



1 Peter

A Verse-By-Verse Commentary

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*Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us,
But to Your name give glory,
Because of Your mercy,
Because of Your truth. Psalm 115:1*

THE BOOK OF 1 PETER; AN INTRODUCTION.

The book of Peter is the 60th book of the Bible, and it is comprised of 5 chapters of 105 verses. Therefore, it is three verses shorter than the previous book, James. A verse-per-day evaluation of 1 Peter will take a bit over three months to complete.

Peter is the Apostle Peter who was personally called by Jesus. Matthew 4:18 and John 1:40 note that he is Andrew's brother (another Apostle of the Lord as is seen in Matthew 10:2), and John 1:44 says that Peter and Andrew came from the city of Bethsaida.

Peter is also known as Simon at times. This is known from the time of his first meeting with the Lord which occurred in John 1. In John 1:40, where Andrew was introduced, it is as "Simon Peter's brother." In the next verse it notes that Andrew "found his own brother Simon." But Peter is also known at times as Cephas (kay-fas). On his initial meeting with Jesus, it says –

"Now when Jesus looked at him, He said, 'You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas' (which is translated, A Stone)." John 1:42

The name Cephas is the Aramaic word for rock. The word "Stone" in that verse is Petros; hence, the name Peter (Cephas) is a name given by the Lord to Simon. He is at times called any of these names, or a combination of them, such as "Simon Peter."

Interestingly, it is Paul who uses the Aramaic name Cephas eight of the nine times that it is seen in Scripture. Those are noted four times in 1 Corinthians and four times in Galatians. When Paul uses that name, it is to highlight the Jewishness of Peter in order to make theological points about things. Paul also writes of him using the Greek name Petros two times in Galatians as well. The more common name Peter is used over 150 times in the New Testament.

The combined name Simon Peter is used over 30 times, mostly by John in his gospel, but it is how Peter refers to himself in the first verse of his first and second epistle. Paying attention to the various ways Peter is addressed will often help the reader understand the surrounding context better.

Though the initial meeting of Jesus and Andrew and Peter is recorded in John 1, the calling of these two brothers to follow Him is found in Matthew 4 while they were fishing in the Galilee.

Peter is known as the apostle to the circumcision, meaning the Jews. This is noted in Galatians 2:7, 8, where Paul says that “they saw that *the gospel* for the uncircumcised had been committed to me, as the gospel for the circumcised was to Peter ⁸ (for He who worked effectively in Peter for the apostleship to the circumcised also worked effectively in me toward the Gentiles).” This does not mean there are two gospels, one for the Jew and one for the Gentile, but that these men were given their main audience for the one gospel to the Jew (Peter) and to the Gentile (Paul).

The canonicity of the book of 1 Peter was never in doubt. It was accepted from the beginning as having come from him, and bearing the authority of his apostleship. It is dated from the mid to late 60s.

The Apostle Paul states in 2 Timothy 3:16, 17 that “All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” So, in a real sense, the letter is, like all of Scripture, written to the people of the world.

However, 1 Peter is written specifically to the Hebrew people who were dispersed among the Gentiles in “Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia” (1 Peter 1:1).

Due to its placement after Paul’s letters, and then after the books of Hebrews and James, it is evident based on an evaluation of the structure of the Bible that the Lord intends for this epistle, like Hebrews and James, to be a letter directed to the Hebrew people of the end times as much as it was directed to the early Jewish believers in the Lord. The very structure of the Bible gives us this hint of redemptive history.

The main theme of 1 Peter is “To emphasize the proper attitude and conduct believers are to have when undergoing persecution.” Thus, the main purpose of the epistle is “To encourage believers in the midst of suffering.”

The main presentation of Christ in the epistle is “Jesus Christ, Our Rock.” The naming of Simon as Simon Peter (Petros, the Rock) or Cephas (the Rock) is an ironic development of this lesser “Rock,” meaning Peter, exalting the true Rock, our Lord Jesus Christ.

The letter is addressed from “Babylon” in 1 Peter 5:13. Though there are various ideas about “which” Babylon is being referred to, the obvious and most likely answer is that he is speaking of Rome in a symbolic way, equating it with Babylon of the past Jewish

history. Babylon held sway over Israel before, but at the time that 1 Peter was written, Rome had assumed that role.

Extra-biblical tradition places Peter in Rome in his later life, and there is no reason to assume that he is not referring to Rome in this figurative sense, just as Revelation does in Revelation 14 (and elsewhere). A study of Daniel 9 also indicates that Rome would be the center of focus again in the end times, corresponding to the theme of Rome as Babylon.

As a short summary of the intent and purpose of the book, we should remember these points:

- 1) *Author:* Simon Peter (Cephas), the Apostle to the Lord Jesus;
- 2) *Date:* Mid to late 60s;
- 3) *Theme:* To emphasize the proper attitude and conduct believers are to have when undergoing persecution;
- 4) *Purpose:* To encourage believers in the midst of suffering;
- 5) *Presentation of Christ:* Jesus Christ; Our Rock.

Life application: We hope that you will spend the next 105 days of your life learning the book of 1 Peter, one verse at a time. From there, we hope you will apply its truths to your life, molding yourself more each day into being a faithful and wholehearted follower of Jesus Christ, to the glory of God the Father.

Lord God, what a wonder it is to study in Your word so that we will know Your heart and what You intend for us as we live out our short lives in Your presence. Be with us, and keep us from frittering away our time with worthless pursuit. Rather, may we study Your word, apply it to our lives, and stand approved in Your eyes on the Day when we will be brought before You for an evaluation of the lives we have lived. Amen.

CHAPTER 1

**Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,
To the pilgrims of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,
1 Peter 1:1**

Peter begins his epistle in a manner similar to Paul. Neither uses their given name (Simon or Saul). The name Peter (Petros – Rock, or the Aramaic Cephas) was given to Peter by Christ Jesus in Matthew 16 –

“When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, ‘Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?’

¹⁴ So they said, “Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”

¹⁵ He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?”

¹⁶ Simon Peter answered and said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

¹⁷ Jesus answered and said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed *this* to you, but My Father who is in heaven. ¹⁸ And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. ¹⁹ And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” Matthew 16:13-19

Peter made the proclamation that Jesus is the Christ. In return, Jesus stated that Simon was Peter, the Rock. He then said, “and on this rock I will build my church.” As a point of theology, Jesus called him Peter (Petros), a masculine noun. He then said that “on this rock (petra)” He would build His church. The noun is feminine. Thus, Jesus was not saying that the rock on which He would build the church is Peter. Rather, it was on the proclamation that Peter made – “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

The Roman Catholic claim that Peter was their first Pope based on this exchange is thus shown to be false.

Peter next says, “an apostle of Jesus Christ.” This is unlike Paul who, in his initial greetings, always added in a qualifier, such as “a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle,” “called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God,” and so on. Peter, however, simply states the fact that he is an apostle. He was one of the original twelve that were called, and the name and title speak for themselves. Whenever the apostles

are listed in the gospel records, Peter is always listed first, and Judas the betrayer is always listed last.

Peter then says, “to the pilgrims of the Dispersion.” What should follow immediately after that are the continued words of verse 2. Here are the two options –

- 1) To the pilgrims of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, ²elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father... (KJV et al.)
- 2) Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the elect who are sojourners of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia... (ERV et al.)

The importance of joining “elect” to “sojourners of the Dispersion” is that not all of the Dispersion are elect. Only those in Christ Jesus are. The Greek is specific to show this. By incorrectly separating these, one could also incorrectly assume that all in the Dispersion are elect.

This word, Dispersion, is referenced in John 7:35 and James 1:1. The idea of the Dispersion of the Jews is also alluded to in Acts 2. Based on the context, those accounts can speak of all Jews, regardless of their having received Christ or not. Peter’s words are to those who have received Christ. Any other Jews of the Dispersion who read this epistle would be incidental, not actual addressees.

Peter then states where in the Dispersion he is writing to with, “in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.” The term “pilgrim” signifies “residing in a strange country,” and thus a stranger or sojourner. In other words, they are not in the land of Israel, and are thus out of their homeland. But more, these are believers in Christ, and so even in the land of Israel, they are sojourners in the same sense as were the fathers whose true home is in a restored, heavenly paradise.

These locations had believing Jews in them. Their faith probably came in several ways. One is that of the scattering of believers after the martyrdom of Stephen. That began in Acts 11 as believing Jews began to spread out. Paul’s missionary journeys also always went to the Jews first where quite often some would believe. Further, Aquila and Priscilla carried the message with them, as is seen in Acts. Slowly but surely, the message extended out so that by this time (mid to late 60s) there was a solid group of believing Jews.

Vincent’s Word Studies notes –

“Of all the catholic epistles, Peter's alone puts forward his apostleship in the introduction. He is addressing churches with which he had no immediate connection, and which were distinctively Pauline. Hence, he appeals to his apostleship in explanation of his writing to them, and as his warrant for taking Paul's place.”

This seems correct, but the important thing to understand is that Peter is addressing Jews (the pilgrims of the Dispersion). Paul's apostleship was to the Jew first, but specifically to the Gentiles. Peter's is solely to the Jews. This is explicitly stated in Galatians 2 –

“But on the contrary, when they saw that the gospel for the uncircumcised had been committed to me, as *the gospel* for the circumcised was to Peter ⁸ (for He who worked effectively in Peter for the apostleship to the circumcised also worked effectively in me toward the Gentiles).” Galatians 2:7, 8

Life application: After this opening verse, it is exciting to think on the wonders that lay ahead in the next 104 days of study. Set your mind now on continuing through with this study to the end. Make it a part of your daily life so that you will be built up and edified each day in an analysis of the word. Let us take time now to pray and ask for both wisdom and discernment as we move ahead –

Glorious and Almighty Heavenly Father, thank You so much for the opportunity to look into the pages of the Bible. Though it was transmitted through fallible men who made mistakes throughout the journeys of their lives, You still worked through them, breathing out Your precious word. Help us to be wise and discerning as we look into Your perfect word, understanding that You are the Author through their inspired writings. Amen.

**...elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ:
Grace to you and peace be multiplied. 1 Peter 1:2**

The word here, elect, signifies that Peter is speaking to believing Jews, not merely all Jews. This will continue to be seen in the remaining clauses of this verse as well. It signifies a truly chosen group. It comes from the Greek word, *eklektos*, which shows the obvious connection to our modern word.

The word covers various aspects of humanity. The Hebrew race was chosen to represent the Lord, particular people within the race were chosen for various appointments, the

Messiah was selected by God out of humanity, and those of faith in Messiah are elect. Each instance bears its own significance.

As noted in the previous verse, the word should be united with the word pilgrims – the elect pilgrims. Peter is writing to those Jews of the Dispersion who are believers in Christ. He then notes that they are elect “according to the foreknowledge of God the Father.”

God the Father did not arbitrarily select people for coming to Christ. He also did not choose at some point to regenerate some and pass over others. Rather, God the Father knew, in advance, who would come to Him through Christ. However, it must be understood that foreknowledge does not negate free will in man.

A person may know that if he leaves \$10.00 on the mantle that his son will steal it, but this does not mean that the son does not have the choice to do the act. The foreknowledge is simply His knowing what will occur, but the guilt of a sinful action cannot be imputed to Him. And the reciprocal is true as well. The voluntary choosing of believing in Christ is left up to the individual.

The word “foreknowledge,” or *prognósis* in the Greek, is where our modern word prognosis comes from. This is its second and last use in Scripture. It does signify a previous determination which is in accord with His grand plan. The individual choices within His plan are known to Him, and occur as He knew they would, but they are still individual choices.

Next, Peter brings in the third member of the Trinity by saying, “in sanctification of the Spirit.” This is the act of the Spirit in setting someone apart as holy. It is the same thought given by Paul, for example, in 2 Thessalonians –

“But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth, ¹⁴ to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

-2 Thessalonians 2:13, 14

This occurs when a person believes the gospel message. At that time, the Spirit seals that person for salvation as a guarantee (Ephesians 1:13, 14). Thus, that person is considered holy and set apart to God. Peter then explains further by saying, “for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.”

Here, the word “for” is used in an after the fact sense. The idea is “unto,” or “that you may obey.” Christ died and shed His blood to provide a sprinkling of His blood upon them. The Greek word is *rhantismos*, and it is used only here and in Hebrews 12:24. It signifies sprinkling for purification.

This is a rite which was accomplished under the Old Covenant in Numbers 19 which was to purify a person from the taint of death. The person was (and we are) passively sprinkled as the work is accomplished upon us. We receive Christ, and the work of Christ is imputed to us, and the sanctification of the Spirit is worked upon us.

As all people are born in sin, all people are born spiritually dead. The sprinkling of Christ is what purifies the believer from this taint of death, and the Holy Spirit then sanctifies that person as holy – all in accord with the foreknowledge of God the Father.

Vincent’s Word Studies asks the reader to stop and “Note the three prepositions: according to (κατά) the foreknowledge; in (ἐν) sanctification; unto (εἰς) obedience. The ground, sphere, and end of spiritual sanctification.” As one can see, Peter’s words here cover roles of all three members of the Triune God.

To understand this right of sprinkling and the marvelous pictures of Christ and His work that they reveal, one can go back to watch these two sermons on YouTube (linked) –

[Numbers 19:1-10 \(The Red Heifer\)](#)

[Numbers 19:11-22 \(The Water of Purification\)](#)

After this short theologically packed description of those he is addressing, Peter then says, “Grace to you and peace be multiplied.” Grace is unmerited favor; it cannot be earned. This is a common greeting among the Greek people. Peace, however, is a common greeting among the Hebrew people.

In their language, the word is *shalom*. The idea of *shalom* is more than a greeting for calm or quiet, but is rather a state of wholeness and completion in all ways.

Peter unites the two terms. The audience is those of the Dispersion, and they would be fully aware of both terms and how they were applied in the common language spoken where they were. This extending of grace and peace is seen in Paul’s epistles as well. In their words, the common order is “grace” and then “peace.” Grace precedes peace because only after receiving the grace of God can a person experience the peace of God.

Life application: There is a lot of theology contained in Peter's words of this verse. A recap of election here may help bring to remembrance the importance of the doctrine. He says that those he mentioned in verse 1 are "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father." Paul also speaks of election in Romans 9 and 11 (and elsewhere). As noted, it is a concept which indicates that even before creation God knew who would be saved. There are different views on this, e.g. –

- 1) God knew what choice would be made by those who received Him;
- 2) God chose the elect and the elect have no choice in the matter.

Proponents of either view have verses which they use to justify their stand, but salvation is clearly described as a "gift" many times in Scripture. If something is forced, it is not a gift; a gift must be received. Further, to say God actively chose only some while actively passing others violates the precept that God "desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." (1 Timothy 2:4).

Think on these things. Understand that God has a plan, it is being worked out in the stream of time which He created, and that plan includes our voluntary choice to receive or reject Jesus Christ.

Lord God, thank You for the gift of Jesus. Thank You also for the wonderful gift of being sanctified by Your Holy Spirit. We look to You in adoration for what You have done for us that we could never have accomplished on our own. It took the sprinkling of the precious blood of Jesus to cleanse us from our defilement. Thank You for this gift! Amen.

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, 1 Peter 1:3

Peter, having completed his introductory greetings, now begins the main section of his epistle. The first word he uses, translated as "blessed," is *eulogétos*. In the New Testament, it is a word reserved only for exalting God. Its most basic meaning would be "worthy of praise." Using this word of praiseworthy acknowledgment, he then describes the "who" and "why" he chose this word by stating, "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

The true God is always worthy of praise, but Peter ties the basis for his praise directly into the fact that God is the Father of Jesus the Messiah. The sons of Korah said –

“Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised
In the city of our God,
In His holy mountain.” Psalm 48:1

The sons of Korah praised God, who is the Lord (meaning Jehovah). Peter’s praise of God is directed to Him based on His position as God who is the Father of Jesus. In other words, there is a special praising of God for this particular aspect of Him. At times, God is praised for what He has created. At times, God is praised for His deliverance. And, at times, God is praised for His loving care of His people. Peter’s praise of God at this time is because of the relationship of God the Father to His Son, Jesus.

The importance of this is seen in comparing Peter’s words to those of, for example, David. In 1 Chronicles 29, he writes –

“Blessed are You, Lord God of Israel, our Father, forever and ever.”

-1 Chronicles 29:10

Instead of noting Him as the Father of the children of Israel, Peter shows that Christ is the fulfillment of what Israel was intended to bring forth – the Messiah. In the coming of Jesus, the truest sense of the Father/Son relationship is seen.

Peter next says, “who according to His abundant mercy.” There is an expectation of mercy from God (according to) which Israel depended upon. They were a wayward people, stiff-necked and deserving of His wrath. This is made painfully clear in Scripture, but they understood that God had and would preserve them because of this attribute of His. The abundant mercy of God is exactly spoken of in Numbers 14:18, and it is referred to in the psalms, such as in Psalm 86 –

“For You, Lord, *are* good, and ready to forgive,
And abundant in mercy to all those who call upon You.” Psalm 86:5

Understanding this attribute of God, Peter says that through it God “has begotten us again.” The word is an aorist participle and should be translated as “begat.” It is an event which occurred at one point for all time.

Further, the word here is unique to Peter, and was probably coined by him. It is only seen here and in verse 1:23. Peter is saying that through the abundant mercy of God, which is found in Jesus Christ, God has given His people a new birth. It is what Jesus

referred to in John 3 when He spoke to Nicodemus about being born again. That conversion which Jesus spoke of is possible because of what God has done in Christ.

It is the same concept as that spoken of by Paul several times where he says that those in Christ are new creatures (for example 2 Corinthians 5:7) who are regenerated through what God has done in Him. Peter says that this act of being born again brings those so begotten “to a living hope.”

The idea is that of expectancy. Man is destined to die, but in Christ, there is the expectation of life. Even if the body dies, because of what God has done in Christ, there is the surety that something beyond this existence which is active, vibrant, and alive will come about for God’s people. It is reminiscent of the very hope Job spoke of –

“For I know *that* my Redeemer lives,
And He shall stand at last on the earth;
²⁶ And after my skin is destroyed, this *I know*,
That in my flesh I shall see God,
²⁷ Whom I shall see for myself,
And my eyes shall behold, and not another.
How my heart yearns within me!” Job 19:25-27

This hope that Job was sure to come about is the hope which Peter claims has come because of Jesus. It is “a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” God the Father sent His Son into the world to live the life which Adam failed to live. Death entered through Adam because sin came through Adam. And as all are in Adam, all sinned. But because Jesus did not sin, he offers the hope of life.

Having died without sin, His death was not for Himself, but for His people. Thus, death could not hold Him (Acts 2:24), and the resurrection from the dead was the only possible outcome for Him. However, as He died for those who had sinned, their sins which were paid for through His death, are atoned for. This is how man is begotten of God. In Christ, new life in Christ is realized. The sin and death of Adam is removed, once and forever.

This is the hope of the resurrection. It is God’s way of reconciling the world to Himself. As it deals with sin in man, and as sin in man is what separates man from God, then it becomes apparent that only those who are in Christ will be saved. It is a theological calculation. Just as 1 + 1 will always equal 2, man in Christ will always equal salvation.

However, just as 1 + 0 always equals 1, unregenerate man without Christ will always remain unregenerate.

Life application: Paul wrote out words which give a sentiment similar to what Peter says in this verse. In 1 Corinthians 15:19, he says –

“If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.”

What Peter speaks of here, and what Paul speaks of there, isn't some ethereal or intangible thought about what may be coming after death. Nor is it a hope lacking certainty for which we must be pitied. Instead, it is a sure promise from God who cannot lie. Our hope is a living hope.

Think on the utter futility of life if Jesus never came? People would be hoping for an eternity of peace that would be completely out of reach. In our natural selves, we are sold out to sin which separates us from any chance of seeing the face of God. However, because of Jesus who came, we have an undeserved chance at restoration and eternal joy.

Today as you head out, look around you and determine that you won't keep this living hope a secret. Step up and take the opportunity to tell others about Jesus. The world is in desperate need of hearing about the surety of God's promise. If God was able to change you and call you from darkness, don't you think He is also able to use you to be an instrument of getting His word out to others? To do anything less than spread the good news is to hide the very words which will either save them or condemn them. Spread the word today – we have a living hope.

Yes God! You chose us for salvation, and this means You chose us to be instruments of Your word. Let us not only enjoy the benefit of eternal life, but also give us the opportunity and ability to tell others about it as well. This we pray that You will be glorified in them on the great Day when You come for Your people. Amen.

...to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, 1 Peter 1:4

Peter just spoke of “a living hope.” He now describes what that hope is, beginning with, “to an inheritance.” The word is one commonly used by Paul to speak of that which awaits those who are in Christ. The idea of an inheritance is one which belongs to a family member. Thus, believers are sons through adoption.

And further, there is no earthly distinction which precludes receiving the inheritance. One can be a slave or free, a male or a female, a Jew or a Gentile, etc. in this life, and yet be an adopted child of God awaiting the inheritance in the next. Paul makes that perfectly clear in his epistles. There is one and the same gospel with one and the same inheritance for all.

Peter then continues by describing this inheritance as “incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away.” The idea of it being incorruptible is that it is imperishable. It cannot decay, erode away, or cease to continue because of a breakdown due to either external or internal faults. The inheritance is obtained, and nothing can cause it to perish. Peter’s use of the word, because he is speaking of a future hope not yet received, is one of a guarantee of salvation.

The idea of it being undefiled is that of something that is unstained. The word was used in Hebrews 7:26 and 13:4; James 1:27; and now here it is used for the last time. There is no taint or contamination in the inheritance. One can think of the pristine perfection of Eden before the fall. It is one which speaks of a joy of existence which cannot truly be imagined by us at this time.

The idea of an inheritance which “does not fade away” is that of it being perpetual in nature. In the Greek, the word is an adjective, and thus it is “unfading.” What will be received, this living hope, is eternal in nature and it will never diminish as the ages pass. It speaks of the unceasing glory of the Creator being revealed forever and ever.

Peter says that this inheritance, this living hope, is “reserved in heaven for you.” The verb is a perfect participle – “which has been reserved.” Thus, the deal is done upon belief in Christ. From that point, the inheritance is kept for that person. Again, it looks to the doctrine of eternal salvation. It is unthinkable that God would keep something for someone, promising that it is so, just to remove that thing based on the individual’s performance. That is not – nor was it ever – a gift of grace. If one must merit, or continue to merit, the inheritance, then it is not of grace but of works.

But the inheritance is set, and it is a heavenly one. People may debate what “heavens” means until the day the inheritance is received, but one thing is certain concerning it – it is not an inheritance which bears any resemblance to the life and sphere in which we now exist. What Adam and Eve had is certainly comparable to what we will receive, but for us, it will be received with the knowledge that it can never be lost again, and that it was obtained for us by the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus, the inheritance is one which will forever result in man glorifying God for what He has done.

Life application: Right now we suffer through backaches, financial difficulties, troubled relationships, etc. But what is coming will be eternal in nature. Paul speaks about this in 1 Corinthians 15:53 –

“For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality.”

Not only will we put on immortality, but it will be in an undefiled state; we will live in complete holiness, and the stain of sin will be gone forever. Our state of sanctification leads to this state of glorification which is the living hope we possess.

The downside of this process is that all who fail to come to Jesus Christ will never receive the promise. They will remain in a state of eternal corruption, and the prospect of heaven will be forever removed from them. We need to understand that for human beings it is “the devil by default.” A change in the settings is needed in order to share in the promise of unfading glory. Citing Paul again, we read this in Acts 26:18,

“... to open their eyes, *in order* to turn *them* from darkness to light, and *from* the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.”

Make sure you don't keep the good news of Jesus Christ a secret. Without Him, hell awaits.

O God, give us the strong and urgent desire to proclaim Jesus' wonderful works to the people around us. Certainly, it is our duty to do so. And so, take away any timidity or reticence to speak out so that we will be bold in our faith! May we be competent messengers of Your precious gospel. To Your glory alone! Amen.

...who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 1 Peter 1:5

Peter continues his marvelous words which highlight the doctrine of eternal security. All three verses of this thought should be cited to see this –

“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, ⁴ to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and

that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, ⁵ who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”

-1 Peter 1:3-5

Finishing this magnificent thought here, Peter says (based on the inheritance which is reserved in heaven for us) that we “are kept by the power of God.” The word “kept” speaks of a military guard. This is its last of four uses in the New Testament. We are being kept and guarded as if by a military sentinel. In other words, God is personally watching over us concerning our inheritance.

Neither our salvation, nor our continued salvation (which is the basis for our inheritance), is not contingent on what we do, but rather on what Christ has done (Ephesians 2:8, 9 e.g.), and what God continues to do. He has granted us salvation, He has sealed us with a guarantee, and He is keeping us by His power and for His glory. As the scholar Bengel says, “As the inheritance hath been preserved, so are the heirs guarded; neither shall it fail them, nor they it.” Peter’s words speak of surety.

Peter continues with “through faith.” It is debated if this means “faith in Christ for salvation” or “continued faith in Christ for salvation.” The answer is found in the citation of Ephesians 2:8, 9 above. We are saved by grace through faith. It is an act of faith which occurred, and that one-time act has brought us to salvation. At that moment, we were sealed for the inheritance (Ephesians 1:13, 14). It is a one-time, and for all time, act of faith.

This is confirmed in the tense of the Greek word translated as “kept.” It is a present participle which signifies a continuous process of guarding our salvation for the inheritance. It is not by us, but by God. If it were up to us to keep our salvation, it would mean that it was never of grace through faith, and it is a certain fact that our salvation would be lost. Peter’s words speak of surety.

Peter next says that this being kept by God through faith is “for salvation.” Peter will speak of the salvation again in verses 9 and 10 of this chapter, and also of our redemption in verse 18. Those will come with a note of assurance, not as a dubious or tenuous possession. It is no different here. The grant is through (dia) faith for (eis) salvation. It is not “in hopes of salvation,” but “for salvation.” Peter’s words speak of surety.

He then finishes with, “ready to be revealed in the last time.” The word speaks of being prepared. It is not ready as in anticipation, such as, “I am so excited about Jesus’

coming.” Rather it is ready in accomplishment, “I have been prepared (by God) for Jesus’ coming because God has sealed me with His Holy Spirit.” The words speak of everything accomplished and set for the act because all of the preparations which were necessary for it to come about have been done. Peter’s words speak of surety.

Reviewing these past three verses in individual thoughts, each one shouts out the doctrine of eternal security –

- 1) We have obtained mercy.
- 2) We have been begotten.
- 3) We have a living hope.
- 4) Our hope is through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.
- 5) We have an inheritance which:
 - a) is incorruptible and undefiled.
 - b) will not fade away.
 - c) is reserved in heaven for us.
- 6) We are kept by the power of God through faith.
- 7) God is keeping us “for salvation.”
- 8) Everything for our salvation is prepared (accomplished) and will be revealed at the time appointed by God.

Life application: It is by grace, through the faith we professed in Jesus Christ in the power of His resurrection that saved us, and it is that same act of faith that keeps us for the coming salvation – the redemption of our bodies. Those who teach that a person can lose his salvation are not very good scholars. Their theology is lacking, and their doctrine is one of bondage, not of freedom in Christ. Keep away from such truly terrible teachers and plainly poor preachers.

Thank You, O God, for the wonderful, beautiful promise of eternal life – free from pain and trial and trouble and sin. Instead, we will have a body which is fitting to be in Your glorious presence and a desire to please You forever. What a great and glorious hope we have! Thank You! Thank You! In Jesus’ name... Thank You! Amen.

In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, 1 Peter 1:6

Peter begins this verse with, “In this.” It is referring to the “living hope” mentioned in verse 3 and the excitingly wonderful description given from verses 3-6. This living hope allows us to “greatly rejoice” no matter what our current situation is. And who could not do so when he fully grasps what Peter has described!

In his words is the assurance of salvation, not merely a dubious hope. It is a hope which is grounded in the promises of God which cannot fail. And, it is because of this living hope, that is possessed by believers, that they can look beyond the temporary light afflictions that they may face. As Peter says, “though now for a little while.”

Peter is speaking not of a temporary issue during this life, but the temporary issue which is this life. The KJV gives a false sense of the idea by saying, “for a season.” Again, Peter’s words do not speak of a temporary part of this life at all, but the whole. This whole is being compared to a short period of time. In comparison to the eternal state in which we will be, this life truly is “a little while.” Understanding this, he then says, “if need be.”

There is a purpose for all things that come to man, and those things come according to God’s sovereign decisions. In the book of Job, Satan afflicted Job terribly, but he did so only as allowed by the Lord. There was, in fact, a need for this trial in his life, and there is always a reason for that which occurs in our lives as well.

For some, they are truly for a season, meaning temporary. Job was afflicted and then restored. However, others may face a particular affliction (or afflictions) for their entire lifespan. Peter would still call this “a little while.”

He then finishes his thought concerning this with, “you have been grieved by various trials.” The words, “you have been grieved,” have the sense of, “you have been put to grief.” It is passive in the grief. We are the recipients of the grief, just as Job was. The next word translated as “by” here is the Greek word *en*. It means “in.” Vincent’s Word Studies says, “the preposition not being instrumental, but indicating the sphere or environment in which the grief operates.”

In other words, we are living in a world of grief, and we have been put to grief in this world where grief operates. What Peter is doing is making a contrast between what is now so that we can compare it to what lies ahead in our “living hope” which is “incorruptible and undefiled.” What we experience here cannot compare to the glory which lies ahead.

The word translated as “various” is one which speaks of the spots of a leopard, lines in marble, or the embroidering of a robe. It is something variegated. The trials come out in various ways, and at various times and degrees depending on the individual. Despite these, Peter says that the believer rejoices. The only reason why one would rejoice through such things is because there is a hope that they have an end. If they were to be one’s full and final lot in life, what would there be to rejoice in? But when we truly grasp

that this life is a blip on the road which leads to eternal glory, then why should we let it consume our joy and disturb our souls?

Life application: Are you reading this commentary today and seeing that Peter's words apply to you? Mature Christians will look beyond the "various trials" which have grieved us, and which may continue to grieve us, and we will possess a joy as we face them. It is certain that we are not immune from trials, and we should even expect them, but they are really only grains of sand on a road otherwise paved with gold, and which leads us to our coming glorified state.

In the book of Colossians, Paul shows us his ability to rejoice even while writing from a Roman prison –

"I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church." Colossians 1:24

Paul was often beaten, imprisoned, abandoned, or he faced some other terrible time. And yet, he could look beyond the moment to the glory to come. If you think carefully about everything that goes on around you, it is all exactly as it should be, and we are moving toward the consummation of the ages.

God is in complete control even if we aren't. He is working faithfully through our many errors, trials, and heartaches. In the end, we can look back on our lives and say, "So this is why that happened." For now, you should trust that He hasn't abandoned you, and He hasn't carelessly forgotten about your every need. While we may mourn now, we can still rejoice in the future. Our hope is that sure; our destiny is secure.

Lord God, help us to realize that you haven't abandoned us, nor have you forgotten even our slightest sorrows. How much more then do You know and care for our times of overwhelming grief. Thank You for being so tender and caring towards us. You are a great and awesome Creator and to You we give our praise. Hallelujah and Amen!

...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, 1 Peter 1:7

Peter just spoke of being grieved by various trials. He says that there is a reason for these things. It is dealing with "the genuineness of your faith." The word translated as genuineness is found only here and James 1:3. It signifies a test or a proving of

something to determine its nature, whether it is genuine or not. Because of the use of this word, it is surmised that Peter was aware of James' epistle and was using this particular word to supplement the thoughts that James spoke of. There he said –

“My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials,³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.” James 1:2, 3

James spoke of the producing of patience when tested. Peter speaks of the genuineness of it. In other words, there is a proving process which is occurring in the believer that comes from these various trials. He then says that this proven faith is “much more precious than gold that perishes.” Peter makes the comparison of faith directly to gold, and he says that it is “more precious.” The thing that many find of such high value is nothing compared to proven faith.

And to bolster this, he says that gold “perishes.” The idea here is that faith does not. When it is proven, it is that which has eternal benefit. In this, there is a thought which Paul made in his writings that is confirmed here. Gold is tangible; it can be seen and held. And yet, it is temporary. However, faith in God's work which is accomplished in Christ is unseen. But despite this, it will never perish. Paul spoke of this in 1 Corinthians 13:13 with the words, “And now abide faith, hope, love, these three.”

Peter then says of this faith, “though it is tested by fire.” This is referring to the “various trials” of verse 6. They are the means of testing the faith, and though they may be grieving, they serve a purpose. Gold is purified when it is put through the fire. Peter is making a comparison between that process and the fire of affliction. The same result is realized. Just as gold is purified by fire, so is the faith purified by the trials. He is making a direct analogy between the two – meaning the proven faith and the purified gold. In doing so, he then says that the faith “may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

The three-fold thought expresses that which is to be bestowed upon those of faith at the time of Christ's revelation. There will be commendation for having demonstrated faith. That will be increased for those who maintained their faith through the various trials they face. There will be reward for those who have increased their faith from simple belief in the gospel to that which is so grounded that it will hold up even through the greatest of trials. And, there will be a conferral of the magnificence of God bestowed upon those who have so proven their faith. Each person will receive what is due to him according to the evaluation which is made concerning the faith which is demonstrated.

In the end, the judgment of the believer is one of reward and loss, and every single reward will be based on faith which is connected to whatever deed is accomplished. A deed not done in faith can receive no reward. The judgment of God in Christ upon the believer is described by Paul in 1 Corinthians 3:12-15 and 2 Corinthians 5:9-11.

Life application: The faith we possess, and which is tested in the crucible of trial, difficulty, and suffering will ultimately lead to “praise, honor, and glory.” Too often when something disastrous occurs, we cry out, “Why God?”

Imagine a father and his friends who go out on the ocean for a day of fishing. Three days later, after extensive searches, they are all found dead. The usual questions arise, and God’s goodness is part of that questioning process. But is this right? Would these people have perished in a boating accident if they hadn’t gone boating? Would it have been better to stay indoors in a locked room?

God’s goodness is displayed in the fact that these people had the freedom to choose a day of fishing; they had the ability to relax instead of continuing work just to feed their family; they had families that loved them; etc. We don’t live in isolated cells with feeding tubes attached to us. We must expect soldiers will die in war, people who cross the street may not make it to the other side, and people who eat may accidentally choke on their food.

The test then is not for the dead, but for the living. When we face trials – be they large or small; personal, within a family, or within a community; financial, life-threatening, or spiritual – we demonstrate our faith when we acknowledge God’s sovereignty and His right to work out His plan in a way that we may not always understand.

When trials come, the testing may be intense and the heat may be severe, but this refining process is something that will ultimately lead to praise, honor, and glory. And this will come when Jesus Christ is revealed to us in His glorious splendor. Pain and sadness are to be expected, but when you can honestly accept all things with the attitude that “the Lord’s will be done,” you are in the high place of strong faith – a place of reward from the Creator.

O great and sovereign God, give us the ability to accept all things that occur in our lives as gifts from You – whether blessing or trial. We ask this because we see that even the trials are blessings when they test our faith and refine it. Help us to consider that Your word clearly teaches this. And so, when trials come, may there be praise, honor, and

glory for us when we faithfully endure through them, and when our faith is proven as a result of them. Amen.

...whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see *Him*, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, 1 Peter 1:8

Peter had just spoken of the faith of his audience. Someday that faith would be turned to sight. As he said, “at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” Now he confirms that they are living by faith and not by sight with the words, “whom having not seen you love.” It is to be remembered that Peter had lived with Christ, experienced many marvelous things with Him, and yet that did not lessen the honor of those who had not seen Him. In fact, Peter certainly remembered the words of Jesus to Thomas –

“Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed *are* those who have not seen and *yet* have believed.” John 20:29

It very well may be that this is what was on Peter’s mind as he penned his words to the saints. He next says, “Though now you do not see *Him*.” This is a set of words which, although rather innocuous in nature, are to be taken literally for all whom he is writing to. As this includes any who read Scripture, and as Scripture is given to all for the establishment and building up of faith (Romans 10:17), it is to be taken that Peter’s words here apply to all – “Though you do not see *Him*.” It is a note that we live by faith and not by sight. It thus dispels claims by those who say they have had visions of Christ. Taken together with Jesus’ words to Thomas, this is a certainty.

Peter then expresses what should be considered an honor with the words, “yet believing.” These people had believed simply by having been told. There was no sight, and yet they accepted the message. The honor Jesus spoke of to Thomas is firmly established in those who have come to God through the word conveyed to them. And in this act of faith, Peter then says, “you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory.”

The joy inexpressible is that joy which can only be felt inside. It is the absolute surety that the faith in the heart will lead to the sight of the eyes. It is a joy which understands that the pains and trials of this world are nothing when compared to the state of existence which lies ahead. And it is a joy which says, “Though death may come, it does not have the final say over my existence.” Words cannot fully express the joy which is anticipated in the faith of the believer.

The idea of the believer's joy being "full of glory" is that of anticipation in the state which lies ahead. We can look at our bodies and see true wisdom in their construction. We can marvel how they heal themselves from cuts, bruises, diseases, and so on. But we also know that our bodies are corruptible and will wear out.

We will die and our bodies will return to the dust. However, what God promises in Christ is a glory which is beyond our ability to imagine. We shall be like Christ, rising from the dead with eternal bodies. Such is just a small sampling of what the words "full of glory" look forward to. Peter understood this because it has been the hope of man since the fall. And it is a hope which is now realized in Christ Jesus, of whom his audience was now also partakers.

Life application: After the resurrection, Thomas doubted that it had occurred at all. This was even after the other apostles and those with them had emphatically claimed that Jesus was alive. Eight days later Jesus appeared while Thomas was present. Finally convinced of what he saw and felt, he cried out, "My Lord and my God!"

Are you struggling with the validity of the biblical account? Or do you have that inexpressible joy which is full of glory? The difference may simply be that you have failed to apply your faith to a study of the Bible.

When your faith is faltering, nothing can build it up like opening its pages and reminding yourself about the reliability of what is recorded there, including the book of 1 Peter.

If you find some portions difficult, go to reliable study aids which were written by people who have spent their lives verifying the accuracy of what the Bible records. Don't be a doubting Thomas (or Jane, or Mike, or Calvin, or...)! Instead, believe the surety of God's word and you will be filled with inexpressible joy!

Heavenly Father, I know Your word is sure and Your testimony is true. When my faith falters, help me to rebuild it through reexamining the pages of the Bible and being filled with Your glorious Holy Spirit. Yes Lord! Fill me to overflowing with knowledge of You by the illumination of Your Word for my understanding and the joy that accompanies it. Amen.

...receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of *your* souls. 1 Peter 1:9

Peter now completes the greater thought which began in verse 6 of this chapter, but of which a lesser thought is connected to the previous verse. Taken together the two verses

say, “Though now you do not see *Him*, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, ⁹ receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of *your* souls.”

The word translated as “receiving” simply means to carry or bear something. However, based on the context, it carries one of a couple different ideas. The first is that of receiving something back which belonged to a person. That is seen, for example, in Matthew 25:27. However, it is also receiving something that has been earned or recovered. This is what Peter is speaking of here.

He says to his audience (meaning the saints) that you will be “receiving the end of your faith.” It is faith which brings the result. One does not receive what is promised based on works, living a particular type of life, or being better than another (grading on a bell curve), or any other such notion. It is faith alone by which one receives “the end” which Peter speaks of, which is “the salvation of *your* souls.”

