

WINGS OF RENEWAL week 3

From Pebbles to People

Warm-up: Imagine you were introducing yourself. How would you describe yourself? What makes up your identity? Is it different between men and women?

READ: 1 Peter 2:4-10

Introduction: In many periods, the people in the Bible were living through change and uncertainty. Think of the wandering in the wilderness, entering the promised land and the period in exile. They didn't know what was ahead but they could look with confidence to the future because of what they had seen God do in the past.

In the New Testament, God sets out our new identity as a way of giving us confidence in Him.

Q1: What does verses 4-5 mean by living stones? How can we be a 'living' stone? What is the analogy with the Old Testament? Where is Jesus in this analogy- verses 6-8 and Acts 4:11-12?

Historically, the cornerstone was the most important part of any building. The total weight of an edifice rested on this particular stone, which, if removed, would collapse the whole structure. The cornerstone was also the key to keeping the walls straight. The builders would take sightings along the edges of this part of the building. If the cornerstone was set properly, the stonemasons could be assured that all the other corners of the building would be at the appropriate angles as well. Thus, the cornerstone became a symbol for that which held life together.

Q2: What comes to mind when you think of us being priests? What was the role of the priest in the Old Testament? READ Hebrews 5:1-4. How can we act as priests today?

Q3: From Romans 12:1-2, how should we behave differently to the world? What does the world ask us to devote ourselves to?

Q4: The concept of being a chosen people and holy nation – a people belonging to the Lord, was evident throughout the Old Testament - see Deut 7:6, Psalm 105:45, Acts 9:15, Col 3:12-14. Who are the new chosen people and what does it mean to you to be one of the chosen people of God?

We are now the dwelling place of God. The Temple was always a shadow. We were made for God and this applies to people from every tongue and tribe and nation.

Q5: Given this new identity, how can we be the church (the chosen people) wherever we go?

Q6: READ Jeremiah 29:4-7. How can we use our gifts to bless others? How can we bless the 'city' in which we live?

Pastor Ken said that we may be the only presence of God people will meet.

PRAY that God will show you how you may be God's presence wherever you are.