

Sermon or Lesson: 1 Peter 2:6-8 (NIV based)
[Lesson Questions included]

TITLE: Jesus Christ - Having An Effect Of Causing Rejecting Humans To Stumble and Fall Spiritually

READ: 1 Peter 2:6-8, with vv.4-5 for context

BACKGROUND:

- - Valued and chosen by God the Father, Jesus has been and is actively involved in orchestrating the continued and further administration and implementation of God's plan and program, even up to and beyond the present time of today. (v.2:4)
 - - True believers have a continuous active personal relationship with the living Jesus, which Jesus intensely desires that non-believers would have as well. (v.2:4)
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v.6 - READ (contains a quote from Isaiah 28:16)

[Lesson Question: Fit together verse 6 with the meanings of the various phrases in the immediate context of previous verses 2b-5.]

SECTION POINT: By means of Jesus Christ, God has successfully and completely established a way in which humans can acquire eternal acceptance by God.

- - Jesus is our "cornerstone", the "foundation" upon which our present, future, and eternal well-being totally and utterly rests. (Strong's #2602)
- - "Building [us believers] into a spiritual house", in which we function together as "a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God", totally rests upon Jesus Christ (v.5). Notice that this description very much resembles how the tabernacle and the temple were to function as specific houses of God in the Old Testament, wherein humans in various manners worshipped God, whose presence dwelled there, among those persons who believe.
- - Jesus Christ, in His functioning on the cross "in Zion", a hill in Jerusalem, was "chosen" and is highly valued as "precious" by God for the foundation and implementation of God's redemption "salvation" plan. (v.2; cf. vv.1:18-20)
- - This 'salvation' provides a way for sinful humans to be eternally pardoned from the punishment for their sins and be reconciled to God, because as stated in Romans 3:23, "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God".
- - Those humans, who properly put their "trust in [Jesus]" for the forgiveness of their own sins, are thereupon immediately granted this 'salvation', which is full pardon of their own sins, complete reconciliation to God, and eternal life in heaven, which means that they will never be "put to shame", "dishonor, disgrace, condemnation", rejection, or expulsion by God. (AHD - "shame"; cf. Romans 8:1, Hebrews 13:5, John 3:16)
- - Notice that this response of humans to personally "see", understand, and put their "trust in [Jesus]" is stated here as a qualifying requirement or necessary condition for acquiring "salvation" from God - "the one who trusts in him..."

- - And by implication in the context here, those qualifying or properly-believing persons are immediately installed and fused as "living stones" into what Jesus has been and continues to be doing as "the living Stone", the "chosen and precious cornerstone" that was "laid" or precisely put into place and into effect, upon which the whole "spiritual house" of those believing persons "is being built". (vv.5,4,6)

- - The phrase "For in Scripture it says" indicates that verse 6 here is quoted from Isaiah 28:16, which was written and predicted approximately 700 years before Jesus Christ came to the earth to fulfill this prophecy, therein presenting some proof that God not only planned this redemption "salvation" far in advance, but that He also subsequently carried it out successfully and completely and according to His plan.

- - Obviously, therefore, God can be trusted to do everything He says He will do. (cf. vv.1:23,25)

- - And notice that Jesus was already the cornerstone of God's plan long before Jesus arrived on the earth to fulfill and implement that plan.

v.7 - READ (contains a quote from Psalm 118:22, cf. Matthew 21:42)

[Lesson Question: Analyze and describe the reactions to Jesus that the 3 groups had: 1. those who believe, 2. those who do not believe, and 3. God the Father. Include the reactions that are contained in previous verses 4 and 6. Also distinguish and include information on a "cornerstone" and a "capstone" that were utilized in the construction of a stone building.]

SECTION POINT: Jesus and what He accomplished in God's redemption plan are "precious" to believers and to God the Father, which is in stark contrast to the "rejection" that **non**-believers hold.

- - Here in verse 7 is a continuation of the emphasis on comparing of contrasting reactions as previously cited in verse 4 with verse 6 - the reaction of God the Father regarding Jesus, along with the reaction of those persons who believe in Jesus, are contrasted to those persons who reject Jesus.

