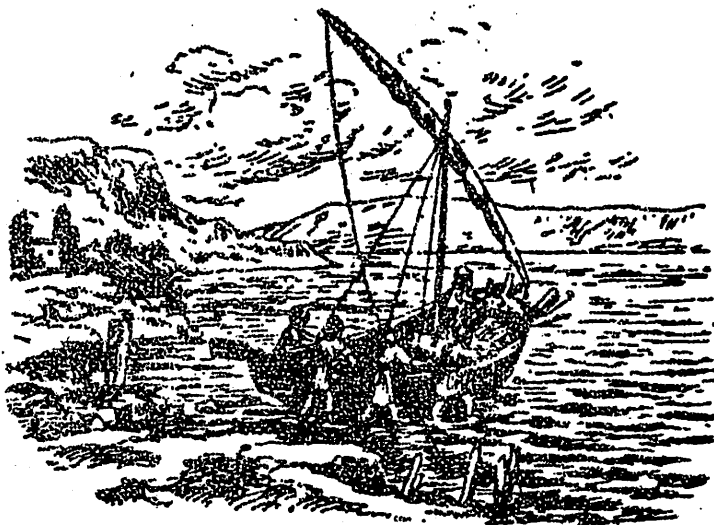


*Commentary*

*On*

**First Peter**



BY  
BENNY B. BRISTOW

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## FOREWORD

It is with sincerity and joy that this commentary on 1 Peter is presented to you for your earnest and prayerful study. An effort has been made by this author to keep the message of this book within its context, and to deepen its meaning by giving additional references from both the Old and New Testaments. You are encouraged to take the time to read and study these references. Remember, there are no contradictions in God's Word, and our purpose should be to harmonize His will when we study.

Likewise, a concerted effort has been made, through prayer and study, to present Peter's message in truth. However, as a human being, there can be weaknesses and failures. Therefore, you are encouraged to be like the Bereans when they heard the message of Paul and Silas. They "searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so" (Acts 17:11). When all of us together seek diligently to find God's truth, we will learn the will of God which is necessary to please Him (Matthew 7:21).

It is my hope and prayer that this commentary will serve as a blessing in your life to help you "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen." (2 Peter 3:18).

Benny B. Bristow

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# INTRODUCTION

## **The Author**

As one approaches the study of the epistles of 1 and 2 Peter, there are two major things that make these studies exciting. (1) The colorful boisterous character of the author. (2) The spiritual aspect of his life. Please consider each of these as we look at a brief introduction to these books.

### **(1) The colorful, boisterous character of the author.**

Peter was so unique that he stands out differently from all other characters of the New Testament. Jesus found Peter as a rough stone that could be sculptured into a beautiful solid stone. His name was Simon, but Jesus called him "Peter" (Greek) or "Cephas" (Aramaic) meaning a "Small rock of stone" thus a rock-like character (John 1:42). He was the son of Jonas, a native of Bethsaida, and (along with his brother Andrew) followed his father's trade as a commercial fisherman (Matthew 4:18; John 1:44). He later had a home at Capernaum where his wife's mother was healed from a fever by the Lord (Matthew 8:5;14,15).

This rugged, impetuous man was introduced to Jesus by his brother Andrew (John 1:42). Peter was first a disciple of John the baptist, but after John declared Jesus to be the "Lamb of God," Peter began following Jesus (John 1:35-40). Peter perhaps holds the record among all of the apostles as one who jumped before thinking! During his early years, he made many mistakes by failing to count the cost, but Jesus mildly rebuked him and led him through his weaknesses to great strength. His most serious mistake was in 'boasting that he would never forsake Jesus, but later denied his Lord (Mark 14:29; John 18:25-27). However, Peter went out and wept bitterly, and showed by his future life that he experienced genuine repentance, and was capable of loving enough to feed Christ's sheep and lambs (John 21:15-17).

### **(2) The spiritual aspect of his life.**

The second major thing that makes Peter a very exciting character is the spiritual aspect of his life. Jesus gave Peter the keys to His kingdom, (Matthew 16:18,19) and he opened the doors of this great kingdom (church) to both Jews and Gentiles (Acts 2, 10). We

have only sketches of his ministry, but all indicate that he was a very prominent figure in the church at Jerusalem (Galatians 1:18; 2:9; Acts 15). Therefore Peter, as an apostle of Jesus Christ, had all the spiritual credentials needed, along with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to write the books of 1 and 2 Peter.

#### **Place, date, and purpose of this epistle**

This book was written from Babylon (1 Peter 5:13), and Peter used the assistance of Silvanus in writing and delivering it. Some consider Babylon to be the ancient country of Babylon, some believe it is an allusion to Rome, while still others give Babylon a spiritual interpretation. The book is addressed to strangers or pilgrims scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. These Christian Jews of the dispersion, away from Palestine in other lands, needed the spiritual teaching contained in this book. In fact, who would deny that the same teaching is desperately needed today.

The date of this epistle is usually considered between A.D. 64 and A.D. 67. The general purpose of Peter in writing this epistle was to remind Christians that Jesus suffered, and they would be called upon to do the same.

# I PETER

## Chapter 1

1. **PETER**, [Like Paul, in most of his letters, this author begins this epistle by identifying himself. This was a custom of the day, and very essential for positive identification of a letter. The name "Peter" is the Greek form of the Aramaic surname, Cephas. It was given him by Jesus and means 'a rock or stone' (Mark 3:16; John 1:42). He is also called "Simon" which means 'hearing' (Matthew 4:18; 10:2).] **AN APOSTLE OF JESUS CHRIST**, [Peter was a commercial fisherman and was at work when Jesus called him to be a disciple. The call was impressive, and to the point: "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Matthew 4:19). Later when the list of the twelve apostles was recorded, Peter was first on the list (Matthew 10:2). The word apostle from the Greek apostolos means: "One sent forth, a messenger, one sent with a special commission as the fully authorized representative of the sender." Peter was one of the twelve and was also one of the three apostles occasionally singled out for special events (Matthew 17:1; Mark 14:33). One could not hold a greater honor or be sent on a more important commission than to be an apostle of Jesus Christ.] **TO THE PILGRIMS OF THE DISPERSION IN PONTUS, GALATIA, CAPPADOCIA, ASIA, AND BITHYNIA**, [The apostle now turns his thoughts to the ones to receive this epistle. Who are they? They are first identified as pilgrims which suggests that they were foreigners away from home and sojourners in a strange land. All Christians should consider themselves pilgrims in the sense that this world is not their permanent home, but are here temporarily on their way to heaven (Hebrews 11:13-16). This was true with the ones to whom Peter was addressing this letter, however, they were also pilgrims in a physical sense because they were of the dispersion. For various reasons, they were Jews who had left Palestine, but had maintained their religious faith among the Gentiles. The word dispersion is from the Greek word diaspora which means: "that which is sown or scattered." It is estimated that by the time of Christ, that the number of the diaspora was much larger than those living in Palestine. Peter names the five areas that he has in mind, all of which are located in northern and central Asia Minor. Pontus was a large province which lay along the Black Sea, and many Jews lived there. This was the birth place of Aquila (Acts 18:2), and when Peter preached on Pentecost, there were Jews from Pontus in the audience (Acts 2:9). Galatia was a Roman province in

central Asia Minor. In its broadest sense, it included such cities as Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe where Paul preached on his first journey. Paul also sent a special letter to the churches in Galatia. Cappadocia was a large inland area of Asia Minor with Pontus on the north, Syria and Armenia on the east, Lycaonia on the west, and Cilicia on the south. There were also Jews from this area in attendance on Pentecost (Acts 2:9). Therefore, many of these Jews could have been converted at Jerusalem, and then later carried the gospel back to Cappadocia. As Peter mentions Asia, he is likely referring to Asia, the Roman province located in the southwestern part of Asia Minor where the seven churches of Asia were located (Revelation 1:11). The capital of this province was Ephesus where Paul and John labored faithfully for the Lord. Bithynia was a region along the northern edge of Asia Minor. When Paul traveled on his second journey, it looked to him like a fertile field, but the Holy Spirit refused him entrance, and sent him to Macedonia (Acts 6:6-10). However, Christians were in this region, and Peter includes them as he writes this letter.]

**2. ELECT ACCORDING TO THE FOREKNOWLEDGE OF GOD THE FATHER, IN SANCTIFICATION OF THE SPIRIT, FOR OBEDIENCE AND SPRINKLING OF THE BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST.** [Even though these Jews were physically scattered in a strange land, they were spiritually at home with God because they had responded to a plan that God had foreknown, which made them among God's elect. All Jews were familiar (under the old law) with the concept of being God's chosen ones (Deuteronomy 7:6), and now Peter applies this same idea to Christianity (c.f. 2:9; 5:13; Ephesians 1:4). As God's children, we have a father who wants us, and made plans for our sanctification through the Spirit. Even though these whom Peter addressed were chosen, their sanctification had come through obedience to reach the blood of Christ. The blood of Christ is available to ALL sinners, but not all sinners will be saved. Just as God chose to SAVE, the sinner must choose to OBEY. "Though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. And having been perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him" (Hebrews 5:8,9). The sprinkling of blood no doubt alludes back to the time that Moses presented the book of the covenant to Israel, and sprinkled blood on them (Exodus 24:7,8). However, in comparison, the blood of Christ brings forgiveness, and sanctification forever. This blood brings forgiveness at spiritual birth (Hebrews 9:12), and continues to cleanse as one walks as a Christian (1 John 1:7).] **GRACE TO YOU AND PEACE BE MULTIPLIED.** [Both Peter and Paul felt the need to extend

these two wonderful gifts to the Christians whom they addressed. After talking about the blood of Christ that had sanctified them, Peter wished grace and peace to be multiplied. Obedience brings the sinner to Christ's blood, His blood brings grace, and grace brings peace (Ephesians 2:8; Ephesians 2:14,15). When grace and peace are multiplied, there is an abundance!]

**3. BLESSED BE THE GOD AND FATHER OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, WHO ACCORDING TO HIS ABUNDANT MERCY HAS BEGOTTEN US AGAIN TO A LIVING HOPE THROUGH THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST FROM THE DEAD,** [With the introduction behind him, Peter is now ready to get more deeply into his message. The two words grace and peace must have reminded him of the greatness of God, because he immediately praises the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. Peter uses the Greek word *eulogetos* for blessed which means praise. It is not the same word used by Christ when giving the beatitudes which means happy. Here, instead of "blessed is," Peter says, "blessed be" as he praises God. God is the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ because Christ was born of Mary by miraculous conception, "she was found with child of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 1:18). Thus, Jesus was His "only begotten son" (John 3:16), and Jesus referred to Him all through His ministry as Father (Matthew 11:25; Luke 10:22; 22:42). Peter now reminds his readers that this Father of Jesus has begotten us again to a living hope. Here he is teaching what Jesus taught to Nicodemus, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). Neither Jesus or Peter is referring to another physical birth, but rather to a spiritual one, "born of water and the Spirit" (John 3:5; 1 Peter 1:23). The hope given through Christ is a living hope. Why? Because one's hope is not in a dead Savior, but in a resurrected one. If Jesus had been unable to come forth from the grave, what hope would we have of being resurrected in the future? Therefore, those born again to a new life on earth (Romans 6:4), can also have hope of living after death. All of Christianity either rises or falls on the resurrection of Jesus. All can join Peter in praising the Father that Jesus was resurrected from the grave, "The Lord is risen indeed," (Luke 24:34). On what grounds does God offer this living hope? Peter answers, "According to His abundant mercy." The word abundant suggests that which is overflowing, because the Greek word means, "much," "full." Without this abundance of God's mercy, all would face eternal death (Romans 6:23).]

**4. TO AN INHERITANCE INCORRUPTIBLE AND UNDEFILED AND THAT DOES**

**NOT FADE AWAY, RESERVED IN HEAVEN FOR YOU,** [This verse gives us more details about the hope that Christians are born into, which is made sure by the resurrection. It is an undefiled and incorruptible inheritance. An earthly inheritance is short lived either because of spending it, or by leaving it behind at death. Millions have seen their earthly inheritance disappear, but not so with the one promised by the Lord! Peter assures them that this inheritance is real and that it is reserved for them in heaven. They have lost their native land of Palestine, and are living as pilgrims on earth, but nothing can take away their heavenly home because: it is incorruptible (Matthew 6:19,20), nothing unclean shall enter (Revelation 21:27), and it will last forever (Matthew 19:29; Romans 6:23). With hope, every faithful Christian can sing: "Heaven holds all to me."]

**5. WHO ARE KEPT BY THE POWER OF GOD THROUGH FAITH FOR SALVATION READY TO BE REVEALED IN THE LAST TIME.** [To give them further assurance that this special place in heaven is reserved for them, he reminds them that they are guarded by the power of God through faith. The figure seems to be like that of the military guarding securely something that is very precious; because the Greek suggests those, "who are being guarded." However, in the case of a military guard, there could be a human weakness or error, but not so with God's power. If Christians hold true to their faith, there is nothing that can separate them from the love and power of God (Romans 8:38,39). This kind of power and faith will guard them and when the end of time comes, they will receive the hope of their salvation (John 14:3).]