The “end” or object of faith is what the faith is expectant of. One can have faith that putting money in the bank will result in a return on the principle through whatever interest rate is promised. One can have faith that starting a journey on a sailboat will bring him to his anticipated island getaway. The “end,” or object, of the Christian’s faith in Jesus Christ is salvation.

In short, sin is the problem. The law is how sin is made manifest, Jesus’ lived perfectly under the law and was found without sin, Jesus died in fulfillment of the law, and for the sins of those bound under the law (a principle known as substitutionary atonement which is authorized in the law), and therefore Jesus removes our sin debt. Jesus rose from the grave, having triumphed over death. In His resurrection, the proof of His sinless nature, and the proof of His acceptable substitutionary death for our sin is seen. In this, the person who believes in Christ’s work (demonstrating faith) is deemed justified and freed from sin’s penalty. And in this, the person is granted eternal life. In this declaration of justification by God, one is saved, which is the “end” of his faith.

Concerning this word, translated as “receiving,” Vincent’s Word Studies says, “Paul uses it of receiving the awards of judgment (2 Corinthians 5:10; Ephesians 6:8; Colossians 3:25). In Hebrews, it is used of receiving the promise (Hebrews 10:36; Hebrews 11:39), and of Abraham receiving back Isaac (Hebrews 11:19). Peter uses it thrice, and in each case of receiving the rewards of righteousness or of iniquity. See 1 Peter 5:4; 2 Peter 2:13.”

It should be noted that in this verse, this word *komizó*, or “receiving,” is a present participle in the Greek. Peter says in “believing,” (of verse 8), one is “receiving” (of verse 9). In other words, the deal is done. By an act of faith in what Christ has done, the salvation is received. How terrible it is that people add to the simple gospel, or that people attempt to divide the simple gospel into various categories (one gospel for the Jew & one gospel for the Gentile) instead of seeing that what God has done in Christ is a one-time act, based on faith, and it is a single gospel message for all people. Those who add to, or attempt to divide, this gospel will receive their just punishment for proclaiming “a different gospel, which is not another” (Galatians 1:6, 7). Be wise! Don’t listen to these false workers who teach their message of demons.

Life application: Positionally, those who have called on Jesus are already saved. We know this from a multitude of verses, for example –

“For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees?” Romans 8:24

The action is completed in the sense that we need to do nothing else except wait to receive our final redemption. Until that day, let us act as if we really believe it. We should attend church – not to be blessed, but to worship out of gratitude. We should endure trials joyfully, knowing that even these serve a good purpose. We should sing in our hearts (and even with our lips!) as we walk along life’s path.

If you are forgetting to thank the Lord for the glory to come, take time today – even right now – to reflect on what is ahead, and then thank Him for the marvel of that Day! As Paul said in the Romans verse, “hope that is seen is not hope.” And as Peter shows, a day is coming when we will receive the end of our faith. This will be when our hope is changed to sight – that glorious day when Jesus Christ Himself calls us to the paradise He has prepared.

Get ready, Jesus is coming, and our eyes will behold the One who brought us to the end of our faith. Praise God! Jesus is coming and we shall be saved. Hallelujah and amen!

What a day! O, what a glorious and joyful day – O, happy day! Lord Jesus, what You have promised is worth all the waiting in the world. One day we will look upon Your majesty and bask in Your beauty for all eternity – saved from the stain of sin found in this temporary world. Praise to You, O Lord! Amen.

Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace *that would come to you*, 1 Peter 1:10

Peter now refers to what he just said in the previous verse concerning “the salvation of *your* souls.” He says, “Of this salvation...” The word “of” here carries the sense of “in regards to,” or “concerning.”

From there, he says, “the prophets have inquired and searched carefully.” Both verbs begin with the prefix *ek*, signifying “out.” And so, the words bear the idea of “the prophets have sought out and searched out carefully.” In this, there is not just a general search made, but a very detailed and concerted effort on their part. They peered into the matter with the most intense scrutiny in order to find out what they were looking for.

Peter says they are those “who prophesied.” A picture is forming. These are prophets who spoke out the word of the Lord. They are not false prophets as can be seen from the previous words “have inquired and searched carefully.”

A false prophet would not search out his own false words. What would be the point? He uttered something out of his own head, and so he is fully aware of what he spoke of. On the contrary, these are true prophets who have spoken the word of the Lord, and now they are actually searching out the message transmitted through them. It shows that the Source of the prophecy was not from themselves, but from God.

The word translated as “searched carefully” is found only here in the New Testament, *exeraunaó*. It signifies “to search with all diligence.” As HELPS Word Studies says, “Here it focuses on the *end*-result of the searching, i.e. the *fulfillment* of salvation (unique glorification) in a believer's life.”

Understanding this, Peter describes what these prophets prophesied by saying, “of the grace *that would come to you*.” The prophets came under the dispensation of the law. They spoke the word of the Lord, and what they prophesied was a time when God’s grace would be bestowed apart from the law. That is perfectly evident from the context of Peter’s words. Further, it is apparent that the grace which they spoke of was coming not for themselves, but for others – at a later time. The word “grace” here signifies the Lord’s favor as He freely extends Himself to His people.

Peter will continue with this through verse 12. It is a marvelous set of words which gives us insights into how certain the prophetic word of God is, and how perfectly planned out

it was. Before the things came to pass, the Lord revealed them. However, He did it in a way which was veiled to those who passed them on. Though they spoke them out, they did not understand what they had conveyed. Thus, they searched what they had received carefully. It is a rather astonishing thing to ponder.

Life application: We read these marvelous words in the book of Isaiah –

“Unto us a Son is given;
And the government will be upon His shoulder.
And His name will be called
Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
⁷ Of the increase of *His* government and peace
There will be no end,
Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom,
To order it and establish it with judgment and justice
From that time forward, even forever.
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.” Isaiah 9:6, 7

Imagine Isaiah receiving this prophecy, knowing these were God’s words, and then reading them again and again and again – searching diligently and trying to discover the meaning of the very words that he had just penned. It is almost unimaginable!

A Man would be born and yet He would be called the Mighty God. Men are born, live, and then die. And yet, it says He would be the Everlasting Father. Each word used to describe this coming One shouts out to us of the Incarnate Word of God – yes, we know Him as Jesus. But Isaiah could only look forward and wonder.

Likewise, the suffering servant passage in Isaiah 52:13-53:12 must have been incredible – what could it mean? Each of the prophets must have looked at the words they had composed and wondered, but until such things were revealed in Jesus, they simply couldn’t fathom the grace that would come. However, we can look back and understand and revel in the words that brought them such straining of thought. How blessed we are in this dispensation of God’s grace!

We look on Your word to us in awe, O God! The grace it reveals is far greater than anything a human could imagine. You stepped out of eternity, united with human flesh, and walked among us. In Christ, You suffered on our behalf and now we have the offer of

*reconciliation and eternal life – all because of what You have done! Glory to You, O God!
Amen.*

...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. 1 Peter 1:11

The words here speak of “the prophets” of the previous verse. He said that they “inquired and searched carefully ... of the grace that *would come* to you.” Now, he continues with that thought, explaining what it was like for these men who spoke out and wrote down the oracles of God. He says they were “searching what, or what manner of time.”

The idea of “searching” is to make a diligent inquiry. These prophets wrote out the prophecies transmitted through them, and then they thoroughly investigated what they had written out. They wanted to know “what,” meaning the details concerning the Messiah they had prophesied about. They were given a broad brushstroke of His coming, but they lacked the details. They could see aspects of Him, but the Man Jesus was out of their ability to see – who He would be, what He would be like, and how He would accomplish the things they wrote of.

They also wanted to know “what manner of time” these things would come about. This may be speaking of the actual timing of the coming of Messiah, but more probably it is speaking of the state of the world at the time of His coming. How could the things they wrote down be fulfilled? What would be the condition of the people who anticipated His coming. What would be the relationship between Israel and the Gentiles? On and on, “what manner of time” lay ahead when Messiah would be revealed?

Peter next gives an indication of the means of the prophetic word coming to these men. He refers to “the Spirit of Christ who was in them.” Charles Ellicott notes that the term “Christ” here speaks of the office, and not specifically a title of the Man – meaning Jesus Christ. This may be a correct analysis. The “Spirit of Christ,” is that which anticipates the coming of Messiah, it speaks of Him and His work, and so on.

It is not impossible, however, that Peter is speaking of “the Spirit of Christ” as referring to the Holy Spirit, whose role in the Godhead is to reveal the Lord Jesus before His coming, during His advent, and continuing on after His ascension. The work of God within the Godhead has one united purpose. Thus, the term “Spirit of Christ” would

then be synonymous with “Holy Spirit,” “Spirit of God,” and etc. This is seen, for example, in Romans 8 –

“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

Peter continues on, noting that “the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand.” Whether “Spirit of Christ” refers to the office, or to the inspiration which comes from Christ personally, the words “was indicating” show that the men were influenced by a force which led them to record what was instilled in them by God. The things He purposed for them to know were revealed. There was enough information to make the work of Christ fully understandable in relation to what was written once it occurred, but not until it occurred.

Until Christ came, it remained veiled even though specific words were given by God as “He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ.” In Scripture, it is the Lord who speaks out prophecy, and yet it is the Spirit who speaks out prophecy, and it is God who speaks out prophecy. And in those words which point to Christ, they – like all other Scripture – were recorded in the word. And the word itself then speaks out prophecy. In this word, the sufferings of Christ are clearly indicated, even from the earliest chapters of Genesis. In Genesis 3:15, it is now quite clear that Messiah is being referred to. There it says that the serpent would “bruise His heel.” From that point on, countless examples of the sufferings of Christ are recorded. The sacrifices and offerings of the Levitical priesthood point to the sufferings of Christ. His sufferings are detailed in small and in great ways in the prophets. They are obscurely referred to in the account of the birth and naming of Benjamin in Genesis 35:18, where he was first named Ben-Oni, or Son of my Suffering.

A complete record of the study into how many times the sufferings of Christ are mentioned in the Bible would take up innumerable pages of analysis. Vincent's Word Studies explains why Peter highlighted this. He says, “Peter was especially concerned to show that the sufferings of Christ were in fulfilment of prophecy, because it was a subject of dispute with the Jews whether the Christ was to suffer (Acts 3:18; Acts 26:22, Acts 26:23).”

By testifying to the sufferings of the coming Christ in advance, there was no excuse that Israel – the stewards of the oracles of God – should have missed the coming of Messiah. Along with these sufferings, Peter also refers to “the glories that would follow.” This refers to everything that would come in successive steps after the sufferings of Christ.

The cross was a point of suffering, but it was also a point of glory. The resurrection, the proofs of His resurrection, the ascension, the continued work of the apostles and the church since, the coming rapture, the physical return of Christ, the millennium, and the eternal state are all referred to in the glories that would follow.

These were recorded by the prophets, and they were all carefully searched out by them, but they could not sufficiently peer into the words they had been inspired to write in order to see what they desired to see. Those things were reserved for those who came after they occurred, and which could then be pieced together in order to be seen in the revealed light that God so intended for them to be seen.

Life application: Today, we have the revelation that the prophets searched out in hopes of knowing, but to them it was a mystery. Paul uses this term quite a few times as he speaks of the ministry of Christ. For example –

“Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began ²⁶ but now made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith— ²⁷ to God, alone wise, *be* glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen.” Romans 16:25-27

Here we see that the work of Christ was a mystery kept in the mind of God since the very foundation of the world. However, it was made manifest in the gospel. This mystery was presented in the “prophetic scriptures” which is exactly what Peter is talking about. The prophets of old wrote of the coming glory, and yet to them it was veiled.

Likewise, the times of the coming of Christ and the fulfillment of the ages is veiled. We can search carefully, get out our calculators and computers, look at calendars of coming events, and strain our minds over the times and the seasons, but in the end, we must simply wait on the Lord’s timing. As Jesus said in Acts 1:7, “It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority.”

When He is ready, He will be back – but not a moment sooner. It won’t come by the desires or uninspired guesses of prognosticators; it will come by the wisdom of God.

Lord God, we sure would love to see Jesus, and we would very much like to sit in His presence and dine together. May that day be soon. But Lord God, Your will be done, not ours. Our garments are washed, our hearts are ready, and Your invitations are in our

hand. When You call, we will respond with joy. Until then, we love You and we will be about the business You have for us. Even so, come Lord Jesus. Amen.

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. 1 Peter 1:12

It is an amazing set of words from Peter. He has been speaking of the prophets who were led by the Spirit of Christ who was in them, and who wrote of the “sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.” Now he says that “To them it was revealed that...”

This thought goes along with what he said in verse 10. There, Peter noted that these prophets “inquired and searched carefully.” But their search was to no avail. It was revealed to them that the words they had received were “not to themselves.” In other words, they spoke out prophecy that did not apply to their lives, but to the lives of others, both in time and, at times, in location.

In other words, it often surely seemed obvious that prophecy of the Messiah to come was future. But some of the prophets prophesied from their homes in exile, such as Daniel. Not only were the prophecies future, but they were pointing to the coming of Messiah in a land that they were not even in. It may seem obvious to us now, but in the ancient world, gods were often considered localized gods of places, nations, or people groups. But the prophetic word of the true God extends beyond such limits.

Peter then continues noting that what was revealed was not to them, “but to us.” Peter is writing the words and making the claim that because Christ had come, the prophetic word was to those who were alive since His coming. The span of years spent in waiting had ended, and the time of waiting for the prophetic word to be fulfilled had arrived.

With this understanding, Peter includes himself now in the process of revealing that once hidden word by saying, “they were ministering the things which have been reported to you.” Peter and the other apostles had seen the fulfillment of the prophecies. They were able to see what the prophets of old could not, and they were able to put the otherwise obscure writings into the context of the Person and work of Jesus the Messiah. Because of this, they reported the message, proclaiming that the prophecies were fulfilled.

It should be noted that the words “were ministering” are in the imperfect active. The prophets of old are still ministering to those who read their words even today as they are explained to us by the apostles. This reporting was “through those who have preached the gospel to you.”

The prophets of old vicariously ministered through the apostles. The words they had received were being passed on for the hearer to know and understand the truth of what was written. As noted already, the truth is that even today the writings of those prophets would make no sense to someone who picked them up and read them, unless they had the accompanying words of the apostles found in the New Testament. This is why Paul could say in his epistle to the Corinthians –

“Therefore, since we have such hope, we use great boldness of speech— ¹³unlike Moses, *who* put a veil over his face so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the end of what was passing away. ¹⁴But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the *veil* is taken away in Christ. ¹⁵But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart. ¹⁶Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.” 2 Corinthians 3:12-16

Without the explanation of the apostles, either in person, or by the writings they have left behind, the mysteries into which the prophets inquired and searched carefully are still veiled to the reader. But since the coming of Christ, these things were made known. And this process was not only directly, as if by personal sight and understanding, but more especially “by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven.”

It is true that the apostles witnessed much of the fulfillment of what the prophets wrote about. Further, Jesus explained many things from the Scriptures after His resurrection (e.g. Luke 23:13-27). However, there are still other things which were not directly revealed at those times. Rather, the Holy Spirit revealed them through the apostles as they were inspired to do so.

Their writings, which have been compiled into the New Testament, allow the Scriptures to be understood from a Christ-centered perspective which would have been otherwise impossible to understand. This is so much so that Peter finishes the verse with, “things which angels desire to look into.”

Of the word translated as “desire to look into,” Vincent's Word studies says –

“A very graphic word, meaning to stoop sideways (παρά). Used by Aristophanes to picture the attitude of a bad harp-player. Here it portrays one stooping and stretching the neck to gaze on some wonderful sight. It occurs in James 1:25, describing him who looks into the perfect law of liberty as into a mirror; and in Luke 24:12; John 20:5, John 20:11, of Peter and John and Mary stooping and looking into the empty tomb. Possibly the memory of this incident unconsciously suggested the word to Peter. The phrase illustrates Peter's habitual emphasis upon the testimony of sight.”

The angels desired to know what the prophetic word said, not as participants in it, but as those viewing the redemptive plans of God from the outside, like spectators in an arena. The astonishing work of God in redeeming man, including the cross of Christ, was a complete surprise to them. This is obvious from the words of Pilate's wife in Matthew –

“While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent to him, saying, ‘Have nothing to do with that just Man, for I have suffered many things today in a dream because of Him.’” Matthew 27:19

Pilate's wife was given a dream which caused her to warn her husband. But if Pilate had not participated in what occurred, Christ would not have been crucified. The next verses confirm that he did not fully heed her words. The serpent went through the woman in the Garden of Eden to thwart God's plans, and he had some inkling that the day ahead was one which would see his defeat. Is it that being unable to determine what action to take, he went through a woman again by attempting to have her influence her husband to thwart what seemed to be an inevitable, but as yet unrevealed, part of God's plan?

If so, this shows us that the devil may know God's word, but he also does not understand the complexities of the prophecies which are future, nor can he discern those things which have not been revealed, but which remain sealed until God reveals them.

Life application: The prophets of old received God's word and then turned around and read what they had written out. They searched the words carefully and looked for hints about the glory to come. When they read of the sufferings of Christ and compared them with verses like the one proclaiming Him the everlasting Father, they must have been completely baffled.

This coming One would be buried in a grave and yet He would rule the nations forever? It must have been incredibly hard to understand and reconcile the concepts... maybe there would be two Messiahs? Maybe the passages weren't to be taken literally?

Finally, they realized that it was simply not for them to know. Instead, others would be the recipients of the revelation which was received; they were merely the conduit by which God was revealing the mysteries that would be revealed in Christ. And who are the favored recipients? They are those who hear the gospel of Jesus Christ.

We have received enlightenment of the verses which were veiled in times past because Jesus' ministry fulfilled them. Once His work was complete, the prophetic word came alive. Truly we are a favored generation. As we wait on the return of our Lord, we have the pages of the Bible to guide us and instruct us in our daily lives. Be sure to read your Bible daily, and to share the gospel always.

Thank You Jesus for sending Your Spirit to illuminate Your word to us through the preaching of the gospel and the study of its contents. Thank You for allowing us to be the recipients of the fullness of the writings which tell us of You and Your glorious work in and through humanity. Amen.

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; 1 Peter 1:13

The word "Therefore" is given to sum up everything Peter has thus far said. In verse 5, he spoke of the believer's "salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." In verse 7, he then spoke of "the revelation of Jesus Christ." His words have been built around those things as instruction and for clarification of how things are in the life of the believer, especially in regard to the surety of the salvation which they possess.

Because of this hope found in the gospel, which was so hungrily searched out in order to be understood by the prophets who wrote of it, Peter says for his audience to "gird up the loins of your mind."

This term is used as a metaphor in a few different ways. In 1 Kings 18, we read this –

"Then the hand of the Lord came upon Elijah; and he girded up his loins and ran ahead of Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel." 1 Kings 18:46

Elijah "girded up his loins" in order to run as quickly as possible. The garments of the people of Israel were long and flowing. If one tried to run in them, he could easily get his legs tripped up. And so, when a quick pace was needed, they would pull the garment up to their waist and tie the sash they wore around that which was pulled up. Thus, they "girded up" their loins.

In Job 38:3, we read this –

“Now gird up your loins like a man,
And I will ask you, and you instruct Me!” (NASB)

Here, the same metaphor is used, but the purpose is different. Instead of running, the Lord is basically saying, “It is time to wrestle.” When a person was set to wrestle, he would gird up his garments, just as when he ran. Thus, the Lord is saying to Job, “We are going to mentally wrestle through this. Be ready!”

One must now question, which was on Peter’s mind? The answer is, probably both. First, Peter was looking ahead to a long race. As he noted in verse 5, the saints are kept for salvation which was “to be revealed in the last time.” As that is an indeterminate amount of time, they were to be girded up for a long race. This is seen in Paul’s words to those in Corinth –

“Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. ²⁵ And everyone who competes *for the prize* is temperate in all things. Now they *do it* to obtain a perishable crown, but we *for* an imperishable *crown*.” 1 Corinthians 9:24, 25

However, Peter is also contending for the faith which has been delivered to the saints. He is writing to Jews who could easily get caught up in the legalism of the law once again. In fact, he had to gird himself up and wrestle with this issue himself. He was challenged by Paul for falling into this trap in Galatians 2:11-21.

Paul had told the Galatians about what happened to remind them of the importance of holding to the one and only gospel, delivered to both Jew and Gentile. In summary of his thoughts, he called the Galatians “foolish” in Galatians 3:1. They had failed to gird up the loins of their mind, and they had suffered defeat in the wrestling match of sound doctrine. Peter is instructing his audience to be prepared for such a race and such a wrestling match.

And so, in his instruction, he says, “be sober.” The words are a present participle which should read “being sober.” Understanding this, it is not speaking of literal soberness, but a spiritual soberness. Believers are to be calm, wakeful, circumspect, and morally grounded by knowing and adhering to the word. In acting in this manner, we will always be ready for the Lord’s coming. It will not be a moment of sad surprise when it happens, but rather a moment of joyous surprise. This is Peter’s intent.

He next says, “and rest *your* hope fully.” Here, the verb is active and imperative. You are to do this, and you are to keep it up. “Rest your hope and keep resting your hope.” And that is to be “upon the grace.” Grace is unmerited favor. It is something that one cannot work for, but simply receive. Peter is saying that the gospel is that of grace, and what it will deliver is solely of grace. In essence, “NO WORKS!” He is adamantly telling his readers the same message that Paul told the Gentiles – “It is not of the law, but of grace.”

He then notes that this grace “is to be brought to you.” Again, as with the words “being sober” above, the verb here is a present participle. It rightly reads, “is being brought to you.” There is salvation in Christ, and it is coming to you and it will not fail. It is an implied note of eternal salvation. As Vincent's Word Studies notes: “The object of hope is already on the way.” And that hope which is coming will be “at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

The revelation of Jesus Christ is spoken of throughout the New Testament. For the faithful believer before the rapture, Christ’s revealing will be at a meeting in the clouds before the tribulation period. For those who are saved after this point, there will be a literal, physical return of Christ to the earth to judge the world. Paul speaks of these things first in 1 Thessalonians 4, and then again in 2 Thessalonians 1. Peter is imploring his audience to be sober and to have the loins of their minds girded up in anticipation of this hope.

Life application: Paul says this concerning the grace of the Lord in Ephesians 2 – “But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), ⁶ and raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus, ⁷ that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in *His* kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.” Ephesians 2:4-7

Paul’s words speak of “the ages to come.” It is a note of infinite grace. God has saved us, and that salvation shall never end. This is just what we need! Let us be thankful for the grace of God which is found in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Thank You Lord for the infinite grace You have displayed and continue to display in our lives. We fail You continuously and our only hope is in Your faithfulness despite our faithlessness. We trust in You alone for both our salvation and our continued state of favor in Your eyes. Thank You for the cross and thank You for the garments of righteousness it provides. Amen.

...as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; 1 Peter 1:14

Peter just told his audience to gird up the loins of their minds, to be sober, and to rest their hope on the grace that is being brought to them. He now continues with his exhortation to them by saying, “as obedient children.”

The Greek uses two nouns here, and it is therefore better rendered as “as children of obedience.” Vincent's Word Studies explains this as, “The Christian is represented as related to the motive principle of his life as a child to a parent.” In other words, this is speaking of the state of the Christian at all times in relation to the Lord, and not specifically of the ongoing conduct of the children in general.

One can see the reason for this relationship by looking back to verse 3 where Peter says that the Lord “has begotten us again to a living hope.” Because of this state of being begotten, we are implored to live as “children of obedience.”

Next, Peter explains what this means with the words, “not conforming yourselves to the former lusts.” Here Peter uses a verb only seen elsewhere in Romans 12:2 where Paul implores his reader to not be conformed to this world. This word gives the sense of identity, or assuming an outward form.

Here Peter is specifically speaking of identifying with a life of lusts. Instead of looking for gratification in all temptations, the believer is to find his satisfaction in Christ, and in the hope which He provides. This is because we have been enlightened to the truth of the resurrection and a future hope. This is something that was previously unknown. If unknown, then the thought is obviously that this world is all there is. If that is so, then one might as well grab for all he can get. But that is, as Peter says, “ignorance.”

Without knowing of the truth of God in Christ, there exists a state of ignorance. In hearing the gospel, and in knowing what God has planned for His people, we are to emulate Christ, walk in holiness, and not conform to (or pursue recklessly) the conduct of this world.

Life application: Many people have a problem with the concept of total depravity. This means that we are all bound under sin and totally incapable of saving ourselves. It also gives us an understanding of why God can command the Israelites to march into Canaan and destroy everything that lived – including women and children. As Jesus said in John 3:18 –

“He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”

We are “condemned already.” This means even from the moment of conception. All humans receive Adam’s sin-nature and do not need to do a thing to be separated from God. However, even on those who are separated in this way, God is merciful – He provides them food, rain, and the good things of life.

As an example of His mercy, He waited 400 years to destroy the people of Canaan because of His longsuffering and because “the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete” (Genesis 15:16). Likewise, God spared Nineveh at the preaching of Jonah because they repented. This doesn’t mean they were saved for eternity, but from destruction in this life; they were allowed to continue on under the sun.

Peter says that we were all in this depraved state and that we once conformed ourselves to these lusts. He then says we did this in “ignorance.” Ignorance of the law is, however, no excuse. If you can come to this realization and accept it for what it is, then you can understand the infinite grace and mercy demonstrated at the cross of Jesus. Glory to God for His favor upon the sons of Adam!

Truly O God, You are merciful and full of grace. Glory be to You for sending Jesus, born into the stream of humanity in order to save us from the depraved state we were in. Surely, You are worthy of all our praise! Yes! Glory to You, O God! Amen.

...but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, 1 Peter 1:15

Several scholars, and several translations, translate Peter’s words here as a title rather than a description. For example, the NASB translates this as –

“...but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior;”

What seems more likely is that Peter is reaching back to the heart of the book of Leviticus where, in Chapter 11, the Lord says this –

“For I *am* the LORD your God. You shall therefore consecrate yourselves, and you shall be holy; for I *am* holy.” Leviticus 11:44

The Lord gave instructions to Israel concerning what He expected of them, and then He proclaimed the reason why He did so. It is because He is holy, and they had been called by Him to be His people. In His calling, He expected them to emulate Him. It is as if God is saying, “I am the Pattern which you should form yourselves after.”

It is to be noted that the Lord’s calling was to Israel alone in Leviticus. Here in 1 Peter, some could argue that Peter is addressing the Jews (which is correct) and, therefore, the calling that Peter is speaking about is one directed solely to the Jews. This is incorrect. Christ established the New Covenant in His blood. In this, He has called both Jew and Greek (meaning the Gentiles – see Romans 1:16; Romans 2:9, 10, Romans 10:12; Galatians 3:28; Colossians 3:11, and etc.).

The fact that the Jews (for the most part) did not accept the gospel does not negate that the call was made to them as well as to the Gentiles. Peter’s epistle is a call to the Jew, but specifically a call to the Jew of the end-times (as can be deduced by its placement after Paul’s Gentile-led church-age epistles). The Jews, after their rejection of Christ and extended time of punishment for this rejection, are being called to the one gospel which is found in Christ Jesus. That it is the same message to both Jew and Gentile is confirmed by Paul’s words of Ephesians 4 –

“But you have not so learned Christ, ²¹ if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: ²² that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, ²³ and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, ²⁴ and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.”

-Ephesians 4:20-24

Paul speaks of living according to the holiness of God, putting off the old man and being adorned in the new. This is the same calling as Peter now speaks of. And so, based on the unchanging nature of God, who is holy, Peter says, “you also be holy in all *your* conduct.”

The call is made, the individual responds to it, and the standard is expected. Peter ties the expected character of the one who has called on the Lord to emulate His character. Again, this is a principle that Paul speaks of in Philippians 1:27 –

“Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel.”

A change in one’s life to that which is Christ-centered is expected of those who have, in fact, come to Christ.

The word used by Peter, and translated as “conduct,” is a favorite of his. It is used three times by Paul, once in Hebrews, and once by James. However, Peter uses it six times in this letter, and 2 times in his second letter. It is *anastrophé*, and it gives the sense of a change of one’s outward behavior based on one’s inner beliefs. If one has called on Christ, having believed the gospel message (an inner belief), that person should then reflect, in his outward conduct, a change which conforms to the One upon whom he has trusted.

It would make no sense for a person to accept the conservative views of hard work, lower taxes, moral uprightness, normal-brained thinking, and so on, just to continue to vote for left-leaning politicians. Nor would it make any sense for such a person to continue to support lazy indolence, higher taxes, perversion, and crazy ideologies. A change to right thinking should have a corresponding external change in the person. If this is true with an earthly political system, how much more should there be a change in a person to a life of holiness when calling on the HOLY GOD through Christ Jesus!

Life application: From eternity past, the Father has called us to be saved. This is known as the doctrine of “predestination.” It tells us that our salvation was and is set in stone; it was a done deal even before creation. And yet the Bible says that we must receive Jesus in order to be saved – an act of our free-will. How are these two concepts reconciled?

God doesn’t think like we do. We think thought after thought, sequentially. We may think discursively in random thoughts, or we may think syllogistically, making deductions where “this plus this therefore equals this.” But God knows everything intuitively and immediately. Nothing is unknown to Him including the free-will decision we make when we receive Jesus. Because of our salvation, it follows then that we need to be holy just as God is holy.

However, because we think sequentially – thought after thought – we get caught up in life as it comes our way. We are challenged with trials, troubles, woes, and difficulties as

the moments turn into hours, and then the hours pass into days. This is why we so desperately need to be filled with God's Holy Spirit.

Just as we asked for and received salvation, we need to ask forgiveness when we sin (a reactive action) which prepares us for being renewed in the Spirit. Also, we need to pray for wisdom, patience, and especially God's direction in advance (acting proactively). And further, we need to know what God expects of us. This comes about through reading and meditating upon His word. By living in this way, we open the doors to holiness and right living.

It simply is not possible to go to church once a week, raise hands, and shout "Hallelujah," and then spend the rest of the week relying on that short experience to keep us holy. Please make a daily commitment to –

- 1) morning - rise and praise;
- 2) daily - walk and talk;
- 3) evening - lay and pray; and
- 4) always - read the word and apply what you have heard.

The Bible reveals that we are always in the presence of the Lord. Remember this and act accordingly. And...be holy in all your conduct.

Lord God, the more we trust in You and the closer our walk is with You, it seems the more evident our sin is. Give us wisdom to confess our sins as they occur, and also to ask for guidance each day that we may be protected from sinning even more. Fill us with Your Holy Spirit as we seek You through Your word so that we may be pleasing vessels of holiness to You. Amen.

... because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy." 1 Peter 1:16

This is cited by Peter from Leviticus 11:44. It reflects God's expectation for His people, both of Israel under the Old Covenant, and for those who come to Christ under the new covenant. Though Peter is writing to Jews, because he is the apostle to the circumcision, this is no different than what Paul writes to the Gentiles as the apostle to the uncircumcised. Two of many examples from him are –

“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, ⁴ just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.” Ephesians 1:3, 4

“Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” 2 Corinthians 7:1

The Lord expects the same holy conduct at all times from His people, because such conduct reflects His holy nature. Time and again in Leviticus, the idea of holiness is presented. Their conduct under the law was expected to conform to the law in order for them to reflect His holiness. But the reason for it was because the conduct of the people from which they were called (meaning the world at large) did not reflect what He expected. This is seen, for example, in Leviticus 20:26 –

“And you shall be holy to Me, for I the LORD *am* holy, and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be Mine.”

Now, Christ has called not only Jews, but all people into His new covenant. This is by drawing them from out of the world. The Jews were called out from the law which only highlighted their sin, and the Gentiles are called out from the unholy conduct of being aligned with the world and against God. Together, all are called to a new type of holiness, which is sanctification by the Spirit and through right conduct before God.

Life application: A couple of great points come from today’s short verse –

- 1) Peter is quoting Leviticus 11:44. There are other times in the Bible where this same general thought is mentioned. Scripture quoting Scripture is one way the Bible validates itself internally. Things are proclaimed and then they happen; things are stated and then they’re re-quoted elsewhere; someone claims to be a prophet and Jesus confirms that status. These and many other such occurrences validate the authority of other books, other people, and other concepts within the framework of the Bible.
- 2) God is making an absolute statement about Himself – a statement that can be inferred from simply thinking about the nature of God, even without the Bible. In other words, the Bible not only validates itself internally, but in a host of other ways, including when discussing the nature of God. Unlike the Koran or other religious texts from religions around the world, only the Bible fully reveals and

confirms the nature of God. We are left with an absolutely sure word concerning His nature. He has revealed Himself to us in a way we can understand.

- 3) We are to reflect God's image. He is holy and we are to act accordingly. He is full of grace and we are to likewise be graceful. He is filled with mercy and therefore we need to exercise mercy. The same is true with truthfulness, love, righteousness, justice, etc. God expects us to live in a way that reflects His nature. When we deviate from that, we isolate ourselves from His goodness and are left with only a fearful expectation of judgment. Let us always attempt to live our lives in a way which reflects God's infinite qualities, even if we fall short of demonstrating them perfectly.

Heavenly Father, You have asked us to be holy because You are holy. That can be rather difficult for us at times. We each fail You when we fail to be forgiving, truthful, or to act in any other way that should reflect Your glory. Forgive us of our weaknesses, and fill us with Your Spirit, so that we can correct this. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay *here* in fear; 1 Peter 1:17

In the previous paragraph, Peter spoke of being prepared for the coming of Christ, keeping free from the stain of this world. He then explained why this should be by citing Leviticus 11:44 – “Be holy, for I am holy.” As the character of the Lord God does not change, He expects us to emulate Him – whether under law or under grace. With that in mind, he now reveals why this is necessary for us. To do so, he begins with, “And if you call on the Father.”

The translation is not acceptable. There is no “the” before “Father” in the original. It should read, “and if you call *on Him as* Father.” The reason is that anyone can call on the Father – whether in Christ or not. The difference is that it is Jesus who brings us into the Father/Son relationship (as will be noted in verse 19). For those not in Christ, they are not recognized as sons through faith. Further, the words are connected to the idea of Him as Judge. As Vincent's Word Studies says, “the point being that God is to be invoked, not only as Father, but as Judge.”

Understanding this slight, but important change, we can understand Peter's words clearly. We have called on God as Father because we have come to Him through Christ. However, how was that accomplished? It was through His death. There was judgment on

sin involved in Christ's work. Can we expect anything less after coming to Christ? No! And so, Peter says, "who without partiality judges."

There must be judgment rendered for not being holy, even after calling on Christ. He died for our sins, and the expectation is that we will live in holiness because of what He did for us. If we fail to do this, judgment must (not "might" or "may") come about. One cannot violate the holiness of God in their conduct and come away free from judgment. And this judgment is without partiality.

As Peter himself said in Acts 10:34, "In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality." God has one standard which must be met for Jew and for Gentile, and He will ensure that each deed is evaluated without bias and in a perfectly fair manner. As Peter says, it will be "according to each one's work."

This is exactly what Paul speaks of in both 1 and 2 Corinthians concerning our judgment. In 1 Corinthians 3:12-15, he says –

"Now if anyone builds on this foundation *with* gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, ¹³ each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. ¹⁴ If anyone's work which he has built on *it* endures, he will receive a reward. ¹⁵ If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire."

And again, in 2 Corinthians 5:10, 11, Paul says –

"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. ¹¹ Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are well known to God, and I also trust are well known in your consciences."

The message of both Paul and Peter is consistent, and it is one which shows that what is coming should be considered by each of us as we walk in this current body. As Peter admonishes his audience, so "conduct yourselves through the time of your stay here *in* fear."

The word Peter uses for "stay" is found only elsewhere in Acts 13:17. It indicates sojourning in a strange land. The idea is that we are no longer of this world, even though we live in this world. This is not to be taken to the ridiculous extreme that many take it

to. Some close themselves off in monasteries. Some refuse to serve in the military of whatever country they reside in. Some will not vote in the elections of the land in which they live. And so on.

The problem with this logic is that they are still in this world. They are still eating food which comes from the ground, and they are still being protected by whatever government of the land in which they dwell. They still pay taxes (you bet they do!), and they still benefit from the roads and other infrastructure of the land. The idea of sojourning is that we are to live in this world, but not to conform to its morals. We are to be a part of whatever situation we are in without violating the holy standard, which Peter cited in the previous verse, and as he explicitly states again in this verse when he says, “conduct yourselves.”

He is tying the “be holy” of the previous verse to “in fear” from this verse. When we fail to walk as we should, we should fear. However, and as Paul made perfectly clear in the verses from 1 and 2 Corinthians cited above, this is a fear concerning judgment which is not for condemnation, but for rewards. It is that of rewards and losses only.

Life application: In this verse from Peter, we see two obvious overlaps in the duties of the Godhead. Compare what it says with these two verses –

“For ‘whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.’” Romans 10:13

“For I know of nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this; but He who judges me is the Lord.” 1 Corinthians 4:4

When we call on Jesus, we call on God, who is the Lord (Yehovah of the Old Testament); when we call on the Father, we call on God. Likewise, the authority for judgment rests with Jesus, and yet the authority for judgment rests with the Father. Everything must be taken in context, but it is obvious that God the Father is revealed to us in God the Son.

Note that judgment is “according to each one’s work.” Salvation is eternal, and it is from the first moment. However, our judgment will be based on the work we do after that moment. This then is not a judgment for condemnation, but for reward. If you desire a greater heavenly reward, then you need to “conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear.”

Further, this is not a fear of condemnation, but a reverent fear. God is ever-present with us, and we simply cannot hide our wicked actions. Instead, we need to fear that they will be exposed, and loss will result. As it says in Acts 17:28, "...in Him we live and move and have our being." Let us act as if we really believe it – in reverence, in holiness, and in gratitude for all good things. Remember what is promised for those whose works are acceptable!

Lord, it is so easy to get distracted and forget that You are right here with us. When we do, of course, we fail You and we act in ways that aren't as holy as they should be. For this, we are sorry. We ask that You give us the wisdom to know Your word, to act in accord with it, and to be filled with Your Spirit in order to remind us of our obligations to You. Help us in this, O God. Amen.

...knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct *received* by tradition from your fathers, 1 Peter 1:18

Evaluations of this verse tend to miss the point of what Peter is conveying. The focus is normally on the idea of being holy, and of living a holy life. This was stated in verse 1:16. It is true that those who are in Christ are to live holy, but that is not actually what Peter is focusing on. The next verse, verse 1:17, focused on judgment and living our lives in fear.

As noted, this is not a fear of condemnation, but a fear of the judgment for reward and loss at the Bema Seat of Christ. Though condemnation is not a consideration, there is still judgment ahead, and for this, we are to fear. The Father will judge without partiality, and He will do so as Peter said, "according to each one's own work." Because of this, he said we are to fear while we stay here in this life.

Understanding that, we can then insert the thought of living in a holy manner. If we fear, we will do what will keep us from the effects of the fiery judgment we would expect to face. With this in mind, we can better understand Peter's thought concerning fear and why he is focusing on it. And so, he says, "knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things."

The word translated as "redeemed" is found only here and in Luke 24:21 and Titus 2:14. It signifies to release by paying a ransom. It gives the idea of restoring something back to its rightful owner, having been rescued from an alien possessor. Man originally belonged to the Lord God. He was taken over by the works of the devil (1 John 3:8), and

he fell under the devil's control. However, for those who are in Christ, they have been rescued from this alien possessor.