- - To those persons who believe, "certainly" there is priceless "preciousness", "value, and honor" in Jesus as the foundation "cornerstone" (v.6) and what He has done for believers, who "will never be put to shame" or condemned (v.6) because the "living Stone" (v.4) gives them "living" spiritual regeneration (vv.4,5), and "salvation" (v.2). (Strong's #3767, #5092)

- - But in contrast, for those persons "who do not believe", their own passive or active rejection of Jesus, by default and thereby in reality, agrees with those persons who at that time approximately 2,000 years ago rejected Jesus, tortured Him, and executed Him on a cross.

- - In reality, non-believers are furthermore in agreement with those religious persons of that time who crucified Jesus, determining and judging that like a "stone the builders reject", Jesus was not useable anywhere in their religious structure - "rejected" to the maximum extent by being disposed of as entirely useless and destroyed as seriously harmful to their religious structure.

- - The non-belief or refusal to believe automatically places all non-believers in agreement with those persons who crucified Jesus and their rejection of Him.
 - - Again in contrast, God valued and exalted Jesus, elevating Him like builders would elevate the "capstone" to the peak of a stone structure as being not only the most useable of all stones, but also of most importance and worthiness - of supreme value equal to and perhaps even more than the great value of the foundational "cornerstone".
 - - The "capstone" or "head of the corner" is the stone at the very top of the structure, located at a corner, which holds the corner and the structure together from the very top, and is equally crucial to the fortitude and excellence of that structure like the foundational cornerstone is. (Strong's #2776, #1137)
 - - In the context of verse 7, Jesus "becoming the capstone" suggests that Jesus perfectly fulfilled all that was to be accomplished in God's redemption plan, and thereby Jesus was given reign as the highest supreme authority over all of God's program.
 - - For God's redemption plan and program, Jesus "has supremacy" as both the "cornerstone" of its foundation and the "capstone" of its peak. (Colossians 1:18; 1 Peter 2:6,7)
 - - Another interesting contrast to note here is that the various highest-ranking leaders of the Jewish religion utterly rejected Jesus having any part in their religion or in its religious structure, however Jesus subsequently became the supreme authority in both the next true religion of God (Christianity) and its religious structure (the true Church).
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v.8 - READ (contains a quote from Isaiah 8:14; cf. Romans 9:33)

[Lesson Question: Analyze and describe the characteristics of and differences between "a stone... stumble" and "a rock... fall", and then apply those characteristics and differences in similarity to Jesus. What does the last sentence in verse 8 contribute to the discussion (that starts in verse 4) about Jesus being "the living Stone"?)

SECTION POINT: God has intentionally designed that Jesus Christ and His redemptive work on the cross would cause many non-believers to stumble and fall spiritually, due to their rejection of Jesus and His redemptive work on the cross.

"and, "A stone that causes men to stumble"

- - In verse 8 are further repercussions on non-believers due to their evaluation and regard of rejecting Jesus, which is characterized as like a "stone" of sufficient size causes a walking person to strike and stub his/her toe or foot on, causing the person to stumble in walking, a hazard to their walking or proceeding through life.
- - The stone appears to be innocuous - likely harmless and of no significant consequence, but the stone nevertheless in reality proves to be of substantial interruptive effect - an obstruction substantial enough to cause a stumble.
- - An effect that Jesus exerts is like this effect that a stone exerts on a walking person, causing a stumble.
- - Intentionally designed by God and due to a critical and technical requirement by God, God has ordained specifically that obtaining righteousness that is accepted by God

comes only by means of proper faith in Jesus Christ and not by means of one's own works or efforts. (Romans 9:30-33)

- - For those persons who hold to the doctrines of their particular religion, their entrenched holding of their religion's theology about how to be acceptable to God causes them in some manner to stumble and reject this actual only way that God has provided for humans to acquire eternal acceptability by God through Jesus Christ.
- - For those persons who are not religious, God has ordained that their humanistic reasoning hinders them from recognizing and understanding the correctness, the rightness, and the reality of God's only way for humans to acquire eternal acceptability by God through Jesus Christ, essentially causing them to stumble, reject it, and dismiss it as being nonsense, and foolishness, and ridiculous, and innocuous for them. (v.40 in John 12:37-41; v.18 in 1 Corinthians 1:18-31)

"and a rock that makes them fall."