**6. IN THIS YOU GREATLY REJOICE, THOUGH NOW FOR A LITTLE WHILE, IF NEED BE, YOU HAVE BEEN GRIEVED BY VARIOUS TRIALS,** [Peter assures these brethren that the Christian life is made up of both joy and pain. While they are rejoicing over the hope of their salvation, it may be God's will that they suffer from trials. Paul assured Timothy: "Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution" (2 Timothy 3:12). A godly life often stirs up those who are rebelling in sin, and they may seek ways to harm the godly. Even though trials may be different in nature for every age, each generation has its persecutions. Whether physical or mental, this can be discouraging and grievous to Christians. However, all must keep their eyes on the goal of eternal life. Paul could continue to run in the race, because he had his eyes on the crown (2 Timothy 4:6-8). James called upon his readers to: "count it all joy

when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience" (James 1:2,3). Peter mentions that there would be "various" trials. As they looked back, they could remember all the many persecutions they had experienced, and as they pondered the future, they could imagine perhaps harmful things ahead. However, these must be considered as a "little while" compared to the joys of eternal life. They must be like faithful Abraham who sojourned in a foreign country, and lived in tents: "for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Hebrews 11:8,9). These brethren of the Dispersion must not allow trials to blind them from their eternal home. (c.f. Hebrews 11:24-26).

**7. THAT THE GENUINENESS OF YOUR FAITH, BEING MUCH MORE PRECIOUS THAN GOLD THAT PERISHES, THOUGH IT IS TESTED BY FIRE, MAY BE FOUND TO PRAISE, HONOR, AND GLORY AT THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST,** [It seems that Peter is deeply concerned that they have the kind of faith that will pass the test. Even though the testing of their faith is more precious than gold that perishes, he still uses the figure of testing gold to verify the genuineness of their faith. Thus, the purpose of this test is to determine whether or not their faith is genuine. When testing gold with fire, it could be destroyed, but it is durable enough to withstand fire to the point that the impurities are removed and the gold remains. With these Christians, after the fire of trials are over, and Jesus is revealed, what does Peter hope to find? He numerates (1) praise, (2) honor, and (3) glory. Here are three things that every faithful Christian desires to receive from God. It must begin with praise. In the parable of the talents, Jesus praised the two and five talent men: "Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things" (Matthew 25:21,23). In this same parable, after praise, came honor and glory: "Enter into the joy of your lord." Only those who have passed the test as gold tested in fire will receive this praise, honor and glory from Christ!]

**8. WHOM HAVING NOT SEEN YOU LOVE. THOUGH NOW YOU DO NOT SEE HIM, YET BELIEVING, YOU REJOICE WITH JOY INEXPRESSIBLE AND FULL OF GLORY.** [Evidently these to whom Peter is writing had not seen Jesus while on earth, but this did not keep them from loving Him. He assures them that they are able to see Him by the eye of faith (believing) to the point that they can rejoice with inexpressible joy and glory. Jesus pronounced a blessing on those who would believe without

seeing Him. Thomas, at first, refused to believe in the resurrected Christ, "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side" (John 20:25). When he did this, he believed and declared, "My Lord and my God!" However, Jesus made the comment: "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed" (John 20:29). Today, we have not seen Jesus, but we can still believe and rejoice in Him. Peter does not speak of just any kind of faith, but a faith that is so strong and real that it brings joy that cannot be expressed. The glory that such faith produces is to full capacity. For this joy and glory in Christ to be present, one must daily study the Word which speaks of the beautiful life, ministry, and death of Jesus. This study brings approval from God (2 Timothy 2:15), and increases our faith (Romans 10:17). The glory one has here on earth in believing in Jesus will culminate at His appearing in eternal glory (John 14:3).]

#### **9. RECEIVING THE END OF YOUR FAITH—THE SALVATION OF YOUR SOULS.**

[There are two ways that one receives salvation from faith. (1) When born into God's family (John 3:5) and saved from sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38). (2) When ushered into eternal life after the great Judgment Day of God (Matthew 25:34; 1 Thessalonians 4:17). One's physical body will die and return to dust (Ecclesiastes 12:7), and even when it is resurrected from the dead, it will be changed to a spiritual body (1 Corinthians 15:42-44), but the soul that is saved will spend eternity with God. Thus, the salvation of the soul (the inner person) is the most important thing in life (Mark 8:36).]

**10. OF THIS SALVATION THE PROPHETS HAVE INQUIRED AND SEARCHED DILIGENTLY, WHO PROPHESED OF THE GRACE THAT WOULD COME TO YOU,** [We are so blessed to live in the Christian age. Some have compared the ages since creation as the "star-lit age" from Adam to Moses, the "moon-lit age" from Moses to Christ, and the period of Christianity as the "sun-lit age." Therefore, as the spokesmen for God foretold the coming of this age of salvation, they wanted to know more. Peter says that they "searched diligently." In their fondest dreams they must have longed to live in this age of grace. Do we appreciate this grace as we should? Are we grateful that the end of our faith is salvation? When they foretold the coming of Christ and His sacrificial death on the cross (Isaiah 53), they were speaking of the age that we are privileged to live in today.]

#### **11. SEARCHING WHAT, OR WHAT MANNER OF TIME, THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST**



WHO WAS IN THEM WAS INDICATING WHEN HE TESTIFIED BEFOREHAND THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST AND THE GLORIES THAT WOULD FOLLOW. [These prophets of God were guided by the Spirit of Christ, and Peter is perhaps referring to the Holy Spirit. When these inspired men spoke by the Spirit, there were many things not revealed to them. They knew that a new covenant would be given (Jeremiah 31:31-34), that a virgin would conceive and bear a Son (Isaiah 7:14), this new ruler of Israel would be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:1,2), He would perform miracles (Isaiah 29:18), be rejected (Isaiah 53:3), scourged (Isaiah 50:6), betrayed by a friend (Psalms 41:9), for thirty pieces of silver (Zechariah 11:12,13), have hands and feet pierced (Psalms 22:16; Zechariah 12:10), put to death (Isaiah 53:8,9), buried with the wicked and rich (Isaiah 53:9), resurrected (Psalms 16:8-10), He would ascend (Psalms 68:18), and reign as King (Daniel 7:13,14). However, as they foretold these wonderful events, they did not know what time this would happen. They knew only that this event would be followed by glories.]

12. TO THEM IT WAS REVEALED THAT, NOT TO THEMSELVES, BUT TO US THEY WERE MINISTERING THE THINGS WHICH NOW HAVE BEEN REPORTED TO YOU THROUGH THOSE WHO HAVE PREACHED THE GOSPEL TO YOU BY THE HOLY SPIRIT SENT FROM HEAVEN—THINGS WHICH ANGELS DESIRE TO LOOK INTO. [As these prophets told of such wonderful events, they had to accept the fact that they would not live to enjoy them, for they were speaking of the blessings of another generation. Peter is saying to his readers that you are the ones (as well as all under the Christian age) of whom they were speaking! Those who were preaching the gospel were fulfilling the words of the prophets. The word gospel means "good news," and these brethren, like the Christians at Rome and in other places, had obeyed the gospel (Romans 1:16; 6:17). This "good news gospel" that Paul, Peter, and others had preached was the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). This message of grace and salvation through Christ was preached through the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Peter was present on that special Pentecost feast day (Acts 2), when the Holy Spirit came with power. He (with the other apostles) had the privilege of preaching the gospel for the first time with three thousand baptisms (Acts 2:41). To further show the beauty and power of this Messianic age, not only had the prophets (which God gave the power to foretell some things about the new age) longed to search deeper into this gospel, but even the angels with greater honor had desired to look into. What could be more important than this? Even though the blood of Christ reached back to previous ages, we are so honored to live in this age of amazing grace—the gospel age.]

13. THEREFORE GIRD UP THE LOINS OF YOUR MIND, BE SOBER, AND REST YOUR HOPE FULLY UPON THE GRACE THAT IS TO BE BROUGHT TO YOU AT THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST; [In view of the marvelous things just mentioned, Peter now makes his application to his readers then and today. All are asked to do three things: (1) Gird up the loins of your mind. (2) Be sober. (3) Rest your hope fully on the grace from Jesus Christ. The "girding up the loins" was a familiar figure in this age, and in ages past. The Israelites ate the first passover with outer robes girded about in haste and readiness (Exodus 12:11). The Roman soldiers of Peter's day, and civilians who worked and traveled, used such a belt to bind their loose garments (Ephesians 6:14). When Jesus taught the importance of being ready at all times, He said: "Let your waist be girded and your lamps burning" (Luke 12:35). Peter seems to be saying, in view of this gospel age of grace and salvation we are privileged to enjoy, keep your minds in control. Christians should not become so caught up in physical things that they forget the spiritual (Matthew 6:19,20). In Paul's words to the Romans: "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind..." (Romans 12:2). Once the mind is under control and in preparedness, there will be sober thinking (Philippians 4:8). With our minds right, we can turn our full attention to the hope that comes from the grace that will be brought by our Savior, Jesus Christ. Those who are prepared will be with Him, but those who are not will be shut out (Matthew 25:1-13).]

14. AS OBEДИENT CHILDREN, NOT CONFORMING YOURSELVES TO THE FORMER LUSTS, AS IN YOUR IGNORANCE; [Christ used children as an example to follow in His kingdom (Matthew 18:3), Peter calls upon his readers to obey as obedient children. What is more beautiful than obedient children? Children are commanded to: "obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right" (Ephesians 6:1), and Peter wants these spiritual children to do the same. What will happen if they DO NOT obey? They will conform their lives to their former lusts. Either they obey God or they will obey the devil. Before they were taught the gospel, they were in ignorance and therefore followed lust, but now they have been taught the way of life. Remember, one can know better and still disobey. Instead of being as obedient children they could be as disobedient children. However, Peter warns against following their former evil way of life.]

15. BUT AS HE WHO CALLED YOU IS HOLY, YOU ALSO BE HOLY IN ALL YOUR CONDUCT, 16. BECAUSE IT IS WRITTEN, 'BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY.

[Now Peter sets for them a high and honorable goal for their lives. In contrast to their former, lustful life of ignorance, he challenges them to be holy like the Holy One who called them. Be like Christ—like God! This holiness must be carried out in ALL their conduct. The way one talks, lives, serves, worships, and the places one goes, are very important in presenting a conduct that is holy. One's conduct cannot be holy while being a friend to the world (James 4:4; 1 John 2:15-17).]

17. AND IF YOU CALL ON THE FATHER, WHO WITHOUT PARTIALITY JUDGES ACCORDING TO EACH ONE'S WORK, CONDUCT YOURSELVES THROUGHOUT THE TIME OF YOUR SOJOURNING HERE IN FEAR; [Since God is the perfect example of being holy, Peter reminds them to call upon Him for help. The prayers of a Christian (children of God) are to be addressed to their father: "Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name" (Matthew 6:9). The Word declares that God will judge the world, and will do it through Jesus Christ (Acts 10:42; 17:31). Peter reminds his readers that each one will be impartially judged according to one's works. Some were Jews and others Gentiles, but this would not hinder God's judgment—He is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34). With God's help in being holy, their works will be right, and the only fear they will have will be reverential fear. As sojourners (only passing through), they will have a reverential fear that will help them keep His commandments (Ecclesiastes 12:13). Millions are rebelling and living their lives in an unholy way because they do not fear God, but the time will come when they must face Him in judgment and will be punished forever (Matthew 25:46).]

18. KNOWING THAT YOU WERE NOT REDEEMED WITH CORRUPTIBLE THINGS, LIKE SILVER OR GOLD, FROM YOUR AIMLESS CONDUCT RECEIVED BY TRADITION FROM YOUR FATHERS, [As these Christians keep their minds under control, think soberly, and seek to be obedient and holy, they must never forget the source of their redemption. In all generations, silver and gold (which are corruptible things) have been capable of buying things! However, Peter declares that they are incapable of redeeming one from sin. Before conversion, these brethren were in the slavery of sin. Their conduct was aimless because it was guided by traditions that had come down from their fathers. Traditions that are not based on God's Word are dangerous because they feel right, even when one is wrong. They often break down the safety control of one's conscience. Jesus reminded the Sadducees and Pharisees that they were evil and self-righteous because of their traditions, and that such had led them to disobey God's commandments

(Mark 7:9).]

19. **BUT WITH THE PRECIOUS BLOOD OF CHRIST, AS OF A LAMB WITHOUT BLEMISH AND WITHOUT SPOT.** [Now Peter turns to the only thing that can redeem—the precious blood of Christ. It is precious because it is the ONLY thing that can save a sinner from spiritual death. Should the American Cancer Society discover a vaccine that would cure cancer, and if it represented the only thing in the world that would cure this terrible disease, wouldn't it be precious? Thus His blood is precious because it is rare, able to redeem, and a beautiful gift of love from God. Christ's blood was the only blood without blemish, because He was without sin (Hebrews 4:15; 1 Peter 2:22). Peter is illustrating Jesus as a lamb without blemish based on the offerings made under the Levitical priesthood. "Your lamb shall be without blemish" (Exodus 12:5a). In the book of Revelation, John records a scene where Christ is pictured as a slain lamb, and they sang these words of a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood" (Revelation 5:9a).]

20. **HE INDEED WAS FOREORDAINED BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD, BUT WAS MANIFEST IN THESE LAST TIMES FOR YOU** [This plan of redemption, with so much power and greatness, was so important that it was known before creation. Before God said, "Let there be light" (Genesis 1:3), the preciousness of Christ's redemption was known. So many people in all generations have thought of Jesus beginning at His birth, but He being one of the persons of God has always existed. This way of redemption was not an afterthought of God, even though it was not made known until the Christian Age. "These last times" refers to the age from Christ until time shall be no more. The prophets and angels tried to learn the details of this plan, but failed to do so. It could be known ONLY when God chose to manifest it in these last times when He spoke through His Son (Hebrews 1:1).]

