuge" or the "God of Our Ruin." The only thing he won't be is the "God Who Doesn't Matter."

To the one who believes in Jesus Christ, God has destined them to eternal honor. But to the one who rejects Jesus Christ, God has appointed them to eternal shame.

What will you think of Jesus today? How will you respond? With repentance? Or with rejection? With faith? Or with doubting?

My prayer is that you will look to Jesus, the One who was rejected, yet chosen by God to bring hope to You this morning. Look to Jesus and live! Do not pass Him by!