This thought alone speaks of eternal salvation. We were lost, we were bought back, and we now belong to the Lord God once again. There is no provision in Scripture that speaks of how that reacquired state could somehow be lost a second time. The transfer is made, and it is effective for all time. In Peter's words, he also states that the redemption is not with corruptible things. It is with something incorruptible, and thus it can never be diminished again. The incorruptible nature of that which effected the purchase likewise speaks of an eternal salvation.

Peter then speaks of that which is corruptible in order to set up a contrast to that which is incorruptible. The corruptible things he chooses are "silver and gold." The things that man tends to put the highest value on are those things which can buy other things. Here, the "silver and gold" are described in words which signify pieces of money. This isn't just silver or gold, but it is silver or gold which is fashioned into that which is then used for currency.

It has the power and the right to be used to make purchases, including the redemption of slaves, for example. But it is still corruptible. It can erode, be divided, be melted down, be lost, and etc.

Because it is corruptible, it cannot be fully trusted. There is a chance that it has eroded to the point where it is not heavy enough when placed on the scales. It may be a false coin, which is a lesser metal merely covered with silver or gold. The fast fingers of the cheating seller may swap out the money handed to him with a forged coin. The value may change on the commodities market, and so the coin may suddenly be reduced in value. And so on.

However, none of this will be the case with what was used to purchase God's people, as Peter says, "from your aimless conduct." The word translated as "aimless" gives the sense of something which is vain, unreal, ineffectual, and so on. It can even mean "godless." There is no true purpose behind the manner of life which the believer was redeemed from. And more, Peter shows the true futility of this life by saying that it was "*received* by tradition from your fathers."

This is a rather clumsy translation. The Greek word is *patroparadotos*. This is the only time it is seen in Scripture. It signifies something which is handed down from one's

fathers. In other words, the very manner of life which man lives in is not only vain, but it is an inheritance, meaning that those who came before also possessed the same vain existence. This is true even if they were redeemed. In other words, the concept of original sin is seen in what Peter is referring to.

A person is either in Adam and thus he belongs to the devil, or he is in Christ and redeemed. However, the children of a redeemed person are not automatically redeemed. The manner of life that they receive is that of the father's original nature, which was unredeemed. Redemption, therefore, is not an inherited trait, but rather condemnation is (see John 3:18). This must be the case, because Peter speaks of the redemption of those he is writing to. This would not be necessary if their state was already acceptable to God.

Understanding Peter's words so far, the question as to why they now are referring to the concept of fear of judgment, rather than some other main subject has not yet been explained. That must wait until his thought is finished. Coming soon to a Bible verse evaluation near you.

Life application: The manner of life for man is one of futility because man is born under the authority and control of the devil. However, this can be changed. Christ has made it possible. For those who have come to Christ, they are given a new nature and an eternal hope. But those same redeemed people have an obligation to share their hope with the next generation, and indeed with all people.

What type of tradition will you hand down to your children? What type of legacy will you leave behind for others to see and evaluate? You are still in the fallen world, and you are still in a fallen body. Will you live out your life as if that was all there was of your life, or will you live out your life as if a real change has taken place which transcends the fallen world and the fallen body in which you live? Be sure to let Christ shine through you for all the world to see.

Lord, we know that we are accountable to You for our doctrine. Therefore, please provide us with wise teachers who can properly instruct us, the desire to learn Your word on our own, and – above all – filling us with Your Spirit to guide us and enlighten us to the truth of Your word. This we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

...but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. 1 Peter 1:19

Peter now continues on with his words which began in verse 1:17. Taken together, they read –

“And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one’s work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay *here* in fear; ¹⁸ knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, *like* silver or gold, from your aimless conduct *received* by tradition from your fathers, ¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”

As noted in verse 17, Peter said that the Father judges without partiality, and so believers are to conduct themselves in this walk of life “in fear.” That is the main idea of the words he continues to express. The fact that He judges without partiality may actually make some boastful. “See, I’m not as bad as these other people. If God judges impartially, I must be on the plus side of things.” Others may not see their particular failings and sins as offensive, and so they continue on in them.

However, when we stand back and look at the standard, we can then (hopefully) truly learn to live out our lives “in fear.” This is because we were “not redeemed with corruptible things.” Rather, we were redeemed “with the precious blood of Christ.”

In these words, the word “Christ” comes in the emphatic position at the end of the sentence. It might more appropriately be translated as, “...by *the* precious blood, *as of a* lamb, without blemish and without spot, Christ.” Or it might have a further emphasis by saying, “...by *the* precious blood, *as of a* lamb, without blemish and without spot, *even the blood of* Christ.”

A payment was made for our sins. And it wasn’t just a payment of something temporary and quickly worn away like gold or silver. Instead, it was paid with Christ’s precious blood – meaning His death. James has already written that “whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one *point*, he is guilty of all” (James 2:9). Because of this, we cannot compare the number or magnitude of our sins to those of others. Whatever sin we have committed, no matter how small, it would have resulted in the need for Christ’s death. An infinite price was paid for our finite, seemingly insignificant (to us), sins. God Himself united with humanity in order to pay this terrible price.

As this is the standard, and as the Father is said to judge “without partiality,” it can now be understood why we are to walk our lives “in fear.” What we may so smugly brush off as a casual thing, is something that not only will be judged, but it must be judged. And it will be judged for what it is, something which necessitated the high cost of our

redemption – Christ’s blood. And to further solidify this in the minds of his readers, Peter adds in, “as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”

The symbolism takes us back to the sacrifices of the Old Testament, including both the Passover and those other sacrifices also required under the Mosaic Law. The lambs used were in their first year, signifying innocence. They were without spot and without blemish signifying purity and perfection. The Hebrew word is *tamim*. It signifies complete, sound, blameless, perfect, and so on.

Peter’s point is that Christ’s perfection was used to redeem us in our imperfect state. Nothing else would suffice, and our flippant attitude concerning sin after our redemption is an affront to God. The redemption is accomplished, the atonement has been effected, and our salvation is secure, but our rewards and losses are to be based on the holy standard – the Lamb of God who died for the sins of the world. What we may think of as a quick and painless trial before God will be one which will lay bare every part of who we are and what we have done in and for the sake of Christ. With such a high standard set before us, let us remember to walk “in fear” all of our days – to the glory of God.

As a side note to this redemption: What hyperdispensationalism teaches is that there is one thing going on for Jews and one thing going on for Gentiles. They will claim that a gospel which Peter explains here in his epistle is directed to the Jews and what Paul says is a different gospel directed to the Gentiles. That is heresy, and – in the case of this Lamb of redemption – proven false by Paul’s own words –

“For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.” 1 Corinthians 5:6

The Lamb for the redemption of the Jews is the same Lamb of redemption for the Gentiles. Stay away from false teachers who espouse the damning heresy of hyperdispensationalism. There is one gospel message to the Jew and to the Gentile. There is one redemption, one atonement, and one fulfillment of the law in order to bring us into one New Covenant. The Gentiles are now partakers in the Commonwealth of Israel.

Life application: Peter contrasts the useless things of the world (including silver and gold) with that which is of infinite value, “the precious blood of Christ.” The most purifying substance in the universe is this blood. It represents:

- The infinite love of God.
- The perfect grace of God.
- The pure mercy of God.
- The supreme righteousness of God.
- The satisfied justice of God.
- The inestimable holiness of God.
- The kept promises of God.

Jesus Christ, represented here by an innocent lamb that is completely free from spot or blemish, was sacrificed on our behalf. Our moral corruption; our heaped-up sins; our wayward thoughts, words, actions, and inactions – all of these – were laid upon Him at the altar of sacrifice which is the cross of Calvary. And all of God’s divine and eternal attributes were reconciled in Him to us by His death. If you want to know the cost of your sins, look to the cross.

The blood of Jesus Christ, which represents His death for your sin, is that cost. But there is good news in His crucifixion. By calling on Him: 1) You can now be reconciled to God; 2) All sins – past, present, and future are forgiven; and 3) You have a certain hope of eternal life because of His resurrection. Death could not hold Him, and He promises the same to you! He rose again by the power of the Eternal God. Jesus has prevailed; Jesus is Lord!

Lord, may we never boast in gold or silver. May we never look with prideful satisfaction upon a good-paying job or a large home. May we never trust in anything so temporary or trivial. Instead, may we trust in the glory of the cross and in the perfect blood which restores us to You. Glory to God in the highest! Jesus is Lord! Amen.

He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you... 1 Peter 1:20

Peter makes a statement now which confirms what he said earlier in verses 1:10-12. There he mentioned the prophets who spoke of the coming Christ – what He would do, who He would minister to, etc. Even though their writings were veiled to them, their words showed that what occurred in Christ was not merely chance or happenstance, but rather it was intentionally designed and spoken of in advance. And so, he says, “He was foreordained.”

The correct translation is “He was foreknown.” The idea of His being foreordained is also taught in Scripture. For example, prophecies about Him speak of His crucifixion. This means that it was certainly foreordained. It was something that was planned in advance to occur. That is not what Peter is speaking of here. Rather, he is referring to knowledge concerning the works of Christ, as noted above (what He would do, who He would minister to, etc.).

The difference is important to show that God not only planned for His advent and work in advance, but that the knowledge of this was also provided in advance. This is then to support our faith in the occurrence. It is good to have faith in something, but without a reasonable basis for that faith, there is nothing to actually support it. But in the next verse, this is what Peter will state concerning what the foreknowledge of Christ was for – believing God and having properly directed faith and hope in Him.

Peter then says that this foreknowledge was “before the foundation of the world.” Everything about what Christ would do was foreknown. The plan was determined before the first particle of mass was created or the first tick of the cosmic clock began. God would be in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself, and the entire plan was foreknown, to the minutest detail. The fact that Lot would sleep with both of his daughters, and then the descendants of both of those unions would lead to Christ, was known.

The union of Boaz and Ruth, and all of the details of how that would come to pass, was known to God. And, and that union was a part of the unfolding genealogy which led to Christ as well. Everything that went into the human lineage of Jesus was carefully determined and was foreknown. And with that knowledge came the record of those particular stories and the utterances of the prophets. All of these records were given to solidify, in the hearts and minds of the people, that Christ Jesus is truly the center of God’s redemptive plans, and – therefore – our faith in Him is firm and sure.

Peter then says, “but was manifest in these last times for you.” Here a change in the tense of the verbs occurs. The word signifying “foreknown” is a perfect participle (having been foreknown). It is a complete thought that was known and remains known from before creation even to the present time. The idea here, though not identical, is similar to the words of Hebrews 13:8 which says, “Jesus Christ *is* the same yesterday, today, and forever.” The two ideas harmonize in the fact that what was known about Jesus is revealed in Jesus. He has been foreknown, and in Him there is no change.

The second verb, which is translated as “was manifest,” is in the aorist tense. What occurred happened at a specific moment in time. This is what the prophets (mentioned

above) searched diligently to know. They understood that the divine hand of inspiration which was upon them spoke of something specific, and that it certainly would come to pass. But as Peter said then, “To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering.” This is what he says again here. Their words which spoke of Christ were for our benefit, and then Christ was made manifest – as they prophesied – for us.

The idea of “these last times” speaks of the current dispensation. The time of the law had passed, and the age of grace began. It is an indeterminate amount of time which will end according to God’s pre-ordained plan for the ages. Until then, believers in Christ are living in what is referred to here as “these last times.” As Peter is speaking to the Jewish believers specifically, the idea of the last times includes the understanding of their Messiah at both the beginning and the ending of the current time, just before the millennial kingdom. Because of this, “these last times” certainly include the final seven years that comprise the tribulation period which comes just prior to the millennium. Peter will complete this thought in the next verse.

Life application: Genesis 1:1 says, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” There was a point when time began, before which it didn’t exist. Einstein realized this when he postulated the Theory of Relativity. This means that the incarnation and work of Jesus Christ was determined before time itself. This isn’t a misreading of one verse either. Revelation 13:8 repeats this amazing concept –

“All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.”

This verse is speaking of unbelievers who have rejected the “Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.” Instead, they turn to the antichrist in worship and adoration. The point not to miss from Peter’s words though is that Jesus Christ, God incarnate, was destined for the horrors of the cross before time, space, or matter existed. The mind of God, which is infinite in knowledge, saw our sin and rebellion, and purposed that instead of us being cast into hell, He would accept the punishment in the body of Jesus.

The next time you determine to click on a porn site for a peek, steal a pack of gum for a kick, lie to your boss about why you came to work late – or a zillion other sins of the flesh – remember that Jesus’ suffering came about because of our rebellion and it came at a point when the matter which comprises our physical bodies had not yet been created. We are accountable to the One who spoke us into existence. Remember this and be holy, even as He is holy.

Amazing love – that You, O God, could look through the immense continuum of time to the moment we would live, and seeing all of our sins, You would still allow us to be born and live. We have rebelled, we have turned from You, we have done wickedly, and yet You still loved us enough to send Jesus to die for the sins we have committed. And You sent Him even before we had done these things. What amazing love! What amazing grace! Thank You for our Lord Jesus. Amen.

...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. 1 Peter 1:21

Here, we have words which carry a theme similar to that of Paul in Romans –

“but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead.” Romans 4:24

Both Peter who is writing to his Jewish brethren, and Paul who is writing to the Gentiles, carry a uniform message concerning salvation and what it means. They both speak forth the same gospel message. Understanding this – that there is only one gospel for Jew and for Gentile – Peter begins with, “who through Him believe in God.”

The word “Him” refers to Christ Jesus, who was referred to in the previous verses. It is through faith in Christ that we “believe in God.” There is a truth that almost every person in human history believes in “God.” There are supposed exceptions, such as those referred to in Psalm 14 –

“The fool has said in his heart,
‘There is no God.’” Psalm 14:1

But these people, today called “atheists,” are deniers of God, not because they actually don’t believe in Him, but because they actively refuse to acknowledge Him. A simple proof of this proceeds from their lips the moment true calamity strikes – “O God!” In the end, there is no way to get around the truth that there is a God.

And so, really, everyone believes in “God.” The marked difference between true Christians and all others is that Christians believe in God in a relationship through Jesus Christ. In other words, they hold to the universally accepted premise that there is a God, but they also accept that Jesus Christ is God, revealing Himself to the world through His incarnation. Thus, the God of Christianity cannot be equated to any other “god” that man believes in.

Peter continues to describe the true God, and His relationship to Christ, by saying, “who raised Him from the dead.” This is referring to the human aspect of Christ who lived out the law, fulfilled all of its precepts, and then gave His life in the final fulfilling act of the Old Covenant. In doing this, He brought it to its completion and initiated a New Covenant in His blood.

In this satisfaction of the law, a portion of which was a substitutionary atonement for the sins of those who believe, God was satisfied. He accepted the payment for those who believe, and He also raised Christ Jesus from the dead. This is because “the wages of sin is death.” As Christ died not for His own sins, but for the sins of others, God found no fault in Him, meaning nothing worthy of the death He died. His death was solely on behalf of others. In this, Peter cried out in Acts 2 –

“...whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.” Acts 2:24

Christ could not stay dead. As there was nothing in Him deserving of death, God raised Him up. Further, He not only raised Him, but He also “gave Him glory.” The glory spoken of here is that of power, authority, majesty, and splendor. For example, Jesus says in Matthew 28, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.” And again, Paul speaks of the glory of the risen Christ numerous times, such as –

“Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, ¹¹ and *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

-Philippians 2:9-11

The glory given to Christ is that of the glory of God Himself. He is the incarnate word of God, forever glorified. Peter then says to his audience that this is “so that your faith and hope are in God.” It is a note of exclusivity. Peter is not speaking of “hope in God” in the general sense. As noted, people of every religion, and even those who espouse no religion, possess a hope in God. Peter’s words are speaking of a hope in the true God who has revealed Himself through Christ Jesus. He is the expression of God that the true God accepts for righteousness when faith is placed in Him.

Logically, it cannot be that Jesus is anything other than God based upon Peter’s words. The reason for this is that Jesus’ human nature is derived from His human genealogy. He was born in the womb of a woman who had descended from a line of humans, and who

were originally created by God. As humanity is a part of creation, and as man can see the evidence of creation in all its marvel – from the intricacy of the smallest subatomic particles to the farthest recesses of the galactic expanse – Peter cannot be speaking of anything which is created. As Jesus’ physical nature was a part of this creation, it is obvious that Peter is speaking of the divine aspect of Christ which is proven through His outworkings in His humanity.

It is in the incarnation itself, the uniting of God with man, that we find that properly directed “faith and hope are in God.” No other faith in God is acceptable for reconciliation and a right relationship with our Creator.

Life application: It is the power of God (repeated elsewhere in the New Testament) that raised Jesus from the dead. A common misunderstanding of cults is this –

- The Father is God.
- Jesus is not the Father.
- Therefore, Jesus is not God.

This is a mistake in reasoning known as the *Fallacy of Illicit Major*. “Major” refers to the major (or first) premise, not a person in the military. The major premise may be true, but it is not all-inclusive. Just because the Father is God, it doesn’t in any way negate the Son or the Holy Spirit from being God.

The second premise is true and is all-inclusive – the Father is not the Son and the Son is not the Father. Based on the incorrect thought of the first premise though, the conclusion is false, and the argument is invalid. Take time to read up on fallacies because it will help you think more clearly and defend your position, which should be completely defensible.

This, however, doesn’t mean it will be accepted, so don’t get too frustrated. No matter what others believe, it is God who raised Jesus from the dead “and gave Him glory.” Again, this doesn’t mean Jesus lacked glory or isn’t part of the Godhead. Jesus, in His High Priestly prayer, speaks of the glory He shared with the Father before creation (see John 17:5). Jesus Christ is not a vain hope, nor is He a created being. He is the incarnate Word of God; the eternal Son of the Father. As it says, “your faith and your hope are in God.” When your faith is in Jesus Christ, your faith is in God. If your faith is not in Jesus Christ, you fail to honor the Father – “If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor (John 12:26).”

Heavenly Father, from You comes logic, order, reason, and wisdom. Give us the strong desire to look into these aspects of understanding that we may be able to defend our positions when faced with difficult challenges. By doing this, may You be glorified and may the lost be directed to You. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, 1 Peter 1:22

Peter now relays a word of exhortation concerning the treatment of the brethren because of the state in which the believer in Christ exists. He begins with, “Since you have purified your souls.”

Here is a word, translated as “purifying,” which speaks of purification from defilement. It can be either ceremonial or moral purification. In the Old Testament, it was the type of purification Nazirites would take upon themselves, setting themselves apart to God. It is used in John 11:55 when speaking of being purified for the Passover.

Peter says that believers have purified their “souls in obeying the truth.” In other words, by faith in Christ, a person is so purified. This is a marvelous parallel to the thought of what Paul said in the book of 1 Corinthians –

“For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. ⁸Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened *bread* of sincerity and truth.” 1 Corinthians 5:7, 8

Paul, writing to Gentiles, has said that Christ is “our Passover.” The purification spoken of by Peter, like that in John 11 (noted above), is accomplished in both Jew and Gentile in order that they may both be acceptable for the true Passover, and indeed for every spiritual application of which Christ has fulfilled through His work. This purification, Peter says, is “in obeying the truth through the Spirit.”

This follows logically with what Paul says in Ephesians 1. When a person believes, they are – at that time – sealed with the Spirit. The harmony between what Paul says and what Peter says is to be noted. They both speak concerning the same salvation and the same purification.

The NKJV then cites Peter as saying, “in sincere love of the brethren.” By using the word “in,” this can be misinterpreted as signifying that the action is tied to the sincere love of

the brethren. This is not the intent. Rather, it should read “to,” or “into,” “for,” or so on. The NIV, which is somewhat of a paraphrase, reveals the intent –

“Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for each other...”

The sincere love is a result of the purification, not a part of it coming about. Because this occurs, Peter then says that believers are to “love one another fervently with a pure heart.” As we have been so purified, we are to then express that purification appropriately in our actions. What we do is to correspond to the state to which we have been brought.

The word translated as “fervently” is one found only here and in Acts 12:5. It literally means, “fully stretched.” It is as if a rope is pulled so that it is fully taut and there is no slack at all in it. The slackness would be equated to a less-than-expected treatment of others. Therefore, our love of the brothers is to be fully stretched out, without such slack. It is also to be “with a pure heart.”

The heart in the Bible speaks of the seat of reasoning. Thus, our minds are to be in a state which conveys only pure and fully expressed love for the brethren. There should be nothing that causes a deviation from a positive mental attitude which is fully expressed in sincere love.

Life application: Again, as for the umpteenth millionth time in the epistles, we have a verse that proclaims eternal salvation. If our souls are purified, then we are cleansed and now acceptable to God who loved us enough to send Jesus. Peter’s words show that the purification is done, and then he expresses our need to work it out in a certain way. In other words, the purification is complete, even if our performance in that state is not.

Why is this so important to understand? It is because failing to comprehend this leads people into bondage, and they become easily directed by the whims of their spiritual leaders. It also leads to the financial gain of those leaders because their followers are bound into works-based religion. But, if our souls are purified through faith in Jesus Christ, then we are at liberty in and through Christ.

Ephesians says that when we believe we are sealed with the Holy Spirit. This is a deposit or guarantee which will never be revoked. Once sealed, we can repeatedly pray for and receive His filling which allows us to obey the truth. This leads us, as Peter says, into sincere love of the brethren – a love which is fervent and with a pure heart.

Yes, we will have conflicts with fellow believers. Yes, they will often irk us with their peculiarities just as we will irk them (make sure you look in the mirror and evaluate the irk-factor in yourself instead of always pointing it out in others). But an irksome person can still be loved.

This is the bond we need to work on. Liking or not-liking to be with someone is much different than loving them unconditionally. If you are having trouble loving someone in your congregation because he is so annoying, irritating, weird, or whatever, then pray that the Spirit will give you the grace to bear with him, despite his peculiarities.

True change comes from the heart in each of us, not in merely changing the world and its people who are around us.

Heavenly Father, grant us the ability to love those that we find so vastly different than us. Help us to remember that they are who they are because of their own makeup and life experiences. As these have shaped them and define them, may we learn to accept them as long as they are otherwise living in accord with what You expect of Your people. To Your glory, O God. Amen.

...having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever, 1 Peter 1:23

In the previous verse, Peter spoke of the state of the believer in Christ – he is purified in soul. He now describes how that came about by saying, “having been born again.” More correctly, it says, “having been begotten again.” It is the same word used in verse 1:3, and this is its second and final use in Scripture. It signifies being born from above. It is the regeneration of the believer which occurs based on faith in Christ.

Peter next describes what this state of being begotten from above means by saying, “not of corruptible seed but incorruptible.” The word “seed” here is unique in Scripture, *spora*. It is a noun that signifies “a sowing.” In other words, “not of a corruptible sowing.” Peter is speaking of the process of generation in humanity. Our “sowing” is corruptible, and that results in a corruptible human. However, the sowing which is from above is incorruptible.

What this means is that it is imperishable, immortal, without the possibility of degradation. It is another of the countless appeals to the doctrine of eternal salvation. How can it be that God regenerates the believer through an incorruptible sowing if the salvation is not eternal? The thoughts are contradictory, and the theology is confused.

Peter then says that this comes about “through the word of God.” This is speaking not of Christ, the incarnate Word of God, but of the transmitted word of God. This will be seen in the next verse, but it is also referred to in verses 1:10-12. There Peter said, “Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace *that would come to you.*”

First, Peter equates the “salvation” noted there with “having been born again” here. Again, the two describe the same thing, and it cries out “eternal salvation.” Secondly, he speaks of their prophecies as “the word of God.” He then says that this word “lives and abides forever.”

Albert Barnes notes that the Greek provides an ambiguity which means that it could either be speaking of God who lives forever, or of the word which lives forever. The ambiguity may be purposeful. Peter may have wanted people to question his words and conclude that the word which issues forth from God is an expression of God. Thus, it is eternal, just as God is. Because it could have been expressed more clearly, this may be why he wrote it as he did.

Either way, Peter’s use of two different prepositions shows the source of the regeneration and the medium through which it is imparted. He says “of” seed and “through” the word. The seed is the source, the word is how that seed is transmitted. This is another biblical proof that the words of Scripture are necessary in order for conversion to take place. It speaks against visions and dreams as a means of conversion, despite the countless claims made throughout the ages that people have come to Jesus in such a manner.

Life application: In contrast to the traditions of men and false additions to true faith, we have the word of God – the Holy Scriptures which are given to us to guide our lives and give us a clear and pertinent understanding of the things of God. It is through this precious gift that we hear the message of faith which can save. Elsewhere, Paul states it like this –

“So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” Romans 10:17

The logical connection is made when we hear and receive the word properly relayed from the pages of the Bible. This is what stirs up our faith, and it is this faith which brings new life from above – that of being “born again.” Though a term only found here in 1 Peter, it is derived from the same root word that Jesus uses when speaking of being

“born again” in John 3. Understanding this should make us realize the immense importance of reading and knowing the Bible.

If we are “born again...through the word of God,” and Jesus says you must be born again in order to see the Kingdom of God, then it follows that misunderstanding the Bible can lead you to a false Jesus and a false gospel. But, when we understand the simplicity of the gospel, and accept Jesus as the incarnate Subject of the gospel, then we are truly born again – “not of corruptible seed, but incorruptible.”

Our acceptance of the gospel is a seed which shall never die, but which will continue to thrive in us, even to eternal life.

Have you asked Jesus to forgive you of your sins and grant you eternal life? If not, call on Him today. He is the precious gift of God for the salvation of all people who trust in Him.

Let us thank God for Jesus today!

Almighty and most-wise Creator, praises and honor belong to You alone. In Your infinite wisdom, You sent us Jesus to lead us back to You and to bestow upon us eternal life. Our songs of praise and thanks will never end as we hail You for all eternity – Worthy is our God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

...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... 1 Peter 1:24**

Peter now begins a comparison between the “corruptible seed” and that which is “incorruptible” which he spoke of in the preceding verse. He will cite Scripture to make his point. His citation is then divided up into two verses. This first verse speaks of the temporary, corruptible state of the world, including that of fallen man.

His words are a citation from Isaiah 40:6-8. In his citation, it appears he was quoting from memory because it is a mixture of the Hebrew and the Greek of Isaiah’s words, showing that he had probably memorized both at some point. The NKJV translation, which is from the Hebrew, says –

“The voice said, ‘Cry out!’
And he said, ‘What shall I cry?’
‘All flesh *is* grass,
And all its loveliness *is* like the flower of the field.
7 The grass withers, the flower fades,
Because the breath of the LORD blows upon it;
Surely the people *are* grass.
8 The grass withers, the flower fades,
But the word of our God stands forever.’” Isaiah 40:6-8

The 40th chapter of Isaiah corresponds to the 40th book of the Bible, Matthew. It speaks of the coming Messiah as He would be revealed. In the quote, it speaks of “all flesh.” There is no distinction between Jew and Gentile. Instead, the comparison of all to the grass is made. Peter retains this thought, even though he is addressing Jewish believers. He is speaking of the “corruptible seed” which is unregenerate man.

In this state, he says, “All flesh is as grass.” Anyone who pays attention to the world around him knows the extremely temporary nature of grass. It is eaten up by animals, it dries up and dies without rain, and it fades away with the coming of the blazing sun or the winter season. There is nothing permanent about it.

And so, it is with man. Scripture proclaims that he is just as temporary and fleeting with the words, “And all the glory of man as the flower of the grass.” It is a one-to-one comparison – as is the grass, so is man. In this, “The grass withers.” The verb is aorist, and so it more appropriately reads, “The grass withered.” This is not a comparison about the value of man, but rather a comparison about the transitory state of man. The grass was healthy and vibrant, and then it was withered. The idea is that of an immediate passing from one state to the other. From there, Peter says, “And its flower falls away.”

The beauty of the grass with its resplendent flower simply falls off and returns to the earth once again. The idea is that man with his beautiful form at one point in life becomes withered and dried up in a moment. What is eighty years to a man who is looking back on his life? He was born, he was filled with youth and vigor, he matured into a man of wisdom and wealth; and then all of a sudden, he was wrinkled, weak, and incapable of caring for himself. And when the Lord determines, he closes his eyes for the last time and is soon interred again in the earth from which he sprang.

This is the hopeless, temporary, and vain existence which is the life of man, and which Peter first focuses on. In the next verse, he will show the contrast between this corruptible seed, and of that which is incorruptible.

Life application: It is true that this verse should have the next verse included with it in order to be fully understood, but one step at a time will give the mind time to ponder first the words of our corruptible state. Next, we will get to better news, so be patient!

Our years, though few, take their toll on us and bring about changes that are not only permanent, but are physically and mentally degrading. Like the grass, what was green and lush in the morning is dry and crinkly in the evening. Soon its flower falls away and then nothing is left but the slow process of returning to the soil from which it came. Taking heed to Solomon's warning in Ecclesiastes 12, we should remember our Creator now, before these times of aging have ended us, and we go to our final resting spot. Remember Him now!

Glorious God, seventy years comes out to a bit more than twenty-five thousand days. Many of us have seen far too many of those go by already, and for many of us the majority of them have been unfaithfully negligent concerning our responsibilities to You. Forgive us of our past times of thoughtlessness, and help us to live our days rightly – praising You, speaking of You, and being filled with You! Amen.

But the word of the LORD endures forever.”

Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you. 1 Peter 1:25

Peter finishes the quote from Isaiah 40 here. In the Hebrew of Isaiah, it says, “But the word of our God stands forever.” Here, Peter makes two changes in thought. The first is from what he said in verse 1:23. There, he used the Greek word *logos* when speaking of the “word” of God. Here, he uses the word *rhema*.

The word *logos* is a word that expresses a thought. When it is used of Christ Jesus, is speaking of Him expressing the thoughts of the Father. The word *rhema* speaks of a matter which is being conveyed, such as a saying, report, command, promise, and so on. It is often used to speak of the hearing of faith, meaning “the divine inbirthing of faith” (HELPS Word Studies). Paul speaks of faith coming through the word (*rhema*) of God in Romans 10:17, it is this word which speaks of the word (*logos*) of God, meaning Christ Jesus, the expression of God in Whom God reveals Himself.

The second change that Peter makes is from the words of Isaiah. There in Isaiah 40, it says “our God.” Here, Peter uses the term *kurios*, or “lord.” Peter is speaking of the word of the Lord, meaning Jesus. Therefore, he is clearly referring to Jesus as God. The reason for the change from *logos* in verse 23 to *rhema* here seems obvious. Just as he is showing that Jesus is God, he is also equating the word (*logos*) of God which is the expression of Himself to the saying (*rhema*) of the Lord. Though the two are not the same, both carry the same weight and authority, and both are “forever.”

Peter then takes that and more fully explains it by saying, “Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you.” Isaiah equated the state of man to the grass that withers. Both are temporary and corruptible. However, the word of the divine inbirthing of faith is incorruptible. He has quoted Isaiah’s words to support what he said in verse 1:23 –

“...having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever.”

Peter is proving the doctrine of eternal salvation. The seed in the believer, by which he is born again, is incorruptible. This is because it is the word of the Lord (which is the word of God), which brings about the inbirthing of faith. He is giving a theological calculation for us to consider: $1 + 1 = 2$. Peter, inspired by God, is showing that Jesus is God, that His word is the word of God, and that His word is one which converts the corruptible into the incorruptible.

Robert Young gives an exacting sense of the translation by saying, “and the saying of the Lord doth remain -- to the age; and this is the saying that was proclaimed good news to you.”

The believer receives the incorruptible word, and because it is incorruptible, it is a word that will endure for eternity.

Life application: No sooner do we rise up than we age, die, and return to the earth. Despite all of our hopes in politicians, charismatic figures, large incomes, or worldly possessions, none of these things will last. The car we bought that we just “had to have” four years ago is already breaking down and falling to pieces. The politician we thought would correct our problems two years ago turned out to be just another person who licks his finger and holds it up to see which way the wind is blowing. The paychecks of the last year have all been spent and our bank account is empty.

But the word of the Lord endures forever. As the sands of time have speedily fled through the hourglass, and as man's time on earth has passed from generation to generation, the word of God stands as a testament to what is and what isn't proper. If we want to know how things will turn out, we don't need a horoscope, an astrologist, or a mystical seer.

Instead, we merely need to look into the pages of the Bible, and we can see the end of man, the beginning of eternity, and the glory of God – all wrapped up in the Person of Jesus Christ. It is His gospel which alone reveals these things, and it is by faith in Him alone that we can participate in the good and eternal side of what the future holds. When we reject Him, we have only a hopeless anticipation of sadness, destruction, and exile. Let us make the right choices now, and let the Word of God abide soundly in our hearts and souls.

Lord God, today may many call on Jesus as Lord and Savior; today may we who have gone astray renew our hope in Jesus our Lord; and today may we look to the cross and leave the world in our wake. Blessed be the name of the Lord on whose gospel of peace we can rest our hope. Glory to the holy Lamb of God, our Lord Jesus. Amen.

CHAPTER 2

Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking,
1 Peter 2:1

Beginning in Chapter 2, Peter writes “therefore.” It is right to remember that when you see the word “therefore,” you should stop and see what it is there for. In other words, we should go back and review what has been previously said. Since the last “therefore” which was in verse 1:13, some of the points which Peter wrote were –

- 1) We will be judged according to our works, and so we should live accordingly.
- 2) We have been redeemed, not with corruptible things, but with the precious blood of Jesus.
- 3) Jesus was foreordained before the foundation of the world, and was manifest now for our sake.
- 4) Through Him, we believe in God, and our faith and our hope rests in God.
- 5) Because of this faith (obeying the truth through the Spirit), we are to love one another with a pure heart.
- 6) This love is possible because we have been born again into incorruptible life by the word of God; the gospel of our salvation.

Therefore and because of these points, we need to “lay aside” anything which would hinder, or be a detriment to, the gospel of our salvation. Such things include:

- *Malice* – the intent or desire to cause harm or pain to someone;
- *Deceit* – the intent to defraud or deceive someone;
- *Hypocrisy* – making false claims or pretenses of having admirable principles, beliefs, or feelings;
- *Envy* – having resentful or unhappy feelings of wanting what someone else possesses; and
- *Evil speaking* – engaging in gossip, coarse language, willful destruction of others with the tongue, etc.

Life application: Peter has given us a short list of things that are incompatible with our life in Christ. We are not to do these things because we bear the name of Christ, and our conduct and actions reflect on Him in the eyes of others.

One of the most common claims against Christians is that of being hypocrites. Often, that is unfounded and is simply a person's own misunderstanding of our life and freedom in Christ. However, it is also a common trait to be found in many Christians, maybe especially between them.

If we put aside such things, we will have a strong and admirable life-walk in the gospel, thus bringing credit and honor on Jesus our Lord and God the Father. Pay heed! We are called to holy living!

Lord God and Heavenly Father, please guide us in our walk and keep us from the sinful attitudes mentioned in Your word, of which we are to avoid. These things, from time to time, well up in us. They can cause division, animosity, and strife. Help us, O Lord, to bring honor to You and to put to rest these things. Help us to be the godly Christians You have called us to be. Amen.

...as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby,
1 Peter 2:2

Peter now turns from the negatives (laying aside) from the previous verse, and to a positive. In laying aside that which is unworthy of the life of believers, he shows what should be the greatest desire and yearning for them. This is so much the case that he chooses "newborn babes" as examples.

He is speaking of actual, physical newborn babies, not those spiritually born from above. However, he is addressing those who are born from above and showing them what their spiritual hunger should be like. A newborn baby knows almost nothing because it has had no experience to build on. But one thing that a baby knows (well, apart from crying – which is intended to remedy the other thing!) is that it is hungry.

A baby might need to be taught where to find the source of that which will satisfy his hunger, but once he arrives at that source, he knows instinctively what to do and he does not stop doing it until he has had his fill. The mother's pure milk, designed by God specifically for him, is what he yearns for. In taking it in, the need is met, and the baby is satisfied.

In like manner, Peter says that believers should "desire the pure milk of the word." Just as there is a source of life which waits at the mother's breast, there is also a source of life which is designed by God that flows forth from Him, through His word. The word Peter uses, and which is translated as "desire," signifies "to yearn for." It speaks of a

longing that needs to be satisfied. It is used by Paul seven times, once by James, and now this is its final use in Scripture.

It should be that our desire to understand our new birth in Christ, and all that it entails, is as great as that of the baby, longing to obtain the milk – the one thing that he knows will satisfy – which is waiting to fill his stomach. And as the source of a baby’s growth is from that milk, Peter shows that it is the “pure milk of the word” which is needed so “that you may grow thereby.”

A person’s doctrine will either be shallow and ineffective, or it will be somewhere all the way up to tall, sound, and well-established. The only way for it to achieve the latter is to first have a thorough knowledge of what the word actually says. Once that is known, even if the theology which comes from the knowledge of the word is not yet developed, there is a basis for higher theology which is sound.

In other words, the word itself leads into doctrines. Doctrines are usually developed over great periods of time, and they are often refined as others provide their own thinking and insight into the particular doctrine. However, if one does not know the word before being handed a doctrine, the only thing that person can do is accept it or reject it at face value, but it cannot be evaluated based on the word itself – because the knowledge of the word is lacking.

However, if a basic knowledge of the word is already at hand, the doctrine can be evaluated and shown to be sound or unsound from the knowledge of the word which already is established in the individual. An example is that either Jesus is God or Jesus is not God. A person with no basic knowledge of the word is told by a Jehovah’s Witness that Jesus is not God. As he has no knowledge of the word, he is more likely to accept this as true. From that point on, he will always evaluate the word from a presupposition that Jesus is not God, and his doctrinal studies will exclude anything which contradicts that in him.

However, if a person has read the Bible carefully and thoroughly, even once, it is as evident as the nose on the face that Jesus is God. The doctrine of the deity of Christ may be undeveloped, but the basic understanding of the truth of the tenet is instilled in him. Because of this, when he hears what the JW says, he can dismiss it as a ludicrous precept which was obtained through false doctrine.

The problem is that without first knowing the word to at least some extent, we cannot properly evaluate the higher doctrines which are then presented. There is no basis for

doing so. This is why we are to yearn after the pure milk which the word of God provides. Only in doing so will we grow. And only in doing so will we grow properly.

Life application: Five times in the New Testament the term “milk” is used. Four of those are applied to a knowledge of the word of God, which is the Bible. Each of those times, it is applied to the very basic knowledge of God and of His works as recorded there. Here is an example from the book of Hebrews –

“For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need *someone* to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food.” Hebrews 5:12.

Peter is consistent with this imagery. If a baby doesn’t get milk, the result is malnutrition and eventually death. And it is no different with those who receive Christ. Should we call on Him and neglect to grow in Him, we will backslide to a point where we become completely malnourished and we will eventually die.

This doesn’t mean a spiritual death – believers have crossed that chasm and are made alive in Christ. But a failure to pursue the things God would rather have us pursue will eventually result in picking up bad habits from the past – drugs, alcohol, etc. These will naturally lead to the destruction of our bodies and end in death.

This is the case with believers who are mentioned in the Bible, and we are no less immune to such things. So, get into the word, read it, crave it, and grow in it! God has a wonderful plan for your life if you will simply allow Him to fulfill it in you. Don’t waste your life on pursuing the wind. Instead, pursue God and His righteousness during your short walk on this earth.

Lord God, time is tight, many things draw our attention away from what is important, and we find it hard to meet our desires in reading and learning Your word. Forgive us for this and remind us of our priorities, the first and foremost of which is knowing You. Give us wisdom to set aside the trivial things that we often pursue, so that we can pursue that which is of eternal value. Hear our prayer, O God. Amen.

...if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious. 1 Peter 2:3

In the previous verse, Peter spoke of desiring the “pure milk of the word.” He now shows that this word is what reveals the Lord Jesus, the Subject of his own epistle. In his words, he finishes the whole thought with, “if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious.”

It is an aorist verb, and so it more correctly says, “if indeed you tasted.” It is a specific time that Peter refers to when the appetite of each believer was excited. Further, the idea of “if” here is not indicating Peter is making a supposition that it may or may not be. Rather, it is a way of saying that it is so, and that his words are to be acted upon. It is the same type of thought that is used elsewhere in this manner. The context implies the idea of “since you have tasted.”

With this understanding, a few points can be made. First, this confirms that the word, meaning Scripture, speaks of Jesus. His words do this by having equated the word with milk, and then by encouraging the taking in of that milk (meaning the word) in order to grow. And it is that word by which we “taste” the graciousness of the Lord.

Milk = word

Taste = understanding of the Lord’s gracious nature

Then, desire the milk (continue to get to know and grow in the Lord) through His word

Secondly, the words shout out the divinity of Christ. The reason for this is that Peter is citing Psalm 34:8 –

“Oh, taste and see that the LORD *is* good;
Blessed *is* the man *who* trusts in Him!”

The psalmist called out for those who seek the workings of the Lord (meaning Jehovah, the God of the Old Testament) to “taste and see” that He is good. Peter uses the idea from that psalm, and he applies it to the working of Jesus, saying, “if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious.” He is making a one to one comparison between “Jehovah” and “Jesus.” In doing so, he is either blaspheming the name of Jehovah, or he is proclaiming that Jesus is Jehovah, the Lord God.

Life application: Have you ever looked at food coming out of the oven and started to salivate in expectation of the delight to come? Or have you ever heard someone speaking about a meal and all of a sudden, your mouth starts to water? This is the mental picture that both Peter and the psalmist of old are trying to relay to the reader concerning their words.

The Lord is to be desired with a yearning even stronger than that of food when we are hungry. And not just any food, but the most delightful tasting, yummiest feast we could imagine. This is why Peter told us to “desire the pure milk of the word.” It is so that we can grow in it, be nourished by it, and have our souls satisfied from the delight of it.

If you have never had this yearning to read the Bible, or if you once had it, but now it is faded, then ask the Lord to clear out all the unhealthy diet in your life (too many Gummi Worms?), so that you will again have the time and the desire to seek Him. A diet of TV, Facebook, and shopping can only take away the time you might otherwise have spent in His presence, learning about Him. Like eating sweets, those things don't nourish, and they only last a moment. But the Bible and its contents will feed you for eternity.

Take time today – yes, even now! – to commit to reading your Bible. May you be blessed as you do – to the glory of God.

O God, let us not squander our few years here on the trivial and temporary. Instead, help us to focus on the eternal and everlasting. We desire to follow You, but far too often we get sidetracked from that set goal. So please Lord, kindly steer us in the right direction and remind us of the greater and eternal blessings that come from seeking You first. Amen.

Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, 1 Peter 2:4

In the previous verse, it was seen that Peter has directly equated Jesus, of whom he was writing about, to the Lord (meaning Jehovah of the Old Testament). As certain as that was from the context, it continues to be verified with his words now. He says, “Coming to Him.” Is he writing about Jesus or God? The answer is “both.”

It is obviously referring to Jesus, because he says in this same verse, “chosen by God.” But he has just equated the Subject (the Lord) of the previous verse to the Lord of the Old Testament by citing the psalm which was referring to the Lord (Jehovah). The words cannot be misconstrued. To deny the deity of Christ is to deny a fundamental tenant of the Bible, and it is to accept heresy.

Peter uses a present participle in the words, “Coming to Him” As Vincent’s Word Studies explains, “Indicating a close (πρός) and an habitual (present participle) approach and an intimate association.” We are to come near to the Lord at all times, and it is to be in a manner which is as if we were coming to our closest relative or friend.

Peter next describes “Him,” by saying, “as to a living stone.” The words “as to” are inserted and unnecessary. He is describing Jesus. “Coming to Him; a living stone.” It is similar to Peter’s own words of Acts 4 –

“This is the ‘stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.’” Acts 4:11

The reason for Peter saying this is because Jesus used the term of Himself, citing Scripture as He did. That is seen in all three synoptic gospels, such as in Luke 20 – “What then is this that is written:

‘The stone which the builders rejected
Has become the chief cornerstone’?” Luke 20:17

Jesus was citing the 118th Psalm, which says –

“The stone *which* the builders rejected
Has become the chief cornerstone.” Psalm 118:22

Jesus was indicating that He was the fulfillment of this messianic psalm. Peter confirms this in Acts 4, and he continues to repeat that now. This will be more fully evident when he cites both the psalm and Isaiah 28 in just a couple verses. Those verses together call out concerning the working of God in Christ. So important is this thought which is seen in the psalms and in Isaiah, that Paul refers to it in Romans 9:32, 33 and Ephesians 2:19-22 as well.

Paul’s words, especially in Ephesians, shows that he and Peter are speaking about the same gospel and the same salvation for Jew and Gentile. This is evident because Peter was speaking to Jews in Acts 4, and he is addressing Jews in this epistle as well. However, Paul is writing to Gentiles in Ephesians 2:19-22 –

“Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, ²⁰ having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief *cornerstone*, ²¹ in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, ²² in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.”

Both apostles refer to Jesus as the cornerstone, and both refer to what God is doing in Christ with his redeemed. We are (Jew and Gentile) being built into an edifice where God will dwell. The heretical doctrine which teaches that there is one salvation for Jew and another for Gentile is to be rejected because it teaches two gospels, not one. There is one gospel for both. To teach otherwise is to teach a false gospel.

Peter next continues with, “rejected indeed by men.” This is what Psalm 118 prophesied, and it is what came about when the leaders of Israel, fulfilling the very words of the Scriptures they were the stewards of, rejected Christ Jesus.

The word translated as “rejected” signifies “to reject after determining something is useless” (HELPS WORD Studies). The leadership of Israel evaluated Christ Jesus, and they found Him tasteless and not worthy of their consideration. In this, they rejected Him as their Messiah. Peter uses the word “men” here, instead of “builders,” as in the psalm to show the obvious contrast between them and God. This is seen in his final words of the verse which say, “but chosen by God and precious.”

Though He was rejected by mere men who are foolish and without understanding, Christ was chosen by God who is all-glorious and all-knowing. The contrast is obvious, and it is Peter’s way of calling out, “Whose side are you on? God’s, or that of man?” For those he is addressing, meaning believers, he is encouraging them to be bold and to act in accord with their calling (as noted in verse 2:1-3).

The final word, “precious,” speaks of that which is held in honor, as of in personal respect. God has placed Christ Jesus at the highest point of honor, making Him the chief cornerstone in the house that He is building. Peter will continue with this thought over the coming verses, demonstrating fully and completely that Jesus is the Messiah, that Jesus is God, and that there is one gospel for all who believe. The message he proclaims is the same as the message that Paul has already put forth in his epistles.

Life application: What does it mean to be a “living stone?” The Bible sometimes uses terms which seem contradictory to the sensibilities of the world.

Take the term “living sacrifice” for example. It doesn’t make sense unless one understands what God expects of us. A sacrifice, by its very nature, is something that dies. Likewise, a “living stone” doesn’t make sense on the surface. But when we realize that it is a metaphor for something else, we can more clearly understand the concept. A stone is something unmoving and unshakable; it indicates permanence and stability.

Jesus is like that to us – He doesn’t change. Instead, He is permanent and reliable. When confronted with His doctrine, the rulers of Israel rejected Him because He wouldn’t relent in properly teaching the things of God and the surety of His word. These people were so caught up in legalism and the teachings of man that they spent their time trying to work out issues completely unrelated to what was expected of them. At one time, Jesus remarked –

“The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat. ³ Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, *that* observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do. ⁴ For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay *them* on men’s shoulders; but they *themselves* will not move them with one of their fingers.” Matthew 23:2-4

Because of this and a host of other words of condemnation, the leaders of Israel rejected Him. However, He carried out His work, the work of God, faithfully. He remains the unchangeable, glorious, and precious Living Stone. Until the end of the ages, Jesus Christ is our eternal and magnificent Lord.

Lord God, what an honor and a blessing to know that You, O Lord, are with us – firm and unchanging. Help us to likewise be firm in our convictions, resolute in our faith, and acceptable to You in our actions. May we be the same – precious living stones in the heavenly temple to come. Amen.

... 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. 1 Peter 2:5

Peter just compared the Lord to a living stone in the previous verse. He now uses the same metaphor concerning believers in Christ by saying, “you also, as living stones.” The comparison is to show that just as Christ is, so we are now as well. As Christ was chosen by God, so God has chosen us. This is to be contrasted with those who have rejected Him. He stated this in the previous verse, and he will continue to show this in the coming verses.

As living stones, Peter next says that believers “are being built up a spiritual house.” The Greek can be formed in one of two ways. The first is passive as translated here (you are being built up). It could also be active and imperative – “you also, as living stones, be built up.” This would go along with what he said in the previous verse. Believers are to come to Christ, and they are to be built up. If this is correct, it is more understandable when being applied to the Jews (his addressees) as a collective group of believers. In other words, “You all need to build yourselves up into a spiritual house.”

What seems more likely, based on the words of Paul elsewhere, is that the passive is being referred to. Christ is not only the Cornerstone, but He is also the Builder. This would then fit with Paul’s use of the same metaphor in Ephesians 2 –

“Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, ²⁰ having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief *cornerstone*, ²¹ in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, ²² in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.”

Paul is clear that Jew and Gentile are being built into the same temple, the spiritual house of God. Therefore, Peter’s words should probably also be taken in this way. The “spiritual house” is that house which is contrasted to the earthly temple made of stone and which is temporary and can be ransacked and destroyed (as the Jews know all too well, having had their temple destroyed by Babylon and by Rome). Rather, the temple of which we are a part is constructed of living stones which Paul elsewhere speaks of as being “eternal in the heavens” (see 2 Corinthians 5:1).

As our bodies will be eternal, so will the temple, which is comprised of our bodies, be eternal. Peter then continues with, “a holy priesthood.” The idea here is that in a temple, there are priests. Those who form the temple also perform the priestly functions. Teachers of a false gospel will point to this verse and say that the idea of conducting these priestly duties only belongs to Jews, but that Paul never speaks of Gentiles in this manner. This is false. Paul speaks of exactly this in Romans 15:16 –

“...to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles in the priestly service of the gospel of God, so that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.”

What Paul is saying is that sharing the gospel is a priestly duty. Paul was not of the tribe of Levi, and yet he was given the priestly duty of the New Covenant, sharing the gospel. As this is a privilege of any – Jew or Gentile – it shows that the priesthood is that of any believer who performs this service. And the purpose of this is “to offer up spiritual sacrifices.”

The idea here comes from the Old Covenant where sacrifices were literally brought up to the altar to be presented. They were brought from a lower to a high place. The picture that one should consider is that of Christ, bearing His cross up to Calvary. He is the Living Stone, and we are to emulate Him bearing ourselves up as spiritual sacrifices and living stones, conducting the priestly duties of sharing the gospel, and of bringing these offerings which are acceptable “to God through Jesus Christ.”

The implication is that despite being set apart, and despite being acceptable to offer up sacrifices to God, they are truly only acceptable because they are presented to God through Jesus. He is the One who covers the sins of His people. He is the One in whom they dwell, and it is only through Him that our imperfect offerings can be acceptable to God. One can see in Peter's words that everything comes back to Christ. Without Him, nothing the believer does is acceptable to God.

Life application: Concerning the spiritual house which both Peter and Paul refer to, no competent architect would ever start a project without knowing exactly how much material was needed to complete the task. When building a home, they will account for how much piping, electric wire, roof shingle, framing wood, etc. is needed. This can and will be calculated exactly so that budgets of time and money are met.

Likewise, God – who is infinitely wise – knows exactly what is needed to build His temple. In a pre-shadowing of this heavenly temple, He gave exact details for the earthy tabernacle (and later the temple) for the people of Israel. Here is an example of this care—

“Then David gave his son Solomon the plans for the vestibule, its houses, its treasuries, its upper chambers, its inner chambers, and the place of the mercy seat; ¹² and the plans for all that he had by the Spirit, of the courts of the house of the LORD, of all the chambers all around, of the treasuries of the house of God, and of the treasuries for the dedicated things;” 1 Chronicles 28:11, 12

These plans included all of the materials, but David also set apart detailed numbers of priests, Levites, and others who would do the work – during and after the construction of the temple. Just as these were taken care of by the Holy Spirit, so is the eternal temple being carefully constructed by God.

When the materials are ready, the temple will be finished. God alone knows when the last “living stone” will be chosen, but when that day comes, this House of God will be complete? Have you accepted Christ as Lord and Savior? Every day that goes by is one day closer to that glorious moment. Until then, let us practice our sacrifice of worship –

*Praising You today, O God – Yes! Praising You today.
We come into Your presence, Lord, so hear us when we pray!
Glory to You O God on High, may our song ever be...
Glory to the Lamb of God, Our Precious Savior is He*

Lord God, thank You for the promise of an eternal future in Your presence. And thank You that we need do nothing to earn it, but that the price has been paid already. All we need to do is accept what You have done through Your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. May we demonstrate wisdom and simply accept that which You freely offer. Thank You for Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

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.” 1 Peter 2:6

For the previous two verses, Peter has been speaking of Christ in a metaphor, as a living stone. He then equated believers to living stones as well, and notes that believers are being built into a spiritual house. To build upon this, he says “Therefore.” In essence, “Because of this, let me explain further.” And so, he continues by showing that this is a concept already established by God, by saying, “it is also contained in the Scripture.”

Here, Peter uses a rare word, *periechó*, to explain that what he is going to convey is found in a particular part of Scripture. It is contained, or enclosed, there. It is therefore something which is given as a divinely inspired precept and worthy of noting in the present context.

Scripture at the time of Peter was our Hebrew Old Testament. It is true that apostolic writings were already being considered on the same level of authority (see 2 Peter 3:15), but Peter is specifically referring to the Hebrew writings. In this case, he cites Isaiah 28:16 –

“Therefore thus says the Lord GOD:

‘Behold, I lay in Zion a stone for a foundation,

A tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation;

Whoever believes will not act hastily.”

The words Peter quotes more closely follow the Greek translation of Isaiah, rather than this Hebrew translation. It is a passage also cited by Paul in Romans 9:33. In Paul’s citation, he shows that the prophecy was referring to Jesus, and that the Jews, for the most part, missed the significance of what Christ did. His was a work which led to grace, not further law observance. Because of this, the Jews – ever intent on relying on their own works under the law – tripped over what Christ did.

Peter, speaking to the Jews, shows that this is the case. He is confirming Paul's words that there is one gospel for both Jew and for Gentile. It is that God has laid the foundation for faith in the sending of His Son, the Messiah. The words, "Behold, I lay in Zion," mean that the message was first given to the people of Israel. Christ came to them, and He accomplished His work among them. God was in Christ, bringing about His redemptive plans for Israel. In this, He was laying out His foundation upon which man would be restored to Him.

Peter then continues with, "A chief cornerstone." This is speaking of Messiah. The cornerstone is the first and most important stone of a building. From it, everything else extends. The word used by Peter for "chief cornerstone" is the Greek word *akrogoniaion*. It is a special word, unique to the Bible, and is used only twice in its pages. The other use is by Paul in Ephesians 2:20 –

“...having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief *cornerstone*.”

Because of the importance of this stone, Peter then describes it by saying "elect." The word signifies "chosen out," or "select." Humanity is the source from which the election is made, but only one Human would be chosen out of humanity. This speaks of Christ's human nature.

God wove together the stream of humanity, recording it all the way from Adam. It wove through various people throughout history, being carefully detailed concerning who they were. This was often in stories that otherwise seem irrelevant to the narrative. But each story was selected to reveal the line from which this One would come. He is the Elect of humanity.

He is also "precious." The word signifies "highly honored." It is a state of high personal respect. Obviously, this is God's perception of Him because it is the Lord who is being cited by Isaiah, and who Peter then quotes. The Lord God has a personal high regard for this One who would be the Cornerstone. This is so much so that the quote finishes with, "And he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame."

There is to be found in this One that Isaiah speaks of a point of trust and directed-faith. In other words, The Lord God indicates that by placing faith in this Cornerstone, they will not later be a disgraced, frustrated, or ashamed. The faith placed in Him will be properly directed faith. As Peter now cites this as referring to Jesus (as did Paul), it is showing – without any doubt, vagueness, or ambiguity – that Christ is the end of the law.

This is because the law is a body of works. In essence, “Do these things and you will be considered righteous before Me.” However, the Lord says that this is no longer the case in the coming Cornerstone. In essence, “Believe on Jesus and you will be considered righteous before Me.” It shows that the law, under which Christ came, merely anticipated the coming of Christ. True righteousness is not of the law, but of acceptance of the fulfillment of the law as accomplished by Christ Jesus. He provides the justification of the law for any who will trust in Him. It is the exact same gospel message which Paul speaks of. There is one gospel by which man is saved – Jew or Gentile – and it is found in simply trusting in the work of Jesus Christ.

Life application: As noted, the cornerstone is the first stone laid when starting a building and is therefore the most important for ensuring that the building will be plumb and level. If this stone is faulty in material, the building will fail. Likewise, if it is placed incorrectly, the building will fail. Because of this, the cornerstone must be very carefully chosen; it must be flawless. It must also be laid by the most skilled builder of all. In the case of Christ, the Cornerstone, the Builder is God Himself.

God is building a temple and He began with His own Son, Jesus Christ. From this starting point, believers from all ages are being built into a spiritual temple. If you have trusted Jesus Christ as your Savior, you have crossed from death to life and have been selected as a stone in the living temple where God will reside for all eternity. This has been guaranteed by the sealing of His Holy Spirit and can never be taken away. You will never be put to shame.

Out of gratitude, awe, and joy, we should therefore endeavor to be acceptable to God in all we do. If you are struggling with this today, as we all do from time to time, let’s pray about it...

Lord God, as living stones in Your glorious temple, we know we need to be holy and acceptable to You. O, but we fail so often. Fill us with Your Holy Spirit as we honor you through the study of Your word, through praising You, and through praying to You. Do this, so that we might live right, act appropriately, and conduct our affairs wisely, and so bring honor to You. This we pray that You will receive the glory You are due through our life and actions. Amen.

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,” 1 Peter 2:7

Peter now expands on what he just said. He cited Isaiah with the words, "And he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame." The result of that is that, "Therefore, to you who believe, *He is precious.*" The NKJV translation is not reflective of the Greek. The word to describe Him is a noun, and it is preceded by an article, and the verb is present and active. It more correctly reads, "For to you that are believing is the preciousness."

The word "preciousness," signifies honor, and it contrasts the "shame" just referred to. Instead of being put to shame, there is honor for those who believe. Faith in Christ bears its own preciousness before God. However, Peter then speaks of "those who are disobedient." Again, the verb is present and active. It reads, "those who are disbelieving." The word signifies a refusal to be persuaded, and it is exactly what the leaders of Israel did. They hardened their hearts to the truth of God in Christ. Peter is showing a contrast between the two in order to show the results of their ongoing disbelief.

In that state, they are included among those of whom the psalmist spoke, and also of whom Christ referred to during His earthly ministry. He cited the words of Psalm 118:22 as is recorded in all three synoptic gospels. In Acts 4, Peter also cited them, and here again he cites them. It is obviously a very important concept for the Jews to understand then.

Jesus spoke to them under the law, Peter spoke to them in the Sanhedrin attempting to show them the contrast between the law and the grace which came through Christ's work, and now he continues to show the importance of what Christ did. And so, once again, he cites the psalm, beginning with, "The stone which the builders rejected."

It is referring to Christ Jesus being the one rejected by the leaders of Israel. The idea of the leaders being the builders is that they were responsible for the spiritual lives of the people. The law was given to provide life to the man who did the things of the law (Leviticus 18:5). In Christ, who was born without sin, and who lived without sin, He accomplished those things. He became the necessary stone to begin the foundation of a true temple which would be based on eternal life, but they rejected Him.

However, God did not. Instead, He was chosen of God and "Has become the chief cornerstone." The Greek reads, "*the head of the corner.*" It signifies the place where the very corner, meaning the cornerstone, sits. Everything in the foundation is dependent upon that point. Thus, everything in the building itself is dependent upon it. The true temple, where eternal life is found, is dependent upon the Stone who is Jesus.

There was no need for Paul to cite this set of words, because Paul's ministry is to the Gentiles. However, the same gospel is found for both. The difference is that there is individual salvation for Jews, and there is collective salvation for Israel. Until the leadership of Israel acknowledges Christ as this true Stone and call out for Him, Israel as a collective whole will continue to be kept from the promises to them which have been anticipated since their inception as the people of God.

Life application: Psalm 118 is known as a messianic psalm because of its predictions of the coming Messiah. Each time it is cited in the New Testament, it is specifically applied to Jesus, His work, and His rejection by the nation of Israel. Despite His rejection and their attempts to nullify His work, He prevailed and has become the chief cornerstone. It is on Him that the church is established, and from Him all else proceeds, properly aligned and both level and plumb. Any congregation or body of believers which is properly grounded in Him will be successful – not particularly in numbers or wealth, but in right doctrine and sound faith.

Peter says, "...to you who believe, He is precious." How do you care for your home? Do you treat it as a comfortable place to live, keep clean, properly maintain, and enjoy? Is your home dirty and not well maintained? We have an eternal home that is built on the precious Person of Jesus, and we are all being built into a living temple where God will reside, illuminated by His splendor through Jesus.

If you know that this is true, and that our position in this home is given to us because of what Jesus did, shouldn't we be pursuing Him, His word, and His glory? Let us endeavor to keep our spiritual house clean and free from fault, and let us further ensure that we are being built properly by reading and applying the Bible to our lives. Rather than being careless about our eternal dwelling, let us give it the attention it rightly deserves. And let us do it in a way that others will see our works and give God the glory He is due.

Yes, O God! Jesus is the precious cornerstone of our eternal dwelling. Because You have given such attention to us in the giving of Your Son, please remind us of our responsibility to you – working to become an acceptable living stone in Your glorious temple. Give us the strong urge and desire to pursue You and Your word, so that we will be properly trained in righteousness. Amen.

... and

“A stone of stumbling

And a rock of offense.”

They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed.

1 Peter 2:8

Peter continues with quotes from the Old Testament Scriptures in order to explain the contrast between those who would believe in Christ and those who would not. Here in verse 2:8, he cites Isaiah 8 –

“The LORD of hosts, Him you shall hallow;

Let Him be your fear,

And let Him be your dread.

¹⁴ He will be as a sanctuary,

But a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense

To both the houses of Israel,

As a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

¹⁵ And many among them shall stumble;

They shall fall and be broken,

Be snared and taken.” Isaiah 8:13-15

In the previous verse, he noted that even though Christ was rejected by “the builders,” He still became the chief cornerstone. His rejection by Israel had no bearing on God’s acceptance of Him and His fully completed work. Because He is the chief cornerstone. Those who believe “on Him will by no means be put to shame” (2:6). However, this same stone of trust and surety for the believer has become a “stone of stumbling” to those who rejected Him.

The idea here was first spoken by Jesus, during His earthly ministry –

“And whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder.” Matthew 21:44

The idea is that if one will not look to Christ as the foundation of his faith, Christ will become the means of their failing. It should be noted that one does not stumble over what he sees. We stumble because we fail to see, and we are thus tripped up. In other words, those who fail to believe in Christ are those who fail to see the significance of what Christ has done. The dividing line is what Christ’s ministry signifies.

As Christ came to fulfill the law, it is the law which is that dividing line. One can put his trust in Moses, meaning the law, and continue to be displeasing to God, or he can come to Christ – who is the fulfillment of the Law of Moses – and be pleasing to God. Only in the grace of Christ is reconciliation with God possible. But to those who stubbornly cling to Moses for their justification, Christ has also become “a rock of offense.”

The word used here, though different than that used in the previous clause, still signifies a stumbling block. This one is specifically the trigger of a trap which causes it to close down on an unsuspecting victim. Christ is that trigger. When what He accomplished is rejected, the individual steps right into the trap. In other words, a rejection of Christ – the fulfillment and embodiment of the law – is what triggers the trap. The law itself is what causes this. The law spoke of Christ, it was fulfilled by Christ, and it condemns those who do not come to Christ. To reject Christ is to have the trap close upon the victim.

This is seen in Peter’s next words. “They stumble, being disobedient to the word.” Jesus said as much in John 5:38-40 –

“But you do not have His word abiding in you, because whom He sent, Him you do not believe. ³⁹You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. ⁴⁰But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.”

The word which the leaders of Israel clung to, meaning the Law of Moses, spoke of Christ. The word shouts out, “Come to the Messiah and be freed from this body of death.” But they, and all who reject Jesus, are disobedient to that same word. It isn’t the New Covenant which condemns; it is the Old. To be obedient to the word, meaning the Old Testament Scriptures which speak of Jesus, means to come to Jesus and receive His gospel. Those who fail to do so stumble as Peter then says, “to which they also were appointed.”

The word Peter uses signifies to put, lay, place, set, fix, and so on. The verb form in which Peter uses is aorist passive. The event occurred, and it occurred based on their rejection of Christ. They actively reject, and the appointment is received passively. When one is cleansed through ritual purification by another, for example, he must stand and allow the other to purify him with the sprinkling. The sprinkling is passively received. This is what occurs here. The person is actively disobedient, and he passively receives his appointment of stumbling.

It should be noted that Paul cites the same verse from Isaiah 8 in Romans 9:33. The message of both of these apostles is a single, united message. It is the one gospel of salvation for Jew and Gentile. To say otherwise is to proclaim a false gospel. Of this, Paul calls such a false teaching anathema, and he who teaches it is accursed (see Galatians 1:6-9). All come to Christ in the same way, and all are saved or condemned based on the same gospel.

Life application: Not only did Christ become the Cornerstone of the Church, but He is also the Capstone. He began it and He will finish it. He is preeminent in all ways to those who are a part of His living temple. But to those who have rejected God's gracious offer through Him, He has become a "stone of stumbling and a rock of offense."

Notice that those verses from Isaiah, which were quoted above, are speaking of the Lord (Jehovah), and Peter clearly identifies them with Jesus. The people of Israel, attempting to please God through works, stumbled over the stumbling stone – they missed God's grace in a futile attempt to obtain it by their own goodness. Rather than being their Rock of refuge, He was to them a rock of offense. He fulfilled the law which they could never do and thus set it aside.

Traditions are hard to break, and pride is a cruel master. They rejected His work in an attempt to establish their own righteousness. Likewise, we love tradition and we love to add our own demands onto ourselves and others, things which are not a part of God's word. In this, we establish our own standards of righteousness.

Take time today to evaluate your own heart in relation to what the Bible lays out for our walk before the Lord. Are you adding in pet peeves, self-goodness, or unbiblical determinations of others to your life? It is a slippery slope, so be careful to move away from these things. Christ determines doctrine for our walk before Him. Let us stand on His word alone for our life and conduct.

O God, give us wisdom when dealing in matters related to the churches we attend. Help us to stay away from legalism – both in ourselves and toward others. Instead, grant us the ability to discern what is right and appropriate from Your word, and then apply it to our lives. We love You Lord and we want to be pleasing to You in all ways. To Your glory we pray, Amen.

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; 1 Peter 2:9

Peter now again speaks of the state of those who believe and what that means, as he has in the previous verses. He is contrasting the state of those who believe with those who do not believe. Those who do not are mentioned as “disobedient” in verse 2:7. For them, Christ is “a stone of stumbling” and “a rock of offense” as said in verse 2:8. Now comes the contrast with the words, “But you are a chosen generation.”

The word is *genos*, and it signifies offspring, family, race, nation, or kind. It is a general word which comes from another word signifying “to come to be.” In this case, believers in Christ have come to be a chosen kind. It is such a general word that Paul used it when speaking to the pagans at Athens in Acts 17:29 –

“Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man’s devising.”

Peter says that believers are now a particular “kind” because of faith in Christ Jesus.

Next, the word “chosen” signifies “elect.” It is the same word Paul uses concerning believers in Colossians 3:12 (and elsewhere) –

“Therefore, as *the elect* of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering.”

Peter then calls those who believe “a royal priesthood.” The word translated as “royal” is found only here and in Luke 7:25, when speaking of palaces. However, it comes from the word signifying a king. That word is used by Paul to speak of Jesus as our true King in 1 Timothy 1:17 –

“Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, *be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.*”

The word “priesthood” is only used by Peter, here and then again in verse 2:9. It signifies the act or office of priesthood. For this reason, those who choose to divide the gospel of Christ into two separate gospels – one for Jew and one for Gentile – state that this is only referring to Jews, and that Gentiles are not considered in any type of priestly office. That is incorrect. Paul speaks of the priestly duty of sharing the gospel in Romans 15:16, a word that finds its same source as that of the word Peter uses here. It is the priestly obligation and honor of believers to share the gospel.’

Peter then says that believers are “a holy nation.” The word translated as “nation,” is *ethnos*. One can see the basis for the common word “ethnic” in it. It signifies a people who are joined together by practicing similar customs or a common culture. Peter here speaks of the *ethnos* of believers who are united because they are “holy.”

That word signifies “sacred” as in being morally blameless, consecrated, etc. It is commonly used by Paul to signify the saints, meaning believers in Christ. This is the idea that Peter gives here. He is addressing the saints who are a special nation, called out by one unifying characteristic which is faith in the Person and work of Jesus Christ – from both Jew and Gentile.

Peter then says believers are “His own special people.” The term used here literally means, “the people for acquisition.” It signifies people who have become God’s possession. The word translated as people is *laos*, and it signifies “a people, characteristically of God’s chosen people, first the Jews, then the Christians” (HELPS Word Studies). It is a general term which Paul uses to identify even Gentile believers in Christ such as in 2 Corinthians 6:16 and Titus 2:14 –

“And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said:

‘I will dwell in them

And walk among *them*.

I will be their God,

And they shall be My people.” 2 Corinthians 6:16

¹³“looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, ¹⁴ 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 2:13, 14

The word translated as “special” is one that speaks of acquisition or possession. Paul uses it when speaking of the Gentiles who have been acquired by God through the gospel in Ephesians 1:14. He uses it as an assurance of salvation for Gentiles in 1 Thessalonians 5:9 and 2 Thessalonians 2:14.

As can be seen, the words of Peter here, “His own special people,” correspond directly to Paul’s words, “*His own special people*,” in Titus 2:14. It, thus, demonstrates that there is one people comprised of believing Jews and Gentiles.

Peter next describes what these honorable designations mean for the believer. It is so “that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.” Though Peter is addressing Jews, it is a universal statement that signifies any who have been brought out of the spiritual darkness of this world.

The word translated as, “that you may proclaim,” is found only here and in Mark 16:20. It signifies to publicly announce in a full manner. Believers are to fully and publicly profess what has occurred in their lives, proclaiming “the praises of Him.” The word translated as “praises” signifies “excellencies.” It speaks of moral excellence and virtue. This is what we are to proclaim of God because of His work, in and through Christ, to redeem man.

And that act of redemption was for the purpose of bringing believers “out of darkness into His marvelous light.” This thought comes from the words of Isaiah 42. There, in Isaiah 42:1 and again in Isaiah 42:6, Isaiah specifically says that this calling is not only for the nation of Israel, but for the Gentiles as well. Reading Isaiah 42:1-9 will open up the meaning of Peter in a full manner. Isaiah speaks of Christ as being a light to the Gentiles and the one who brings the prisoners out of darkness. It is a single, unified, gospel that is proclaimed not only to Israel, but to the Gentiles as well.

The words used here by Peter are elsewhere used by Paul to signify one body of believers which is comprised of both Jew and Gentile. For those who proclaim two separate gospels, they are proclaiming a false gospel, which is anathema. Stay away from such heretical teachings, and hold fast to the truth that the church is one unified body of believers based on one gospel message.

Life application: Peter uses terms once applied to Israel to convey the role that the church now holds –

- Chosen people – Deuteronomy 7:6
- Kingdom of Priests – Exodus 19:6
- Holy nation – Exodus 19:6
- Special people – Deuteronomy 26:18

Along with these titles, Peter goes to Isaiah 60:6 and applies it to the church as well, when it says that the gentile nations will come and “proclaim the praises of the Lord.” All of these are being applied to the church, indicating their fulfillment in the people that follow Jesus – both from Jew and from Gentile. This doesn’t mean, however, that Israel, as the Jewish nation, is through.

Daniel 9:24-27 allots 490 years to them to complete certain things. Thus far 483 of those years have been completed and 7 more are yet future. These seven years will occur when the church is taken out at the rapture. Then, once more, Israel will be the focus of God's attention on earth.

In the meantime, all peoples – Jew and Gentile alike – who have called on Jesus are a part of the church, the Body of Christ. We have been called from darkness into His marvelous light. As it says in Isaiah 60:2, 3 –

“But the LORD will arise over you,
And His glory will be seen upon you.
³The Gentiles shall come to your light,
And kings to the brightness of your rising.”

Indeed, the glory of the LORD has arisen over us in the Person of Jesus Christ!

Thank you, O most glorious Heavenly Father for allowing us the privilege of being servants of the King, our Lord Jesus. May we faithfully proclaim His praises all of our days and may we serve as faithful witnesses of His glory. This we request that You may be exalted! Amen.

...who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy. 1 Peter 2:10

Peter, writing to his Jewish brothers, now uses words which Paul also used in Romans 9 to speak of the Gentiles –

“What if God, wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction,²³ and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory,²⁴ even us whom He called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?

²⁵ As He says also in Hosea:

“I will call them My people, who were not My people,
And her beloved, who was not beloved.’+

²⁶ ‘And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them,
“You are not My people,”
There they shall be called sons of the living God.’” Romans 9:22-26

Paul shows that the Gentiles, who were not God's people, had become His people. Peter, one of the people of Israel and addressing Israelite believers, says of them now, "who once *were* not a people." If Israel was the people of God, but Peter says to his audience that they were not a people, then it must be that he is speaking not of merely being of the stock of Israel – meaning their common Jewish heritage – but of being believers united in a new way, regardless of their heritage.

When they were not believers in Christ, they were not God's people. Now that they are believers in Christ, they are God's people. That is seen in his continued words, "but *are* now the people of God." Christ is the dividing line for who is and who is not considered the people of God. These addressees, despite being of Israel, were not God's people, but they became God's people through faith.

As Paul says the same of the Gentiles in Romans 9, it means that all believers – Jew and Gentile – are the people of God by faith in Jesus. It is one gospel for Jew and for Gentile. The thing to be considered is that, at the time of Peter writing the epistle, the nation of Israel had not received Jesus. Only a portion of the people had. At the same time, the Gentile-led church was exploding in numbers, and would continue to grow and flourish for the next two thousand years.

Peter's epistle, coming after the Gentile-led church-age epistles, is a hint that the Jews would again, someday, gain ascendancy within the body of believers. The number of Jews who are coming to Christ is growing at an incredible rate since their reestablishment as a nation, and it will be at some point that the rapture will occur. At that time, the focus of God's attention will be on Israel. So, Peter's epistle prophetically looks forward to that point in time.

Understanding this, it becomes evident that this is so that someday it will be said of Israel that they are those "who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy." Again, whether Jew or Gentile, the dividing line is Christ. Those Jews at Peter's time became a part of the people of God, as did the Gentiles. However, as a nation, Israel failed to come into the New Covenant.

The issue of Israel as a nation is separate, but it is still relevant. For Israel, there is individual salvation, and there is collective (national) salvation. Each Jew who is to be saved must come to Christ individually. However, God made promises to Israel as a nation as well. For Israel as a nation to be saved, they must call out on Christ nationally. Jesus said this to them explicitly when He addressed Jerusalem, meaning the seat of power, in Matthew 23 –

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under *her* wings, but you were not willing! ³⁸ See! Your house is left to you desolate; ³⁹ for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, ‘Blessed *is* He who comes in the name of the LORD!’” Matthew 23:37-39

Until Jerusalem, signifying Israel’s leadership, calls out to Christ as Lord, there will be no national salvation. But Christ says that it will happen, and He will return to rescue them. The glory of the millennium will be preceded by a time of terrible tribulation on earth, but Israel will survive through it, and they shall – collectively and nationally – again be called by God “My people.”

Life application: The Bible does not reveal an Old Testament God who is wrathful and stern, and a New Testament God who is gentle and loving. This is the concept that many have concerning its pages, but it is important to know that God is unchanging, and the same attributes expressed in the Old Testament are also expressed in the New. We read this proclamation in Exodus 34:6, 7 –

“The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, ⁷ keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing *the guilty*, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children’s children to the third and the fourth generation.”

God proclaimed His glory to Moses as He passed by. When He did, the first attribute He mentioned is that He is merciful. This is particularly so to the people of God, but it also applies to all humanity. When Nineveh had grown to a certain state of moral corruption, instead of destroying them God sent Jonah to call them to repentance. When they did, He withheld their destruction.

Likewise, any person who shakes his hand and says, “I don’t believe in God” is worthy of destruction, but He relents and allows them to continue. Maybe such will repent and believe. How much more then is God willing to bestow mercy on us when we do become His children! As believers in Christ, we once had not obtained mercy, but now we have. If you have called on Jesus Christ, God has demonstrated infinite mercy upon you. Unlike the non-believer who will eventually die and be cast into hell, God has promised you eternal life. What an amazing God!

Yes, Lord! You are truly amazing! That You would show mercy on us, even upon such great sinners. With grateful hearts, we sing Your praise, and we will do our best to bring glory to You all of our days. What a great and awesome God You are! Thank You for Jesus and the mercy You have shown to us through His sacrifice. Thank You, O God, thank You! Amen.

Beloved, I beg *you* as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, 1 Peter 2:11

Peter now uses a word of close personal affection which is used by every author of an epistle – Paul (in all but three of his epistles), the author of Hebrews, James, Peter, John, and Jude. It is most commonly used by Paul, but Peter uses it eight times in his two small epistles. It is translated as “beloved.” In its highest sense, it signifies divinely-loved. In his second epistle, Peter will use the term of Paul.

Here, he uses it to begin an exhortation unto holy living, starting with, “I beg *you* as sojourners and pilgrims.” The word translated as sojourners signifies an alien. It is seen only four times in Acts, Ephesians, and now here for the last time. It signifies a temporary dweller, especially a foreigner.

The word translated as pilgrims is similar. It was used by Peter in his opening words, and now he uses it here as its last use in Scripture. It signifies someone who resides in a strange country. It is someone who is simply passing through.

As this is the state of believers, Peter notes that they should not get caught up in the ways of those who are a part of this system, and so he says for believers to “abstain from fleshly lusts.”

The idea is that a person who is a foreigner in a strange land will not take part in the customs of those around him because he has no affiliation with them. The true home of the believer is with Christ. We have been redeemed out of this world, and therefore our conduct here is to be reflective not of what we have been redeemed out of, but that of the place where we are redeemed to. The Lord is holy, and we are to be holy. To follow after the lusts of the flesh is to not pursue holiness.

Peter then finishes with, “which war against the soul.” Vincent’s Word Studies notes, “The compound pronoun denotes a class, of that kind which, classifying all fleshly desires in one category.” Peter’s words are all-inclusive. Anything which is fleshly and which wars against the soul of the believer is to be abstained from.

The idea of the “soul” of the believer is one that is renewed by the Spirit, and it is no longer to be aligned with the fallen things of the world. As we have been renewed by the Spirit, our lives should reflect that higher spiritual attitude. But Paul, writing about this, notes how hard that is. In Romans 7, he said –

“I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. ²²For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. ²³But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. ²⁴O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? ²⁵ I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!” Romans 7:21-25

After saying this, he closes out Romans 7:25 with –

“So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.”

Through reliance on Christ, believers are delivered from the “body of death” which wars against us. Peter now admonishes believers to abstain from anything which would cause this war of the soul to rise up in us.

Life application: If both Peter and Paul acknowledged that these things exist around us, then it is obvious that they had the same war in their own souls. Such is true with all people. In other words, being an apostle, preacher, minister, or missionary does not make one immune. We all have a responsibility to not get entangled in these things, and it is something we all struggle with. When you slip and fail, confess and turn back. Jesus is merciful and forgiving.

Lord God, we must acknowledge that we have the very war in our own souls that the writers of the New Testament speak of. The world pulls one way, even as our hearts tell us to resist such things. Certainly, we fail You often, and we simply cannot walk this path alone. Instead, we need You with us each step of the way. Strengthen us, and give us the ability to win this war – to Your glory! Amen.

...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. 1 Peter 2:12

Peter had just instructed his reader to “abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul.” He now gives a reason why this should be. It is not only for their own holiness, health, and betterment, but because they are representatives of Christ to the world. Understanding this, he says, “having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles.”

Peter is writing to Jewish believers, as is noted in the opening of his epistle. However, he is not making a divide between Jews and Gentiles, by saying what he now says, as if there are two gospels. The phrase “among the Gentiles” is a common expression of Paul, used in the exact same manner when he writes to his Gentile audience. The idea is not one of separation between Jew and Gentile, but one of reflecting the Lord’s holiness – by Jew or Gentile – among the nations.

With that explained, Peter now says, “that when they speak against you as evildoers.” The word “evildoers” speaks of a criminal, or someone bent on doing what is wrong. It is only found in 1 Peter where he will use it three times. The same thought is expressed, using the two roots of the word Peter uses here, concerning Jesus in John 18:30. As Christ was spoken of as doing evil, so His people are expected to be accused of being evildoers.

However, one of the main points found in the book of Acts is that Christianity fell under the auspices of a sect of Judaism. This was important at that point in history, because Judaism was considered an acceptable and allowable form of religious expression within the Roman Empire. If Christianity were considered a new religion, it could have been forbidden immediately.

However, because it is the fulfillment of the Jewish oracles to believe in the Messiah, Christianity was considered as a part of this already-accepted religion. However, Jews spoke against it throughout the nations, and in front of the Gentiles. An example of this is found in this passage from Acts –

“Now it happened in Iconium that they went together to the synagogue of the Jews, and so spoke that a great multitude both of the Jews and of the Greeks believed. ² But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brethren. ³ Therefore they stayed there a long time, speaking boldly in the Lord, who was bearing witness to the word of His grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands.” Acts 14:1-3

This is exactly the type of thing that Peter is speaking about. Eventually, the Roman Empire under Nero brought its weight down upon Christians, and the persecution

became great. Christians were spoken of as evil by Jews and by Gentiles. But Peter exhorted them because he knew that being spoken against as evildoers was, and would continue to be, the norm.

As Peter speaks equally to the Jewish believers in the end times, the words to them are no less relevant today. The messianic believers are persecuted by the Jews. And yet, their testimony in Israel is bringing together more believers from the non-Jews who live in Israel and elsewhere, and they are also bringing in new Jewish believers to the faith all the time as well.

Therefore, the conduct of believers is to be exemplary in front of these Gentiles, so that “they may, by your good works which they observe,” have a positive effect on them. Peter will explain what that effect is with his final words of the verse. For now, the word translated as “which they observe” is a present participle in the active voice. The people around believers are observing them and making constant determinations about them.

The word signifies an attentive viewing, not just a casual look. The word is unique to Peter and is used only here and in 1 Peter 3:2. It is this general thought, of being carefully evaluated while living holy lives, that the Gentiles would then see the proper conduct of believers and then “glorify God in the day of visitation.”

This phrase is debated over. Is it speaking of the time of Christ’s coming? Is it referring to another particular event? The word translated as “visitation” is a general word where a visit occurs by anyone for any reason. What is probably on Peter’s mind is a simple visitation of the blessing of the Lord upon people who actively witness the conduct of the Christian believers, and realize that Christians are not who they have been portrayed as. Instead, they are seen to be valid messengers of the truth of God. At that time, they believe and their visitation, by the Holy Spirit for salvation, comes to pass.

Life application: This verse should make believers stop and really reflect on the consequences of what Peter is implying. When Peter speaks of the “Gentiles,” he is speaking of the people of the world among whom believers in Christ live their lives. This is similar to what Paul said when speaking of his Jewish brethren who didn’t believe –

“For I speak to you Gentiles; inasmuch as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, ¹⁴ if by any means I may provoke to jealousy those who are my flesh and save some of them.” Romans 11:13, 14

The conduct of believers should be right at all times in order to lead people to Jesus. If we don't act appropriately, we not only keep them from desiring a relationship with Jesus, but we also bring discredit upon His name. Our actions and conduct before unbelievers should be as holy as our actions and conduct while in church on Sunday morning. Consider that as you conduct your daily life.

Heavenly Father, it is sure that our conduct has not always been a source of inspiration to the non-believers around us. We also know that there will be those who will have accusations against us on the great Day of Judgment. For this, we feel remorse. Give us the heart's desire to always reflect Your glory from this day on. Amen.

Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, 1 Peter 2:13

Peter now states "Therefore" based on his words of verses 11 & 12. He noted that believers are as sojourners and pilgrims, and thus are to abstain from the fleshly lusts of this world which war against us. We are to have honorable conduct among the Gentiles in order to bring them to a state where they glorify God, because of our good works which they observe. Out of this, comes Peter's "Therefore."

It is because we are living in this world, but are not a part of it, that we are to "submit ... to every ordinance of man." One might say, "I am not of this world, and therefore I do not need to submit to the ordinances of man." And, unfortunately, this is the position many believers hold to. "I don't have to serve in the military because..." "I will not vote because..." On and on, Christians pick and choose what they will do in this world in an attempt to appear more holy than those around them, or simply because they don't want to do a certain thing, and so they fall back on the premise that they are not obligated to do this or that because they are not of this world.

It is faulty logic, refuted by both Peter and Paul. When Peter says, "every ordinance of man," he is referring to the duly established laws of whatever land believers live in. The word he uses, *ktisis*, signifies "creation." It speaks of either the act of creation or the product of it. Thus, from a human aspect, it speaks of institutions. They did not exist, but man created them. They form the basis for human conduct and living within a given sphere of existence.

When a believer lives in a city, for example, he falls under the institutions of that city, of the county in which the city exists, of the state in which the county exists, and of the federal government in which the state exists. The believer is to submit to all of these

institutions because they comprise the sphere in which he exists. This is not optional, but rather it is God-inspired through the writers of the epistles. Paul says the same thing in Romans 13 –

“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. ² Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves.” Romans 13:1, 2

The words from both Peter and Paul are clear and explicit. Therefore, if we are to submit to the ruling authorities, it is an all-inclusive deal. One cannot logically say, “I will pay taxes because I have been instructed to, but I will not vote because I am ‘not of this world.’” That is illogical and is simply an attempt to appear more holy or pious than the next person. A person may willingly choose to not vote, but to then ascribe that choice to the fact that he is a Christian is contradictory to what is stated by the apostles.

Peter next says that this submission is “for the Lord’s sake.” This means “because the Lord has mandated that it is to be this way.” It is not that the Lord needs it this way to fill a lack that only we can fill, but that we need to be this way because He has stated that “it is so.” He has delegated the powers of this world to certain individuals who then form their governmental institutions. They are the authority in this sphere, and we live within this sphere. Therefore, we are to submit to them.

Peter then begins to designate exactly what he means by saying, “whether to the king as supreme.” Peter uses the designation of “king” when speaking of the Roman emperor. The emperor is known by other titles, such as *autokrator*, *Kaisar*, and etc. However, he is also, at times, called “king,” such as in John 19:15 and in Acts 17:7. He was the highest earthly official in the land, and he was to be submitted to.

In the United States, the highest single official is the President, but the laws issue from Congress, and the Supreme Court’s decisions determine the legality of the laws. It is this three-fold federal head that is to be equated to Caesar here.

When Peter says that the king is “supreme,” he is speaking of his earthly state. It is not an acknowledgment of him as a god, nor does it mean that we are to do something mandated by this supreme king which would be against the rule of God. The highest allegiance of the believer is to God, as He has revealed Himself to us in His word for our life instruction.

Life application: As believers, we are living in the land that God determined for any given one of us – be it Korea, America, Germany, etc. We are told by Peter here to submit to every ordinance of man. If the king (or president, prime minister, etc.) signs a law, then we are to obey it. We are to do this even if it seems unjust. Everyone in the country is bound under the same law. If others obey it and Christians don't, then they leave a bad testimony and an unfavorable image of our greater and true King.

However! If at any time an earthly government passes a law that is contrary to the law of God, it must be disobeyed. This is because we have a higher law in God's word. As an example, America has legalized abortion. We therefore are to allow abortion to continue (such as not murdering the doctors involved in conducting them), while still working within the framework of the government to abolish the practice.

However, if America passed a "mandatory abortion after one child" law, we would be obligated to disobey this law when directed at us individually. We must follow the higher law of God and protect the life He has created. Sometimes it is hard to determine where disobeying should and shouldn't be practiced. This is why it is so very important to know and meditate on God's law which is contained in the Bible.

Heavenly Father, you have called us to live at peace with our governments and our leaders. You have shown us that we are to be subject to them, even when we disagree with their laws. Help us to be discerning in the proper conduct of our lives and the following of your mandates. This is right because it ultimately glorifies you. So be with us as we conduct our affairs under the governments in which we live. Amen.

...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. 1 Peter 2:14

Peter now completes the sentence which began with verse 13. He informed believers to submit themselves "to every ordinance of man." This included the king as supreme. Now he says, "or to governors."

The word is *hégemón*. One can see an early source of the word hegemony. It signifies a commander, governor, leader, and so on. It can even speak of a province. Thus, it can signify the officer placed in charge of such a province. It is these officials who are "those who are sent by him." This is speaking of these individuals as representatives of the king.

In other words, these people are under the authority of the king, who is to be submitted to, and thus, these officials are likewise to be submitted to. Further, the word translated

as “are sent” is a present participle. The king continuously sends these officials, as needed, to oversee the region which his jurisdiction covers. It isn’t that these officials are to be obeyed once, but always. When they govern, their authority speaks for the king.

Peter then describes what this authority reaches to by saying, “for the punishment of evildoers and *for the* praise of those who do good.” This lower level of authority has the power of the king to first punish those who do evil. The word translated as “punish” actually signifies something stronger. It extends to avenging wrong and executing vengeance. It is full and complete punishment. In other words, Christians are to be subject to such authorities. They cannot claim themselves “out of the world” and thus out of the vengeance of the king. His authority lies over them.

And so, when the believer abides by the rules of the land, he is also to be without fear. Instead, he would fall under the king’s “praise of those who do good.” Here, the word translated as “who do good” is unique in Scripture. It signifies “well-doers.” It reflects a person who does that which is inherently good.

When the king’s laws merge with the inherently good living of the believer, that individual can hope for praise because of his conduct. The king, as the one appointed by God, is in the position to hand out favor or discipline according to his will. This does not mean that Christians are exempt from his unjust wrath, but that whatever they receive from him is according to the position in which he sits, and according to his will.

Life application: Here, Peter is implying that each level of government has been established to bring about order in our society and when a particular level of authority passes a law, we are obligated to obey it. If we don’t, those authorities have been given additional powers – such as sending along people designated to enforce the laws which have been passed.

We have local police, sheriffs, state enforcement agencies, and also federal enforcement units – such as the FBI, DEA, TSA, IRS, etc. We may not always like how these people conduct their affairs, but they are the designated authorities, and we are accountable for our actions before them.

If we didn’t have law enforcement, there would be chaos. If we didn’t have tax collectors, the government wouldn’t be properly funded, etc. Evildoers would be in charge, and life would be far more miserable than it is when laws are enforced.

Likewise, when we obey the law and give respect to the authorities, we can (hopefully!) expect praise and compliments from them. Obviously, this isn't always the case, but when law enforcement gets out of hand or when government becomes over-burdensome, the people generally handle the problem by replacing the offenders. In history, this has often been a bloody replacement, but if society works properly, these things can be handled at the voting booth.

Lord God, give us patience when dealing with the authorities. Too often they seem to step into our lives in a way which is beyond the authority they have been granted. If this is the case, may peace prevail, and may we be given the proper words and conduct to handle the situation. We pray this that You will be glorified through our actions under those You have appointed over us. Amen.

For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men— 1 Peter 2:15

The previous two verses have spoken of submitting to every ordinance of man which extends from the king as supreme, or from governors who are sent by the king. He then said that these governors are sent by the king for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of those who do good. Understanding this context, Peter now says, "For this is the will of God."

If God wills it, then who are we to work against it? It is the epitome of arrogance to not subject oneself to the ruling authority and yet to claim that you are following Christ as a faithful and obedient servant. Rather than being one "of those who do good," you have made yourself liable to punishment because you are, in fact, an evildoer. The supposed "ultra-piety" of Christians who reject this precept is shown to simply be a nauseous vapor.

Rather than emulating such an attitude, Peter says that being subject to the ruling authority "is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men." The "doing good" is referring to being subject to the ruling authority which is contrasted to being an evildoer in the previous verse.

Christians who fail to honor the ruling authorities are not showing allegiance to the Lord, but to themselves by supposedly elevating themselves above others around them. This is by claiming a super-spiritual state of holiness. Isaiah, prophesying the word of the Lord, speaks of those in Israel who acted in such a manner, elevating themselves above others in outward shows of supposed piety –

“Who say, ‘Keep to yourself,
Do not come near me,
For I am holier than you!’
These *are* smoke in My nostrils,
A fire that burns all the day.” Isaiah 65:5

Peter shows that this is a problem among believers in the church as well. The word he uses for “put to silence” signifies “to muzzle.” It is what Jesus did when He countered the failed logic of the Sadducees in Matthew 22:34, and what He did as He faced off against demons, and even what He did when He silenced the wind. He muzzled these things, silencing them. Peter says that believers are to so silence these evildoers.

As far as the word translated as “ignorance,” it is a word used only in 1 Corinthians 15:34 and here. It signifies “willful ignorance.” It is a refusal to learn by experience. One can think of any Christian who claims to know a certain doctrine, but who has never taken the time to read and study the Bible. Such a person spouts out what he thinks he knows, but he actually has no idea what he is talking about. These people are, as Peter says it, “foolish men.”

There is actually an article in front of this, and thus it says, “the foolish men.” It is those who he has just referred to. His choice of word for “foolish” is also used by Jesus in Luke 11:40 and Luke 12:20. Paul also uses it quite a few times. This is its last use in Scripture. It signifies “mindless” or “stupid.” Such a person is short-sighted because he is lacking all of the information needed to make a decision, and thus he cannot act prudently. The church is overflowing with such people because they fail to read, assimilate, and put into use the precepts of God’s word.

Life application: We are to obey the duly established authorities because:

- These people have been ordained by God to rule.
- By disobeying them, punishment will result (which brings discredit).
- By obeying them praise will result (which brings credit).
- And, through obeying them, the arguments of foolish and ignorant men will be silenced.

If you can see the logic here, then you can understand why Christians are to be law-abiding citizens. It also makes sense that the nuttier the laws of the rulers, the more important it is to obey them.

As unbelieving, ungodly people grow in number in the government, their laws will naturally reflect this. It would be normal to expect then that we would fight against the government because of their unwise, and even perverse, rules. But by doing this, we would give the enemies of God even more chance to revile us and Him. As long as the laws don't cause us to violate God's law, we actually bring credit to Him by obeying them and acting as proper citizens. It shuts the mouths of the ignorant and takes away their ability to revile God.

Make sure you consider this when you speak out against your leaders, when you think about violating their laws, or when you attempt to conspire with others in bringing harm to those appointed above you. You bear the name of Jesus Christ. Therefore, you are obligated to act responsibly and bring credit to Him.

O Lord, we often really have a tough time with some of the crazy laws and arrogant, slanderous leaders appointed over us. But Your word shows us the importance of praying for them, obeying them, and working within the established laws they have passed. Though it is difficult, it is all to bring credit to You. So, Lord, please give us the ability to do so. Amen.

...as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God.

1 Peter 2:16

Peter has been speaking of submitting to the authorities and the rules they lay down for society. He then equated those who fail to do this as "foolish men." There is no doubt he is including believers in this. They profess to love God, but they fail to do what God expects of them. Now he says that believers are to do this "as free."

This means that believers are free from the world because of Christ, and yet God has mandated that we are to live within the confines of the law. However, some reject this and act as if they are above the laws of the land. This would, and will, bring about a hatred of believers and of Christ because of their haughty arrogance. It would further set the body apart as a rebel group. Any government would then see it as a threat.

This is exactly why believers are to submit to the authorities established by God. They are to be seen as upstanding and obedient within the lands in which they reside. The purpose of Christ leaving a body of believers behind is to bring more into it, not to exalt itself above others and turn them away from it.

However, Peter next says, “yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice.” The word translated as “cloak” is more rightly stated as “covering” or “veil.” It is something that would hide the true intent, and thus it forms a pretext. Further, the word “vice” speaks of that which is evil. It is that which is morally wicked because there is no shame in doing wrong.

A believer could say, “I am free and therefore I can do whatever I want.” Thus, he could promote any worldly vice and claim that his actions don’t matter. But this is not what God has called his people to. He has saved them from this fallen world to live for Him. It is only an arrogant, foolish, and ignorant person who would willingly continue in his old life of debauchery and claim that it didn’t matter. “I am saved, so I can do what I want.”

The very idea of this, however, confirms the doctrine of eternal salvation. Peter could not use these words if eternal salvation was not true. He would, instead, say that the consequences for such a life would result in condemnation. The negative (not threatening damnation) affirms the positive (eternal salvation). And he then explains why it is so by saying, “but as bondservants of God.”

This is the heart of the matter. The believer is saved, but is saved unto righteousness. Only a perverse fool would stand saved by the blood of Christ and then willingly do what is contrary to the salvation he has been given. But even such a fool, if saved, remains saved. It shows the immense mercy of God because of what He has done in Christ Jesus for those who come to Him.

As bondservants of God, we are given freedom from sin. When we fail to live to that standard, we are the ones who will suffer – both in this life, and in the judgment to come.

Life application: The context of this verse is what Peter has been discussing for the last couple of verses – we are to submit to the authorities appointed over us and to live in harmony with the laws they have duly established. He said we are to do this because –

- It is the will of God.
- Our actions will silence the accusations of “foolish men.”

Peter then goes on to say that we are free. This certainly means that we are free from the restrictions of this world; we have a higher allegiance. But our higher allegiance is actually of a much stricter moral code than the code of our earthly rulers.

Even though we are actually free from society's mandates, this in no way excuses us from living morally and in an upright manner. Others are watching who are bound to the rules of society. If they were to see us exercising our freedom in a licentious manner, it would give them every opportunity to accuse us and also rail against the God we claim to follow. It would further possibly lead them to call on a false Jesus who accepts such behavior. Thus, they would never come to true, saving faith.

As Peter says, we may be free in one sense, but we are "bondservants of God" at the same time. How can we claim liberty leading to moral perversion under a lesser master? It makes no sense, and yet this is the exact way much of Christendom lives. When you move about society, be careful that others understand that the One you serve is far more precious to you than freedom from the world system in which you live. Let us pray for strength and fortitude in this area –

O Lord God, we are Your servants, and yet we have acted as if we are free from Your law and bound to the laws of man and the chains of sin. You freed us from this life and yet, unfaithful as we are, we often return to it. Please transform us to holy living and right moral direction, so that Your precepts will be held in high esteem by those who see our behavior in this life. Amen.

Honor all *people*. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king. 1 Peter 2:17

Peter has been speaking of submitting to the authorities which are duly established over believers, meaning those of the secular world. He said that this is the will of God, and the reason for it includes putting to "silence the ignorance of foolish men." He then noted that a Christian's liberty is not to be used as a cloak for vice.

With these thoughts in mind, he next says to "Honor all people." The word signifies to fix a value to another, and thus holding in personal esteem. If one is to fix a value to the foolish, as noted in verse 15, there will obviously be lesser esteem for them than for others. It cannot mean that all people are honored equally. In fact, that would go contrary to what Paul says of the believer's spiritual teachers –

"Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine." 2 Timothy 5:17

Therefore, it must be that honoring all people is a way of showing the respect due to each individual accordingly. Paul speaks of exactly this in Romans 13:7 as well. Next, he

says, “Love the brotherhood.” This word, brotherhood, is found only here and then again in 1 Peter 5:9. It speaks of the fraternity of believers.

There should be a sense of fraternal love between believers. It is true that we may not like every believer we encounter. And yet, we should endeavor to love them as believers, even if we don’t actually like them. There is nothing contradictory in this. Rather, it is how we would conduct ourselves in any situation, be it work-related, assignments in the military, and so on. We are to put our allegiance to the greater bond over our personal likes or dislikes of the individual. In the case of those redeemed by Christ, we should esteem them in the way that Christ did, saving them despite their fallen state.

Next, Peter says, “Fear God.” The word signifies dread, terror, reverent awe, and so on. The context of the situation explains the meaning. When Jesus performed miracles, the people around Him are said to have feared. In this case, it was an awe of the power of God. Jesus told the people to fear God because He has the power to save, or to cast into hell. He also said that believers are not to fear those who can only kill the body. If this is all they can do, but God can save even the dead from that state, then truly God is to be feared. We are to hold Him in the highest awe who created all things, and who has the power over all things and for all eternity.

Finally, Peter says, “Honor the king.” Most scholars are in agreement that this is speaking of the emperor at the time (meaning the governing authority at any time) who was also referred to as “king,” such as in John 19:15. This is based on the words of verse 13 where Peter spoke of the king when referring to the highest official of the land. This is probably not the case. Rather, Peter is speaking of the King of kings who is Christ. This would be in line with Paul’s words of 1 Timothy 1:17 –

“Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, *be* honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.”

The same word used in the first clause, “*Honor* all people,” is used here. What is obvious then is that the personal value, or esteem, which is assigned to the King, is to be of infinite measure. We are to hold our God in such esteem that our praises and respect for Him continue at all times, even unto eternity.

Life application: Four wonderful imperatives are wrapped together in one verse to sum up the paragraph we have been looking over. Rather than getting wordy, Peter leaves no doubt and no ambiguity as to what sums up his thoughts. We are to –

Honor all people. All people – the poor, foreign, homeless, toothless, aged, young, annoying, etc. – are created in God’s image. All people are deserving of some level of our respect and attention.

Love the brotherhood. A little more specific than “honor all people,” and really, maybe a bit more difficult too. How annoying are some of the people in our church! Isn’t it easier to ignore them, or avoid them, when you see them coming? Sometimes it’s easier to travel to foreign countries and hang out with people who don’t speak our language than be nice to people in our own church. But we are called to love our fellow Christians no matter how different they are.

Fear God. Direct and to the point. Solomon said it this way –

“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter:
Fear God and keep His commandments,
For this is man’s all.” Ecclesiastes 12:13

Honor the King. This is surely talking about Jesus. Peter has moved from the general to the specific: people → brotherhood → God → King. How do we honor God? By honoring Jesus. As Jesus Himself said, “He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him” (John 5:23).

Yes Lord, give us wisdom and kindness in dealing with others – in the family of man, in the family which is the church, towards You as our Creator, and to Christ as our King. May our actions be appropriate in all ways and at all times, and may You be glorified through them. This we pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Servants, be submissive to *your* masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh. 1 Peter 2:18

Peter now turns from a general exhortation of being submissive to the leaders, which he says “is commendable before God,” to a specific exhortation directed to “servants.” The word is *oiketes*, or “servants.” It is not the common word which speaks of a bonded servant, or a slave. Rather, it speaks of a servant in a household who works for a family. This implies that it is work accomplished with devotion and affection. Paul uses it in Romans 14 when speaking of believers –

“Who are you to judge another’s servant? To his own master he stands or falls.

Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand.”

-Romans 14:4

What Peter will say here extends to the end of the chapter, the contents of which certainly applies to all believers. But the focus is on servants because it is servants whom this particular aspect of Christ and His ministry reflects. He came to be the “suffering Servant.”

The word translated as “master” is *despotés*. It “implies someone exercising ‘unrestricted power and absolute domination, confessing no limitations or restraints’” (R. Trench). It is where our modern term “despot” comes from. It is used ten times in the New Testament, and six of them are speaking of the Lord.

Paul uses it when speaking of an earthly master several times, such as in 1 Timothy 6:1 –

“Let as many bondservants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and *His* doctrine may not be blasphemed.”

The idea that Peter is conveying is like that of Paul’s words. Whoever is a believer, while a member of such a household, is still obligated to be submissive to his own earthly authority who exercises control over him, and to do so “with all fear.” It is the same word as Peter used in verse 1:17 –

“And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one’s work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay *here* in fear.”

After saying that, he then tied the reason for this conduct in with the work of Christ. He will do the same thing here in the verses ahead. We are to have reverent fear of our masters because Christ also conducted Himself in this same manner. The point, then, is that we are to be like Christ in our earthly walk.

He then explains this by saying, “not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh.” It is not difficult to yield to a good and gentle master. In fact, it is a privilege to do so. But Peter says that servants are expected to be this way toward those who are harsh as well.

The word Peter uses, translated as “harsh,” means “crooked.” John the Baptist used it to speak of the crooked paths which Christ would make straight. The only other two uses of it need to be seen to understand why Peter is speaking as he is –

“And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, ‘Be saved from this perverse generation.’” Acts 2:40

“Do all things without complaining and disputing, ¹⁵ that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world.”

-Philippians 2:14, 15

In both instances, the apostles speak of the state of the world in general. Christ came into this state and submitted Himself to this crooked generation. Thus, believers are to conduct themselves in the world in the same manner. In the verses ahead, Peter will show us that this was a part of Christ’s plan in order to bring men out of this state and to Him. The crooked paths are made straight by Christ, and a part of that work is incumbent on us to see that it is accomplished.

Life application: Have you have had a really terrible boss in the past? Do you have a really crummy boss now? Peter is telling you today that you are to be submissive to your masters.

Obviously, we normally don’t have bondservants and house masters in today’s society, but we do have bosses that we are accountable to. As long as we are working for them, we have made the voluntary choice to submit to them. We are to show them proper respect regardless of how moody or uncaring they are. Fortunately for many of us, we work in a hierarchy and bad bosses can be monitored by higher bosses. Further, we have workplace standards in place which were set by government bodies at all levels.

In the time of the Roman Empire, such wasn’t the case. Slaves, hired hands, etc. were at the whims of their overlords. No matter whether they were gentle or harsh, Peter told them (and thus us today) that they were to be submissive. Jesus set the perfect example in this. If the Creator was willing to show such humility, how much more should we also be submissive?

Lord, we can see how terribly short we fall from Your high standard. We have not been submissive to those who are over us in the way Your word directs. At times, we have complained against, gossiped about, and even talked back to our superiors. Give us a full-cleansing that we might be acceptable employees in the future. May our actions bring You the glory that You are due. Amen.

For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully. 1 Peter 2:19

Peter is speaking to “servants” as noted in the previous verse. He then told them that they were to reverently submit to their masters, both the good and the harsh. Speaking of submitting to the harsh masters now, he says, “For this is commendable.”

The literal reading is, “For this is grace.” The meaning of this is debated. Some interpret it as being a mark of grace as a Christian, such as, “Look at how he endures under such harsh treatment. Those Christians are gracious indeed.” Others see it as a point which deserves divine favor (grace) for enduring though such things. Others look to it as meaning that it is what is expected of believers (because this is what the word says) and though not deserving of any particular grace, it is pleasing in the sight of God.

The last is surely true. God is pleased with such an attitude. But the first is also true. It is a mark of grace, and such a mark has purpose. It is to reveal the intended character of Christians to the world. In other words, bearing up under harsh treatment is the sphere of grace in which the believer exists. As Peter says it, “For this is grace.”

Imagine him in front of a TV pointing out different types of people. He shows a clip of a servant who fights back at his master – “This is an example of ‘lacking wisdom.’” He shows a clip of a servant who curses his master after his master leaves the room – “This is an example of ‘wickedness.’” He then shows a servant who bears up under the harsh treatment of his master with only courtesy, reverence, and respect – “This is ‘grace.’”

Peter then explains this state by saying, “if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully.” The ill-treated servant displays grace, but it isn’t because he doesn’t want to punch the head of his master. It is because he is doing what God expects him to do, even as he endures grief. It is against the natural state of man to bear up under such trials in a contended manner, but he does so out of a greater fear of God, and thus he displays grace even when suffering wrongly.

Peter will give a logical reason for this first, and then he will show that this is exactly what Christ Jesus did. He, the grace of God incarnate, was willing to act in such a manner, and so Peter says that when we do, “This is grace.” It is reflective of Jesus’ words found in Luke 17:6-10. Take time to read that.

Life application: Peter's words are tough to practice and few people are able to master what they say. Even if we suffer wrongfully, our conscience toward God should tell us to accept what has happened rather than diminish our testimony of Him in our lives.

Being magnanimous in the face of obvious wrong treatment isn't easy, but Paul says elsewhere –

“If your enemy is hungry, feed him;
If he is thirsty, give him a drink;
For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head.” Romans 12:20

In today's unreasoning society, we are often faced with real unfairness. Hard work and dedication are no longer rewarded and are, in fact, condemned. For example, students in school who perform to the best of their abilities are not granted “top of the class” awards because others who failed to perform might feel left out. This is just as unfair as a boss who mistreats you. But a student who is magnanimous in such an instance will be remembered for his attitude.

There are so many instances in our lives where we can show ourselves approved by God, but the difficulty is in actually doing it. Let us ask the Lord for His help –

Heavenly Father, You know how difficult it is for us to overlook mistreatment and unfairness, but if it will bring You glory, then give us the ability to act properly in these instances. May Your divine hand be there to guide us, or we will surely not be able to act in the way You expect. Thank You for being with us in such times. Amen.

For what credit *is it* if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this *is* commendable before God. 1 Peter 2:20

It was just noted by Peter that it is commendable for suffering wrongly if it is done with a good conscience towards God. He now asks an opposing thought to get his audience to think through why this is so, beginning with, “For what credit *is it*...?” The word translated as “credit” is found nowhere else in the Bible. It is akin to a word which signifies being called by name. Thus, an appropriate translation would be, “For what praise *is it*...?”

It is as if he is focusing on those who would claim such a thing. If a person of a minority race, religion, or culture, in a given society, was to be punished for doing something

wrong – we'll say attacking people with a knife, or maybe killing his sister because she "dishonored" the family name, or something similar – and then he claimed that he was suffering because of racial or religious persecution, rather than for the actual wrong he had done, then he would be such a ridiculous fool.

And so Peter continues, "when you are beaten for your faults." The person is rightly punished for the wrong he has done. Understanding that, Peter then says, "if ... you take it patiently?" The person is obviously a criminal. He has done wrong. And yet he calls out during his punishment, "I am receiving this as persecution for my religion, and so I accept the punishment for the honor of it." Those who hear, and who aren't ridiculously dull, would laugh at him. He is a criminal, and he is rightly deserving of what he got. Such a thing is what Isaiah referred to –

"Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil;
Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness;
Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!" Isaiah 5:20

It is perverse and illogical to claim that something which is obviously wrong is good and noble. However, and in contrast to that notion, Peter then says, "But when you do good and suffer." This is completely the opposite scenario. A person goes as a missionary to another country to spread the gospel. Or maybe the person stands on the corner of the street and reads the Bible, proclaiming salvation through Christ, or any other such good and reasonable action which is meant to help others, be productive in society, establish right morals, and etc. In doing such a thing, Peter says that "if you take it patiently."

While having done nothing wrong, the individual is being persecuted, punished, imprisoned, or whatever, and yet he takes his suffering patiently. In such a case, Peter notes again (as in verse 19) that "this *is* commendable." And it is not just commendable in and of itself, but it is so "before God."

God is witness to the act, because it was right, good, and honorable. And in his seeing it, He notes that what has been done is proper.

Life application: If you are punished for doing something wrong and you take your punishment patiently, what credit is there in that? In fact, it is not only something that should be done, but if it is not done there is bound to be more punishment. No one likes a whiner and to fight back over just punishment shows a person that needs more of it. Peter contrasts this, however, with the one who suffers patiently when the punishment is undeserved.

On the other hand, if a missionary who is proclaiming salvation through Christ fights back, what will be the result? It will be more conflict and an even greater animosity towards the gospel. But, if the missionary suffers after having done no wrong and accepts the unjust punishment, what will be the response? As has so often been the case in the history of the church, the gospel wins over because of such patient suffering. The exact opposite of what is expected occurs.

Let us then consider the epitome of unjust suffering as contrasted to just suffering and remember what occurred –

“Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? ⁴¹ And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong.” Luke 23:40, 41

The criminal on the cross next to Jesus realized that He was being crucified even though He was innocent. In return, the world has become a vastly different place – light shines in the darkness and many souls that would otherwise have been eternally condemned will now stand in the presence of God without fear. Hallelujah to the Lamb of God!

Lord God, Jesus suffered patiently when no punishment was due. He became an example to each of us that we too can endure through unjust punishment. And so, give us that ability as well; give us the ability to bear up under unjust punishment and to bless, not revile, our false accusers. And through this, may You be glorified. Praises to You, O God. Amen.

For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: 1 Peter 2:21

Peter has just shown that patient suffering, especially when it is suffering unjustly, is commendable before God. He now says something not often taught in the modern church, “For to this you were called.” Believers are called to numerous things – holiness, righteousness, being examples to non-believers, and etc. But believers are also called to suffering wrongly for their faith. The expectation is that, in this suffering, they are to bear up under it and patiently endure it.

As a reminder, Peter is writing to Jews. However, this is not a message unique to Jews. Paul says the same to Gentile believers in Romans 8:17 and elsewhere. In fact, Paul uses the same word as Peter now when writing this to the Gentiles at Philippi –

“For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake.” Philippians 1:29

This is not a concept unique to Jewish believers who were expected to suffer while Gentiles could expect wealth, prosperity, and ease. Such a message is contrary to Scripture. Peter says this is so, “because Christ also suffered for us.” A few key points are seen here. First, believers are expected to suffer *because* Christ suffered. The word *because* will be further explained in the next clause.

Secondly, it is Christ who suffered. It doesn’t simply say that Jesus suffered. The name Yeshua, or “Jesus,” was a common name at the time. But more, even if speaking of the correct Jesus, it wasn’t just that He was a person who suffered, but He is the Christ – the Messiah – who is the Anointed One of God who suffered. His suffering was prophesied in advance so that it would be known without a doubt that this was a part of God’s plan, and that His suffering was not an accident, but a predetermined part of what God was doing.

Thirdly, it says that Christ “also suffered for us.” The word “us” is possible, but it is more rightly translated as “you.” Peter is directing His words to believers who need to be trained in what he already knows. This then follows with his earlier words, stating “you” and “your” when conveying such truths.

Christ’s suffering was not for Himself, but for others. And His suffering was not just a vicarious act, as if believers are exempt from suffering because He suffered in their place. Instead, He suffered so that they could become believers and follow Him in the suffering which the gospel, at times, necessitates. This becomes fully evident with the words, “leaving us an example.”

Peter uses two words unique to Scripture here. The first, translated as “leaving,” signifies “to leave behind.” The notion of His suffering was left behind for us to see and fully understand. The second word, translated as “example,” is a compound word which would literally be rendered “underwriting.” It is as if a written copy of what He did is left as a print for believers to follow. As Vincent’s Word Studies describes the word, it is “a copy set by writing-masters for their pupils. Some explain it as a copy of characters over which the student is to trace the lines.” We as believers have what Christ left behind to carefully emulate so “that you should follow His steps.”

The word translated as “follow” means to “follow upon.” We are not simply to follow Christ, but to step in the footprints which He has walked. He is the Guide, the writings

have been left to carefully follow, and the footprints have been set in the ground which has now solidified to stone so that our steps are completely in accord with His.

Life application: The evidence for the Christian to expect and accept suffering in this life is overwhelming. The modern prosperity gospel is a false teaching brought about by a misunderstanding, misapplication, or misuse of the message of the Bible.

This is not to say that we should not hope for blessing, work for prosperity, or be born into wealth, but these things are not to be expected. Christianity is not an entitlement society of wealth and ease. Instead, it is a commitment to following one Lord and to be willing to set aside our own personal gain, our earthly desires, and even our family relationships when they interfere with our responsibilities to Jesus.

If you have been told to claim a blessing in Jesus' name, you have been counseled incorrectly on what you should anticipate.

The gospel message is the central theme of the Bible, and Jesus is the center of that message. He lived faithfully, bore pain and suffering quietly, and prevailed over this temporary life of earthly passions and lusts. This then has become our example to follow.

What is commendable? Missionaries who give their lives away for Jesus' sake; people who preach on Sunday and are willing to work a second job, if necessary, during the week; congregants who praise Jesus on Sunday and continue to praise Him morning and night throughout the week – even if they face trials, poverty, cursing, or abuse. For most of the world, following Jesus is a life-threatening commitment, and yet one which they gladly accept.

Let us never lose sight of Jesus' example; let us never fail to follow it when called to do so.

Lord, many times we have been promised ease, abundance, prosperity, and wealth by preachers, but Your word proclaims a different reality. Help us to accept blessing and ease, or hardship and trial, as You choose for us. No matter what, though, give us the desire and ability to follow Jesus through thick and thin. Amen.

**“Who committed no sin,
Nor was deceit found in His mouth”; 1 Peter 2:22**

Peter now reveals the character of Christ during His ministry to support the two thoughts which he has just put forth to be considered. In doing so, he cites the second half of Isaiah 53:9 –

“Because He had done no violence,
Nor *was any* deceit in His mouth.”

The quote here is given to support the second of the two premises that he is conveying. The first that of doing good, and the second is suffering for it. Peter presents those in verse 2:20, and then said that is what believers are also called to emulate in verse 2:21 –

“But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this *is* commendable before God. ²¹ For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps.”

The quote from Isaiah shows that Christ, in fact, did what was good. First, He “committed no sin.” Peter uses an aorist active verb, thus indicating that there was not a single occurrence where He sinned. In all He did, He never failed to hit the target of perfection. Peter then continues with Isaiah’s words by saying, “Nor was deceit found in His mouth.”

The idea here is that exactly as He presented Himself, so He was. He spoke clearly, unambiguously, and without cunning or hypocrisy. And in His conduct, His words were validated. Such a person should be both held in respect, and He should also be treated with exceptional honor and praise. However, the opposite was the case, as will be seen in Peter’s coming words. That will then explain the second premise noted above.

Life application: To understand the context of Isaiah’s words, which are cited by Peter here, take time to read Isaiah 52:13 – 53:12 today. This is the “Suffering Servant” passage which details the ministry of Jesus – including His death and resurrection. All of this was prophesied 700 years before it occurred.

In His earthly ministry, Jesus remained perfect and without sin, and there was no deceit in His words. Despite this, He was treated treacherously and condemned to die. If the Lord of Creation was willing to undergo such treatment after His perfect life, shouldn’t we – who are sinners by nature – be willing to suffer shame and reproach as He did?