21. **WHO THROUGH HIM BELIEVE IN GOD, WHO RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD AND GAVE HIM GLORY, SO THAT YOUR FAITH AND HOPE ARE IN GOD.** [Peter goes a step further and relates to these Christians how they had been redeemed. They had believed in God through Christ, because God the Father raised Him from the dead (Acts 5:30), and gave Him glory by allowing Him to ascend to His right hand (Acts 5:31). Now that these events have happened, the Christian's faith and hope are firmly grounded in God. Hope is now "an anchor of the soul, both

sure and steadfast" (Hebrews 6:19), both in this life and after this life is over (1 Corinthians 15:19).]

22. SINCE YOU HAVE PURIFIED YOUR SOULS IN OBEYING THE TRUTH THROUGH THE SPIRIT IN SINCERE LOVE OF THE BRETHREN, [Even though the redemptive power of Christ's blood is powerful, sufficient, and precious, it must be reached by the sinner. Peter now refers back to the time that their souls were purified. It happened when they obeyed the truth which put them into a spiritual family where they could love their brethren fervently with a pure heart. What did they obey when they obeyed the truth? They obeyed Christ and His Gospel. Jesus taught: "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6a). "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth" (John 17:17). To obey the truth is to obey the Gospel which Paul says is "the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek" (Romans 1:16). A sinner becomes a penitent believer by hearing the word of God, then after confessing His faith, he obeys that "form of doctrine" (Romans 6:17), by being buried in baptism in the likeness of Christ's burial, and by being raised from baptism in the likeness of Christ's resurrection (Romans 6:4). This is the new birth of "water and the Spirit" (John 3:5), and "the washing of water by the word" (Ephesians 5:26).]

LOVE ONE ANOTHER FERVENTLY WITH A PURE HEART, [The love that Peter calls upon them to have is a fervent and pure love. It is a love that is genuine, not "play acting" like the hypocrites, and is pure without ulterior motives. When Jesus introduced His new commandment of loving one another to His disciples, He said: "By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:34,35). Here, Peter passes on this commandment to those who have obeyed the Gospel.]

23. HAVING BEEN BORN AGAIN, NOT OF CORRUPTIBLE SEED BUT INCORRUPTIBLE, THROUGH THE WORD OF GOD WHICH LIVES AND ABIDES FOREVER, [To put further emphasis on the brotherly love, Peter reminds them of their birth into God's family. Their second birth was not from the seed of corruptible flesh. Such is corruptible in the sense that one's physical body dies and returns to the dust (Ecclesiastes 12:7). However, it is different with the second birth, these brethren had been born again through the Word of God, which lives and abides forever! (Matthew 24:35). One may often hear the expression, "a born again Christian." The truth is, there is no other kind since ONLY those who are born again are saved from

sin and in the kingdom (church) (John 3:5). Peter is here speaking of the same birth taught by Jesus to Nicodemus when He said: "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John 3:5). Some object to the idea of being born again of the Word—they want some direct miraculous experience. However, Peter places emphasis on the birth of the incorruptible Word of God which is eternal. The Word of God teaches a sinner to become a penitent believer that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and to be baptized into Christ (Galatians 3:26,27), to be saved (Mark 16:16). This is a birth of the Word that will last forever!]

24. BECAUSE "ALL FLESH IS AS GRASS, AND ALL THE GLORY OF MAN AS THE FLOWER OF THE GRASS, THE GRASS WITHERS, AND ITS FLOWER FALLS AWAY, 25. BUT THE WORD OF THE LORD ENDURES FOREVER. [To prove that all sinners need to be born again of the Word which is eternal, Peter quotes Isaiah 40:6-8. The fleshly part of man is compared to the grasses and flowers of the fields. They have their lushness and beauty, but only for a brief time and then they are gone. Not so with the Word of the Lord, it endures forever. Therefore, it is foolish for one to place all emphasis on this fleshly life and fail to prepare the soul for eternity. The birth of the Word places one's eyes on things above (Colossians 3:1,2), rather than earthly. It places the value of the soul above all earthly possessions (Mark 8:36,37).

NOW THIS IS THE WORD WHICH BY THE GOSPEL WAS PREACHED TO YOU. [With this much importance placed on being born of the Word, Peter makes sure his readers understand that he refers to the gospel preached to them. The new birth is based on the good news of the death, burial, and resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). Paul wrote that man or angel would be accursed if they preach another gospel (Galatians 1:8,9). He said of himself: "Woe is me if I do not preach the gospel" (1 Corinthians 9:16b). When a sinner becomes a penitent believer, he dies to sin (Romans 6:3), when he is buried in the waters of baptism, he is buried with Christ in death, when he is raised from the waters of baptism, he is raised with Christ (Romans 6:4). Thus, he has obeyed the form of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6:17), and free from sin (v. 18). It should be easy to see why that ONLY the Word of the gospel would produce the new birth and salvation (Romans 1:16,17).]

## Chapter 2

**1. THEREFORE, LAYING ASIDE ALL MALICE, ALL GUILTY, HYPOCRISY, ENVY, AND ALL EVIL SPEAKING,** [The word "therefore" ties Peter's admonition that follows to what has been said. With their new birth, pure heart, and fervent love for each other, they need to seek purity. To do this, they must give up something, and the list begins with **malice**. In a specific sense, this word means "ill will," and this sin will keep one from loving with a pure heart. However, this Greek work for malice "kakia" is most often used in a general way and means all kinds of wickedness and depravity which would include "ill will." (cf. Romans 1:29; 1 Corinthians 1:29; Ephesians 4:31; James 1:21). Whatever sense Peter had in mind, it represented an evil that destroys love. The word **guile** means deceit, and when Paul described the sins of the depraved in the first chapter of Romans, he listed this sin (Romans 1:29). This was a sin that made its attack very early in the history of the church. Ananias and Sapphira made an effort to deceive the brethren by selling a possession and keeping back a portion for themselves while pretending to give all. However, their lie cost them their lives (Acts 5:1-10). Another evil that must be put aside is **hypocrisy**—pretending to be something one is not. It is play-acting, and this sin was severely condemned by Jesus as he taught the Scribes, and Pharisees (Matthew 23:13-16). **Envy** is a word that raises its ugly head in most of the lists of evil in the New Testament (Romans 1:29; Galatians 5:21; Philippians 1:15; 1 Timothy 6:4; Titus 3:3). It goes beyond wanting what belongs to another, but begrudges the fact that the other person has it. Even if the one envying does not want such for himself, he does not want the other person to have it. Peter concludes his list of impurities to lay aside with **evil speaking**. It seems that all these sins just mentioned are demonstrated with the tongue of slander. The tongue can be used to encourage, to edify, and to express love, or it can be used to destroy (James 3:1-12). Evil speaking is designed to destroy love, and Peter wants such laid aside.]

**2. AS NEWBORN BABES, DESIRE THE PURE MILK OF THE WORD, THAT YOU MAY GROW THEREBY, 3. IF INDEED YOU HAVE TASTED THAT THE LORD IS GRACIOUS.** [The author now alludes back to his statement "having been born again" (1:21), and calls upon them to desire the proper food for growth. Whether they were recent or older converts would not keep this illustration of a newborn infant from applying. He does not say they are newborn babes, but "as newborn babes" desire

the pure milk of the Word. A faithful Christian should never lose his or her desire for the pure Word. Jesus taught: "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled" (Matthew 5:6). Notice that the milk must not be contaminated, it must be the pure milk of the Word. Peter is putting emphasis on the spiritual food that must nourish all Christians. One must study and rightly divide the Word to be approved of God (2 Timothy 2:15), because only the Word is given by inspiration of God to make one complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16,17). From birth to death, followers of the Lord must desire it (as newborn babes) for growth (2 Peter 3:1). Another motive is given for all to desire the pure spiritual milk of God. It reminds one of the graciousness of the Lord. The statement of verse 3 is based on Psalms 34:8. Since they have tasted the goodness and graciousness of God, they should want to feast faithfully on His Word. One must not separate the Word from its author, the Lord. He is the one who gives it truth and sustaining life (John 6:63).]

**4. COMING TO HIM AS TO A LIVING STONE REJECTED INDEED BY MEN, BUT CHOSEN BY GOD AND PRECIOUS,** [The one who has made possible, all the beautiful things discussed thus far by Peter, is the Savior, Jesus Christ. Their birth and spiritual growth had been possible by coming to Jesus as a living stone, which man had rejected, but God accepted as being precious. The "coming to Him" represented the time that they had been "born again" of the incorruptible Word (1:23). Peter now introduces another figure to describe their spiritual relationship to Christ. He is a living chief cornerstone in the temple of God. All Christians, (as living stones) are build around Him in spite of the fact that man rejected Him. To God, He is the chosen one and is precious, rare, (only one) and beautiful. One comes to Jesus, the living stone, by becoming a penitent believer who is baptized INTO CHRIST (Galatians 3:26,26), for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38).]

**5. YOU ALSO, AS LIVING STONES, ARE BEING BUILT UP A SPIRITUAL HOUSE, A HOLY PRIESTHOOD, TO OFFER UP SPIRITUAL SACRIFICES ACCEPTABLE TO GOD THROUGH JESUS CHRIST.** [The figure of God's Temple being built around Jesus as the chief cornerstone is continued as Peter reminds his readers that they are as living stones. The physical temple located in Jerusalem was made up of dead stones, but now the house of God, the church (1 Timothy 3:15), is built up of living stones (Christians) around Jesus the living cornerstone.



Instead of the Levitical priesthood, Peter reminds his readers that they are a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ the great High Priest (Hebrews 4:14,15). Such sacrifices begin by presenting their "bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service" (Romans 12:1). What a great honor to love the Lord enough to give one's heart, soul, strength, and mind to Him in His service (Mark 12:30). Therefore, when our bodies are presented in spiritual worship and faithful service to God, we are acceptable to Him through His Son, Jesus Christ (Hebrews 13:15).]

6. THEREFORE IT IS ALSO CONTAINED IN THE SCRIPTURE, "BEHOLD I LAY IN ZION A CHIEF CORNERSTONE, ELECT, PRECIOUS, AND HE WHO BELIEVES ON HIM WILL BY NO MEANS BE PUT TO SHAME." [To back up the fact that Jesus is the chief cornerstone, Peter quotes from the Old Testament scriptures (Isaiah 8:14; 28:16; Psalms 118:22). Jesus' important position in the new temple was foretold hundreds of years before His appearance. As this important cornerstone, Jesus was elect and precious—the ONLY one who could fulfill this position. In fact, all the important rolls that Jesus has in all realms cannot be shared or rivaled by another. There is no other name for salvation (Acts 4:12), no other Son of God to be given (John 3:16), no other way to the Father (John 14:6), no other door to God's sheepfold (John 10:7), no other foundation (1 Corinthians 3:11), and no other cornerstone. Since this is true, believers will never regret or be ashamed of their believing in Him. "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned" (Mark 16:16). What could be more regretful and shameful than to face Jesus at the Judgment Day as an unbeliever? Without believing in Him, one dies in his sins and cannot be with Jesus (John 8:24).]

7. THEREFORE, TO YOU WHO BELIEVE, HE IS PRECIOUS; BUT TO THOSE WHO ARE DISOBEDIENT, "THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED HAS BECOME THE CHIEF CORNERSTONE," 8. AND "A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE." THEY STUMBLE, BEING DISOBEDIENT TO THE WORD, TO WHICH THEY ALSO WERE APPOINTED. [Peter now sums up his conclusion about one either accepting Jesus or rejecting Him as the chief cornerstone. Even though the scripture says that He is an elect and precious stone, He is precious only to the believers. The apostle reminds his readers further that the one whom the unbelievers rejected has been made the chief cornerstone. During Christ's ministry, He was often rejected, "He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him" (John 1:11). Many of the Jewish leaders spent

their time trying to trap Him so that others would join them in rejecting Jesus (Matthew 22:17; Mark 12:14). However, His greatest rejection came when He was finally given a mock trial and crucified (Luke 23). Jesus became to the unbelievers, a stone in their pathway. He had to be dealt with either as a stepping stone to eternal life, or a stone of stumbling and offense. When one rejects Christ, he becomes disobedient and rejects the Word. The scriptures had foretold the coming of Christ, and even the fact that He would be rejected (Isaiah 53:3). Those who had stumbled over this chief cornerstone, and had disbelieved the Word, had fulfilled the prophecies. It is sad to note that millions today are still stumbling over Jesus, the elect and precious cornerstone!]