- - Another repercussion on non-believers in their rejection of Jesus is an analogy that He is like "a rock" of large size and mass, that clearly poses a threat and, in fact, incites a "fall" with direct substantial harm to the walking person. (from Strong's #4073)
- - Being like the "rock" in this analogy, Jesus is an unavoidable hazard for both errant religious persons and non-believers, who by God's intentional design "fall" into a "trap or snare" of a more hardened rejecting regard for Jesus along with a corresponding more sinful condition for themselves. (Strong's #4625; Romans 9:18; cf. Isaiah 8:13-15)
- - And furthermore, eventually they irrevocably "fall" into receiving the eternal consequences for their technical rejection of Jesus, which includes the eternal punishment for all of the sins they have committed during their life on the earth.

"They stumble because they disobey the message -- which is also what they were destined for."

- - Here at the end of verse 8, a main reason is clearly specified as to why people stumble in regard to Jesus - "they disobey the message".
- - They "willfully and perversely refuse to believe" what God has made known about Jesus, His redemptive sacrificial suffering work on the cross, and His resurrection from the dead on the third day. (Strong's #0544)
- - And they refuse to "obey" how God wants them to respond to Jesus and correspondingly how God wants them to then live their life. (Romans 8:5-9)
- - Other dynamics, that motivate or cause people to disobey, stumble, and fall in rejecting Jesus, are: rebellion, ignorance or naivety, being deceived or gullible, being led astray, un-discerning, poor judgment, lack of common sense, indifference, skepticism, spiritual blindness, lack of being exposed to the gospel message, failure to recognize the critical importance of the gospel message, hard-heartedness, love of sin or something deviant, freewill to choose differently, and etcetera, and perhaps in combination.
- - By technically rejecting Jesus, they are in reality likewise rejecting the only way in which they can receive the redemption that God has provided and offers to rescue them from paying the eternal punishment for their own sins that they deserve. (Colossians 1:12-14)
- - Therein, due to their "stumbling because they disobey the message" about Jesus, eternal condemnation is what awaits them in their future, all of which "indeed" God "has

appointed" for them - "what they were destined for". (Strong's #1519, #3739, #2532, #5087; Romans 8:1-4)

- - As is plainly evident here, God is **EXTREMELY** serious about how humans are to regard and respond to Jesus.

- - On one hand, God's love for us humans is unfathomable (impossible to measure), as demonstrated in the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, to take upon Himself the punishment for sins, which provides a way for us humans to acquire a totally undeserved complete pardon and permanent forgiveness of our own sins. (Romans 5:8)

- - On the other hand, God has ordained and even orchestrates that persons, who stumble in some manner about Jesus, are consequently further propelled into their disobedience to the message about Jesus.

- - Thus, in and of themselves, these stumbling non-believers are fulfilling "what they were destined for" - disobedience and disbelief that ultimately results in them spending eternity paying the never-ending horrific punishment for their own sins.

- - To simplify and summarize this comparison of the seriousness of God, those persons, who properly believe in Jesus, inherit in fullness God's immeasurable love forever.

- - In unsettling contrast, those persons, who stumble and ultimately fail in properly believing in Jesus, inherit in fullness God's wrath forever. (Romans 5:9)

- - God's love consequently goes to the extreme for those persons who properly believe in Jesus "the Stone", and God's wrath consequently goes to the extreme for those persons who failed to properly believe in Jesus "the Stone".

- - Considering that God has "destined" non-believers to disobey the message, stumble, and fall, therefore in effect and in reality God did not "elect" or "choose" proportionally many non-believers to receive salvation. (vv.1:1-2)

-- As we true believers encounter people in the world, and endeavor to present the gospel message and God's Word to them, and strive to gently persuade them to properly accept Jesus, the gospel message, and God's Word, thereby we should expect that:

- - - - many people will maintain their rejection, disbelief, distortion, and opposition to Jesus Christ, the gospel message, and the Word of God;

- - - - but yet some people will be or will become open to hearing and receiving Jesus Christ, the gospel message, and the Word of God.

- - Certainly, we will encounter some people who have been 'chosen' by God and destined them to believe in the "precious cornerstone" and thereby become the 'elect'.

- - So we press on and persevere in appropriately presenting Jesus Christ to the world, essentially giving all non-believers that we encounter an opportunity to properly accept Jesus Christ.