Peter leaves us with no other possible answer than, “Yes Lord, I will follow Your example.” Let us always endeavor to remember His way when we are facing trials, even when we have done no wrong. As Peter said, “...for to this you were called.”

Heavenly Father, You have called us to be as Your Son – faithful, patient, and willing to suffer even when we have done no wrong. Give us that supernatural ability, and may our lives be a testimony to Your great faithfulness. We love You and desire to be pleasing children in Your glorious family. Amen.

...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; 1 Peter 2:23

The words of Peter are a continuation of the thought of the previous two verses. He noted that as Christ suffered, so that act was an example for us to follow after Him. In this, Peter cited Isaiah 53 which said that Christ committed no sin, and that there was no deceit found in His mouth. Now Peter continues that thought with, “who, when He was reviled.”

The words continue to speak of Jesus. It is true that He was reviled throughout His ministry. It seems there was always someone there to speak ill of Him, such as ascribing His work of casting out demons to the power of Beelzebub. That is but one of many examples of how He was reviled. But Peter is surely being more specific and speaking of the reviling He faced just prior to His crucifixion. This is the context of Isaiah’s words.

In Matthew 26, this is recorded concerning His treatment –

“Then they spat in His face and beat Him; and others struck *Him* with the palms of their hands, ⁶⁸ saying, ‘Prophecy to us, Christ! Who is the one who struck You?’”

To revile means to say harsh things and make verbal assaults against another. Such words are intended to demoralize another, which is exactly what occurred as Christ was being so mocked and accused. However, Peter then says that He “did not revile in return.” This is more fully revealed in the complete set of words found in Isaiah 53:7 –

“He was oppressed and He was afflicted,
Yet He opened not His mouth;
He was led as a lamb to the slaughter,
And as a sheep before its shearers is silent,
So He opened not His mouth.”

Jesus could have reviled His accusers during His ministry, but He rather rebuked them and spoke in a manner of how the prophets spoke. He warned that judgment was coming upon them, in an attempt to wake them up and turn them from their ways, but He did not revile. And when He was being purposely abused by those who came against Him just prior to His crucifixion, He could have reviled at them in return for their words towards Him. But He maintained His composure and remained silent.

Peter continues with, “when He suffered, He did not threaten.” When He was illegally struck and mocked by His accusers, He could have said, “You will be judged for this and punished by God.” But instead, He allowed them to have at Him without any such threatening statements. He had warned them throughout His ministry, and their hearts were hardened to His warnings. At the time of His trial and execution, He held His words and allowed them to fulfill the plan and purpose of God in Him. As it says, He instead “committed *Himself* to Him who judges righteously.”

In the Greek, there is no object for the verb. It essentially reads, “He gave Himself over to (?) judging justly.” Because of this, the object must be inferred. Some say, “His cause.” Others infer “His insults and injuries,” meaning His revilers and their actions against Him. The NKJV, in accord with others, says “to Him,” meaning God. This would certainly be in accord with what Peter has already said –

“And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one’s work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay *here* in fear.”

-1 Peter 1:17

This seems the best choice here. It would not be speaking of the righteous judgment of Pilate or Caiaphas because their judgment, although ordained by God, was not a just judgment. Peter has just shown in verse 2:19 that one can suffer wrongly, and yet he should still be subject to the authority over him.

However, if this is speaking of God, the obvious question then should be, “If this is righteous judgment, and Jesus is being judged, then He must have done something wrong, yes?”

Judgment comes from wrongdoing, so how can it be that Jesus, who never sinned, is being judged? The answer is found throughout the Bible, and in both testaments. We have sinned, but God graciously allows our sin to be transferred to an innocent substitute. This substitute is then killed, thus removing the sin.

As it says in the book of Hebrews though, the blood of bulls and goats (Old Covenant sacrifices) can never take away sin. Instead, they were accepted by God until the time when Jesus' more perfect sacrifice came. Jesus gave His life on the cross for the sins of all people who, by faith, accept what He has done. God righteously judges our sin in His own Son. Jesus' death is what removes our guilt. This is exactly what Peter will next write about as he continues with his words to us.

Life application: The great news is that not only is our sin removed through the death of the Lord Jesus, but He came back to life because "it was impossible for death to hold Him." He never sinned, so not only did He remove our sins, but they had no binding effect on Him as well.

Now, by the power of the resurrection, Jesus promises eternal life to all who have had their sins likewise removed. Think of what this means logically. Our sins are gone; death comes through sin; therefore, we can never truly die again. Though we die in our mortal flesh, our eternal souls have been made alive in Christ. Someday we will be given eternal bodies as well. In addition to conquering death, Jesus did it without reviling those who wrongly accused Him. Behold! The perfect Son of God who died to give us new life!

What a glorious Gift we have in our Lord Jesus! What an incomprehensible story of faithfulness, mercy, and grace! O God, how can it be that You have judged our sin in Your own precious Son? And even more, You have given eternal life to those who come to Him in faith because of His victory! Glory to You, O God! Amen.

...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. 1 Peter 2:24

In verse 2:22, Peter cited Isaiah 53:7. That came after having said that Christ suffered for us and in so doing He left an example for us. Isaiah's words prophesied that Christ would commit no sin, nor would there be any deceit found in His mouth. Despite this, Peter relayed the fact that Christ did not turn and revile those who mistreated Him, but instead committed Himself to the One who judges righteously.

The key thought is that He had committed no sin, and yet he suffered. Now Peter explains why He allowed it to be so. In doing this he will cite Isaiah 53:5. Understanding this context is what will help us to avoid one of the greatest errors of the modern church. It is an error in doctrine which has actually led innumerable people into feelings of insecurity, or to the belief that they are not sound, faithful Christians.

Peter's words of verse 2:24 begin with, "who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree." It has just been stressed that Christ had no sin of His own, and yet He "bore our sins." The word "bore" means to "offer up," as if on a high altar, and thus as a sacrifice which is offered up to God on high. It is reflected in Christ's bearing of the cross both to the place where He would be crucified, and bearing the cross as He was crucified. The entire process is an offering up to God on high.

In this is found the doctrine of substitution. In Israel, a person would lay his hands on the head of an innocent sacrificial animal, confess his sin over that animal, and then the animal would be slaughtered. The symbolism is that of transferring the sin to the animal who then died in place of the sinner. Christ bore our sins in this manner.

However, Hebrews 10:4 notes that "*it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.*" Thus, what was done in Israel was only typological, and it was in anticipation of the coming Christ who would fulfill the typology. It is Christ alone – sinless, and thus qualified to be considered "innocent" before God (thus fulfilling the typology) – who bore our sin "on the tree."

The word "tree" is literally "the wood." It is the same term used by Peter in Acts 5:30 and 10:39. Paul also uses it in Acts 13:29 and Galatians 3:13. God chose wood from a tree to be the mode of execution by which Christ would bear the sin of the world. Just as death came from a tree in the Garden of Eden, and just as the tree of life was withheld from man at that same time, the wood of Calvary became both the instrument of death for Christ and the instrument of life for those who would then look to Him.

Thus, the wood Peter speaks of is the fulfillment of those types. The cross of Calvary is also the place of transfer. On the cross where He died, the substitution is made, just as it was when the innocent animal died. The transfer that was anticipated, in the types and shadows of the Levitical law, is actually accomplished when one accepts Jesus as his Substitute. This then allows "that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness."

The verb Peter uses, translated as "having died," is found only here in Scripture. Transferring it to English is a difficult task which will only form a somewhat awkward translation. It signifies "to become from." As Vincent's Word Studies states it, "...having become off unto sin; not becoming separate from sins, but having ceased to exist as regards them."

Christ died for our sins, and thus we have died to sins. The transfer is made, and the sin is forgiven. Once forgiven, a person is no longer a slave to what he was forgiven of. If a

person is in prison and he serves his time, he is set free from prison. But even more, if a person is in prison, and the President pardons him, it is as if he never committed the crime. It can never be held against him again. If he is no longer bound by that crime, he is freed unto freedom.

Likewise, a person who is dead to sin is then freed unto righteousness. This is exactly what Paul speaks of in Romans 6. Consider what Peter has just said, and think on it as you read Paul's words –

⁵“For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be *in the likeness* of His resurrection, ⁶ knowing this, that our old man was crucified with *Him*, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. ⁷ For he who has died has been freed from sin. ⁸ Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, ⁹ knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. ¹⁰ For *the death* that He died, He died to sin once for all; but *the life* that He lives, He lives to God. ¹¹ Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. ¹² Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. ¹³ And do not present your members *as* instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness to God. ¹⁴ For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.” Romans 6:5-14

Paul then sums up this state of “become from” in regards to sins in Romans 6:18 by saying, “And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.”

Paul and Peter proclaim exactly the same gospel which produces exactly the same effects. They further speak of exactly the same obligation once that effect has been produced. And the reason for this obligation, that of living for righteousness, is that it is because of the work of Christ “by whose stripes you were healed.” This is where Peter cites a portion of Isaiah 53:5 –

“But He *was* wounded for our transgressions,
He *was* bruised for our iniquities;
The chastisement for our peace *was* upon Him,
And by His stripes we are healed.”

The words, “by His stripes,” speak of the punishment of scourging that Christ suffered. Peter uses a singular noun, *mólóps*, found only here in Scripture. It signifies a body wound. In the case of Christ, it consisted of that which was received during His scourging.

He was punished for sins He did not commit, and then He was crucified in order to die, thus carrying away those sins for which He was punished. The verb Peter uses shows this as an accomplished fact. The healing is done, and it is imputed to the one who believes (the verb is also passive – the person simply believes, and the work of Christ is transferred to him). The write below understood the passion Peter must have felt as he wrote out his epistle to us –

“Such a sight we feel sure, as we read this descriptive passage, St. Peter’s eyes beheld on the body of his Master, and the flesh so dreadfully mangled made the disfigured form appear in his eyes like one single bruise” (Lumby).

The obvious question for all believers to consider is “healed of what?” What is it that Peter has spoken of? Is it healing from the sniffles? Is it healing from cancer? Is it healing from any body ailment at all? The answer is “No” to all of them. Peter has referred to sin, and only sin. The highly inappropriate nature of claiming physical healing based on the words of either Isaiah 53:5, or 1 Peter 2:24, is obvious.

The only healing that Peter speaks of is that of sin. Healing from the effects of sin, which is sickness, anxiety, trouble, and death itself, may come about through prayer and/or right living, or it may only come about when the believer is translated to glory. But claiming physical healing of any type based on the words here is not only poor doctrine, it is a false teaching which leads hopeful believers into sad paths of dejection and turmoil when they are not healed of the physical affliction they fervently desire to be healed of.

Life application: As noted, the context of what Peter is quoting – and what Isaiah was looking forward to – is spiritual healing, not physical healing. This is the healing provided by Jesus in these passages.

Because this verse is not at all implying physical healing, by quoting this over someone with a physical problem, and “claiming healing” because of it, can only lead to false expectations and weakened faith.

The amazing part of what is conveyed to us here is that God took our pain and our suffering, and placed it on His own precious Son. The precious healing we receive because of His cross is spiritual and it is eternal. We have new life because of the work of Jesus Christ. Praise God in the highest for what He has done for His wayward children.

Thank You, O Lord, for the wonderful blessing of Jesus and the healing He provides. Through Him and through His suffering, we are healed of our state of corruption and death, and we now have new life through Him. O, to be called a son of the Living God because of His terrible trials! May we never forget what transpired to restore us to You. Thank You for Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls. 1 Peter 2:25

There is a necessary correction in the intent of Peter's words to get the proper sense of what he is saying. Charles Ellicott explains –

“The right reading does not attach ‘going astray’ to ‘sheep,’ but as predicate of the sentence, ‘ye were going astray like sheep.’ The ‘for’ introduces an explanation of how they came to be in need of ‘healing.’”

In this, the verb connected to the present participle denotes habitual action. It is a state of constant going astray. Peter here is continuing to cite Isaiah 53. What he cites is only a part of Isaiah 53:6, which says –

“All we like sheep have gone astray;
We have turned, every one, to his own way;
And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.”

The idea of going astray like a sheep is also found in Psalm 119:175, Jeremiah 50:6, and in Jesus' parable in Matthew 12:10-14. The idea then is one which would have been fully understood by all of Israel, whether they acknowledged it personally or not. Peter has just noted that it was by the stripes of Christ that these believers had been healed. The “For” which begins this verse is tied to that.

The necessarily healing which came about is shown, definitively, to not be a physical healing, but a spiritual one with Peter's continued words. All of Israel (Peter is specifically speaking to the Jewish people) had gone astray, just as the Gentiles of the world had. They were in as much need of this spiritual reconnection to God as anyone

else. They had constantly wandered from God, as is evidenced by the entire body of Scripture from the moment they left Egypt, even to Peter's present time (and which continues in Israel to this day).

It is in this state of going astray that Peter then compares them to sheep. Sheep need a constant watch over them, or they will simply wander. This is what happened to Israel. Being like sheep, and without proper overseers, they constantly wandered into the wilderness of spiritual apostasy. However, with the coming of Christ, Peter provides the good news for those who recognized Him for who He is. He says, "but have now returned."

The verb is passive, and is more correctly translated, "but are now returned." There was a specific point in time that the event occurred. It is when they received Christ, believing the gospel message. At that time, Christ returned them to Himself. The word "returned" does not imply that they individually had ever been under his care and were brought back to it. Rather, it speaks of the state of man in general. Man had belonged to the Lord, he turned from God, and now these individual humans were returned, they were converted, to that original reconnected state.

Peter then explains what this returning means with the words, "to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls." The idea of the Lord as the Shepherd of the sheep permeates Scripture. David speaks of the Lord being his Shepherd in the 23rd Psalm. Ezekiel refers to this state several times. Jesus spoke of it as clearly as could be stated in John 10 –

"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. ¹² But a hireling, *he who is* not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. ¹³ The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep. ¹⁴ I am the good shepherd; and I know My *sheep*, and am known by My own. ¹⁵ As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. ¹⁶ And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock *and* one shepherd." John 10:11-16

The word translated as "Overseer" is only used here when speaking of Christ Jesus. The idea of shepherding, however, is connected to it in Acts 20 –

“Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.” Acts 20:28

The Lord appointed lesser overseers within the church, implying that He is the true and greater Overseer. The Greek word is a compound of *epi*, or “over,” and *skopós*, or “look intently.” It signifies one who keeps a close eye on his flock. In the case of Christ, He maintains a personal watch over His people, determining the perfect care and protection necessary for each of those who are His. It speaks not of their physical well being, but of their assured salvation. No matter where they are, He is always attentive to their state.

It would be ludicrous to consider that a person could become a part of the flock of God, and to end up lost again. It would not show an attentive overseer, but one lax in his duties. Who can ascribe such negligence to the Lord? Rather, the Lord is the perfect Shepherd and Overseer. Those who are His will never stray so far as to be lost again.

Life application: Peter says we “were like sheep going astray.” A sheep doesn’t intentionally leave the security of the shepherd. Instead, without thinking, they just keep eating grass and moving farther and farther away from him until they are lost.

This is the comparison God makes to us throughout the Bible. We don’t reason things out, but just amble along without a care or a thought. We are in a state of helplessness, and there is nothing we can do to correct it. We pursue sin like grass, and continue in it until we are so lost that it is what seems normal and proper, like eating grass is to a sheep. It takes the shepherd’s attention to bring the sheep back into the fold and likewise, it takes God’s attention to ensure we are brought back to Himself.

This is just what God has done through Jesus – hence the terminology of Him being the Good Shepherd, the Chief Shepherd, and the Great Shepherd, as well as Peter’s titles in this verse – the Shepherd and Overseer of our souls.

The entire context of the passage is speaking of our being lost in sin and separated from God. But God sent Jesus, the Shepherd and Overseer of our souls, to bring us back to Him. This then is the healing that Peter has referred to.

It is the reversal of the curse of death mentioned in the first pages of Genesis. When God said to Adam that he would die on the day he ate of the fruit, he was referring to this state of spiritual death and helplessness. But He also promised this would be

corrected. Thanks be to God! It was in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus our Lord. By His stripes, we truly are healed.

What a marvelous and gracious Creator You are! We departed from You and became lost in sin and death. O! But You sent Jesus to find us and bring us back home again. What a wonderful story of deliverance and redemption! Thank You, O God, for Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

CHAPTER 3

Wives, likewise, *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, 1 Peter 3:1

Peter has been talking about the patience in suffering and obedience of Christ Jesus for the past eight verses, explaining to servants that they should act in a similar manner. Here, he now says that wives should be likewise submissive to their husbands. He has gone from general thoughts to believers, to an exhortation to “servants,” using a word which indicates a household servant, but which may possibly imply all believers as servants in God’s household (the words which followed in verses 2:18-25 certainly point to something all believers should practice), and now he specifies “wives.”

His words here are in perfect accord with the words of Paul in Ephesians 5:24 –

“Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so *let* the wives *be* to their own husbands in everything.”

In that same vein, Peter says to the wives that they are to “*be* submissive to your own husbands.” The word translated as submissive signifies to place oneself under the ranking authority of another. It is the same word directed to all believers in verse 2:13, and to the “servants” in 2:18. Wives are to be under obedience to the authority of their husband. This is the hierarchy established at the very beginning. At the fall, the words were pronounced by the Lord –

“To the woman He said:
‘I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception;
In pain you shall bring forth children;
Your desire *shall be* for your husband,
And he shall rule over you.’” Genesis 3:16

This is the divinely established order which is reflected in Scripture and throughout Scripture. It is spoken of by Paul in great detail. Peter gives further elaboration by saying, “that even if some do not obey the word.” The word “obey” carries with it the idea of belief. There is a conscious disbelief of the word, and this leads to not obeying its precepts. The assumption is that these are not believers.

Some have tried to align the word “obey” with the Jews only, meaning that Peter’s words here are directed to only Jewish women who believe, and who are married to

unbelieving Jews. This is without merit. Paul says to Gentiles in Romans 11, and using the same word twice –

“For as you were once disobedient to God, yet have now obtained mercy through their disobedience, ³¹ even so these also have now been disobedient, that through the mercy shown you they also may obtain mercy. ³² For God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all.” Romans 11:30-32

Paul also uses the same word in Romans 2:8 when speaking of both Jew and Gentile. The word simply means that these people are disobedient to the gospel through disbelief, whether Jew or Gentile. In Peter’s case, he is addressing Jewish believers, but the distinction is made because he is the Apostle to the Jews, not in the presentation of a variant gospel, but as an ethnic calling.

Understanding this, Peter continues with, “they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives.” Peter uses the same word for “win” that Paul uses five times in 1 Corinthians 9:19-21 when speaking of winning others to Christ through his own serving and submission to others.

For Peter’s words now, this again speaks of the husbands. The conduct of the wife itself is to be submissive and Christ-centered so that their actions alone, even without saying another word concerning the gospel, which the husbands have not believed, will win them over. It is the submission of the wife, because of Christ, which is expected to bring about the conversion. The message has been heard and understood, and to nag about it to the husband will only drive him further away. Therefore, to live out the message as a submissive wife is the expected remedy to the matter.

This takes the reader right back to the end of Chapter 2 where Christ submitted Himself to the righteous judgment set before Him. The time for His ministry of words had ended, and the time for His silent submission had come. This is the thought Peter is conveying to the wife. As Solomon says –

“A time to keep silence,
And a time to speak.” Ecclesiastes 3:7

Peter’s words here have come under attack as authoritative for modern believing women. As an example, Charles Ellicott says –

“Whether this imposes for all time upon Christian wives as complete a submission towards their husbands as is here enjoined might perhaps be questioned, because the special reason for the command in this place was to allay suspicions engendered by the boldness with which Christianity proclaimed the freedom of the individual. St. Peter has just been giving injunctions for absolute submission, even to injustice, on the part of slaves; and the progress of Christianity has abolished slavery altogether. The measure of the Christian wife’s submission may safely be left to her own enlightened conscience, guided by other passages of the New Testament not written, like this, for a special emergency.”

Ellicott’s words are without merit and, in fact, contain several falsehoods. Slavery has not been abolished. It is an ongoing part of the world, even if it was abolished in his nation by Christians. It is also true that all Christians are slaves to righteousness and slaves to God (Romans 6:18-22). Secondly, the submission of the wife is not “left to her own enlightened conscience.” It was ordained by God at the beginning. Peter will cite the submission of Sarah to her husband in a few verses, and Paul continues with the thought in his epistle. The submission of the wife is never “left to her own enlightened conscience” in Scripture.

Further, if the words of Paul and Peter are not prescriptive, then they would not be included in the epistles which govern relations within the body of believers. It is not up to individuals to determine which verses of the church age epistles apply to the church and which do not. Peter’s words are in accord with Paul’s, and they are prescriptive. It is not a right of Christians to shop for their doctrine, but they are to accept the word, which is clear and without ambiguity, as it is written, and they are to comply with it.

Life application: Rather than putting women down, as has so often been proclaimed by liberal theologians and female activists, this verse is actually placing them in a high and exalted position. No one, no matter how bad their theology on Jesus may be, diminishes the high position God places on servanthood and servant leadership. In fact, it is one of the greatest aspects of Jesus’ earthly ministry.

But suddenly the attitude is changed when the role of women is mentioned. It is as if they are saying, “How dare those chauvinistic apostles tell women to be submissive to their husbands?” Peter and Paul, in particular, are treated as if they are women abusers and that they should be dismissed because of their culturally biased attitude towards women. Nothing could be farther from the truth.

As just noted, servants are to be examples to their masters for several reasons –

- 1) That the name of Jesus won't be brought into disgrace;
- 2) That unbelievers will see their behavior and possibly come to be saved by it;
- 3) That the order of things, which has been established by God, will be maintained – something beneficial to all.

Peter says the same concepts that apply in other hierarchies also apply in familial relationships. To fight against what has been ordained by God in the family structure is no different than fighting against His will for us in the larger society. Don't ever feel women are being given anything but a high and exalted position in the workings of God. What He has ordained is proper, fitting, and honoring to each – male and female alike.

Heavenly Father, help us to fully appreciate the glorious role that Jesus filled as both a Servant of God and as the Head of the church. Help us likewise to fulfill the role ordained for each of us – as men and women of God, chosen for Your glorious purposes. May we do as You would have us do and thus bring glory to You in the sight of all. Amen.

...when they observe your chaste conduct *accompanied by fear*. 1 Peter 3:2

Peter continues with his reason why women are to be submissive to their husbands, even if they are non-believers. And so he says, “when they observe.”

The word translated as “observe” was introduced in 1 Peter 2:12. Peter now uses it again for the last time in Scripture. It signifies to look upon or behold. In both instances, observation of the believer leads to a noticeable change in the beholder –

“...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.” 1 Peter 2:12

“Wives, likewise, *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, when they observe your chaste conduct *accompanied by fear.*” 1 Peter 3:1-2

Like the non-believing Gentiles who are set to glorify God because of the conduct of believers, even when spoken of as evildoers, so non-believing husbands can be greatly affected by the conduct of their wives which they observe. It is conduct which Peter next describes as “chaste.”

The word signifies pure to the core, unadulterated, uncontaminated, and without any spoil – even to the center of one’s being. There is no mixture of anything impure or worthy of rebuke or condemnation. It is a word used of that which is sacred, holy, and free from ceremonial defilement, as in an offering. Imagine a husband with such a wife. He could never find an accusation against her, and thus his heart would hopefully be pricked each time he considered her ways, knowing it was because of her faith in Christ.

Peter then says that this chaste conduct is to be “*accompanied by fear.*” The Greek literally reads, “in fear.” There are several possible intents for Peter saying this. The first would be out of reverent fear of God, as it is used elsewhere. Because this has been determined by the Lord, even since the fall of man, it is her duty to act this way in awed fear of the Lord.

The second is out of respect for her husband, fearing that anything less would be improper due to his authority over her, and thus damaging the relationship which exists between them.

And the third would be a fear of the consequences of failing to show proper respect, which would be to further alienate him from a relationship with the Lord. As a believer, her highest duty is to the Lord. Therefore, her duty to her husband is to win him to the Lord. Should she not act with a proper fear of the Lord, of her husband, or towards the gospel, the chances of his salvation would be greatly diminished.

Life application: It should be the great hope of all believers that their conduct would be such that those who observe it will want to know who this wonderful Lord is that the believers would be such fine examples of honorable character.

If you come to Christ and then act in a manner which is in line with the gospel, regardless of how you are treated, others cannot help but notice. Therefore, let your respect for the Lord be of the highest and most exalted manner possible. Let the people of the Lord proclaim His surpassing greatness and be ever mindful of His mercies upon us. By having this attitude, may others see our testimony and our faithful walk and be won over, even without words.

Lord, before we knew You, we lived as those who had no respect or fear for You. Our lips failed to praise You and, in fact, we spoke Your name in inappropriate ways. Now we know You, now we fear You, and now we love You. Give us the desire and ability to always exalt You so that others will see and fear You as well. In all things, may You be glorified through our lives. Amen.

Do not let your adornment be *merely* outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on *fine* apparel— 1 Peter 3:3

The words of Peter here are completely in line with those of Paul which are found in 1 Timothy 2:9 –

“...in like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing.”

The word Peter uses for “adornment” is *kosmos*. It signifies an ordered system. It is used at times to speak of the world, the universe, the people of the world, and etc. With this understood, Peter’s words can more effectively be understood.

He is saying that there is to be a character about the Christian woman which should not be “outward.” The NKJV supplied the word “merely.” The reason for this is that the “ordered system” of a woman isn’t to be based on externals. But this is exactly what the world is caught up in. This is so much the case that sometimes this is all one sees of her. There is nothing internally beautiful to back up the external facade which is seen by all.

In order to ensure that the true, godly character of the woman is seen, Peter says for women to “not let your adornment be merely outward.” It is a way of saying, “Have substance in and of yourself. Don’t just be a false presentation of who you are.” Then, in order to explain his intent, he notes several things to avoid. In doing so, he uses words only found here in Scripture. The first case is “arranging the hair.”

Peter uses the word *emploké*, meaning an elaborate braiding of the hair. If a woman is trusting in her hair to be the fullest expression of who she is, she is trusting in that which is vain, ostentatious, and vapid. The old saying, “It’s lipstick on a pig,” may be true. Without being able to discern the nature of the woman apart from her hair, there is nothing to really rely on in a meaningful way.

Next, he says, “wearing.” It is another unique word, *perithesis*. It signifies, “a putting all around.” In having gold on every extremity, and all around the face and neck, that is what the eyes will be directed to. The heart may be pure or wicked, the woman may be a saint or a harlot, but who can tell? Unless the person is known for who she is, the gold is a distraction which hides the truth. Like whitewash on a fence which is corroded and

ready to fall down, and which has its true nature hidden, so the gold hides what is most important for others to see.

Peter then says, “or putting on fine apparel.” Again, a third unique word is seen *endusis*, translated as “putting on.” Further, the NKJV supplies the word “fine.” Vincent’s Word Studies states of this, “Female extravagance in dress in the days of the empire reached an alarming pitch.” In an attempt to compete with others in outward beauty, the inner nature of the woman is covered over and indiscernible. Such should not be the case.

Peter will explain what should rather be the case as he continues in the verses ahead.

Life application: This and similar verses have led to some interesting fashions for Christian women – entire denominations clad in matching dresses and bland appearance. However, it is not good to “pick and choose” intent from a verse simply because it meets someone’s personal preference. Rather, the Bible needs to interpret itself and where there is no comparable thought, wisdom is needed to know what’s being intimated.

As noted above, the NKJV supplies the words “merely” and “fine,” which are not in the original. The reason they do this is because:

- 1) Elsewhere in Scripture women wear fine apparel and have other outward adornments, thus highlighting their beauty.
- 2) Nowhere in Scripture is outward adornment to highlight beauty forbidden – in fact, it is often noted with approval.

Great biblical women of faith have adorned themselves with finery; in the Song of Solomon, the beauty and adornments of Solomon’s wife are highlighted, including gold and silver. The exemplary wife of noble character mentioned in Proverbs 31 is robed in “fine linen and purple.” Because of these, the NKJV has rightly inserted “merely” and “fine.” A woman’s beauty should not be “merely” noticed because of her externals.

Lord, no matter what we wear and no matter how we adorn ourselves, we have no true beauty apart from You. But through Jesus, we are radiant and beautiful. Whether we adorn ourselves in fine things or not, may we bring glory to You because of the inward beauty You give us through Jesus. Thank You for Jesus who brings forth the true beauty of who we are! Amen.

...rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God. 1 Peter 3:4

Peter's words are only a part of a greater thought which began in the previous verse –

“Do not let your adornment be merely outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel—⁴ rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.”

Instead of focusing on the externals, which may look great but actually hide a soul full of wickedness, Peter says that the woman of God should rather display “the hidden person of the heart.” The idea here is comparable to what Paul says in Romans 7:22 –

“For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man.”

The things described in the previous verse are coverings which reveal nothing of the true character of the person. But that which is hidden in the heart is what reveals the individual's true nature. It is concealed and is not readily discernible from a first glance.

However, the true nature of a person will always eventually become evident. All of the fancy external adornments will eventually be exposed as false as a man grows more intimate with the woman. If he cares about anything except externals, he will come to realize that she possesses “the incorruptible *beauty* of a gentle and quiet spirit.”

The arrangement of the hair will someday no longer be able to enrapture those around her. The gold can get lost, stolen, and so on. The fine apparel will eventually wear out, get moth-eaten, or the like. These things are temporary and they reveal nothing of the true character of the soul. But a woman with a gentle and quiet spirit possesses that which is enduring, and which will never fail to satisfy a man who understands that true source of her beauty. To him, it is of more value than all of the flashy and expensive externals, and it is also “very precious in the sight of God.”

The word translated as “precious” signifies “extremely expensive.” It is seen just three times. The first is in Mark 14:3 and refers to the costly perfume which was poured over Christ. Paul uses it in 1 Timothy 2:9 when referring to “costly clothing,” which he dismisses as of no value in comparison to moderation in such things. Peter now uses it for the last time to show that the gentle and quiet spirit of a woman is of great value to God.

This is evident from quite a few passages in Scripture, and it highlights the fact that God is looking on the internals when evaluating the people of the world. That which is external is temporary, fleeting, and of no true value. How odd it is, then, that this is what the world mostly focuses on!

Life application: What do we know about Sarah from Scripture? Do we know how her hair was arranged? Does someone still have the bracelets she wore? Even if they were still around, they would be completely worn away by now. The beautiful handmade clothes she wore disappeared thousands of years ago. But we still have the knowledge of who she was, and what her attitude toward her husband and toward God was.

Likewise, the fleeting beauty of those in Hollywood, or in fashion magazines, will be gone within a very short span. The only thing left of any value at all will be their character. Looking at the examples of today, it is a sure bet that most of them will be completely forgotten in the same amount of time – multiple divorces, drug addictions, arrests for abuse, etc., mark the character of most of these shallow and unreasoning people.

What they need isn't a new silk dress or a new fancy hairdo. Rather, they need the covering of Christ. They don't need more gold and diamonds. Instead, they need that which costs them nothing and yet which has infinite value. If only we could pursue that which is truly worth pursuing – Jesus! What we need is Jesus!

“Charm *is* deceitful and beauty *is* passing,
But a woman *who* fears the Lord, she shall be praised.” Proverbs 31:30

Lord, may the women of God look in the mirror and realize how precious they are – simply for who they are, and not because of what they wear. When they apply make-up, put on earrings, or buy a new dress, may they remember that these things don't make them beautiful. Instead, it's a pure heart and a gentle and quiet spirit which shows their true beauty. Amen.

For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands, 1 Peter 3:5

Peter has instructed women to not focus on the externals for their adornment, but on the inner beauty of the person. Now, he gives a firm and reliable reason for this through example. He begins with, “For in this manner.” In other words, in the manner in which I just told you to conduct yourselves, which is to “not let your adornment be *merely*

outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on *fine* apparel—⁴ rather *let it be* the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible *beauty* of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God” (verses 3:3, 4).

It is this expectation that Peter likens to the women of “former times.” Peter is not going to arbitrarily pull out examples from his family or of some lore passed down by Jewish tradition. Rather, he will refer to a key example from Scripture, and have her stand as representative of “the holy women who trusted in God.”

In other words, there is a record in Scripture which is then used as an example for other women to emulate. As God saw it sufficient to include this example in Scripture, then it is obviously something that He finds noteworthy and deserving of emulation. Such women “adorned themselves” as Peter noted in the previous verses (cited above).

The word “adorned” is in the imperfect tense in the Greek. What this means is that it was their habitual and continuous way of conducting this aspect of their lives. In this, they weren’t fashioning themselves for all to see and lust after, but rather they remained “submissive to their own husbands.”

Remember, it is wives who Peter is addressing. If a woman is married, and yet she is purposefully dressing in a manner that is intended to attract the attention of other men, it means that she is not being submissive to her husband, but rather she is being solicitous of the attention of other men. It is a note to the world that she is not satisfied with him and she is seeking more from the men to whom she has no right to be with. She bears a resemblance not to the godly women of the past, but to the crafty harlot described in Proverbs 7 or to the ruthless and yet seductive Jezebel who knew how to coerce men through a painted face and flattery –

“Now when Jehu had come to Jezreel, Jezebel heard *of it*; and she put paint on her eyes and adorned her head, and looked through a window.” 2 Kings 9:30

Life application: Peter is not implying that a woman is to dress blandly or shun away from any of the external treatments. However, those things aren’t what she should be relying on to catch her husband’s attention. If she is, then sadness and dissatisfaction will result.

These things are temporary and fading, and people get old and wrinkly. The day is coming when the finery no longer works and the wrinkles are all that’s left. When that day arrives, then what is left but emptiness and loneliness? But when a woman adorns

herself with her inner beauty, trusts in God, is gentle and respectful, and – yes – submissive to her husband, she has a firm and lasting foundation set for the love and approval of her husband.

Is being submissive meant to be degrading to a woman? Of course not! God made women the “weaker vessel,” and it is the man’s duty and responsibility to care for and protect her. He is to honor his wife as his lifelong partner and to look first and foremost at her true inner beauty.

Only a perverse person would reject a godly, submissive, and gentle wife for someone who is glitzy, finely dressed, and as shallow as a wading pool. In the end, he is destined to drown in his own tears and sorrow. But a man who respects the beautiful, kind, and gentle wife of God is a man who will live in true happiness and contentment.

Heavenly Father, may we look to the pattern You have set for our marital relationships. Give us joy and contentment in the husband or wife of our youth and may we revel in the bond You established on the day we vowed our souls to one another in Your presence. Amen.

...as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror. 1 Peter 3:6

Peter now provides an example of the women of faith who were submissive to their husbands, as he just mentioned in the previous verse. His choice takes the reader back to Genesis where he notes that “Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord.” This is cited from Genesis 18:12 –

“Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, ‘After I have grown old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?’”

The interesting thing about this verse is that Sarah said this to herself, not out loud. However, what is understood from this is that a person’s thoughts which are unstated are surely reflective of the true thoughts of the person. If it was her habit to speak of her husband using the honorific “my lord” in her thoughts, then it demonstrates that she honored him in her outward expressions and manners as well.

It should be noted that nothing is said of Sarah’s outward adornments or fashions, of which Peter has been speaking. The lack of any such note is an implicit reference that her beauty was a natural beauty, of which she is noted for in Genesis – even at an older

age. Further, when Peter says that Sarah “obeyed” Abraham, it is referring to his custom of ensuring their safety through her words, as is recorded several times in Genesis, such as –

“And Abraham said, ‘Because I thought, surely the fear of God *is* not in this place; and they will kill me on account of my wife. ¹² But indeed *she is* truly my sister. She *is* the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife. ¹³ And it came to pass, when God caused me to wander from my father’s house, that I said to her, ‘This *is* your kindness that you should do for me: in every place, wherever we go, say of me, ‘He *is* my brother.’”” Genesis 20:11-13

Thus, Sarah was obedient and she was respectful, just as noted by Peter now. From there, he continues with, “whose daughters you are.” The translation is lacking. The verb is aorist and passive. It should read, “whose daughters you have become.” Though speaking to a Jewish audience whose wives would also be Jewish, Peter implies that they only became daughters of Sarah at a specific point. It is not a hereditary entitlement. This is the exact same concept that Paul uses when speaking of the state of both Jews and Gentiles in Galatians 3:7 –

“Therefore know that *only* those who are of faith are sons of Abraham.”

Paul speaks in the same manner in Romans 4:11 and elsewhere as well. Peter then states how they have become this way by saying, “if you do good and are not afraid with any terror.” The translation of the NKJV is cumbersome. For clarity, the ESV says, “if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening.”

Peter’s words here are an allusion to Proverbs 3:25 –

“Do not be afraid of sudden terror,
Nor of trouble from the wicked when it comes.”

The Greek translation of this says, “Be not afraid of sudden fear.” That is what Peter was considering in his citation. Sarah is used as the example. Her hope was in God, and thus she demonstrated faith in being told she would have a child, even at an advanced age. Though she laughed in doubt, when she realized that the Lord’s words would come to pass, she did not waiver or shrink back because of the fears that could otherwise have overtaken her.

In speaking of the women as being daughters of Sarah, it is not speaking of salvation as is the case with the analogy of faith like Abraham. Rather, it is speaking of typology of character. The women of the faith, meaning believers, become daughters of Sarah in type when they show respect towards their husbands and they do not fear those things that might otherwise terrify women whose hope is not grounded in Christ.

Life application: Very few major figures in the Bible come away with nothing negative said about them... and Sarah is not one of them. Her faults, as well as her nobler deeds, are given – showing her to be just as human as the rest of us.

Together, she and Abraham worked through life's difficulties and problems, occasionally faltering in their conduct. But Sarah is remembered as a true woman of God because she was faithful to her husband, calling him "lord."

The word "lord" in the Hebrew passage being referred to is *adoni*. *Adon* is simply a term that can mean "mister" or "master." In fact, in modern Hebrew, if one were to introduce his friend at a business meeting, he would say, "This is adon Cohen." The "i" affixed to *adon* indicates possession (my lord, or my master). She could have used another term, *ishi*, which indicates "my husband."

In Genesis 18:12, Sarah chose to use the term *adoni*, rather than *ishi*. This was her way of showing respect to her husband. In today's verse, Peter goes on to say that the woman of God should show similar respect when referring to her husband.

Lord, just as Sarah was given a child in her old age, just as the children of Israel were delivered through the Red Sea, and just as Jesus was resurrected unto eternal life, so we will trust that You will deliver us from all that is frightening. We know that You are in complete control of all things, and so our trust is well-founded when it is placed in You. Thank You for this assurance we possess. Amen.

Husbands, likewise, 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. 1 Peter 3:7

Peter now turns to the husbands. He has steadily worked up the level of authority within the house from servants, to wives, and now to husbands. His words to them are short, comprising only this one verse. And so he begins with, "Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding."

The word “likewise” is stated to show that the same care and attention of the preceding thoughts should be given by the husband as was stated for the servants and wives. From there, he instructs them to dwell with their wives in an intelligent way concerning the relationship which grasps the differences between the sexes.

The word translated here as “understanding” signifies knowledge which is obtained from firsthand experience. In other words, the husband has to pay attention to the differences between himself and his wife, and then to use wisdom in how to attend to those differences. One of them, which Peter relays as a specific duty, is that he is to give “honor to the wife.”

Peter uses the same word as he did when speaking of Christ in 1 Peter 2:7 –

“Therefore, to you who believe, *He is precious...*”

There is to be a value assigned to the wife, showing her as precious in the husband’s eyes. She is not merely someone to serve the husband or to accomplish the tasks for him which are otherwise demeaning. Rather, he is to grasp that she has a special value in the relationship which is unique and benefiting to it. Peter then notes the state of the wife in this capacity by writing that she is “the weaker vessel.”

In other words, the fact that she is weaker is a reason for assigning a special value to her. If someone has a mug made of durable plastic, he can haphazardly place it anywhere without worry that it could be damaged. However, if he has a special mug made of porcelain, he will treat it with extra honor and care. Because it is a weaker vessel, it does not mean it isn’t precious. Rather, it is far more precious and deserves special attention because of that.

Though not stated by Peter, it is obvious that the weakness of the woman is not limited to her physical nature, but emotions are obviously normally tied in as well. There are always exceptions, but the nature of the woman is to be intelligently evaluated by the husband to ensure her fragile nature is taken into consideration.

Peter then adds in that this attention to the needs of the wife are especially significant because both the husband and the wife share a common bond when they are united in their belief in Christ. This is that they are “heirs together of the grace of life.”

It is understood by Peter here that there is an absolute equality between men and women in regards to salvation and all that is tied together with it. Though there are

differences between men and women which are intended for this life, there is no distinction between men and women in the spiritual benefits of being in Christ. This is stated by Paul in Galatians 3 –

“For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” Galatians 3:26-29

This idea of equality has, unfortunately, been taken to an unintended extreme by liberal-leaning theologians and churches. Both Paul and Peter are speaking of an equality in regards to position in Christ, not position in this world. Peter has just noted that women are the weaker vessel. He has given different instructions to the husband and to the wife.

Paul, likewise, gives specific instructions for men within the church and for women within the church. There are things women are explicitly stated to do, and things women are forbidden to do. The equality of position and salvation in Christ does not mean equality in all matters at all times. This is a fundamental error of liberal theology. The grace of life, that of being in Christ and in the expectation of eternal glory for both husband and wife, is what is being referred to now.

Lastly, Peter gives a concrete reason for the proper treatment of the wife by the husband. It is so “that your prayers may not be hindered.” If there is ill-treatment of the wife, she will be bitter in her heart and spirit. But God ordained that the husband be united to his wife as one. They are to have the same goals, hopes, aspirations, and so on. If they are not united in harmony, the prayers for those things will be harmfully affected.

Therefore, it is evident from Peter’s words that harmony within the husband/wife relationship is crucial to the reception of their prayers by the Lord, and His favorable response to them. This is also to be inferred by Paul’s words in 1 Corinthians 7 –

“Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband. ⁴The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband *does*. And likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife *does*. ⁵Do not deprive one another except with consent

for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.”

-1 Corinthians 7:3-5

If there is not a united aspect to the prayers of the husband and wife, who are deemed as one in God’s eyes, the prayers will be ineffectual, both in their presentation to the Lord, and in His response to them.

Life application: Peter has been explaining the role of women in the family structure. Like Jesus who came as a Servant, Peter explained that the role of a woman was equally high and exalted. The only thing shameful about serving is that someone would fail to do it, thus failing to resemble the Lord. But the man can, and should, serve the wife.

Men and women are created differently in mindset. Women are geared towards one thing and men towards another. This doesn’t mean there are no similarities, but there are differences. Men need to understand this.

If a man fails to relate to his wife, what does he end up doing? He misuses her both physically and emotionally. He does this because he has failed to empathize with her. The failure is more often than not the man’s fault!

A man should be willing to lay down his very life for the woman he committed to at marriage. To fail in this regard is to disregard what Jesus did for the church – dying for it. Jesus has given the example for men to follow.

Men, why are your lives out of control? Why are you suffering in a crummy marriage? Go look in the mirror. Nine times out of ten it is because you are failing to be the godly husband you are supposed to be. Your prayers are being hindered because of it, and God’s face is not turned toward you. Step up to the plate and act like the man of God you are intended to be!

Lord, help us to be the spouses you intend for us to be. We certainly fail in what Your word has laid out for us at times, and it has caused disruption and stress in our families. Give us wisdom in dealing with our marriages so that You will be glorified through our actions, and also so that peace will prevail in our homes. Amen.

Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous; 1 Peter 3:8

Peter's words, until verse 2:18, were to all who would receive his letter. In verse 2:18, he then wrote to "servants." He then addressed "wives" in verse 3:1, and then he addressed "husbands" in verse 3:7. Now, he says, "Finally, all *of you be* of one mind."

The word "Finally" doesn't mean he is ending the thoughts of the epistle, but rather he is taking the three categories he just referred to, each directed to a particular emulation of Christ, or for specific Christian conduct, and he is reuniting them as one with these words. These words are particularly for all who are living as sojourners and pilgrims.

Servants, wives, and husbands alike are to be "of one mind." The word is found only here in the New Testament. It literally says, "like-minded." It is to share the same perspective which is to emulate the mind of God in Christ, and then acting on that. Peter then defines that with "having compassion for one another."

Again, Peter uses a word unique in Scripture, *sumpathés*. One can see the modern word "sympathy" coming forth from this word. It conveys the idea of an "interchange of fellow-feeling in joy or sorrow" (Vincent's Word Studies).

Peter next says to "love as brothers." Again, it is a word unique in Scripture, *philadelphos*. It is an adjective, not a noun, which signifies a state of loving as family members. After this, he then says for each to "*be* tenderhearted."

This is a word used only once by Paul, and then one more time here by Peter, *eusplagchnos*. It speaks of "the visceral organs ('bowels') as they exercise positive gut-level sympathy (empathy, compassion) – i.e. 'living with guts'" (HELPS Word Studies). The word "tenderhearted" gets the point across well.

And, finally, for this verse, Peter admonished his reader to "*be* courteous." The word gives the sense of humility, lowliness of mind, or modesty.

Life application: Peter admonishes us with words like, "*be* of one mind." Doesn't that seem to be a huge barrel to fill! He is talking in the general sense. Of course, we all have different hopes, likes, aspirations, etc. What he means is that, in the Christian context, we should all have the same attitude towards our faith or fellowship, and our love for each other. We need to have compassion one to another.

When a brother or sister is experiencing sickness, sadness, or loss, we should show empathy and give comfort. We should love one another without hypocrisy. A notable tenet among Christians is that we don't necessarily need to like each other, but we do

need to love each other. Even though we may not want to be around a particular person because our lives don't sync well with them, when we are around them we need to give them the same dose of love that we would give our best friends.

Further, from Peter's words of this verse, we realize that too often we allow our morning mood to carry on throughout the day. Instead, we should endeavor to be warm and affectionate in our dealings with one another. We should also add in a spoonful of respect and submission. These qualities don't always come easily, but they are given for our benefit. As we endeavor to live them out, we will mature as people and as Christians.

Heavenly Father, we admit that we have not always been the epitome of Christian character. We haven't been of one mind with our brothers, we have failed to be compassionate, loving, tenderhearted, and courteous. And yet, this is what You expect. Be with us and guide us to be a reflection of You, the fulfillment of all these qualities. To Your glory we pray. Amen.

...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. 1 Peter 3:9

Peter continues his list of exhortations to all the brethren. Taken together with the last verse, it reads –

“Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous; 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.”

In his words of verse 9, he begins with “not returning evil for evil.” The words are in exactly the same line of thought as that of Paul in Romans 12:17, which says, “Repay no one evil for evil.”

A good analysis of this comes directly from Jesus in Matthew 5:38-48. This idea, put forth by the Lord, Paul, and now Peter, is intended to be followed despite being contrary to our normal human nature. By staying in the word, fellowshiping with others, talking to the Lord continuously, and praying without ceasing, this difficult precept can be attained. But with the distractions in the world constantly tugging at us from every direction, it is otherwise a remarkably difficult task. In the end, repaying evil for evil is

simply producing a second evil. If the first evil was wrong, a second one doesn't make the first right; it only adds to the evil.

Next, Peter says, “or reviling for reviling.” Paul speaks of one who would stir up such an attitude in 1 Timothy 6:3-5. This particular precept has become especially easy in modern times where a keyboard directs the thoughts of the mind more than a personal, face-to-face interaction. It is so very easy to revile someone in return for their reviling, because there is no real accountability in the act. But whether in person, or through the internet, we are admonished to not act in such a way.

Peter then continues with, “but on the contrary blessing.” Instead of reviling another, we are to speak forth a blessing. And this “blessing” should not be one which is sarcastic. Rather, it should be a true and heartfelt blessing intended to stir up the one who has put forth evil or reviling in hopes of convicting them of their improper act and bringing about an intended change for good in them. And Peter gives the reason for this by saying, “knowing that you were called to this.”

There arises a question with these words. Do the words “you were called to this” speak of what has already been said, meaning conducting oneself in the manner just stated by Peter, or do they speak of what he will next say, which is “that you may inherit a blessing.” The answer seems more likely to be the former. This is because it is the same line of thought as given in 1 Peter 2:21 where he says –

“For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps.”

It is the conduct of the believer which Peter is focused on, not specifically the rewards for the conduct. Being Christlike means acting as Christ did, and as He has instructed us to do. We have been called to not return evil for evil and to not repay reviling with reviling. Instead, we have been called to respond to both with a blessing. In conducting ourselves in such a manner, Peter then says this is so “that you may inherit a blessing.”

This is not the reason for the conduct, but it is an expected benefit derived from it. What the specific nature of the blessing one may inherit could be debated. However, it is certain that blessing will come. It may come immediately in the heart of the person who is blessed rather than reviled. It may come from someone who sees our conduct and wants to know Christ because of our display of right conduct. And, it may be a reward from the Lord for simply being obedient to His word. No act of righteousness which is accomplished in faith will fail to receive its reward.

In the end, a blessing will come upon the one who rightly follows the words of admonishment from Peter now, and from the directives found elsewhere in the epistles which set church-age doctrine for us.

Life application: How many people send money to televangelists in order to receive a blessing! And yet Peter shows us today how we can truly inherit a blessing, and it has nothing to do with lining the pockets of a smooth speaker. Instead, our blessings come from being obedient to the word of God. This includes the following precepts –

- 1) Having compassion – demonstrating that the hurting are truly important to you.
- 2) Loving as brothers – no matter how you feel about those around you, you are willing to set aside the petty and love them despite the differences.
- 3) Being tenderhearted – when you show tenderness to others, you display a caring that most people need at any given moment.
- 4) Being courteous – Jesus washed the feet of his disciples setting an example of humility. Be sure to open the door for others, allow people in when traffic allows, be polite to salespeople who have nothing to do with the problem you may be experiencing, etc.
- 5) Not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling – just because you have been offended, there is no reason to turn around and bite back. As Jesus instructed, we are to “turn the other cheek.” Instead of handing back poison, hand back a blessing.

These then are the ways we can inherit a blessing. If we are trying to gain favor from pastors, evangelists, or others, by sending them money in order to make more money, then we are acting in a manner contrary to Scripture. The attitude of the heart, and not the desire for a fuller wallet, is what God is pleased with.

Heavenly Father, too often we fail to act in the ways outlined in Your word. Too often we want the blessing without being a blessing. Forgive us for this callous and self-centered attitude, and help us always to be the type of Christians who are obedient to You and to Your word. May we be avenues of love leading others to You. Amen.

For

“He who would love life

And see good days,

Let him refrain his tongue from evil,

And his lips from speaking deceit. 1 Peter 3:10

Peter has just spoken about not returning evil for evil, or reviling for reviling. He then said, “knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing.” To support this, he now cites Scripture, specifically the Greek translation of Psalm 34 –

“Who *is* the man *who* desires life,
And loves *many* days, that he may see good?
¹³ Keep your tongue from evil,
And your lips from speaking deceit.” Psalm 34:12, 13

The idea of the first words of the psalm, as quoted by Peter, are explained by the scholar Bengel as, “Who wishes to live so that he will not weary of life.” In other words, “How will a man pursue life so that it is really worth living? How will a man’s days be built up and blessed instead of those which are tedious and toilsome?” Peter, following the psalmist, is showing how to live what would be considered a truly abundant life.

Will he write about fast donkeys, big bank accounts, and the last iRock to scratch out messages to friends on? No! Rather, he brings it all back to the state of the heart. Despite specifically referring to the mouth and what it puts forth, the words which flow from there are only a reflection of the heart, as the Lord notes –

“A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.” Luke 6:45

Peter heard those words and certainly remembered them as he cited the psalm by saying, “Keep your tongue from evil.” The word signifies to stop or to cease. There should be a complete cessation of evil proceeding from the tongue. Along with this, “And your lips from speaking deceit.”

Here the psalmist, and Peter also, use what is known as parallelism. It is saying the same thing a second time in a different way. The tongue is used as a part of the speech process. Likewise, the lips are also used in speaking. Here, deceit is used to describe the “evil” of the first clause. The word translated as “deceit” is one of baiting and hooking another person, or catching them in a snare. Peter is saying that if a person wants to live a life which is full, abundant, and without woes, this is an appropriate step to take in order for that to happen. He will continue citing the psalm in the next verse to further refine this.

Life application: Peter provides us with a general guideline for a love of life and an expectation of living days of happiness. As a way of confirming what he has said, and the benefits of following his advice, he cited Scripture. This accomplishes several things.

- 1) It gives credence to the advice he has given. Just as a Christian counselor or pastor will cite Scripture in order to support his advice today, Peter did the same while writing his epistle.
- 2) It verifies the authority and value of the Old Testament, including the psalms, in the Christian's life. As Paul said to Timothy – "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16). Paul said this when only the Old Testament existed, thus confirming its continued validity in the life of the believer.
- 3) It is telling us that what was cited in the Old Testament has found its fulfillment in the New. Peter is applying Scripture from the Jewish culture to the testimony about Jesus – indicating He is the reason for what was previously written.

Because of these points, let us take his advice. Let us always refrain from using our tongue for evil, and may our lips never speak falsely or deceitfully. Although this should be obvious to us, it is not always easy for us. Stay close to God, walk in the Spirit, and rely on the Son for your life and conduct, and these difficult pronouncements will be made attainable.

Lord God, just as Isaiah said he was "a man of unclean lips," and he dwelt among a society of people whose lips were impure, we too have mouths which don't always utter blessings. Instead, we bite back, speak falsely, and revile when we should bless. Help us in our fallen state to overcome these things and thus bring honor to You. Amen.

**Let him turn away from evil and do good;
Let him seek peace and pursue it. 1 Peter 3:11**

Peter continues to cite the 34th Psalm. His words of this verse are from verse 14 –

"Depart from evil and do good;
Seek peace and pursue it."

The words, as of the previous verse, are because of what he said in verse 9 concerning the duty of believers who are called to such conduct. The calling was made in the psalm, and Peter is citing the psalm to substantiate that it is so.

The first clause says, “Let him turn away from evil.” The Greek word gives the sense of seeing evil ahead and literally changing course away from it. It is a word used only elsewhere by Paul in Romans 3:12 and Romans 16:17. The exhortation and admonition is to bend away from that which is evil “and do good.”

One can turn away from evil and still find more evil to pursue. But the word of Scripture is to not only turn away from that which is evil, but to also then pursue a path which is right and proper. This is then confirmed by the next clause which says that this same soul should then “seek peace.”

To seek means to investigate. Its intent is to get to the bottom of a matter. Anything which could hinder the process is to be removed from the path. When the peace is sought and seen, Peter then says to “pursue it.”

The word signifies pursuing with all haste, literally running after it. It is used when speaking of pursuing a prize. The mental imagery is intended to show the lengths one should go to to avoid evil –

“There is evil up ahead! Turn away! Turn away! Keep turning from it until something which is good and noble is seen. When you see it, seek its path and then chase after it!”

This is the exhortation that Peter lays forth for those who are called to right conduct before the Lord.

Life application: Sometimes it is so much easier to follow the crowd in our voting, our choice of church to attend, our exceeding the speed limit in order to get where we need to go, or in a host of other routine matters. But our votes reflect choices that lead us to either godly or ungodly leaders. Our church of choice reflects the very soundness of the gospel in our lives. Our exceeding the speed limit – regardless of being on time or late – reflects our desire to obey the laws of the land in which we live (and which the Bible expects us to obey).

Anytime we choose the easy path, even if good eventually results, it reflects on us – not on the result.

Further, what does it mean to seek peace and pursue it? A perfect example of misunderstanding “pursuing peace” is modern Israel. The world is seeking a “peace plan” which involves dividing the land and taking a portion (and eventually all) of it from the Jewish people. But God has already determined what will bring peace to the region. He has also made the sovereign choice to restore the land to Israel. According to Joel 3:1, the very thing that the world thinks will bring peace will actually bring its judgment. Seeking peace must be from God’s perspective or it will ultimately result in more unrest. It is the gospel of Jesus Christ which brings about a restored fellowship with God that will result in peace.

Heavenly Father, help us to have clear thinking when we act, and never to follow evil in hopes of a good result. And help us to pursue true peace, emulating Jesus and proclaiming His gospel to the nations. In so doing, may we bring You all the glory that You are due. May we always think our actions through before we err in our ways. Amen.

**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. 1 Peter 3:12**

Peter now completes his quote from Psalm 34. The words here come from a portion of verses 15 & 16 –

“The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous,
And His ears are open to their cry.
¹⁶ The face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”

Remembering the context of Peter’s words which brought about his citing of the psalm, will help clarify why he is saying this. He had said that believers were called to do what is right, and that in doing so one may inherit a blessing. This is confirmed by the words of the psalmist now. The blessing is that “The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous.”

The meaning here is that the Lord is watching over them. He is the One who protects them and favors them because of their conduct. To have the eyes of the Lord upon you is to receive His favor. This is reflective of what it says in the high priestly blessing from Numbers 6 –

“The Lord bless you and keep you;
²⁵ The Lord make His face shine upon you,
And be gracious to you;

²⁶ The Lord lift up His countenance upon you,
And give you peace.” Numbers 6:24-26

If the Lord’s face shines upon a person, and if the Lord’s countenance is upon him, it is because His eyes are directed toward him. There is favor, grace, and peace to be expected from this most favorable state.

Peter next says, “And His ears *are open* to their prayers.” Again, it is a note of divine blessing. When one prays, it is in anticipation of having his prayers heard and responded to. The ears of the Lord hear, and in hearing, He returns with his blessing upon the one who has conducted his affairs as prescribed by the word He has already sent forth for instruction.

Now, to contrast that favorable state, Peter finishes his quote with, “But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.” Here, the same preposition is used that was used in the first clause. There, it said the eyes of the Lord are *epi*, on, the righteous. Here it says the face of the Lord is *epi*, against, those who do evil. This follows the Greek translation which Peter is citing. The Hebrew uses two different words.

The intent is that the Lord’s face being *epi*, or “upon,” those who do evil signifies in a negative way. In other words, there is no change in the Lord, but there is a change in the source of what the Lord sees, meaning man. It is the difference between the two that brings about either favor or disfavor. There is perfect righteousness in the Lord, and His countenance will reveal the true state of the person – whether he does that which is right or that which is evil. The resulting judgment, for good or bad, is perfect because it is the Lord who judges the conduct.

Taking the entire thought now, and looking at what Peter said in verses 8 & 9, and then comparing it to what the psalmist said (and which Peter uses to confirm his words), we see how the conduct Peter admonishes in us, and the resulting blessing for being obedient, is a set standard of the Lord which transcends dispensations. It is how the Lord works at all times as His eyes winnow out the evil from the good –

“Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous;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.¹⁰ For
‘He who would love life
And see good days,

Let him refrain his tongue from evil,
And his lips from speaking deceit.

¹¹ Let him turn away from evil and do good;
Let him seek peace and pursue it.

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.” 1 Peter 3:8-12

Life application: Unfortunately for humanity, the Bible says, “There is no one righteous, not even one;...” Understanding where righteousness comes from is then a really important matter.

All people are born into the stream of humanity from one common ancestor, Adam. We have all, therefore, inherited his fallen state and lack any righteousness of our own. Therefore, any righteousness in a person is an imputed righteousness – something credited by God. Under what circumstances is a person credited with righteousness then?

The answer, throughout the Bible, is that righteousness is credited because of properly placed faith. It is faith in God’s sovereign workings in humanity by which we are credited with His righteousness. Slowly, throughout history, God worked toward the coming Messiah. And at just the right time, Jesus came. It is by faith in Him and what He has done for us that we are imputed righteousness.

Once this is secured, the Lord is attentive to our prayers. When we call out to God in the name of Jesus, we satisfy the requirement God has chosen for restoration. Unfortunately for humanity, this leaves all people who fail to call on Jesus without a Mediator. In this case, the face of the Lord is against them. Here it says, “...those who do evil.” By default, all people outside of Jesus are in this category. There can be no restoration until the sin problem is dealt with first.

If you would love life and see good days, then get right with Jesus! All else will be in its proper place once this is accomplished.

Lord, You haven’t made it hard for us to be reconciled to You. However, You have made it a narrow path and a limited choice. Thank You that there is the choice though. By faith in Christ Jesus, we are again restored to a right relationship with you. Now, O Lord, hear our prayers and respond to them according to Your great wisdom. This we pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.

And who *is* he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good?

1 Peter 3:13

This verse now follows after the citation of Psalm 34. The psalm was given to support Peter's words concerning right conduct and that which will bring about a blessing. Now, he asks, "And who *is* he who will harm you." The question must be asked in an elevated sense to understand his meaning, "And just who is he who will harm you?" Or, "And who, I ask, is he who will harm you?" The reason this must be the case is because the words of the very next verse to come – "But even if you should suffer."

The question by Peter here, then, does not imply that those who do right will not suffer. In fact, Christ – who did no wrong ever – suffered greatly. And further, He told his followers that they should expect the same. What Peter is saying is that those who can bring harm have no true authority over those who "become followers of what is good."

If one follows in Christ's steps, he very well may suffer harm, but it is only a temporary, earthly harm. It cannot separate him from Christ, and it will not diminish the glory which lies ahead as promised by Christ. The idea is reflective of what the author to Hebrews says, and which is cited from both Psalm 56:11 and Psalm 118:6 –

"So we may boldly say:
'The Lord *is* my helper;
I will not fear.
What can man do to me?'" Hebrews 13:6

Peter's words here signify that we are to trust Christ, emulate Him, and not worry about the consequences in this world as we go forth in righteousness. As noted, this will be more fully seen in the coming verse.

Life application: The very next psalm in the Bible, after the one Peter just quoted, says –

"Fierce witnesses rise up;
They ask me *things* that I do not know.
¹² They reward me evil for good,
To the sorrow of my soul." Psalm 35:11, 12

King David wrote both psalms, and yet there is no contradiction when it is understood that we don't always receive the same treatment we hand out. It should be expected that trials and troubles will come, even when we act exactly as the Lord would have us

act. In fact, in some contexts, the more we act like Christ the more persecution we can expect.

Despite this, it behooves us to act properly, regardless of how others eventually treat us. Generally, this will lead to peace and contentment with those around us. One thing is certain, if we are belligerent and unruly, we can only expect strife and conflict. Following the general guidelines Peter has laid down will normally result in a happier time.

Lord, how much better is life when things go smoothly. But should we be persecuted or treated unfairly for our faith, give us the courage to look beyond the moment and to the great reward You have in store for us. May our lives be as lights and as examples to those around us, even those who are at enmity with You. Amen.

But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed. "And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled." 1 Peter 3:14

The words of this verse provide clarity to what was said in the previous verse. There, Peter asked, "And who *is* he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good?" He was not stating that harm would not come, but his question was making a comparison between the one who is causing the harm and the Lord. The one who is causing the harm can only do so in a temporary, limited way. But the Lord's blessing far exceeds such temporary trials. This is now seen in the words, "But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake."

The comparison is clearly set forth. Someone is suffering despite his right conduct as outlined in the previous verses. Therefore, the suffering is not deserved, and the one who is persecuting him is in the wrong. The Bible is filled with examples of this. How one responds to it is what is now being presented. Even if one conducts himself righteously and yet suffers, he is to continue to conduct himself in a manner worthy of the title he bears – meaning that of being a Christian.

Peter says that in such conduct, "*you are blessed.*" Peter is thinking back to the words of Jesus in Matthew 5 –

*"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake,
For theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 5:10*

He had sat and listened to the words of Jesus, and he had considered them in light of all that is recorded in Scripture. The psalms are replete with such an idea, and those psalms anticipated what would occur with Christ Jesus not too long after He had spoken out the Sermon on the Mount. What was anticipated, was fulfilled in Him. And in Him, then, is the example for His followers to emulate. And in that emulation, there is a blessed state which exists.

Peter then says, “And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled.” Here, Peter quotes a portion of Isaiah 8:12 –

“Do not say, ‘A conspiracy,’
Concerning all that this people call a conspiracy,
Nor be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled.”

Peter cites Isaiah, but he leaves off the next words given by Isaiah which fill in what Peter only implies –

“The Lord of hosts, Him you shall hallow;
Let Him be your fear,
And *let Him be your dread.*” Isaiah 8:13

This is the comparison which is intended by Peter. There may be threats from persecutors, but those threats can only go so far. In the end, it is the Lord who has control over all things, and it is the Lord who is to be feared. Again, the idea is that living righteously has its own reward, even if it also carries earthly torments. The two cannot be compared, and so it is always right and proper to act in a righteous manner.

Life application: We can generally expect good results from proper behavior, but this isn't always the case.

Isaiah was told to prophesy to the people about their unrighteousness and incorrect thinking. Not everything then was directed by a conspiracy, nor is everything today directed by a conspiracy. The problem with this type of thinking is that eventually everyone is a foe and there is a spy under every bed. Too many people in the church have failed to understand this, and to them the government is an enemy, the phone company is an enemy, and even others in the church are enemies.

Threats and hatred become the standard, even to faithful believers who haven't crossed every “t” or dotted every “i.” This type of behavior leads to a bad name for Christians in

general, and eventually to a complete breakdown in fellowship. Peter tells us, as Isaiah did, that we are to remain faithfully righteous and not be afraid of those Peter speaks of. Read your Bible, love your Lord, and keep right fellowship with your fellow Christians to the greatest degree possible.

Lord, because You are our Lord, we shall not fear, nor shall our hearts be troubled. What can man do to us? You have our eternal souls safely in Your hands. Everything else is just temporary and fading away. Help us to keep this attitude always – even when troubles surround us. Thank You, Lord Jesus. Amen.

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;
1 Peter 3:15

In 1 Peter 2:8, Peter cited Isaiah 8:14. He now returns to Isaiah 8 to quote it again. This time, it is Isaiah 8:13 –

“The Lord of hosts, Him you shall hallow;
Let Him be your fear,
And *let Him be your dread.*”

Peter, referring to that verse in Isaiah, says, “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts.” There is a difference between source texts here. Some say, “But in your hearts sanctify the Christ as Lord.” One can debate which text is better, but it is of note that if this is the true rendering, Peter is equating Christ Jesus as Yehovah Sabaoth, or “the Lord of hosts.”

Despite the disparity, the idea is that we are to sanctify the Lord God (or the Christ) in our hearts. The phrasing used here is unique in the New Testament. Charles Ellicott says it means “to recognise, in word and deed, His full holiness, and therefore to treat Him with due awe.” Such recognition is to be “in your hearts.” In other words, it is to always be in our thoughts, and we are to reason out the glory of God and consider it in all we say and do.

In that state, we will be mentally prepared to then follow through with his next exhortation, which is that we are to “always *be* ready to *give* a defense.” The Greek word is *apologia*, an apology. However, it does not mean to apologize, as in “I’m sorry.” Rather, it signifies a defense, or a reasoned argument, concerning the evidences for our faith in Christ.

In an ancient court, the term meant a legal defense. This is what Peter is now stating we are to do. We are to be ready to make a case, as if a defender of the faith, “to everyone who asks you a reason.”

In other words, there should never be a time when the believer in Christ is not prepared to answer. Whether he is asked by a small child or by the President of the United States. In sanctifying the Lord in our hearts, we will always have Him in mind, and we will be able to readily explain the substance of our faith. This is because they will want to know the “reason for the hope that is in you.”

What is constantly on the mind is what will show forth in the person. When one is sanctifying the Lord in his heart, he will exude thoughts of the Lord in his daily walk. People will see something different about him and want to know what the reason for his remarkable character is. This is the intent of always contemplating what the Lord has done, and the glory of Him who has done it.

The hope in the believer is to radiate out of him in order to then continue to sanctify the Lord in an external manner. From there, the questions will be asked, and at that time the prepared answer of defense is to be provided. But Peter says it is to be so “with meekness and fear.”

Again, there is a slight difference in texts here, some of which include the word translated as “but” – “but with meekness and fear.” This is certainly to be implied, even if not explicitly stated. We are to defend our faith, we are to do so when asked about it, but we are to do it with a sense of glorifying the Lord, not ourselves, in the process.

To be meek is to show humility. There is to be a reverent fear of the Lord in the process, understanding that it is He who saves, but He uses human instruments to convey the message of His salvation. Thus, our fear is to be of God – a fear that we might fail to properly convey the message – and it is to be in fear for the poor soul who will never be saved if our defense is inappropriately conveyed. The high responsibility of conveying the gospel, and in defending it when asked to do so, has been levied upon each believer. How terrible it is to consider that we should fail to properly convey this eternity-changing message.

Life application: There are several verses which are truly imperative to know and remember in Scripture. This is one of them. Take time to go back up, read it, and reflect on it.

Sanctifying the Lord God in one's heart is an active thing; something we should be doing constantly. If you see a beautiful bird flying in the sky, tell the Lord, "Thank You for allowing me to see this." If you taste something wonderful, "Thank You Lord! It's delicious." If you get thwacked on the head by a rock kicked up by your lawnmower... "Thank You Lord, ... that could have been worse." In all you do, give thanks and praise to the Lord.

Always being ready to give a defense means always. Be ready!

May the Lord, the Lord Jesus be with You as you prepare yourself for stepping out into the great spiritual battlefield which fights against the gospel of salvation.

Heavenly Father, You who gave us Your word to instruct us, we have often not been properly prepared to defend the hope we have within us. Today we ask that You fill us with the hunger and great desire to be ready, at a moment's notice, to provide the answers necessary for the questions we receive. We ask so that You will be glorified through our faithful answers. Amen.

...having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed. 1 Peter 3:16

In the previous verse, Peter admonished his audience to "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." He now expands upon that with the words, "having a good conscience."

The word translated as "conscience" is seen thirty times. Peter has used it once in verse 2:19. He uses it here now, and he will use it just one more time in verse 3:21.

The use of it now is because having a good conscience is an absolute necessity when giving a defense for one's faith. It would be logically inconsistent for a person to give a defense for the gospel message while living hypocritically. It is certain that all, including the most saintly people we know, harbor dark thoughts and – at times – conduct themselves in a manner others might find inappropriate. However, the goal and aim of all apologists is to live in the same right manner which is in accord with the gospel they proclaim and defend. Thus, they will have a good conscience.

Peter then explains the particular reason for this necessity beginning with, "that when they defame you as evildoers." Here, Peter assumes that such will be the case. There is

no “if” in his thought. People who proclaim the gospel, and those who defend that same glorious message, will be defamed as evildoers.

And time has borne this out. Throughout history, those who defend the gospel have been accused of evil doing. This has even been (and continues to be) the case by those who are supposedly Christian. During the Reformation, those who defended the truth of Scripture were persecuted and even martyred for their stand. And the main foe for them was the Roman Catholic Church. The dark dealings of that devilish den continues to this day, and their accusations against true Christians are brought up from time to time – calling them the evildoers!

However, by maintaining a good conscience, Peter says that “those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed.” The word Peter uses, and which is translated as “revile,” is found only here and in Luke 6:28. It signifies “to intimidate by using threats and false accusations ‘tailor-made’ to the situation, i.e. under-handed tactics ‘customized’ to smear someone’s reputation” (HELPS Word Studies).

When such reviling occurs, and without any true basis for it, they will eventually be ashamed of what they have done. This can go one of two ways. They could be ashamed of their own conduct, repent of it, and accept the truth of the gospel defense. This would obviously be the minority. Most people who revile the truth of the gospel will revile its defenders as well. Even after a sound defense, they will simply double down on their hatred of the truth.

The second way they will be ashamed is at the judgment. The word translated as “they shall be ashamed” is found thirteen times. Once it is used by Luke, twice by Peter, and ten times by Paul. Paul, citing Isaiah 28:6, says that those who put their trust in the Lord will not be ashamed. Peter used that same verse in 1 Peter 2:6. It is the sure hope of a future approval from the Lord. Likewise, those who reject the Lord and His gospel have the surety of shame coming their way. The very people that they accuse of evildoing will stand approved, and they will stand condemned.

Life application: Peter’s words of this verse may be as hard for a faithful Christian to fulfill as any verse in the Bible. The vast majority of times, those who defame us won’t care diddly and will go on persecuting. However, the faithful testimony of Christian witnesses under persecution is a strong sermon to those who see it. Many people throughout the ages have seen the faithfulness of those being persecuted, and have repented of their accusations, coming to Christ in humility and remorse.

To remind yourself of the call to which we have been called, do a general image search on “Christian persecution.” Or, you can visit the Voice of the Martyrs website. There you will see the truth of Islamic, communist, and even socially liberal people as they mistreat Christians because of their faith. The tide is turning to this type of treatment even in America. When it comes, be set in your mind to have a good conscience towards those who defame you for Christ’s sake.

Lord, we sure don’t look with joy at the prospect of reviling, torture, or death for Your sake. We can certainly admit this freely. But Lord, should this day come for us, please give us the courage and soundness of mind to respond in a manner worthy of the most honorable title of Christian. To Your glory, may this be the result of our testimony and witness. Amen.

For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.

1 Peter 3:17

Peter has been speaking of the Christian maintaining proper conduct and a proper witness and testimony, even if it involves suffering wrongly in the process, such as being defamed as an evildoer, even if such is not the case. He now expands on that by saying, “For it is better, if it is the will of God.” The Greek actually has a play on the word “will” in it, literally reading, “if the will of God should will it.”

The idea here is an emphatic one. If it is the will of God that wills something, regardless as to how we perceive it from our finite ability to grasp all that is involved, it is the preferable thing to occur. In the case of suffering, Peter continues with, “to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.”

One can see that suffering for doing evil is to be the expectation that is in accord with the will of God. Peter is conveying that as a certainty. However, there are times that suffering is God’s will for those who do good.

The two are set in contrast. For doing evil, suffering is an appropriate thing to occur, and it is expressed by the will of God. However, for doing good and suffering, it is a higher expression when it occurs because of the will of God. Hence, Peter says that is “better.” HELPS Word Studies says that it is “‘better’ after exerting the power needed to ‘plant down God’s flag of victory.’”

God has a plan, and suffering is a part of that plan, even when the person who is suffering did good and not evil. There are examples of this throughout Scripture. Abel

suffered after doing good. Joseph suffered without having done any wrong. He followed his father's words, did what was proper, and suffered for it. In 2 Chronicles 24, Zechariah the priest suffered for doing what is right.

Such instances started at the very beginning, and they continued right up until the coming of Christ, who only did what was good, right and proper. And yet, He suffered. But it was the will of God that He did so (Isaiah 53:10), and it served God's will for it to come about. But such things also served God's purposes within the stream of redemptive history.

After the coming of Christ, these things did not cease. Stephen, the first martyr, found this out. The apostles each suffered for doing good. And since then, God's people have suffered greatly for doing good, but these instances serve their proper purpose within God's will for a greater cause.

Life application: No one in his right mind wants to suffer. There are times in the history of the church, however, that people have actively gone out looking for martyrdom thinking that they will receive a greater reward for it. This kind of thinking may reflect a lack of vitamins in the diet, but it doesn't represent anything the Bible teaches.

Having said that, if suffering, reviling, or even martyrdom comes, we can expect a blessing from God. This is confirmed by Jesus' words, as well as elsewhere in the New Testament. The only hindrance to receiving such treatment is timidity on our part. We can't expect to suffer for doing what is right if we don't put ourselves in the position where we could possibly face the suffering.

How easy it is to stay in our comfort zone and live in ease and security, but how much more notable it is to pursue and excel in that which is difficult. Do you ever take time to consider the faithful Christians in every country of the world, sent from their homes and families in order to teach, preach, and translate the word of God? Some of them will never return home, but they have found a greater calling in this life than Sunday afternoon football followed by a week of work that anticipates more Sunday afternoon football.

And one doesn't have to travel to distant lands to step into places of difficulty. Most towns and cities have places that need to hear the gospel and where one can also expect reviling and possibly suffering. But this is where the gospel meets the heart, and this is where miracles can still happen. Don't be afraid to step out and proclaim Christ. Your eternity is secure, so fear not – what can man do to you?

Lord, give us hearts and desires to see Your message spread – in whatever place it needs to be proclaimed. Let us not be timid or fearful of the reviling of man, but rather let us proudly stand in defense of Your word. May our lives be a testament to Your faithfulness in this world. Amen.

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, 1 Peter 3:18

Peter just stated that “*it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.*” To fully support this, he now demonstrates that the Lord set the premier example of the notion for us to see, perceive, and emulate. He does so by beginning with, “For Christ also suffered.”

The implication is that Christ did nothing wrong and yet He suffered. Even if someone simply read Peter’s words without understanding who Christ was, that person would say, “I have a concrete example of someone who suffered, and yet who did no wrong.” Further, the verb is aorist active. The action is past, and it is complete, never needing to be repeated, and yet its effects continue on for all time.

From there, Peter then explains why Christ suffered, but it brings in a theological point that cannot be missed. He says, “once for sins.”

If one considers what Peter has already said, that “Christ also suffered,” it becomes evident that Christ’s suffering is set in contrast to that of others, even Christians. A Christian may be jailed for his faith. He may be beaten for his faith, and he may even die for his faith, but his sufferings are not on a comparable level to what Christ did.

To suffer for sins is deserved. Sin is evil and therefore one who sins deserves the suffering that is meted out. However, because Peter is using Christ as the example for suffering without having done wrong, it then becomes immediately obvious that He suffered for the sins of another and not for Himself. The Greek word translated as “for” is *peri*. It signifies “all around,” and thus it means “concerning.”

This then follows through with what Paul says elsewhere, such as in 2 Corinthians 5:21 –

“For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”

Christ's suffering was a vicarious act. He did not sin, and yet he was made sin for us, as Peter says, "the just for the unjust." The Greek contains no definite articles. It rather reads, "just for unjust." This highlights the graphic nature of Christ's work. There are two separate categories. Christ is in one category, while all others are in a separate category. Even the Christian who suffers does so in the same category as all others. And yet, Christ suffered on behalf of all.

The idea is that He became a sin offering to God on behalf of others. This concept is referred to throughout the epistles. It is noted in Romans, Galatians, Hebrews, & 1 John. For example, John says –

"And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world." 1 John 2:2

Further, Peter says that He did this "once." This shows the full and complete nature of the act. It is explained by the author of Hebrews –

"For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, *which are* copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; ²⁵ not that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another— ²⁶ He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. ²⁷ And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, ²⁸ 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 9:24-28

What Christ did was vicarious, it was one-time and for all time, and it was based on His just character which stands in opposition to all others' unjust character. The same general thought is also repeated elsewhere in Hebrews, such as in verses 7:7 and 10:10. It is a main thought of the author there, and Peter exactly follows through with the idea.

Understanding this, Peter then astonishingly says that it was "that He might to bring us to God." The suffering of Christ has a purpose. It wasn't just to die for someone else's misdeeds. Others have done that, offering to die for what someone else has done. But Christ's suffering had a greater purpose.

When someone dies for another, the life of one is allowed to continue. But that person will eventually die and will be separated from God because of his sins. The death that the other person died was simply to allow another's life to continue without the immediate pain of physical death. But Christ's death was to correct the spiritual death which all men already possess. This is seen in Paul's words –

“But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved).” Ephesians 2:4, 5

Man is already dead because of inherited sin. The disconnect exists, and it cannot be overcome by the death of another, because all have inherited Adam's sin nature. However, Christ did not.

Therefore, Christ's death was in contrast to the nature possessed by all others, that of one who is just for those who are unjust. In this act, and because He came from God and returned to God (see John 16:27, 28), He also brings to God those who come to Him. The disconnect, which came through Adam's sin, is corrected and man is restored to God. Peter then says that this resulted from His, “being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit.”

It is important to see that the Greek contains no articles before “flesh,” and the article before “spirit” is lacking in many manuscripts. Here, the flesh is being placed in opposition to the spirit, and it is probably not speaking of the Holy Spirit.

Vincent's Word Studies provides an analysis of what may be on Peter's mind –

“The words connect themselves with the death-cry on the cross: ‘Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.’ Huther observes, ‘Flesh is that side of the man's being by which he belongs to earth, is therefore a creature of earth, and accordingly perishable like everything earthy. Spirit, on the other hand, is that side of his being according to which he belongs to a supernal sphere of being, and is therefore not merely a creature of earth, and is destined to an immortal existence.’ Thus, we must be careful and not understand spirit here of the Spirit of God, as distinguished from the flesh of Christ, but of the spiritual nature of Christ; ‘the higher spiritual nature which belonged to the integrity of his humanity’ (Cook).”

Charles Ellicott speaks in a similar manner concerning this –

“...the spirit, set free from the body, immediately receives new life, as it were, thereby. To purely spiritual realities it becomes alive in a manner which was impossible while it was united to the flesh. The new powers are exemplified in what follows immediately. So long as Christ, so long as any man, is alive in the flesh, he cannot hold converse with spirits as such; but the moment death severs flesh and spirit the spirit can deal with other spirits, which Christ proceeded forth with to do.”

Life application: Christ suffered for our sins. He took upon Himself the sins of the whole world though He was without sin. By trusting in this noble and glorious act, God “imputes” Christ’s righteousness to us, and our sin is transferred to Him at the cross.

We were separated from God by an infinitely wide chasm, but Jesus – being fully God and fully man – was able to remove that infinite gulf. As Man, He could take our sins from us; as God, He could place His hand on the Father and obtain forgiveness for us. He is the bridge which spans the divide.

What an absolutely glorious bargain! The Just one – Jesus our Lord – died for the unjust! We are now freed from the wages of sin and death through His precious blood. O God! How gloriously wonderful You are to deal with us in such a gracious manner. May our hearts never fail to praise You for the wonderful deeds You have wrought. Amen.

...by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison, 1 Peter 3:19

Translations of this verse are based on what the translators believe is being conveyed. Here are some variations of it –

After being made alive, he went and made proclamation to the imprisoned spirits-
- (NIV)

So he went and preached to the spirits in prison— (NLT)

in which also having gone, He preached to the spirits in prison (BLB)

Christ then preached to the spirits that were being kept in prison. (CEV)

and in his spiritual existence he went and preached to the imprisoned spirits.
(GNT)

And he preached to those souls who were held in Sheol, (Aramaic Bible)

in which also He went and made proclamation to the spirits *now* in prison, (NASB)

by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison, (NKJV)

in which He also went and proclaimed His Message to the spirits that were in
prison, (Weymouth)

in which also to the spirits in prison having gone he did preach, (YLT)

This is a large enough sample to show that it is a verse which is translated almost completely based on some type of presupposition. For example, the CEV specifically says "Christ." They assume it was Christ who did the preaching. The GNT says, "in his spiritual existence." That is not at all in the Greek, but they have made that presupposition, again assuming it is Christ while not in His physical body. The Aramaic Bible equates "prison" with Sheol, the place of the dead. The NASB inserts the word "now" (now in prison) assuming that it is speaking of spirits who are now in prison, thus implying that the preaching occurred before they went to prison. The NKJV says "by whom" instead of "by which" or "in which" thus implying that it is the Spirit who influenced the preaching. The Weymouth says, "that were in prison," thus implying that they were in prison, were preached to, and are now free from prison. The YLT puts everything in the past tense.

How can this be sorted out? The answer is by the most literal possible translation of the Greek, without presuppositions, and by using the rest of Scripture to determine if a translation matches what is said elsewhere or not. The main consideration immediately, however, is the context. Peter has been speaking about having a "good conscience" (see verse 16) towards God, and about the difficulties and suffering one can expect, because of being right with God.

He will give his example now, and then he will explain that it is based on having "the answer of a good conscience toward God," again in verse 21. The entire passage has not deviated from the main thought of going through suffering, but doing so with a good conscience towards God. Because this is so, he is giving examples of those who put themselves on the line, like Christ did, in order to have a "good conscience" towards God. Therefore, and getting ahead of things a bit, this is not speaking of Jesus, nor is it speaking of Him preaching to people who had died.

For now, the Greek reads, "in (by) which (whom) also to the in prison spirits went (having gone) preached."

Peter had just written, "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." The first thing to determine is, "Who or what is the subject of the verse now being considered?" Is it speaking of Christ of verse 3:18, or of the Spirit or spirit? Note that the word "He/he" is not in the Greek, but it is inserted by those who presuppose it is speaking of Christ Jesus, or the Holy Spirit. The logical answer as to who is being referred to is the nearest antecedent, the spirit. As noted in the previous verse,

This leaves two choices – either it is “the Spirit,” meaning the Holy Spirit, or it is “the spirit” as explained by Cook in the previous verse where he said, “Thus we must be careful and not understand spirit here of the Spirit of God, as distinguished from the flesh of Christ, but of the spiritual nature of Christ; ‘the higher spiritual nature which belonged to the integrity of his humanity.’”

Which it is can be debated, but it is not Christ who did the preaching. Rather, it was either the Spirit, or the spirit. There was a preaching conducted by a spiritual force. As the Spirit does not preach, but rather inspires men with the word of God, we are being shown that there was a preaching by man in a spiritual state, or under a spiritual influence. To whom and when this occurred still needs to be inferred.

Was it to someone in the past who is now in prison, as implied by the NASB, or was it to someone in prison in the past who was given the gospel, as implied by Weymouth and others?

Next, what is “prison” referring to? It appears clear, and commentaries pretty much unanimously support, that “prison” is speaking of the state of those who have died already. In other words, the word “Sheol” as translated by the Aramaic is correct. It is the pit, Hades, Sheol, etc. The people were either dead and were preached to while dead, or they are now dead but they were previously preached to.

The mystery of this difficult set of verses will continue to be searched out until a suitable answer, which is in accord with other precepts found in Scripture, is given.

Life application: This verse, along with the next one, has been completely misunderstood by many, and it has led to much confused thinking. In various sects, such as the Mormons, it is used to justify their stand that there is no hell and no torment.

But that is contrary to the message of the Bible. There is one life to be lived by man, and then that man must face his Creator in judgment. Be wise and discerning. Understand that without Jesus, all are condemned.

Lord God, thank You for faithful men of righteousness who preach the true and precious gospel to the people of the world. Thank You that we have a chance to respond to this message and be born again – born from above – by Your gracious Spirit. May those who hear this marvelous message make the right choice while there is still breath in their lungs. Amen.

...who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while *the* ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water. 1 Peter 3:20

The words here need to be kept together with the thought of the previous two verses to be fully understood –

“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, ¹⁹ by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison, ²⁰ who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while *the* ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water.”

As was seen, there is a tremendous variety of translations of verse 19. Each is based on a guess as to what is being relayed and who is being referred to. The only way to properly evaluate the content of those words is to check whatever conclusion is made with the rest of Scripture.

Peter had said in verse 3:19 that the spirits in prison had been preached to. As interpreted by some, their idea is that Christ, after the death of the people being referred to, went and preached to their departed spirits to call them to repentance. This is assumed because they never had a chance to hear the gospel and Christ took care of this after the fact. The claim is that it was after His crucifixion and prior to His resurrection He went to those spirits and gave them the gospel that they had not previously heard.

This would be comparable to someone in a jungle today receiving a special grant from God because no one comes and physically preaches to him. This is entirely incorrect, and it is not at all what is being discussed here. First, the Bible is clear in Hebrews –

“And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment.”

-Hebrews 9:27

Therefore, this is not speaking of people being given a second chance for salvation after death. Further, the very point of leaving man here after salvation is to carry the message of Christ to the world. Whether before the cross, or after the cross, it has been man’s duty to warn his fellow man concerning righteousness.

The burden rests upon the saved soul to continue that process of continuing on with proclaiming the gospel. And that is done by conveying the word of the Lord which came through the prophets and apostles. As Paul says in Romans 10 –

“How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? ¹⁵ And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written:

‘How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace,
Who bring glad tidings of good things!’

¹⁶ But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, ‘Lord, who has believed our report?’ ¹⁷ So then faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”

-Romans 10:14-17

This is the way that man is brought the gospel message. One man preaches of righteousness and repentance, and those who hear either accept the preaching and turn, or they are condemned. It is irresponsible for people to claim that there is a second means of receiving the gospel apart from that which is ordained in Scripture. It punts man’s responsibility off to some other supposed means that people can be saved – visions of Jesus, second chances after death, and etc. But the Bible is clear. There is one gospel, and it is man’s duty and responsibility to get that word out to the world.

All men are already in Adam and are already heading to hell. Jesus confirms this in John 3:18 when He says we are “condemned already.” We have this life to get it right with God. When our eyes close for the last time, our eternal destiny is sealed.

As man is appointed to die and then face judgment, it cannot be speaking of Jesus going to those who have died and giving them the gospel in order for them to repent and be saved. Such an idea is not found in Scripture. Understanding this, Peter now continues with, “who formerly were disobedient.”

The Greek here reads, “having disobeyed in time past.” It is referring to a point in time when the people were alive and in a state of disobedience. This is then further explained by the words, “when once the Divine longsuffering waited.”

It is an idea which is found all through Scripture. Man disobeys God, but God is patient with them, even in their state of disobedience. It is seen, for example, in the Lord’s words to Abraham –

“But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites *is* not yet complete.” Genesis 15:16

The Lord gave the Amorites 400 years to live, repent, and even allow their wickedness to continue before He finally destroyed them. He did this with Israel again and again as well. But He also did it with those before the Flood of Noah. In Genesis 6, it says “that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth.” What this means is that the whole earth had become wicked, implying that the Lord was longsuffering. Otherwise, He would have snuffed out all life much earlier.

This is then confirmed with Peter’s next words. He says, “in the days of Noah.” By the time Noah reached the 600th year of his life (Genesis 7:6), the Lord had finally had enough, and He brought the floodwaters upon the earth. Prior to that, He had allowed man to continue in his wickedness.

However, before the destruction of the world, Peter explains what Noah was doing. In 2 Peter 2:4, 5, he says, “For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast *them* down to hell and delivered *them* into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment; ⁵ and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, *one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness*, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly.”

Noah was a preacher of righteousness. He told the people that God is holy and that they needed to return to the Lord in righteousness and holiness because they were accountable to Him. And he obviously continued to do so right up until the last moment, because Peter next says, “while *the* ark was being prepared.”

There would be no need to include this statement unless verse 19 was speaking of it being Noah, not Jesus, who did the preaching, and that it was before, not after, the deaths of the people being referred to.

In other words, what Peter was saying in verse 19 is that the saving message of Christ which was originally promised to Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:15 – the Protoevangelium, or “First Gospel”), and which was later understood by righteous men such as Enoch and Noah, was preached by those men even back then. The “spirit of Christ” enabled these men to plead with the people; to preach to the people.

It is because the people being referred to were dead, at the time of Peter writing his epistle, that he speaks of them now as “spirits in prison.” They weren’t in prison when they were preached to. Rather, they are in prison as Peter writes about them. This is

obviously why the NASB added the word “now” into their translation (see commentary on verse 19). They rightly understood that this was not speaking of Christ preaching to spirits who had died, giving them a second chance. Rather, they had been preached to by the “spirit of Christ” (meaning either the hope of Christ in those godly men, or – possibly – the Holy Spirit) which resided in the men of God while they were still alive.

However, the message from Noah fell on deaf ears. He next says of this world of wickedness, “in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water.” Of all of the people on the planet at Noah’s time, only eight were saved – Noah and his wife, and his three sons and their wives. The rest of the world failed to heed, they were exterminated, and their souls went to prison where they remain to this day, awaiting the final judgment which all men will someday face.

This is the correct and proper interpretation of these verses which have been well-abused by sensationalists and those who determine to deny that a literal judgment and a literal hell await those who refuse to come to Christ.

Life application: God doesn’t leave the people of the earth without a testimony of who He is. Even if they don’t hear the gospel which can lead to salvation, they still have creation itself to testify to who He is –

“Nevertheless He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.” Acts 14:17

It took 100 years for Noah to complete the ark, during which time he preached repentance to the people. The question of the day is, “Do you really believe in the account of Noah and the flood?” Too many churches and theologians dismiss it as myth, as does the evolutionary community. But the Bible doesn’t leave us with that option. If you are not sure, ask yourself this question, “Is Jesus a liar?” If you are a Christian, you can only answer “No!” Claiming that Jesus is truthful then necessitates a belief in Noah and the flood. Noah is mentioned in Jesus’ genealogy, and he is spoken of by the apostles and by Jesus as well –

“And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all.”

-Luke 17:26, 27

Noah was real, the flood was real, and the judgment of the flood really happened. Eight people among the population of the world were spared. Such is the judgment of sin. Thank God for His gospel and His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Lord God Almighty – in Your powerful hands are the saved of the ages. Also, in Your powerful hands are the souls of the condemned. You are righteous in Your judgment and merciful towards the objects of Your favor. Thank You for Jesus, thank You for the cross, thank You, O God, for Your Gospel of Peace. Amen.

There is also an antitype which now saves us—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, 1 Peter 3:21

Peter just referred to “the days of Noah, while *the* ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water.” He says that this is an “antitype.” The Greek word, *antitupos*, is found only here and in Hebrews 9:24. In this case, it refers to something which is represented by a symbol.

The ark of the covenant, for example, is a type which anticipates the Person of Jesus Christ. He, then, is the Antitype. Peter is saying that what happened to Noah and his family in the ark was given by God as a type of that “which now saves us.”

In other words, the process of salvation was being hinted at in the flood narrative, just as it is in many other shadowy pictures from the Old Testament Scriptures. The account of Noah is the type; “baptism” is the antitype.

This is now the last time that the word *baptisma*, or “baptism,” is used in Scripture. It comes from *baptizó*, the act of baptizing. The idea of baptism means “fully wet” or “submerged.” The reason it is not translated as such, but is rather transliterated, is surely because the practice of infant sprinkling became an accepted practice as the church got corrupted. When the Bible was translated into English, all kinds of theological quarreling would have arisen if the word was properly translated. To avoid this, the word (which conveys the idea of full submersion) was simply transliterated.

However, it is not the act of water baptism that Peter is now referring to. Rather, he explains – very clearly so that the point is not missed – that this “baptism” is “not the removal of the filth of the flesh.”

In other words, he is referring to the baptism of the Holy Spirit, not water baptism. Water baptism, which would wash the flesh, is given to simply picture what occurs in the life of the believer. It is an “after the fact” public proclamation of a change that took place in a person. Further, it is an act of obedience to the command of the Lord. But it is not what is being referred to now by Peter.

What occurred in the flood of Noah is that a family was brought through the waters of purification. The filth of the world was purged away in the destruction of the flood, but the man of righteousness and his family were carried through that cleansing flood and brought into a new world.

Here, Peter uses a word, *rhupos*, which is translated as “filth,” and which is found only here in Scripture. It speaks of a state of being unclean which results from doing that which is morally improper. It is unacceptable conduct based on a moral dirtiness. The world, which had become morally perverse, was washed away and its “filth” was purged.

Peter says that this moral filth of the flesh (as if it could be washed away with mere water) is not what he is speaking of for the believer. Rather, the baptism which saves is “the answer of a good conscience toward God.”

Here is another word used for the last time in Scripture, *suneidésis*, or “conscience.” It is a word used frequently by Paul that signifies, “properly, joint-knowing, i.e. *conscience* which joins moral and spiritual consciousness as part of being created in the divine image. Accordingly, *all* people have this God-given capacity to know right from wrong because each is a *free moral agent*” (HELPS Word Studies).

This “conscience” is described by Peter with a word unique in Scripture. It is an *eperótéma* – a demand, a question. The conscience, in essence, demands of God, “Am I right before you?” One can have a seared conscience and not care. Or one can have a conscience which is aware of the Creator and always looking to be pleasing to Him.

In the flood of Noah, there were two actions going in opposite directions. There was Noah, the preacher of righteousness being saved, and there was the world of filth and moral depravity which was purged. Noah did not purge the world of its filth, the flood – sent forth from God – did. Noah’s salvation came through his conscience towards God. His conduct “demanded” or “questioned” of God, and God responded. “Is my conscience concerning You appropriate?” “Yes, I have found it acceptable.”

The act of water baptism, that of being “fully submerged,” pictures a theological truth. Nobody is “partly cleansed of the impurity of the world. Rather, they are fully cleansed. In this, they are set apart from the world which will be purged of its filth. The idea is that there is salvation and there is condemnation. These are the only two states which exist.

Peter then finishes the thought concerning that which saves. It is “through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.” In other words, these words are tied to “which saves” in the first clause. The baptism is a result of the resurrection of Christ, but only in that there is the conscience which accepts that premise.

As man is a free moral agent, and as his conscience must work out an acceptable faith in the work of Christ – a work which culminated in His resurrection – then it shows that man is not regenerated in order to believe as Calvinism states. Rather, man’s free will must actively reason out his state before God, see that he is lost in a world of filth (meaning moral unrighteousness), and come into the Ark of Safety which is the Person and work of Christ, and thus be saved.

The faith in Christ leads to the “baptism” which is the demand, or question put forth: “Am I right before God?” God’s answer is, “Yes.” It is Christ which allows this to occur.

Here, Peter makes the connection between baptism and the flood of Noah where eight people were saved through the water. Paul makes a similar connection in 1 Corinthians 10 where those who went through the Red Sea were all “baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea.” Like Paul, though, Peter says that it isn’t the water which saves. Rather, the baptism of the Holy Spirit is what sanctifies. The filth of the world is purged away because the righteousness of Christ is imputed to the one who believes.

The point of the entire passage is that Noah remained righteous and he was saved because of his good conscience towards God. The waters of the flood washed away the filth, but Noah survived the ordeal in his being carried through the flood. This was his answer because of his good conscience towards God. And, it is also applicable to us, as evidenced by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Life application: Too often people focus on the externals, but they fail to complete the verse or paragraph to see that what is being said is exactly the opposite of what they originally thought. Thus, the entire context is necessary to understand the meaning. Jesus said in Mark 16:16 –

“He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.”

The words, “he who believes and is baptized,” leads some to believe that water baptism is somehow required for salvation, but this is not what is meant. Rather, the baptism of the Holy Spirit is what is being referred to. There is an a/b connection being made –

- a (belief) and b (baptism) = salvation
- no a (belief) = no salvation

Therefore, b (baptism) is a result of a (belief). One occurs based on the other.

Paul says that the moment a person believes, he receives the deposit of the Holy Spirit. This is the “baptism” being referred to here. It is the “baptism of the Holy Spirit.” The words of Mark 16:16 show this. “He who believes and is baptized” is a united event – when you believe, you receive.

Salvation comes from trusting in Jesus Christ and His resurrection (see Romans 10:9), and it is the “answer of a good conscience toward God.” Too often denominations separate these actions or mandate what is simply not implied (such as water baptism) because of a confused understanding of these passages.

Remember that

- 1) salvation comes from calling on Jesus;
- 2) the moment you call on Jesus you are sealed or “baptized” with the Holy Spirit;
and
- 3) repeated filling of the Holy Spirit comes with obedience, prayer, living a holy life,
and etc.

Thank You Lord for the simplicity of Your gospel. Thank You that we are saved by grace through faith and that, the moment we believe, we are eternally sealed with Your Holy Spirit. What a wonderfully glorious God You are to lavish such favor upon us. Thank You Lord for the blessings found in Christ. Amen.

...who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him. 1 Peter 3:22

Peter has been speaking of suffering as Christ did, and yet maintaining a “good conscience” towards God in the process (see verses 3:16 & 3:21). It is seen that Noah

preached faithfully to those of the world who are now in prison (meaning now consigned to their fate in the prison of death). His words fell on deaf ears because when the time for the flood came, the Lord only saved him, his wife, his three sons, and their three wives.

All of the rest of the world was destroyed in the flood. Noah's time of suffering for the gospel (the anticipation of Messiah and the life that should be lived in accord with that promise) was rewarded with life. That is what our "good conscience" towards God is being equated to. Peter finished the previous verse with the thought that this is certain, and it is "through the resurrection of Jesus Christ."

Noah was carried through the purging waters. The same waters that brought death to the world could not harm him. Likewise, the suffering we can expect cannot overcome us because Christ has already gone before us and prevailed. The resurrection proves this to us. Peter's thoughts have been focused on one overarching thought all the way through, even since verse 11 of the previous chapter.

There, he wrote about being spoken against as evildoers. After that, he wrote about submission to those around us – governments, masters, wives, husbands, and one another. He then went into greater detail concerning suffering for righteousness sake. All of this time, the same main thought has been conveyed – we are to accept suffering when it means keeping a "good conscience" towards God. Whatever happens here is subservient to that thought because Christ has already prevailed over this world.

It is through His resurrection that we have this surety. And based on His resurrection there is now a new order of things – even if in this earth it continues to seem otherwise. Our hope is not in this world, and our suffering will have an end. In the meantime, there is a purpose for it. And it does not go unnoticed by the Lord "who has gone into heaven."

Christ didn't just resurrect, but He also ascended. He was found approved by God, raised, and then exalted to heaven itself. Peter then says that, there in heaven Christ, "is at the right hand of God." As always, this is not speaking of a physical location, as if God has a hand. Rather, the right hand signifies the position of authority, power, and rule. In other words, Christ is given all authority, all power, and complete rule of all things.

There in heaven, even "angels and authorities and powers have been made subject to Him." All of that which is created, even the non-tangible things such as angels (which are spirits), and powers are in subjection to Christ.

Peter's words concerning this authority are intended to remind his reader that their current state, whether being spoken against as evildoers, being mistreated by a master, being unloved by a husband, suffering harm while doing good, or for any other reason, is not out of the control or notice of Christ Jesus. If our conscience is good towards God, meaning if we are right with Christ, nothing that can happen can harm us. Even if the entire world is flooded with water and all life on it is purged, we will be safely carried through the deluge.

With this in mind, Peter will begin Chapter 4 with a continued explanation of how we can apply the example of Christ's sufferings to our own lives. But without showing us that Christ has prevailed over all of these things, asking people who are already suffering to be willing to continue suffering would be a big pill to swallow.

Life application: The resurrection of Jesus means that He had prevailed over death. Now He has ascended to heaven and is at the right hand of God.

Peter confirms what Jesus said in Matthew 28:18 when He proclaimed, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth." Peter details this authority as being over angels and authorities and powers. This is a way of saying, "everything." All authority at every level is subject to the rule of Jesus.

When nations descend into turmoil and chaos seems to be the only result of what's going on around us; when news services can't discern what will happen next and they speculate over the fate of gas prices, economies, or people groups; when leaders fall and other more wicked leaders rise to power – all of these things are already known to God and are under the complete control of Jesus.

If you are stressing over current conditions in the world, if your investments seem to be precariously close to disappearing, or if you can't find an intelligent soul to ease your mind over the turmoil, then remember to simply trust in Jesus and His perfect plan. Either He is in control and Lord over all, or He's not. If you claim He is, then be at peace. Things are perfect and coming to their completion. He sends you shalom from the right hand of God on high.

Whew! Just when we think the world is coming unglued, we can turn back to Your word and remember that everything is happening just as it should. Israel will be safe, God's people – the church – will be raptured, and eternity is going to be perfect. What worry should we have? None! Praise be to God...no worries at all. Amen.

CHAPTER 4

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, 1 Peter 4:1

The words “for us” are not in all Greek manuscripts and are debatable, but the point is made either way – Christ suffered, and His suffering was not for His own misdeeds, but for those of others. Peter notes that Christ’s suffering was “in the flesh.”

The word “flesh” is generally a negative word, signifying the carnal moral nature. But this is not always the case. It simply speaks of the physical body of humans which – because we are fallen – is closely connected with the fallen morality which accompanies the physical flesh. In the case of Christ, no negative undertones are implied. It simply means that He suffered in His physical human body.

This thought was especially highlighted in verse 3:18 –

“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.”

Based on this, Peter now says, “arm yourselves also with the same mind.” The word Peter uses, and which is translated as “arm yourselves,” is found only here, but it conveys an idea which is seen in Paul’s writings several times. The idea is that believers are to carry the same purposeful intent as Christ did. Just as He was willing to suffer in order to bring about a good end, so should we willfully intend to do likewise.

With that expressed, Peter then explains why this should be the case. It is because “he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin.” Peter’s notion of Christ having suffered is inclusive of His death. Because of this, his words mirror the thought of Paul in Romans 6 –

“For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be *in the likeness* of His resurrection, ⁶ knowing this, that our old man was crucified with *Him*, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.” Romans 6:5, 6

Because Christ suffered (inclusive of His death), and because that suffering and death was on our behalf, we have died with Christ. He has freed us from this body of death and given us freedom to live for God. This is a theological truth which lives in us right now.

We died with Christ, and thus law has no mastery over us. Paul says that it is by law that we have a knowledge of sin. But we are no longer under law; we are under grace. As this is true, we are free to be obedient to a new Master, the Lord. As Albert Barnes says of this, "...there is such a union between Christ and the believer that his death on the cross secured the death of the believer to the world."

As this is so, we are to arm ourselves with that same mind, being resolute in our intent to live as Christ lived. His suffering for us is to lead to our obedience to living for Him.

Life application: Some of the points which were made in the previous chapter have led us to where we are now in Chapter 4. A quick synopsis of them will help remind us of what led us to this point –

- 1) We are to be compassionate towards, and good to, others. We are to bless them even when they persecute us.
- 2) This will bring a blessing upon us because the Lord is attentive to the righteous deeds of His people.
- 3) We are to give a defense of why we have the sure hope of our faith, but we are to do it in a gentle and meek way.
- 4) Through our display, and especially when it involves suffering, those who persecute us will be ashamed.
- 5) This pattern was set by Christ at the cross and is what brought us to God; this pattern worked in us and can be expected to have the same result in others.
- 6) This was seen in Noah before the flood – to a world abounding in wickedness – in order to make known the righteousness of God. So, we in this wicked world have the same pattern to follow.
- 7) Despite our actions, only a few may be saved – just as only eight came through the flood – but those eight became the type of how we also are saved and brought to righteousness, sealed with the Holy Spirit in baptism.
- 8) The resurrection is our assurance that we are on the right path and that we have the power of Christ behind us.

Because of all this, we should "arm ourselves with the same mind" as Christ. He suffered in His flesh to save us from sin. Arming ourselves with this mind is to act in the same way, even in suffering, to bring others out of sin. By failing to do this, our actions indicate that we feel others are less deserving of what was of infinite value to us. Let us never make that error, but instead let us hold others, even those who persecute us, with the same high value as God did when He sent Jesus to call them to righteousness.

Lord, it certainly is hard to look at the world around us and not feel angry at the sin and perversion going on. But we too once walked in that way so let us not forget the depths from which we were called. You saved us despite our actions, and You can save them as well. May You use our faithful testimony to bring others to righteousness. Amen.

...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. 1 Peter 4:2

Speaking of the one who emulates the mind of Christ, Peter just said, “for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin.” He now gives the reason for this by saying, “that he no longer should live the rest of *his* time.”

Here, Peter uses two words which are unique in Scripture. The first is *bioó*, or “to live.” It signifies the spending of one’s time. In other words, it doesn’t simply mean the state of living, but the act of living. One can live for baseball. One can live for fishing. Peter says that the one who is of the same mind as Christ will not spend his time living in the flesh.

The second unique word Peter uses is *epiloipos*, or “rest of *his* time.” It signifies that which remains. HELPS Word Studies says of it, “This intensified term (used only in 1 Pet 4:2) stresses the profound, eternal *results* that *build* on each decision (action), in every scene of life.”

If one is in Christ, and pursues the mind of Christ, he will consider his state and act in a manner which is appropriate to the life he has set his mind to. It will not be “in the flesh.”

Interestingly, Peter had just said in the previous verse that “Christ suffered for us in the flesh.” Christ assumed a truly human nature and suffered in it for us. But for those who are in Adam, this human nature, this flesh, is earthly and morally corrupt. Christ, whose Father is God did not inherit Adam’s sin-nature. His flesh was human, but not morally corrupt. Peter contrasts Christ’s flesh to the general state of man by saying that believers should no longer live “in the flesh.” He obviously means that we are not to live in the morally corrupt earthly flesh, but to live in a state of spiritual holiness.

From there, he then describes exactly this by describing the flesh as “for the lusts of men.” The words here bear a close resemblance to that stated by John in his epistle –

“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: ¹³ who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” John 1:12, 13

What God intends for us is not what men lust after. And what the will of the flesh sees as good is not what the Spirit of God wills for. There is to be an attaching of our lives to God through Christ, and we are to pursue that will which God seeks for His redeemed. This is explicitly stated by Peter with the words, “but for the will of God.”

The will of God is what the Spirit of God wills, and it is what the mind of Christ wills. There is a complete harmony within the Godhead concerning will, purpose, and intent. The three bear the same purpose and goal at all times, and at no time is there division in the mind of God. Only the roles within the Godhead in performing the will of God is unique to the individual member.

Peter is making an argument similar to the one made by Paul in Romans 6:1-4. Notice the similarity in the following verses to what Peter is saying –

“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? ² Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? ³ Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? ⁴ 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.”

It is certainly right and fitting that both men discuss the same issue in a similar way. Should only one account have been recorded, misinterpretation of these verses would be even easier than they are. Already people fail to understand the significance of baptism and how it is applied in this epistle by Peter. There is also a misreading of what it means to live holy lives, and there is also a misunderstanding about the eternal state of man – all because people grab single verses and run with them rather than taking all things in context and comparing Scripture with Scripture.

Life application: The Bible is not as complicated as many people make it, but it is very detailed. With teachers (or in our own studies) skipping around and picking and choosing verses, we can easily be led down the wrong path. For now, just know that we are to put away the life of flesh and live for God. This is our calling to holiness through Jesus. Although we cannot attain sinless perfection in this life, it should always be our goal to live in a manner which shuns fleshly lusts and strives for holy living.

Lord God, You have given us the pattern by which we should live. We certainly fail You often and often slide backward. But Lord, give us spiritual traction so that we may press onward towards the life of holiness that You have called us to. May You be the One who is glorified as we pursue You every step of the way. Amen.

For we *have spent* enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles—when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries. 1 Peter 4:3

Peter now expands on his previous thought concerning no longer living for the lusts of the flesh, and instead living for the will of God. There is a difference between some Greek manuscripts which say either “you” or “we.” The NKJV is based on the manuscript which says “we,” as if Peter is including himself. Either way, he notes what the state was in the past by saying, “For we *have spent* enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles.”

The word “will” here is a preset and fully resolved plan. It identifies the will or intent of someone. The will of the Gentiles is how they lived their lives. It is how anyone without law would act, and yet the law did not even change Israel’s conduct.

In other words, and Peter is writing to a Jewish audience, their behavior was that of following after the nations. The law was given to keep Israel from such things, but Israel failed to pay heed. Instead, they lived as immorally as the Gentiles did. But that time is now past for those who have come to Christ. Instead of such a life, they are called to holiness and to living for God.

To ensure that they understood their previous character, and what it involved, he next gives a list of those things they participated in. In doing so, he uses the standard way of identifying how one lives by saying, “when we walked.” It is a common expression signifying daily conduct. As one walks, their carriage is identifiable. Even from a long distance off, a person can be identified simply by the way he walks. And so, to say that one walks in a certain way identifies their moral character.

Peter next lists the walk of his fellow Jewish believers, showing them that their conduct under the law did not match what the law demanded of them. First, he mentions, “in lewdness.” Strong’s identifies the meaning as “outrageous conduct, conduct showing to public decency, a wanton violence.”

Next, he says, “lusts.” The word signifies an inordinate desire for something. It is an attitude where one is highly focused on something, but it can – at times – identify something in a positive light, such as earnestly desiring that which is good (see Luke 22:15).

Peter then mentions “drunkenness.” This is the only time the word is seen in Scripture. It signifies excessive drinking or debauchery. It does not speak of someone who moderately drinks alcohol, but rather someone who abuses it.

Next, he says, “revelries.” This signifies drunken feasts which included sexual immorality, carousing and wild partying, and etc. After this, he adds in “drinking parties.” It is another word unique in Scripture which signifies drinking and carousing.

Peter then finishes with “and abominable idolatries.” The word “abominable” signifies that which is criminal or lawless. Acts 10:28 translates it as “unlawful.” It is that which is unacceptable. The word “idolatries” is used by Paul three times, and this is now its final use in Scripture. It signifies idol service or image worship.

Peter has said that all of these were practiced by his audience. It does not necessarily mean each had participated in all of them. Rather, as a general rule, his Jewish audience followed the same despicable practices that the Gentiles had followed.

Peter may have been thinking of the words of Jesus which are recorded in Mark 7 –

“For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, ²² thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. ²³ All these evil things come from within and defile a man.” Mark 7:21-23

Jesus spoke of the source of such things, thus showing that a change had to take place in a person in order for his heart to be converted. It is Christ who makes that possible. The law is insufficient to do so, and – as Paul notes – it highlights these things in man.

Life application: In context, this is referring to why we should live holy lives, because Christ suffered to put sin to death in us. Because He did, we should be willing to suffer as well. The reason is that all people – Jew and Gentile – have participated in the very things which led to His cross.

Even when we were living in this fashion, Christ was willing to give His own life to buy us back from there.

Anything which brings about sin also necessitates judgment. The cross is sufficient to cover all of it though. Because it is, and because of God's great mercy which is displayed in it, we can now see why Peter calls us to accept suffering as well, and to also live in the will of God. These things should stem naturally from a grateful heart. Those who accept Jesus as Lord and don't have this attitude demonstrate an ingratitude that will be regretted throughout the ages.

Such is the case of those being addressed in 1 Corinthians. In that epistle, Paul writes to a congregation full of confused, self-serving, and argumentative people. Throughout the letter, Paul directs them to Jesus and His work. Likewise, Peter directs us to Him as well. One day – be it soon or down the road a bit – we will face Jesus. At that time, how many of us will be ashamed at the lack of attention we paid to His calling? Let us strive now to live for Him!

Lord God, grant us the will, desire, and ability to serve You in holiness. May we even be willing to suffer for Your sake if that is what is necessary. Whatever will bring You the most honor, may that be the desire of our hearts. We truly do wish to glorify You, O Lord. Amen.

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*. 1 Peter 4:4

Referring to the list of things that pagans choose to do, Peter now says something that is not unexpected for anyone who turns from such a life to living in holiness in Christ. He says, "they think it strange that you do not run with *them*."

The term Peter uses is literally "not running with them." They are a band of miscreants running as quickly to the gates of hell as they can, and suddenly one of them realizes the error of his way and stops. The others turn their heads in surprise and wonder what on earth is going on. "Hey, this is the way to hell! You're never going to get there like that."

But this is the point of living in holiness and not for the flesh. It is to turn to what reflects the nature of God, and to what God expects for His people. However, they cannot see this as their minds are clouded by the things of the flesh. It is a complete surprise that you have ceased to join with them "in the same flood of dissipation."

The words of Peter speak of debauchery to the point of excess, even to overflowing. The word Peter uses, which gives the sense of “excess,” is found only here in the Bible. Vincent’s Word Studies notes that when used in classical Greek, it speaks of tides which fill the hollows. There is an overflowing sense of debauchery which they are engaged in, but which the believer suddenly realizes is wrong. In stopping and turning from it, Peter then says that they are “speaking evil of *you*.”

The idea here is, “You idiot. Stop acting so self-righteously. We know who you are and what you have done. You are as bad as us, and now you act as if you are a saint.” It is common for those who do evil to not turn from their evil when they see holiness on display. Rather, they do their utmost to pull the one who has turned from his wickedness back to their own level. Like crabs in a bucket, they will always pull the one attempting to get out of it back in – even so that they can be boiled alive together.

Life application: Peter is making a connection to the previous chapter where the flood of Noah was introduced. Surely Noah faced the evil tongues of those around him who belittled him as he steadily built the ark. But in the end, he was saved through the flood and the others were destroyed. Likewise, if you have come to Christ and have given up on the character and conduct you once lived, you have probably faced (and possibly still face) the jeers of those you once hung around with.

They may look at you as if you’ve lost your mind, thinking it strange that you don’t run with them anymore. The fact is though that you are the one who has found reason and understanding, and it is you who are being safely guided through the very same flood that you were once drowning in. Don’t be disheartened and don’t be discouraged by the constant beat of the drums calling you to return to this empty way of life. Rather, stand fast and march on towards the goal which is the high calling of life in Jesus Christ.

By your steadfast attitude, you may even become a witness to the very people who are currently giving you such a difficult time. In the end, they may have their eyes opened, simply because of your faithfulness to Christ. Stand firm then in Jesus, and may He be your safe hiding place and strong refuge. Don’t let the life you once lived take over and nullify the glorious work of sanctification that Jesus is working in you.

Lord Jesus, you know the temptations we face, the taunts we endure, and the continuous call for us to return to our previous way of life. Give us a strong and resolute spirit to stand firm against these things and to be bold and faithful as witnesses to the glorious change You have brought about in us. This we pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.

They will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.

1 Peter 4:5

The words are connected to those of the previous verse who “think it strange that you do not run with *them* in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of *you*.” Peter says of them now that “They will give an account.”

Here he uses the same term that he did of believers in verse 3:15 –

“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;”

It is probable that he is tying the two thoughts together in his mind. Christians are to be prepared to give a defense concerning their faith because all people will be required to give an account of their lives. If the first can lead to a resulting change in others, the account given – and the judgment rendered – will be vastly different for the one who must give his “account to Him who is ready to judge.”

The Greek more closely reads, “having Himself in readiness.” The judgment is near, it is always at the ready, and when the time for it arrives, it will be conducted without delay. Further, it is speaking of the coming judgment of God which will be conducted by Christ Jesus. This is explicitly stated in Acts 10:42 and in 2 Timothy 4:1. It is also stated in other ways elsewhere. It is Christ Jesus who has been ordained by God for this purpose.

If one thinks about it logically, Christ is the standard for judgment. He was found without sin, and He prevailed over death because of it. He is the embodiment of the law, and therefore, what He has done is the ideal to which all others must attain in order to meet God’s standard and be accepted by Him.

Therefore, one will either be found in Christ, and thus acceptable to God, or he will not be in Christ and unacceptable to God. The judgment will be that simple to conduct. There will be no balances to weigh out good and bad. There will be no listing of deeds leading to justification. There will be no time in purgatory which leads to a state of sanctification and holiness. There will only be those in Christ and those who are not in Christ. