Peter is writing to exiled Jews, reminding them of how God has fulfilled his promise to them in Christ. Elsewhere in the New Testament, we read about how Gentiles are also incorporated into this “spiritual house”. How does Paul speak about this in Ephesians 2:19 - 22?

The “spiritual house” does not refer to a single local church as such, since in Peter’s letter, it is made up of believes from many different places. How are they joined together? How do you think the people of this temple declare ‘the praises of him who called’ (1Peter 2:9) in practice?

How has this passage both encouraged and challenged you in your Christian life?

Study 3: Jesus and his people

Reading: 1Peter 2:4 - 12

Before we read the passage in 1Peter let us read a couple of passages in the Old Testament as background to help us understand what Peter is writing about.

<u>Read Isaiah 8:1 - 15:</u>

What is the Lord about to do to Samaria and Judah - that is, the northern and southern kingdom of Israel?

The Lord is often referred to in the Psalms as a “rock” of salvation (e.g. Ps. 18:2, 46), but what sort of rock has he become now for Israel?

<u>Read Isaiah 27:12 - 28:19:</u>

Who are the people being spoken against? What have they done?

What sort of “stone” is God laying?

What will God do in the future ("in that day")?

What reactions do different people have to the stone? What is the result for them?

Read 1Peter 1:13 - 2:3:

A "living stone" is a strange idea, since a stone is usually about the most lifeless thing you can imagine. Why do you think Peter describes Jesus as a "living stone"?

Looking closely at 1Peter 2:4 - 10, what does this passage say about believers and what they are in Jesus Christ?

What function does this particular stone have? What part of the building is it? What sort of building will the finished project be?

What tension or contrast do you see in how the people are described in verses 9 - 10 and in verses 11 - 12? How is this tension lived out? When will it be resolved?

How does this relate to some of the Old Testament prophecies we looked at earlier?

What does God think of this "living stone"?