BIG IDEA: Many non-believers stumble and fall spiritually, due to their rejection of Jesus and His redemptive work on the cross, whom and which God the Father and true believers hold as "precious" and highly valued.

APPLICATIONS:

For those of you who are a true believer:

- - How motivating is the "preciousness" of Jesus Christ for you? (v.7)
- - Are you motivated to draw as close to Jesus as you possibly can? (v.4)
- - Are you motivated to yield yourself to Jesus to the maximum that you can? (v.1:14)
- - Are you motivated to obey Jesus to the maximum that you can? (v.1:22)
- - Are you motivated to seriously battle and successfully abstain from sinful behaviors that remain in your life, so that you can more purely proclaim and declare Jesus in your speaking and in your teaching about Him? (vv.2:1,11)
- - Are you motivated to serve Jesus to the maximum that you can? (v.5)
- - Are you motivated to sacrifice other desired activities in your life in order to maximize fulfilling all that Jesus has for you to do? (v.5)
- - Are you motivated to surrender completely to or fully return to the calling that Jesus has on you and on your life to do ministry - perhaps even full-time ministry? (v.5)
- - Perhaps now would be a good time for you to accurately evaluate how motivated you are by the "preciousness" of Jesus Christ?
- - From these various considerations, are there corrections you need to make in your life? Are you motivated to make them - now?

For those of you who are not a true believer:

- - Perhaps now would be a good time for you to re-evaluate and thereupon change your position of technically rejecting Jesus Christ.
- - Do you now "see" and understand that your failure to correctly "believe" in Jesus has automatically placed you in agreement with those persons who severely tortured and crucified Jesus in their rejection of Him? (vv.7,6)
- - Have you now identified the reasons why you stumble and fail or refuse to correctly believe in Jesus? (PAUSE, allow them a few moments to reflect on why they technically reject Jesus)
- - Through this study of these verses, is God right now prompting you to completely dismiss everything that is hindering or preventing you from correctly "trusting in Jesus" (v.6)? (PAUSE, allow a few moments for the Holy Spirit to prompt them)
- - If you are ready to respond by dismissing your rejection of Jesus and correctly "trusting in Jesus", then sincerely tell that to God right now, perhaps with the following words to help you: (PAUSE after each phrase to give them time to recite and understand what they are herein praying to God.)

Dear God,

I 'see' that I have been spiritually 'stumbling'

because I have been technically 'rejecting' Jesus.

I also see that my sins cause me to 'fall short' from being acceptable to you.

***I now dismiss all the reasons that I have for rejecting Jesus
and 'disobeying the message' about Him.***

And I now 'trust in Jesus',

thoroughly believing that He paid the penalty for my sins

when He suffered crucifixion on the cross

and that He then resurrected from the dead on the third day.

By means of perfect and sinless Jesus,

***please grant me 'salvation',
which is full pardon of my own sins,
complete reconciliation to You, God,
and eternal life in heaven,
which includes that You will 'never put [me] to shame'
or condemn me
or expel me.
Thank you. Amen.***

- - If you have sincerely put your "trust in Jesus", then God says in verse 7 that He "will never put [you] to shame", meaning you have eternal life with God in heaven forever.
 - - "Now that you have tasted that the Lord is good" (v.3) in granting you eternal life, God wants you to "grow up in your salvation" (v.2), so that you will be able to fulfill the assignments that God has for you, as outlined in verse 5.
 - - If you continue to come to these meetings and you tell me or one of the leaders that you have put your "trust in Jesus" today, we will work to help you to become and fulfill all that God has for you.
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[Additional Lesson Questions to ponder (optional, if time allows):

- - Do further and in-depth analysis and contemplation on what a "cornerstone" and a "capstone" are.
 - - What was their function in the construction of a building in those days?
 - - How was a determination made as to which stone would be used as a cornerstone, and which would be used as a capstone?
 - - What relation did the other stones and the rest of the building have to the cornerstone and to the capstone?
 - - What were the results when an excellent cornerstone and an excellent capstone were chosen?
 - - And thereby, of what value were an excellent cornerstone and an excellent capstone to the builder and to the owner?

 - - What contents or assertions or elements in the "message" about Jesus Christ are so unappealing or disagreeable to people that they are motivated to "disobey the message", thereby causing them to stumble and fall? Analyze and describe.]
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