**9. BUT YOU ARE A CHOSEN GENERATION, A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, HIS OWN SPECIAL PEOPLE, THAT YOU MAY PROCLAIM THE PRAISES OF HIM WHO CALLED YOU OUT OF DARKNESS INTO HIS MARVELOUS LIGHT;** [Peter has just painted a dark gloomy picture of those who had rejected Jesus, and now in contrast he honors his faithful Christian readers. What has just been said of the unbelievers is not true with you, seems to be his message. To prove his point, he numerates some honored characteristics that they possess. Note that these are lifted from physical Israel and applied to spiritual Israel: (1) A chosen generation. God does not do things by chance, but with divine planning. When preparation was made to bring His Son (the Messiah) into the world, God chose Abraham to bring forth from his seed a chosen nation (Genesis 12:3). For centuries they were recognized as God's chosen people, and His chosen ones (Isaiah 43:20b). Now, Peter reminds these Christians that they represent God's chosen generation, God's people (Eph. 2:14-18; Galatians 3:28), because when (both Jews and Gentiles) believed on Jesus, and obeyed the Word, they became God's chosen generation. (2) A royal priesthood. God had asked Moses to declare to Israel that if they would obey His voice that they would be "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" Exodus 19:6]. They would praise Him, and recognize that He had called them out of darkness into His marvelous light. Sin represents the devil and darkness, but the Lord offers an escape into light. Not only had they answered the call to come out of darkness, but they were to proclaim His praises to others.]

**10. WHO ONCE WERE NOT A PEOPLE BUT ARE NOW THE PEOPLE OF GOD, WHO HAD NOT OBTAINED MERCY BUT NOW HAVE OBTAINED MERCY.** [To show the exalted position these Christians are in, both Jews and Gentiles, Peter alludes to Hosea 2:23, and reminds them that they are now

special with God. The thought of this verse was especially true of the Gentiles, because they had not received the law (as the Jews), and had chosen (as a general rule) heathenism. However, now it is different for those in Christ! Those who have obeyed the Gospel, Jews and Gentiles, are a people of God, and have obtained mercy, (Galatians 3:26,28].

**11. BELOVED, I BEG YOU AS SOJOURNERS AND PILGRIMS, ABSTAIN FROM FLESHLY LUSTS WHICH WAR AGAINST THE SOUL,** [At this point, Peter reminds them that they are loved by him as well as being loved by God. Since they are God's people, Peter wishes them to keep their eyes on the spiritual rather than the fleshly. Thus, he begs them to be wide-awake to the destructibility of the fleshly lust waring to destroy their souls. These brethren are reminded that they are sojourners and pilgrims. This was true with them physically because they were living away from their home land, Canaan, but even more so, spiritually, (Hebrews 11:13). In the few short years of pilgrimage, fleshly lusts could cause them to lose their souls forever. Then, what profit would all gains of this life be? (Mark 8:36). Fleshly lusts represent the enemy of the soul, and without Jesus the Savior, the war is lost. "O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit" (Romans 7:24—8:1). The only way to win over the flesh is to walk in the Spirit (Galatians 5:16)].

**12. HAVING YOUR CONDUCT HONORABLE AMONG THE GENTILES, THAT WHEN THEY SPEAK AGAINST YOU AS EVILDOERS, THEY MAY, BY YOUR GOOD WORKS WHICH THEY OBSERVE, GLORIFY GOD IN THE DAY OF VISITATION.** [One of the ways to avoid fleshly lusts which destroy the soul is to conduct one's life in a honest and honorable way before the heathen Gentiles of that day, even when accused of evil. Retaliate the evil of these Gentiles with good works, and this may lead them to glorify God in the day of visitation. Fleshly lusts would say, do them evil, and do them harm, but this is wrong. Show them good works instead! "Therefore if your enemy hungers, feed him; if he thirst, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:20,21). The day of visitation evidently means when God shall visit them, but the question is when, and in what way? Some have thought the final Judgment Day, but others feel that the context suggests when God visits them in mercy. If this is what Peter had

in mind, the day of visitation would be when the saving gospel is preached to them. In such case, whether or not they obeyed the gospel would determine whether His visitation would be salvation or condemnation (Mark 16:15,16). Some evil men and women have been receptive to the gospel call today because they saw faithful Christian acts, even in the face of persecutions.]

13. THEREFORE SUBMIT YOURSELVES TO EVERY ORDINANCE OF MAN FOR THE LORD'S SAKE, WHETHER TO THE KING AS SUPREME, 14. OR TO GOVERNORS, AS TO THOSE WHO ARE SENT BY HIM FOR THE PUNISHMENT OF EVILDOERS AND FOR THE PRAISE OF THOSE WHO DO GOOD. [Peter now turns his attention to the human institutions which enforce the laws of the land. Even though these laws may occasionally go against God and the truth, as a general rule they are designed to punish the evildoers. When such leaders and laws do not conflict with God's will, Christians must obey them. "Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves" (Romans 13:1,2). However, in the event they oppose God's will, God must be obeyed. When Peter and John were commanded by law authorities to disobey God, they answered, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:19,20). Peter begins with the king, and includes all working under him. Some have supposed the king to be the Emperor, and the rulers under him. Even though there are exceptions, these rulers will be a friend to those who do good. "For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same" (Romans 13:3). God uses the rulers to help those who are good, and to punish those who do evil. Therefore, they are referred to as "God's minister to you for good," and "God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil" (Romans 13:4)].

15. FOR THIS IS THE WILL OF GOD, THAT BY DOING GOOD YOU MAY PUT TO SILENCE THE IGNORANCE OF FOOLISH MEN— 16. AS FREE, YET NOT USING YOUR LIBERTY AS A CLOAK FOR VICE, BUT AS SERVANTS OF GOD." [By obeying the rulers and laws of the land that do not conflict with God's will, Christians follow God's way of putting to silence ignorant and foolish men. Faithful followers of Christ, make a better environment in which to live, and are law abiding citizens.

When Peter wrote this epistle, some thought of Christians as rebels who opposed the laws of the land, but this was false. The only way to alleviate such ignorance was to do good and follow the laws of the land. Since Christianity set them free (John 8:32), even from the law of Moses, some must have thought that they could ignore the human institutions of law and order. This type of attitude could lead them to feel free to commit evil. However, this attitude was wrong and contrary to being a servant of God. Paul gave a similar warning, "For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another" (Galatians 5:13).]

**17. HONOR ALL PEOPLE, LOVE THE BROTHERHOOD. FEAR GOD. HONOR THE KING.** [This little verse seems to sum up the attitude Christians are to have toward others in all positions of life. Honor all people refers to those who deserve honor. As Christians, we are to live in this world even though we must not follow worldly and fleshly practices (John 17:15). We must strive to do good to all. "Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith" (Galatians 6:10). Peter calls upon his readers to love the brotherhood. This means all who are brothers and sisters in Christ. Love is the cement that holds the brotherhood of Christ together. Jesus taught, "A new commandment I give to you that you love one another, as I have loved you, that you also love one another" (John 13:34). Peter, in this verse, uses the Greek word *agapao* for love, which represents the most caring love possible. The thought is to love ALL brothers and sisters in Christ. "Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another;" (Romans 12:10). Fearing God means to reverence Him to the point of obeying Him. "Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether it is good or whether it is evil" (Ecclesiastes 12:13,14). As one fears God, he must also honor the king and governmental rulers on earth. Since God appoints them for the good of His people, they must be honored (Romans 13:1-7).]

**18. SERVANTS, BE SUBMISSIVE TO YOUR MASTERS WITH ALL FEAR, NOT ONLY TO THE GOOD AND GENTLE, BUT ALSO TO THE HARSH. 19. FOR THIS IS COMMENDABLE, IF BECAUSE OF CONSCIENCE TOWARD GOD ONE ENDURES GRIEF, SUFFERING WRONGFULLY.** [The laws of the land at this writing had a legal system of slavery, and when slaves became Christians and found freedom in Christ, it was a temptation to neglect their earthly

masters. However, Peter calls upon them to be submissive even if a master is harsh (crooked or unfair). Why? Because, in so doing, one is mindful of God and pleasing Him. They were asked to do right because they belonged to the Lord even if made to suffer wrongfully. Jesus set the perfect example of doing right when wronged (1 Peter 2:23). Paul gave this description of the actions of the apostles, "And we labor, working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure it; being defamed, we entreat..." (1 Corinthians 4:12,13). The principles in these verses apply to employer/employee relationships today.]

**20. FOR WHAT CREDIT IS IT IF, WHEN YOU ARE BEATEN FOR YOUR FAULTS, YOU TAKE IT PATIENTLY? BUT WHEN YOU DO GOOD AND SUFFER FOR IT, IF YOU TAKE IT PATIENTLY, THIS IS COMMENDABLE BEFORE GOD.** [There seems to be a test involved in the proper reactions of slaves to their masters. If they have done wrong and patiently take their punishment, what credit is due? However, to patiently suffer because they are faithfully following God, this is commendable. Why? Because such actions come from being like Jesus. He taught His disciples, "Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you" (Matthew 5:11,12).]

**21. FOR TO THIS YOU WERE CALLED, BECAUSE CHRIST ALSO SUFFERED FOR US, LEAVING US AN EXAMPLE, THAT YOU SHOULD FOLLOW HIS STEPS:** [The very gospel that called them and all other Christians, (2 Thessalonians 2:14), was the fact that Jesus died, was buried, and resurrected from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). Jesus had taught, "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me" (Mark 8:34). Paul urged the Roman Christians to present their "bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service" (Romans 12:1). Thus, suffering was often associated with following Christ! However, the greatest proof of all is found in the example of the suffering Jesus did while living, and then dying on the cross. These Christians, and all to follow in other generations, are to suffer by following in His steps. With this attitude, the servant, with the unfair master, could endure grief and suffer wrongly. By walking in Jesus' steps, persecutions would never stop the growth of Christians then or in ages to come. What about today? Do we follow the steps of Jesus ONLY if the way is easy? What about the times we

are harmed for doing right, judged without the facts, and mocked for following truth? We sing, "Sweetly, Lord, have we heard thee calling, Come follow Me," but do we follow Him when the going gets rough?]

**22. WHO COMMITTED NO SIN, NOR WAS GUILF FOUND IN HIS MOUTH, 23. WHO, WHEN HE WAS REVILED, DID NOT REVILE IN RETURN; WHEN HE SUFFERED, HE DID NOT THREATEN, BUT COMMITTED HIMSELF TO HIM WHO JUDGES RIGHTEOUSLY;** [Jesus lived on this earth more than thirty years, yet never committed a sin. He died as a sinner would die, but He was innocent! "For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Corinthians 5:21). How could he live without committing a sin? Some have felt that since He was the Son of God, that sin was not tempting to Jesus. This concept is false because Jesus was singled out by the devil and tempted in the wilderness (Matthew 4:1-11). The Hebrew writer says of Jesus, "...but He was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15). Jesus is described further, "Who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens" (Hebrews 7:26). Peter gives some examples of the sinlessness of Jesus as he alludes to Isaiah 53. There was no guile (deceit) found in His mouth. They reviled or abused Him, but He did not abuse them. The sinful enemy of Jesus did everything in their power to make Him suffer, but He did not threaten them with any type of retaliation. Instead, He prayed, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do" (Luke 23:34). Instead of resisting the cross and punishing the enemy, Jesus committed Himself to the cross and all the punishment as a guilty sinner, even though He was perfect. He knew that such was His Father's will, and God would judge these evil acts righteously. It is not easy to hold our tongues and actions when wronged. We are tempted to get even instead of returning good for evil.]

**24. WHO HIMSELF BORE OUR SINS IN HIS OWN BODY ON THE TREE, THAT WE, HAVING DIED TO SINS, MIGHT LIVE FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS—BY WHOSE STRIPES YOU WERE HEALED.** [Peter continues to show that Isaiah's prophecy was fulfilled in Christ by giving the purpose of His death. Even though He had no sins of His own, His body bore (as a sacrifice) the sins of others. "So Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation" (Hebrews 9:28). The tree means "wood or piece of wood" and in this context refers to the

cross. That which was considered a curse, became mankind's greatest blessing (Galatians 3:13). Who can be forgiven because of this sacrificial death of Jesus? Those who die to sin, and live for righteousness (Romans 6:1-4). Is this death available to all who are lost in sin? Yes, but only a few will respond to His death for cleansing and salvation (Matthew 7:13,14). To be healed by His stripes (death on the cross) a sinner must obey a form of His death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6:17). This process is described by Paul as dying to sin, and being buried and raised in baptism to a new life in Jesus (Romans 6:1-4; Galatians 3:26,27).]

**25. FOR YOU WERE LIKE SHEEP GOING ASTRAY, BUT HAVE NOW RETURNED TO THE SHEPHERD AND OVERSEER OF YOUR SOULS.** [Again, the prophecy of Isaiah is used by Peter to show the importance of Christ's death on the cross (Isaiah 53:6). The figure is sheep without a shepherd that have been returned to the Shepherd. When living in sin, we are without spiritual guidance, but with the oversight of the Shepherd, we are brought under control. The going astray without a shepherd means that all were lost in sin and facing death (Romans 6:23; 7:24). However, with the Shepherd and overseer of our souls, we are forgiven and saved from sin by the shedding of His blood. "But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been made near by the blood of Christ" (Ephesians 2:13). All Christians have Jesus to lead them as the good Shepherd who was willing to lay down His life for His sheep (John 10:1-18).



## Chapter 3

1. **LIKEWISE YOU WIVES, BE SUBMISSIVE TO YOUR OWN HUSBANDS, THAT EVEN IF SOME DO NOT OBEY THE WORD, THEY, WITHOUT A WORD, MAY BE WON BY THE CONDUCT OF THEIR WIVES, 2. WHEN THEY OBSERVE YOUR CHASTE CONDUCT ACCOMPANIED BY FEAR.** [Peter has given instructions for submission to government authorities (2:13-17), servants to masters, (2:18-21) and now he turns to another relationship that affects one's spiritual life. Peter instructs Christian wives how to be submissive to their own husbands even if their husbands are not Christians. God has assigned both men and women their roles and responsibilities in life, and both are very important. Whether or not man or woman approves, God has given man headship with love over his wife. "But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God" (1 Corinthians 11:3). "For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body" (Ephesians 5:23). For man to be the head, the wife must be submissive. "Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord" (Ephesians 5:22). This is God's way and has brought happiness to millions when the husband loves his wife (Ephesians 5:25). In this context, Peter refers to this God-given arrangement as a way to convert an unbelieving husband. Even though the unbelieving husband will not obey the Word by being taught, he is won to Christ, by the Word, as he sees it lived in his submissive wife. He will obey the word, but only because he sees her chaste conduct and fear of God as a Christian wife. Peter is not suggesting that a wife must submit to her husband if he commands her to sin! With this type of submission, she could not fear God and show her chaste conduct. In all situations of life, we must obey God rather than men (Acts 4:19,20). However, in this marriage relationship that does not go against God's will, she must submit to please God, and to win her husband to Christ].

3. **DO NOT LET YOUR BEAUTY BE THAT OUTWARD ADORNING OF ARRANGING THE HAIR, OF WEARING GOLD, OR OF PUTTING ON FINE APPAREL; 4. BUT LET IT BE THE HIDDEN PERSON OF THE HEART, WITH THE INCORRUPTIBLE ORNAMENT OF A GENTLE AND QUIET SPIRIT, WHICH IS VERY PRECIOUS IN THE SIGHT OF GOD.** [Peter has just discussed the power of a wife to win her husband to the Word by a chaste conduct. Now he reminds her of the true meaning of her beauty. True beauty is not adorning the outward appearance, but the gentle and quiet spirit of the heart. Peter does not seem to be condemning a woman for making her outward

appearance attractive, unless she does so excessively and with immodest apparel. "In like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, (discretion) not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works" (1 Timothy 2:9). However, he is warning her against excessive outward display, and letting such be her only beauty. Wives who depend on outward adorning only for their beauty will never win an unbelieving husband to the Word. Therefore, true beauty must come from within the heart, and be displayed daily by a gentle and quiet spirit. The outward finery will corrupt, but the beautiful heart that pleases God will never be destroyed, and will become even more beautiful as the years pass. "Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day" (2 Corinthians 4:16)].

5. FOR IN THIS MANNER, IN FORMER TIMES, THE HOLY WOMEN WHO TRUSTED IN GOD ALSO ADORNED THEMSELVES, BEING SUBMISSIVE TO THEIR OWN HUSBANDS, 6. AS SARAH OBEYED ABRAHAM, CALLING HIM LORD, WHOSE DAUGHTERS YOU ARE IF YOU DO GOOD AND ARE NOT AFRAID WITH ANY TERROR. [To further illustrate the type of submissive wife Peter has in mind, he refers to the holy women of the Old Testament who were submissive to their own husbands. These women were holy because they trusted in God who is holy (1 Peter 1:15). Peter singles out Sarah as an example of one who obeyed her husband Abraham and called him lord which means master (Genesis 19:24). Sarah and others depended on the hidden person of the heart for their beauty. Sarah and other holy women, are to be models for Christian women. Spiritually, Christian women are their daughters if they display the same good, and do not allow fear to drive them from performing the same good. Today it is not uncommon to hear wives ridiculed who follow the biblical example of honoring their husbands. Without doubt, it takes courage to stand up for right when the world ridicules those who dare to be different. However, Christian women should not fear the world since such will pass away, and is an enemy to God (James 4:4; 1 John 2:15-17).]

7. LIKEWISE YOU HUSBANDS, DWELL WITH THEM WITH UNDERSTANDING, GIVING HONOR TO THE WIFE, AS TO THE WEAKER VESSEL, AND AS BEING HEIRS TOGETHER OF THE GRACE OF LIFE, THAT YOUR PRAYERS MAY NOT BE HINDERED. [Since husbands and wives are given different roles in life, Peter instructs them separately. The only way for a marriage to please God is for both husband and wife to fulfill their

God-given place. With the assignment of headship, it could be a temptation for a husband to abuse his position, and become inconsiderate toward his wife. Peter wants husbands to know, that they likewise have instructions to follow. First, they must understand the nature of a woman. Some men assume that women are the same as men except for their sexual physical anatomy. Therefore, in all areas such husbands dwell with them without understanding. Peter suggests some ways for Christian husbands to give honor and to show understanding. (1) Recognize them as being a weaker vessel. The word vessel is applied to the human body. "That each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor" (1 Thessalonians 4:4). As a general rule, the wife's body is not as strong physically as that of the husband. This does not mean that she is inferior, because this is the way woman was created. In fact, one of the beautiful traits of a woman is her tender and weaker body as compared to that of man. Therefore, the husband should understand this and desire to protect her. He should not make unreasonable demands, and expect her to display the same physical strength as himself. (2) The second way for the husband to honor his wife is to consider her as being heirs together with him of the grace of life. When God's grace is extended, He does not show partiality to bond or free, Jew or Greek; male or female (Galatians 3:28). The husband who fails to honor his wife cannot properly pray, and likewise may hinder her prayers.].

**8. FINALLY, ALL OF YOU BE OF ONE MIND, HAVING COMPASSION FOR ONE ANOTHER; LOVE AS BROTHERS, BE TENDERHEARTED, BE COURTEOUS;** [In addition to these special relationships just discussed, Peter now turns to all the brethren, and calls upon them to be of one mind. Christianity is a team effort, and division is the work of the devil. This is not to say that a body of believers can all think alike, and never have a difference. However, they can have one mind in the sense of following the teachings of Jesus. They can set their minds on allowing Christ to be the head of the Church and on following His teaching. "Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son" (2 John 9). Religious division is sinful, and Paul called upon the church at Corinth to, "speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Corinthians 1:10). With this one mind, it becomes easier to show compassion or sympathy, to love, to be tenderhearted, and courteous to brothers and sisters in Christ.

Please note that these four virtues compliment each other. It is easy to show compassion, sympathy, tenderness in our hearts, and to be courteous to a brother or sisters whom we love. Paul sheds light on this verse in these words, "And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ also forgave you" (Ephesians 4:32)].

**9. NOT RETURNING EVIL FOR EVIL OR REVILING FOR REVILING, BUT ON THE CONTRARY BLESSING, KNOWING THAT YOU WERE CALLED TO THIS, THAT YOU MAY INHERIT A BLESSING.**" [After giving the positive feelings and actions Christians are to have toward each other, Peter numerates two negative things to avoid. (1) Don't return evil for evil. The flesh says, you did me evil, and I'll get you back with even more evil. You reviled or abused me with words, and I'll speak more severally! Peter lets his readers know that this kind of attitude is wrong, and they should rather return a blessing. Why? Because this is the reason why you were called! Thus, to receive God's blessing, you must bless those who speak evil against you. "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:21). "love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you" (Matthew 5:44). What is the blessing that Christians will inherit? "Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven" (Matthew 5:12)].

**10. FOR HE WHO WOULD LOVE LIFE AND SEE GOOD DAYS, LET HIM REFRAIN HIS TONGUE FROM EVIL, AND HIS LIPS FROM SPEAKING GUILLE; 11. LET HIM TURN AWAY FROM EVIL AND DO GOOD; LET HIM SEEK PEACE AND PURSUE IT.** [To verify this new way of life taught in Christianity, Peter uses a quote from Psalm 34:12-16. There is a natural longing in the hearts of mankind to be happy in life. It has been said that happiness is the thing most often sought after and less found than anything else in the world. To be happy, it is important to love life and experience good days. When life is loved, it becomes easier to accept even the difficult times. However, in this context, Peter is discussing what we can or cannot do to love life and see good days. The first thing suggested is to refrain our tongues from evil. Why begin with the tongue? Because an unbridled tongue has an evil effect on all aspects of life. In the Epistle of James, immediately before defining pure religion, James defined a religion that is vain and useless. "If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless" (James 1:26). The word

refrain used by Peter means, "to stop." Thus, one is to stop his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking guile. Since the tongue cannot be tamed, James 3:8, it must NEVER be without a bridle. When controlled, the tongue and words spoken bring great blessings, but when uncontrolled, "It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison" (James 3:8). Once the tongue is under control, to love life and see good days, Peter calls upon his readers to turn away from evil and do good. Each individual must determine the direction of his or her life. Yes, we can influence each other, but the final decision comes down to our personal choices. In the statement before us, Peter defines the fruits of repentance. Genuine repentance is a decision of the heart to turn away from evil and to follow righteousness. "Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord" (Acts 3:19). It is not enough just to turn away from evil, but one must replace the evil with good. "Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you" (James 4:7,8). This love of life and good days must be sought or pursued! Millions in every generation, sit back and expect their ship to come in so they can find happiness. However, the peace that comes from doing right must be pursued. God provides the many opportunities, but mankind must seek them. "If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men" (Romans 12:18)].

**12. FOR THE EYES OF THE LORD ARE ON THE RIGHTEOUS, AND HIS EARS ARE OPEN TO THEIR PRAYERS; BUT THE FACE OF THE LORD IS AGAINST THOSE WHO DO EVIL.**" [Peter closes the quote from this Psalm by referring to God's part in one's pursuit for loving life and seeing good days. All will be failure without God's help! What an assurance to know that when we are righteous (right with God) His eyes are on us and His ears open to hear our prayers. This is the foundation on which all Christians should build their lives. Refuse the evil and follow the good, and God will bless. "For the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly shall perish" (Psalm 1:6). The blind man who was healed by Jesus, summed up this principle in these words, "Now we know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears him" (John 9:31)].

**13. AND WHO IS HE WHO WILL HARM YOU IF YOU BECOME FOLLOWERS OF WHAT IS GOOD? 14. BUT EVEN IF YOU SHOULD SUFFER FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS' SAKE, YOU ARE BLESSED. AND DO NOT BE AFRAID OF THEIR THREATS, NOR**

**BE TROUBLED.** [In view of the fact that the Lord is watching the faithful, and listening to their prayers, who can harm you? This is a rhetorical question and the answer inferred is, no one can harm you if you are following that which is good! They may persecute, but this will not keep you from God's blessing. Notice, they must be followers of what is good. The oldest manuscripts have, "zealous of" what is good. Peter is not discussing lukewarm followers like the church at Laodicea (Revelation 2:14-22), but followers on fire with zeal. "Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works" (Titus 2:14). Peter seems to be saying that as a general rule you will not be harmed for zealously following good, but if you do suffer for righteousness' sake, you will still be blessed. This is what Jesus taught. "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:10). "And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matthew 10:28). Therefore, in view of God taking care of you, don't be afraid or troubled over those who may persecute you.]

**15. BUT SANCTIFY THE LORD GOD IN YOUR HEARTS, AND ALWAYS BE READY TO GIVE A DEFENSE TO EVERYONE WHO ASKS YOU A REASON FOR THE HOPE THAT IS IN YOU, WITH MEEKNESS AND FEAR;** [Instead of fearing your persecutors, Peter first calls upon his readers to sanctify or reverence the Lord God (Christ) in their hearts. Is this enough? No, there is a defense to be given while they are feeling this reverence in their hearts for the Lord. What is to be defended? The reason for their hope in Christ Jesus. To defend one's hope in Christ would involve showing Him to be the Son of God who came to earth, lived a life without sin, died for the sins of others, was buried in a tomb, but came forth to life, and ascended back to His Father. Therefore, because He died and was raised to live forever, the hope of all Christians is that through Him all can have eternal life. "My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness; I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but wholly lean on Jesus' name. On Christ, the solid rock I stand; all other ground is sinking sand." Jesus promised, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:13,14). Peter mentions three things that should be present when defending this hope: (1) Sanctify or reverence the

Lord God in your heart. (2) Always be ready. (3) Defend it with meekness and fear. Christians today must have this same hope, and be ready to defend it at all times. "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable" (1 Corinthians 15:19)].

16. HAVING A GOOD CONSCIENCE, THAT WHEN THEY DEFAME YOU AS EVILDOERS, THOSE WHO REVILE YOUR GOOD CONDUCT IN CHRIST MAY BE ASHAMED. 17. FOR IT IS BETTER, IF IT IS THE WILL OF GOD, TO SUFFER FOR DOING GOOD THAN FOR DOING EVIL. [In previous verses, Peter has shown the importance of being right with God, and refusing to return evil for evil. Now he is saying that it is important that you practice what you defend! Even though Christians cannot live a sinless life, this should nevertheless be their goal. If one should claim to be a follower of Jesus and purposefully follow sin, he WILL NOT have a good conscience. Paul asked the Roman Christians, "How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?" (Romans 6:2). Sin is either a way of life, or an occasional stumble while trying to be like Jesus, and the latter of these two represents the life of a Christian with a good conscience. "Whoever abides in Him does not sin (continues not to sin). Whoever sins (continues to sins) has neither seen Him nor known Him...If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 3:6; 1:8,9). The good conscience, mentioned by Peter, must be based on truth to be acceptable. Before conversion, Paul had a good conscience as "chief of sinners" (Acts 23:1; 24:16; 1 Timothy 1:15), but he was wrong! However, Peter is making the point that if the enemy defames and reviles them as an evildoer while they have a good conduct, and a good conscience IN CHRIST, this will make the enemy ashamed. In summary, Peter is mentioning two ways one can suffer. (1) For doing good. (2) For doing evil. Between these two, it is better to suffer within God's will for doing good than to suffer for doing evil (Matthew 5:11,12)].

18. FOR CHRIST ALSO SUFFERED ONCE FOR SINS, THE JUST FOR THE UNJUST, THAT HE MIGHT BRING US TO GOD, BEING PUT TO DEATH IN THE FLESH BUT MADE ALIVE BY THE SPIRIT, [To further prove that Christians should suffer for doing good without returning evil, Peter gives Jesus as the perfect example. While giving Him as an example, he also relates some important facts about His death. (1) The suffering of Christ represents the sacrifice He made for sinners. Instead of the sacrificing of animals which had been done for fifteen hundred years, Christ made the supreme sacrifice for

sin. "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). "For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:3). (2) Not only did He sacrifice His life for sins, but He did it one time only—ONCE! The animal sacrifices of the Levitical system had to be repeated year by year, but once was sufficient for the offering of Jesus for sins. "Not that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another—...By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Hebrews 9:25; 10:10). (3) Jesus was just and died for the unjust to bring sinners to God. Justice demanded death, because God had promised death for sin. Either mankind would stay away from God forever, (spiritual death) or someone without sin must die for him. Jesus was the ONLY ONE who could accomplish this. Now, if Christ, who never sinned, could suffer for such a worthy purpose, so should Christians suffer for doing good. (4) Even though Jesus was put to death in the flesh, He was made alive or continued to live by the Spirit. They could kill His body, but His spirit was very much alive by the Spirit of God. As Jesus died, he said, "Father, into Your hands I commend My spirit" (Luke 23:46). After His body would lie in the tomb for three days and nights, God, by this same Spirit would raise Him from the dead. "But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you" (Romans 8:11)].

7 19. BY WHOM ALSO HE WENT AND PREACHED TO THE SPIRITS IN PRISON, 20. WHO FORMERLY WERE DISOBEDIENT, WHEN ONCE THE LONGSUFFERING OF GOD WAITED IN THE DAYS OF NOAH, WHILE THE ARK WAS BEING PREPARED, IN WHICH A FEW, THAT IS, EIGHT SOULS, WERE SAVED THROUGH WATER. [Peter continues discussing the power of the same Spirit who made the spirit of Jesus alive. By this same Spirit, he went (in spirit) to the spirits in prison who refused salvation in Noah's day. Where was this prison? It was the unseen world of the dead! When Jesus taught about a rich man and Lazarus dying, He pulled the curtain back, as it were, for all to see where their spirits were dwelling. The rich man was in torment in Hades, while Lazarus was comforted in Abraham's bosom. Was this a prison for the rich man's soul? Yes, he was being punished with no possible way of escape! Jesus quoted Abraham as saying to him, "Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now



he is comforted and you are tormented. And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us" (Luke 16:25,26). The rich man could not even send a message to warn his five brothers not to come to this place (vs. 27-29). Thus, a more vivid picture of a prison could not be given. When Jesus died, His spirit went to this same "place of comfort" where Lazarus dwelt. Jesus referred to this place as paradise when He promised the penitent thief, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43). What did Jesus do while in Paradise? Like Abraham, He did some preaching. While Abraham spoke only to the rich man (as far as we know), Jesus spoke to the disobedient spirits of Noah's day. Was he giving them a second chance for salvation? No, because this would contradict all other teaching in the Word of God. Note also, for the verb "preached," Peter did not use the Greek word euaggelizomai, which denotes proclaiming the saving gospel, but rather kerusso which denotes the act of heralding. Therefore, nothing is said of His preaching to SAVE, but rather preaching to HERALD a message. What was the message? We are not told, but within the context it could have been His victory over sin and death. He could have proclaimed that Noah was right when he preached, through My spirit, the righteousness of God (2 Peter 2:5)! Just as Abraham had reminded the rich man that he had his chance while on earth, Jesus may have reminded them of how God was longsuffering and gave them a long period of time to be saved while Noah built the ark, but (except eight souls) all were lost. Peter says that the eight souls were saved by water. It may sound like a contradiction to teach that water destroyed all except eight souls, and water saved the eight souls. However, the same water that drown the wicked, lifted the ark up and saved the eight souls from death and the old world of sin!

Another possible explanation of this difficult passage is that Peter was not referring to Christ preaching in spirit between His death and resurrection, but that Christ's spirit was preached through Noah in the days before the flood. When Peter penned this epistle, all these spirits, who rejected Noah's preaching, were imprisoned in the Hadean world. Even though there are mysteries surrounding this verse, and many interpretations are suggested by preachers, teachers, and commentators, we know for sure that Peter was using the salvation of Noah and family to illustrate baptism, an antitype which now saves us.]

## **21. THERE IS ALSO AN ANTOTYPE WHICH NOW SAVES US, NAMELY BAPTISM**

**(NOT THE REMOVAL OF THE FILTH OF THE FLESH, BUT THE ANSWER OF A GOOD CONSCIENCE TOWARD GOD), THROUGH THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST,** [What was the purpose of Peter relating this experience of Jesus with the disobedient spirits of Noah's day? To help his readers see that the flood was a type of something very important when being saved through the suffering and death of Christ. Peter reminds them that there is an antitype which now saves us. Just as Noah and family were saved by water, a sinner is saved by water—namely baptism. How does the water of baptism save? Not the removal of the filth of the flesh! There is no power within the water itself, but rather the answering of a good conscience toward God. Baptism is God's way for the believing, penitent sinner to enter Christ to be saved by His blood. "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Galatians 3:26,27). Baptism is the way a sinner obeys a form of His death, burial, and resurrection. "Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4; 6:17). Baptism is the dividing line between being lost and being saved just as water divided Noah and family in the ark from that sinful, disobedient generation! Jesus drew the same line when He sent forth His apostles to preach to the world. "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned" (Mark 16:16). The believing, penitent Saul of Tarsus was told, "And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). Those who teach that baptism is not essential to enter Christ for salvation, cannot answer with a good conscience toward God. All of this salvation through the death of Christ is made sure by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Without His resurrection, His death would have been without power to save. "And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished" (1 Corinthians 15:17,18)].

**22. WHO HAS GONE INTO HEAVEN AND IS AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD, ANGELS AND AUTHORITIES AND POWERS HAVING BEEN MADE SUBJECT TO HIM.** [Not only was Jesus raised from the dead, but Peter declares His ascension to His Father in heaven. "Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight" (Acts 1:9). The exaltation of Jesus is further taught as Peter declares Him to be at the right hand of God.

This is a position of honor and authority, as He reigns over His kingdom. Before leaving the earth, Jesus declared, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth" (Mark 16:18). At the right hand of His Father, all angels, authorities and powers are subject to Him. This is the same message Peter preached in his great message on the day of Pentecost when the church began. He said of Jesus, "Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear" (Acts 2:33). As this chapter closes, surely Peter has convinced his readers that they should be willing to follow Christ's example in suffering for doing good. Out of His suffering came His death, burial, resurrection, and ascension to the right hand of His Father].

## Chapter 4

1. THEREFORE, SINCE CHRIST SUFFERED FOR US IN THE FLESH, ARM YOURSELVES ALSO WITH THE SAME MIND, FOR HE WHO HAS SUFFERED IN THE FLESH HAS CEASED FROM SIN," [The author of this epistle now refers back to his instructions in chapter three where he called upon Christians to learn to suffer for righteousness' sake as did Jesus. In this verse, he asked his readers to arm themselves with the same mind as found in the suffering Christ. The words "arm yourselves" is the figure of preparing for battle as a soldier. Paul called upon the Ephesian Christians to, "Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil" (Ephesians 6:11). To be able to suffer as Christ, Christians must prepare by arming themselves. The arming, according to Peter, takes place in the mind. The mind is a computer that is programed to direct all actions either for good or evil. "For as he thinks in his heart, so is he (Proverbs 23:7). When one's mind is armed to follow the suffering of Jesus, there will be great spiritual success. Some Christians might ask, "Of what value is there in suffering for righteousness?" Peter's answer is, you will cease from sin. He is not suggesting that those armed will never commit another sin, because all human beings sin (1 John 1:8,10). However, when one is properly armed and strong enough to suffer for Christ, he strives daily not to sin. Sin is no longer his or her way of life].

2. THAT HE NO LONGER SHOULD LIVE THE REST OF HIS TIME IN THE FLESH FOR THE LUSTS OF MEN, BUT FOR THE WILL OF GOD [In this verse, a definition is given for ceasing from sin. Those who follow Jesus, even to the point of suffering, will avoid the practice of fleshly lusts. "How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?" (Romans 6:2). Paul said of his own life, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me;" (Galatians 2:20). There is no way a true Christian can live for Christ and follow the works of the flesh. Those who follow the flesh will not inherit the kingdom of God (Galatians 5:19-21). Instead of living for the flesh, Peter says they will live for the will of God. When a sinner obeys the gospel, he gives up the works of the flesh, and bears the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22,23). Paul taught the same principles of this verse to Christians at Corinth, "And He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again" (2 Corinthians 5:15)].

3. FOR WE HAVE SPENT ENOUGH OF OUR PAST LIFETIME IN DOING THE WILL OF THE GENTILES—WHEN WE WALKED IN LICENTIOUSNESS, LUSTS, DRUNKENNESS, REVELRIES, DRINKING PARTIES, AND ABOMINABLE IDOLATRIES. [A contrast is drawn in this verse between doing God's will and doing the will of the flesh. Before coming to Christ, these Christians had given their lives to the fleshly ways of the heathen Gentiles. Paul wrote of the evil ways of the Gentiles in Romans 1. It is at this point that Peter illustrates what he means by following the will of the flesh. He says that they walked in, or were active in the following evil practices: **Licentiousness** means immodest, wantonness, unbridled conduct, excessive sensuality. **Lusts** represent unlawful desires or uncontrolled passions of the flesh. **Drunkenness** means to drink excessive wine to the point of being intoxicated. **Revelries** are those who carouse as the result of drunkenness. **Drinking parties** is a drinking bout, a carousal. Finally **abominable idolatries** can be defined as the worshipping of idols in an unlawful way. Probably all the evils mentioned in this verse were practiced in their idolatrous worship. They had wasted enough of their past life in these evils and should abhor even the thought of such sins. Christians are to, "Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good" (Romans 12:9)].

4. IN REGARD TO THESE, THEY THINK IT STRANGE THAT YOU DO NOT RUN WITH THEM IN THE SAME FLOOD OF DISSIPATION, SPEAKING EVIL OF YOU. 5. THEY WILL GIVE AN ACCOUNT TO HIM WHO IS READY TO JUDGE THE LIVING AND THE DEAD. [When one obeys the gospel and totally changes his life to be like Jesus, there will usually follow persecution. Unconverted friends will not understand why he or she will not continue to join them in their evil ways. Peter says they will go so far as to speak evil of you. He sums up the evil practices as a "flood of dissipation." Sin promises happiness and a better way of life, but it is a killer! It eats away daily at dissipating both soul and body, and those who allow such will reap corruption (Galatians 6:7,8). This kind of mockery, especially to newly born Christians, may hurt deeply. However, Peter promises that they will have to give an account for their evil to the one who will judge all humanity. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad" (2 Corinthians 5:10). God has chosen to judge the world through His Son Jesus. "Because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given

assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead" (Acts 17:31). Peter says that the Judge is ready or prepared to judge the living and the dead. As Peter wrote this message, he was speaking of judgment for those who were already dead, as well as those who were alive. There is no way to escape one's appointment with judgment. "And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27). In the Book of Revelation, John saw the dead, small and great standing before God. He saw the sea, Death and Hades deliver up their dead, as the books were opened. His summation, "And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire" (Revelation 12-15)].

**6. FOR THIS REASON THE GOSPEL WAS PREACHED ALSO TO THOSE WHO ARE DEAD, THAT THEY MIGHT BE JUDGED ACCORDING TO MEN IN THE FLESH, BUT LIVE ACCORDING TO GOD IN THE SPIRIT.** [Since Peter has just mentioned that those who are dead will be judged, he reminds his readers that this is why the gospel was preached to them. Peter does not say, preached to them AFTER they were dead. He says, "the gospel WAS preached to those who are dead." Since those who are now dead had heard the same gospel preached as those alive, Peter is saying that they too will be judged! Their judgment will be based on how they lived their fleshly lives while upon this earth in regard to the gospel, and their relationship "to God in the spirit." His spiritual way turned them away from fleshly practices while they lived in their fleshly bodies upon the earth. "But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His" (Romans 8:9). While on earth, we must choose to sow either to the flesh or the Spirit (Galatians 6:7,8). Some have tried to associate this verse with Jesus' preaching to the spirits of those in prison from Noah's day (1 Peter 3:19). However, Peter does not use the same Greek word for preach in both passages. In 1 Peter 3:19, he uses the Greek word Kerusso, which means the act of proclaiming or heralding. In this verse now being considered, he uses the Greek word euaggelizomai which denotes gospel preaching. Thus, Peter is referring to the dead who were alive when hearing the saving gospel preached, but are now dead. Those who obeyed it and lived faithfully will be saved, and those who rejected it will be condemned (Mark 16:15,16)].

**7. BUT THE END OF ALL THINGS IS AT HAND; THEREFORE BE SERIOUS AND WATCHFUL IN YOUR PRAYERS.** [What end of all things is at hand? If Peter is speaking of a specific date, he could be referring to the

end of the Jewish system. Even though their law had been nailed to the cross, Colossians 2:14, they were still practicing many Jewish relics and religious traditions of the past. If this epistle was written around A.D. 67, as some suppose, the destruction of Jerusalem, A.D. 70, would deal the final blow. However, if the apostle is speaking in a general sense, he could be referring to the second coming of Christ since all Christians are living in the last days, and must be watchful for His appearing. While on earth, Jesus taught of the coming of these two major events: (1) The destruction of Jerusalem, and (2) His return (Matthew 24). As to the destruction of Jerusalem which occurred A.D. 70, Jesus gave signs so they would know the time of its appearing, but He did not give signs of His return. He said, "But of that day and hour no one knows, no, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only" (Matthew 24:36). Since no one knows when He will appear, all generations are to consider His coming at hand. The thought throughout the New Testament is to be prepared and watchful at all times. Peter had taught them that all the living and dead will be judged, therefore they were to live with the thought that the end of all things was at hand. In view of this fact, they were to be serious and watchful in their prayers. They were to live daily with lives devoted to the Lord. They were to take Christianity seriously and pray as they prepared. This is true with all generations that live on the earth until the Lord returns! Note that this sober, prayerful attitude is opposite to the lustful attitude of those who walk in licentiousness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries (1 Peter 4:3). To be spiritually strong and prepared for death or Christ's return, it was important to live in daily prayer. "Pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you" (1 Thessalonians 5:17,18)].

**8. AND ABOVE ALL THINGS HAVE FERVENT LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER, FOR LOVE WILL COVER A MULTITUDE OF SINS.** [Like the apostle Paul, (1 Corinthians 13:13), this writer places great emphasis on love. Love is above all things because when it is absent, other things lose their value. "And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love" (1 Corinthians 13:13). Jesus wanted love to be the identifying mark of all Christians. "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:34,35). Peter calls for a fervent love. Fervent means "to stretch," therefore, a

love extended to its full capacity! Agape love is the kind of love specified. This kind of love gives full consideration to the one loved, and is totally unselfish in nature. It is the kind of love God had when giving His only begotten Son for sinful man (John 3:16). The fruit of this kind of love for one another will cover a multitude of sins. Peter is evidently alluding to a proverb, "Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all sins" (Proverbs 10:12; cf. Proverbs 17:9). When love is present, there is understanding and forgiveness. Paul called upon the Ephesian Christians to, "be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ also forgave you" (Ephesians 4:32). This kind of attitude is impossible without fervent love for one another. When love is not present, wrongs are not forgiven, and grudges are carried and brought up to destroy. When love is present, there is forgiveness and the sins are covered forever!].

**9. BE HOSPITABLE TO ONE ANOTHER WITHOUT GRUMBLING.** [Hospitality literally means "love of strangers." It suggests showing kindness to Christians traveling from another place. Paul taught the Roman Christians, "Distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality" (Romans 12:13). The example of Abraham entertaining the three men who came to his tent is an example of the importance of hospitality (Genesis 18:1-22). The Hebrew writer evidently had this example in mind when he wrote, "Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels" (Hebrews 13:2). Hospitality was so important that one of the qualifications for elders was be hospitable (1 Timothy 3:2). Even though it is often overlooked, one of the important factors that helped spread the church during the first century, and will help do the same today, was Christian hospitality. Peter reminds them that it is not enough to be hospitable, but it must be done without grumbling. Of course, this is true with all works as servants of the Lord. The best way to solve this problem of grumbling is to increase brotherly love. From a human standpoint, showing hospitality can become tiresome and require extra work. This can tempt Christians to grumble from the burden. However, if we can only imagine what it would be like if the situation were reversed, we can remove grumbling. This is an excellent place to apply the golden rule, "And just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise" (Luke 6:31)].

**10. AS EACH ONE HAS RECEIVED A GIFT, MINISTER IT TO ONE ANOTHER, AS GOOD STEWARDS OF THE MANIFOLD GRACE OF GOD.** [After calling upon



these Christians to be hospitable, Peter gives an admonition concerning the proper use of gifts. The New Testament speaks of two types of gifts. (1) Direct gifts from the Holy Spirit. "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit...for one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit,... to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues" (1 Corinthians 12:4, 8-10). (2) Other type gifts which come through the providential guidance of God. They may be abilities, the answering of prayers, and the gift of salvation. "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23). Peter uses the Greek work charisma and means "a gift of grace, a gift involving grace from God." Therefore, any gift from God whether miraculous or non-miraculous is included. Every Christian in all ages has some type of gift from God, and must use it. The context of this verse refers specifically to gifts wherein one can minister to others. These gifts are given to us, but they belong to God and as good steward, we must use them properly. All Christians must answer to God for the stewardship of His gifts. (Matthew 25:15; Luke 19:13-26). When each member of the spiritual body ministers his or her gift, the body is healthy and functions for the glory of God].

**11. IF ANYONE SPEAKS, LET HIM SPEAK AS THE ORACLES OF GOD. IF ANYONE MINISTERS, LET HIM DO IT AS WITH THE ABILITY WHICH GOD SUPPLIES, THAT IN ALL THINGS GOD MAY BE GLORIFIED THROUGH JESUS CHRIST, TO WHOM BELONG THE GLORY AND THE DOMINION FOREVER AND EVER. AMEN.** [In this verse, Peter singles out two types of gifts. One involves teaching and the other serving, and both of these are very important. The gift of speaking must be channeled to always speak the oracles of God. The oracles of God represent the authority of God from His Word. The laws for Israel were referred to as the oracles of God. In Stephen's sermon, he reminded them that Moses was "The one who received the living oracles to give to us" (Acts 7:38; cf. Romans 3:2; Hebrews 5:12). Therefore, those who preach by their own authority, are not good stewards of their gift, and will be accursed (Galatians 1:8,9). Likewise, those who have gifts to serve others, must carry them out within God's direction. When gifts are handled properly, God is glorified through Jesus, and the servants are recognized as good stewards. The last words of this verse contain a beautiful doxology as Peter expresses to God glory

and dominion forever and ever. Man does not have the right to take any glory from God, for God deserves, and must receive, glory NOW and FOREVER!]

12. **BELOVED, DO NOT THINK IT STRANGE CONCERNING THE FIERY TRIAL WHICH IS TO TRY YOU, AS THOUGH SOME STRANGE THING HAPPENED TO YOU;** [At this point in the Epistle, Peter begins his third and final major division by addressing his readers as beloved. This is a word that expresses Peter's love toward them. He wishes to prepare them for the trial they would need to face. Evidently some did not understand why they had to suffer for following Christ. As a general rule, one thinks of being punished for doing wrong or for committing crimes, and not for doing good. However, Christians were put through fiery trials, and these represented a test. Fire was used to remove impurities from gold, and fiery trials were used to bring forth the pure gold of Christianity in their lives. Although these trials seemed strange, Peter assures them that they had a purpose].

13. **BUT REJOICE TO THE EXTENT THAT YOU PARTAKE OF CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS, THAT WHEN HIS GLORY IS REVEALED, YOU MAY ALSO BE GLAD WITH EXCEEDING JOY.** [These persecuted Christians were not to rejoice because they enjoyed the suffering, but because they were joining Christ in His suffering. When they followed Jesus, they stirred up the world against them just as surely as the world was against Jesus. Jesus taught, "If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you" (John 15:18,19). Peter wants them to know that suffering for Christ was inevitable, and he prepares them for it. John gave the same message, "Do not marvel, my brethren, if the world hates you" (1 John 3:13). Why does Peter call upon these brethren to rejoice in their sufferings? Because one day when Christ returns in His glory, they will be glad they endured and will have exceeding joy. All will be reversed! At Christ's appearing, the world will suffer and Christians will be rewarded. Peter is telling them that their suffering with Christ will be turned into exceeding joy when Jesus comes in glory. How did Paul feel about this subject? "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Romans 8:18). "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2

Corinthians 4:17)].

14. IF YOU ARE REPROACHED FOR THE NAME OF CHRIST, BLESSED ARE YOU, FOR THE SPIRIT OF GLORY AND OF GOD RESTS UPON YOU. ON THEIR PART HE IS BLASPHEMED, BUT ON YOUR PART HE IS GLORIFIED. [There is no value in being reproached or in suffering unless it is for the name of Christ. Jesus taught, "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:10). Peter has already pronounced a blessing on those who suffer for righteousness' sake (1 Peter 3:14). This kind of suffering proves that the Spirit of glory and of God is upon you. The name of Christ means following His authority, and wearing His name. Therefore, Peter is saying for these brethren to be different from the world. The world speaks against Him and His name, but you (even when suffering) glorify Him. Why were they so different from the world? "For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age" (Titus 2:11,12). True followers of Jesus stir up the world to the point of speaking against Jesus and persecuting those who follow Him. Peter is saying that when the world attacks you for following Jesus, you should consider yourself blessed].

15. BUT LET NONE OF YOU SUFFER AS A MURDERER, A THIEF, AN EVILDOER, OR AS A BUSYBODY IN OTHER PEOPLE'S MATTERS. 16. YET IF ANYONE SUFFERS AS A CHRISTIAN, LET HIM NOT BE ASHAMED, BUT LET HIM GLORIFY GOD IN THIS MATTER. [After discussing the blessings to be found in being reproached for the name of Christ, Peter reminds them that there are types of suffering which are shameful. Peter gives some examples. (1) Murderer. From the time that Cain committed the first murder, this has been considered shameful. When God gave the ten commandments to Israel, one of them was, "You shall not murder" (Exodus 20:13). This same sin is restated under the teachings of Christianity with emphasis on hatred in the heart (Matthew 5:21,22). (2) A thief. In both the Old and New Testaments, stealing is a sin. Another of the ten commandments stated, "You shall not steal" (Exodus 20:15). This sin is considered shameful by those who seek to do right. (3) An evildoer. This is a general term to describe all types of sins. Some spend their lives looking for ways to commit acts that go against the moral teachings of God. (4) A busybody in other people's matters. One who meddles in the business of others. This sin is associated with others, such as talebearing, gossip, and lying. All four of these mentioned by Peter are

shameful, and those who commit them should feel shame. However, in contrast, Peter says not to be ashamed if you suffer as a Christian, but consider such as a matter for glorifying God. Although wearing the name Christian may cause the world to persecute you and even try to make you feel shame, Peter is saying, that as Christians they should rejoice. The name Christian means "an adherent of Jesus," and appears only three times in the New Testament (Acts 11:26; 26:28; 1 Peter 4:16). All who wear this name should feel the greatest joy and honor even though the world feels differently. Why? "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12)].

**17. FOR THE TIME HAS COME FOR JUDGMENT TO BEGIN AT THE HOUSE OF GOD; AND IF IT BEGINS WITH US FIRST, WHAT WILL BE THE END OF THOSE WHO DO NOT OBEY THE GOSPEL OF GOD? 18. IF THE RIGHTEOUS ONE IS SCARCELY SAVED, WHERE WILL THE UNGODLY AND THE SINNER APPEAR?"** [Peter wants these Christians to know that they will be judged by the way they live while wearing the name of Christ, and by the way they suffer with Him. The judgment here is evidently the trials they would suffer as Christians. If they can suffer as a Christian and glorify God in that name, God will be pleased. Peter wants them to know that such judgment begins with the house of God. The house of God is identified by Paul as Christ's church. "But if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Timothy 3:15). It is a biblical fact that Christians must answer to God as to their faithfulness to Jesus, and those who come through and remain faithful to His Word will be saved. The grace of God is so big and wonderful that one might be tempted to abuse it, purposefully turning to sin. In fact, Paul had to deal with this problem when writing his epistle to the Romans. He asked, "What then? Shall we (Christians) sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not!" (Romans 6:15). The saving grace of God does not give Christians a license to sin, nor does it exempt them from His judgment. All who are in Christ and saved by grace must not "walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit" (Romans 8:1). Those who continually walk in the light as Jesus is in the light will have His blood to cleanse them (1 John 1:7). Therefore, judgment begins first with the house of God as their faith and faithfulness are tried! Then Peter moves to the judgment of those who do not obey the gospel. How will they stand in judgment? It is

inferred that they will be lost. If God is strict, and requires His children to obey the gospel, and to stand up faithfully and not be ashamed, what about those who do not obey the gospel? They will be lost! Paul joins Peter in specifying what will happen to those who obey not the gospel. "When the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thessalonians 1:7,8). Jesus taught His apostles to preach the gospel to the world and every creature, and then declares, "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned" (Mark 16:15,16)].

**19. THEREFORE LET THOSE WHO SUFFER ACCORDING TO THE WILL OF GOD COMMIT THEIR SOULS TO HIM IN DOING GOOD, AS TO A FAITHFUL CREATOR.** [Since judgment will begin with Christians as to their faithfulness under trials and persecutions, Peter calls upon the faithful to commit their souls to Him in doing good. You be faithful to Him, and He will be a faithful Creator to you. Salvation of the soul is made up of two major parts. (1) God's part. This involves providing grace and forgiveness through Jesus the Christ (John 3:16; 1 John 3:16). His part provides full instructions as how one should walk in the Spirit. "Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh" (Galatians 5:16). (2) Man's part. This involves first obedience to the gospel, God's power to save (Romans 1:16). Once in Christ where all spiritual blessings are found (Ephesians 1:3), there is a need to remain faithful even if called upon to suffer according to God's will. Faithfulness involves also a life of doing good which reflects the light of Jesus. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. God's grace and salvation is offered to all who will obey and live faithfully, but only a few will choose Him (Matthew 7:13,14)].

## Chapter 5

**1. THE ELDERS WHO ARE AMONG YOU I EXHORT, I WHO AM A FELLOW ELDER AND A WITNESS OF THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST, AND ALSO A PARTAKER OF THE GLORY THAT WILL BE REVEALED:** [After showing the important need for Christians to pass the judgment of God by their faithfulness in meeting trials, Peter turns to those who oversee the house of God. He exhorts these leaders because they can help the flock of God stay faithful through their trials and persecutions. Since Peter was a fellow elder, and one acquainted with the suffering of Christ, he felt the need to review the seriousness of their responsibilities. The various names by which they are called reflect the importance of their work. They are called: elders (Acts 20:17), bishops (1 Timothy 3:1), overseers (Acts 20:28), pastors (Ephesians 4:11), and shepherds (1 Peter 5:2). Before serving in this leadership role, they must meet specific qualifications which reflect good Christian character in their homes, outside the church, and among the flock (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9). These men have an important job to perform, and need to keep their eyes on the glory that will be revealed when Jesus returns. Instead of Peter appealing to these men as an apostle, he refers to himself as a fellow elder who witnessed the sufferings of Christ. Any suffering that these men might encounter should not take them from the goal of receiving the glory that will be revealed].

**2 SHEPHERD THE FLOCK OF GOD WHICH IS AMONG YOU, SERVING AS OVERSEERS, NOT BY CONSTRAINT BUT WILLINGLY, NOT FOR DISHONEST GAIN BUT EAGERLY; 3. NOR AS BEING LORDS OVER THOSE ENTRUSTED TO YOU, BUT BEING EXAMPLES TO THE FLOCK;** [At this point, Peter reminds them of their jobs as elders. They are assigned to be shepherds over the flock. The words "which is among you" limits their oversight to one flock. Each local church had its own elders or shepherds. As Paul and workers established churches in each city, they also appointed elders. "So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed" (Acts 14:23). These men were to serve willingly as overseers, and with the right motive. Those who would serve for dishonest gain, and for power to lord over the flock were not to serve. They were required to desire this good and not be appointed by constraint. "This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work" (1 Timothy 3:1). Shepherding the flock involved, (1) Feeding them spiritual food. "Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which

the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd (feed) the church of God which He purchased with His own blood" (Acts 20:28). (2) Teach and defend the truth of sound doctrine against those who teach for gain. This would involve protecting the flock from false teachers (Titus 1:9-11). (3) Set before the flock a positive example. Instead of driving the sheep as lords, they were to lead them by their good example. The flock is entrusted to them, and they will have to give an account to God for their souls. Christians are instructed to, "Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you" (Hebrews 13:17). The flock and shepherds have their responsibilities, and when all of these are followed, the church will be strong.]

**4. AND WHEN THE CHIEF SHEPHERD APPEARS, YOU WILL RECEIVE THE CROWN OF GLORY THAT DOES NOT FADE AWAY.** [At this point, Peter reminds them of the goal of all faithful elders or shepherds. They will receive the crown of glory from the chief Shepherd, Jesus. The crown of glory that fades not away will be heaven. All faithful Christians look forward to and long for a crown. This motivated Paul to continually press on until it was time for him to be offered. Then he was able to write, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing" (2 Timothy 4:7,8). Faithful Shepherds want this crown for themselves, and for the flock they oversee. Many crowns fade with the passing of years, but this crown of glory will never fade away. It is not fleshly, but eternal.]

**5. LIKEWISE YOU YOUNGER PEOPLE, SUBMIT YOURSELVES TO YOUR ELDERS. YES, ALL OF YOU BE SUBMISSIVE TO ONE ANOTHER, AND BE CLOTHED WITH HUMILITY, FOR GOD RESISTS THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.** [The word "likewise" reminds us that in this epistle, Peter is giving instructions to various ages and relationships in life. He has instructed the slaves and masters, husbands and wives, shepherds of the flock, and now he addresses the younger people. They are called upon to submit yourselves to your elders. The Greek word presbuteros describes men who are older, but not serving as elders, or it can describe elders who oversee the flock. Since he makes a contrast between younger and older, he may be teaching younger

people to submit to older people whether bishops or not. Certainly, the elders who oversee the flock would be included, but perhaps Peter intended the exhortation to all who are older in the church. Submit suggests the idea of recognizing their age or office in life. Then Peter makes a sweeping statement that includes all of you be submissive to one another. He seems to be saying, give the proper respect to any in the church who deserve it. The church is made up of all ages and various positions to carry on the function of the body. "For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another" (Romans 12:4,5). Without this respect, it would be impossible to be clothed with humility. The more we are like Jesus, the more respect we have for others and their station in life. Paul wrote Timothy, "Do not rebuke an older man, but exhort him as a father, the younger men as brothers, the older women as mothers, the younger as sisters, with all purity" (1 Timothy 5:1,2). Peter says, "be clothed with humility." The word clothe means, "to gird oneself with a thing." No doubt, Peter remembered a forceful lesson taught him by his Lord on humility when Jesus, "rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself...and began to wash the disciples' feet" (John 13:4,5). To reinforce the importance of humility, Peter quotes the thought from a proverb by Solomon, "Surely He scorns the scornful, but gives grace to the humble" (Proverbs 3:34). Therefore, if you desire the acceptance of God and His grace, be clothed or gird yourself with humility.]

**6. THEREFORE HUMELE YOURSELVES UNDER THE MIGHTY HAND OF GOD, THAT HE MAY EXALT YOU IN DUE TIME, 7. CASTING ALL YOUR CARE UPON HIM, FOR HE CARES FOR YOU.** [Peter now draws his full conclusion as to what he has taught on the importance of humility. To have such humility, one must recognize the mighty hand of God who can exalt at the proper time. Those who try to exalt themselves by their own strength are not really exalted. Those who are humbled under God's mighty hand, and are lifted up, are truly exalted. Isn't this what Jesus taught? "Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:3). "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven...Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth" (Matthew 5:3,5). Notice the contrast between the humble Christian and the mighty hand of God. Without His mighty hand we are so weak, and cannot lift up ourselves. However, to be under His mighty hand in humility makes us strong and exalted. Peter reminds them that



such will happen in due time. Sometimes Christians become impatient while waiting, and this was especially true with those who were suffering. However, Peter reminded them that they should cast all their cares upon Him, "for He cares for you" (v. 7). The Psalmist had written the same type promise in these words, "Cast your burden on the Lord, and He shall sustain you; He shall never permit the righteous to be moved" (shaken) (Psalm 55:22). The Greek aorist used with casting suggests that the casting is done "once for all." Some who turn their burdens over to the Lord, later take them back when their faith grows weak. We must NOT allow anyone or anything to weaken our faith in God's powerful arm to help! Paul admonished the Christians at Philippi, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6,7)].

**8. BE SOBER, BE VIGILANT; BECAUSE YOUR ADVERSARY THE DEVIL WALKS ABOUT LIKE A ROARING LION, SEEKING WHOM HE MAY DEVOUR. 9. RESIST HIM, STEADFAST IN THE FAITH, KNOWING THAT THE SAME SUFFERINGS ARE EXPERIENCED BY YOUR BROTHERHOOD IN THE WORLD.** [As Peter warns these brethren of how the devil is at work, he calls upon them to be sober and vigilant. Sober, as used here, means self-controlled and soberminded, and vigilant means watchful. The devil is an adversary, an enemy who is out to destroy. He is pictured here as a roaring lion, roaming about for the purpose of devouring. The lion lives by destroying other animals for food. The devil exists to destroy souls eternally. Christians must be serious and watchful concerning the devil and his purpose. God has provided His children with the proper armor made up of truth, righteousness, the gospel, faith, salvation, sword of the Spirit, and prayer. Paul called upon the Ephesian Christians to, "Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil...therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand" (Ephesians 6:11,13). Peter is writing these Christians to RESIST the devil, and to be STEADFAST in the faith. He is saying, take your stand, and don't allow the devil to move you from the faith. Peter further encourages his readers to consider the fact that they are not alone here on earth in their sufferings. You share a common experience with the whole brotherhood in the world. They need to know that God has not singled them out for suffering, but the devil is making his attack on all the brotherhood." By looking to God for His powerful help,

and by remaining steadfast in the faith, they will be successful in resisting the devil.]

**10. BUT MAY THE GOD OF ALL GRACE, WHO CALLED US TO HIS ETERNAL GLORY BY CHRIST JESUS, AFTER YOU HAVE SUFFERED A WHILE, PERFECT, ESTABLISH, STRENGTHEN, AND SETTLE YOU. 11. TO HIM BE THE GLORY AND THE DOMINION FOREVER AND EVER, AMEN.** [As Peter encourages them to resist the devil and hold on to the faith, he reminds them of their God of all grace. The earthly suffering might cause them to forget that God had called them to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus. Although they would suffer for a while, God would bring them through. Even though the devil and heavy persecutions had them shaken and in distress, God would perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle them. The Greek word for **perfect** suggests mending or restoring a net (Mark 1:19). **Establish** means "to fix, make fast, to set." **Strengthen** suggests that God would give them strength for service. God would settle their souls, by establishing them on a solid foundation. They should serve the Lord knowing that His grace would see them through. Paul summed up these same truths to Christians at Corinth, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 15:58). Only those who allow God to help, and who hold on faithfully to the end, will be saved. "Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life" (Revelation 2:10). Just the thought of considering all the grace and glory that God will give, caused Peter to bring forth another doxology as he did in 1 Peter 4:11. Even though these Christians are going through a very difficult time, Peter is assuring them that God will come through for them. God is the giver of all good and perfect gifts. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning" (James 1:17). Therefore, let the devil roar and seek to devour, hold on firmly and faithfully to the faith, and at the proper time God will give you the strength, grace, and power to stand.]

**12. BY SILVANUS, OUR FAITHFUL BROTHER AS I CONSIDER HIM, I HAVE WRITTEN TO YOU BRIEFLY, EXHORTING AND TESTIFYING THAT THIS IS THE TRUE GRACE OF GOD IN WHICH YOU STAND.** [At this point in the epistle, Peter identifies Silvanus either as the person whom he used in writing this letter, or the messenger to deliver it. If Peter dictated the epistle to Silvanus, then it appears that these last three verses were written as a postscript in Peter's own hand.

Silvanus is the same as Silas, Paul's faithful companion in the gospel. When Paul began his second missionary journey, he chose Silas (Acts 15:40). In both of his epistles to the Thessalonians, as well as 2 Corinthians, Paul associates himself with Silvanus and Timothy (2 Corinthians 1:19; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:1). We do not know in what way Peter and Silas got together in the Lord's work, but Peter considered him a faithful brother. No doubt, Paul and many brethren throughout the known world would join Peter in calling him our faithful brother. Such a spiritual description should be desired by all Christians today! Peter refers to this epistle as being brief, but those who sincerely and prayerfully study it agree that it is filled with many important truths and exhortations from God. Peter wanted them to know that his epistle contained "the true grace of God in which you stand." The message to the world then and now is the true saving grace of God. Without this grace, all hope of eternal life is lost. Therefore, both Paul and Peter placed all hope of standing in God's grace. Paul wrote, "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into THIS GRACE IN WHICH WE STAND, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Romans 5:1,2.)

**13. SHE WHO IS IN BABYLON, ELECT TOGETHER WITH YOU, GREETES YOU; AND SO DOES MARK MY SON. 14. GREET ONE ANOTHER WITH A KISS OF LOVE. PEACE TO YOU ALL WHO ARE IN CHRIST JESUS. AMEN.** [Peter specifies two who send greetings, she who is in Babylon and Mark my son. The she who is in Babylon was either a female person or the church, however, the word church does not appear in the Greek. Some have even supposed this "she" to be Peter's wife. She is identified only as being in Babylon, and one of the elect. The word Babylon could mean the Babylon in Mesopotamia or a military station in Egypt. If used figuratively, it may be referring to Rome (cf. Revelation 17, 18). A greeting is also sent by Peter from Mark, my son. It is supposed that this is John Mark, a worker associated with Paul and Barnabas (Acts 12:12, 25; 15:36-39). Paul refers to John Mark in some of his epistles (Colossians 4:10; 2 Timothy 4:11; Philemon 24). If this is John Mark, Peter considered him a son in the gospel, just as Paul considered Timothy. "To Timothy, my true son in the faith:" (1 Timothy 1:2; cf. 2 Timothy 1:2; 2:1). Peter calls upon his brethren to greet one another with a kiss of love. This was a custom of that time, and represented an expression of love. The kind of love mentioned by Peter was not love associated with lust or physical desire, but agape love. To distinguish the kiss of

Christians, Paul called it a holy kiss. "Greet one another with a holy kiss. The churches of Christ greet you" (Romans 16:16). This "holy kiss" would compare to shaking hands in the church today. Peter closes his farewell greeting with peace to all who are in Christ Jesus. This is the only place where this kind of peace can be found, "IN CHRIST JESUS." Paul verifies this fact when he wrote, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places IN CHRIST" (Ephesians 1:3). Peter also desired that all have this wonderful peace found ONLY in Christ Jesus.]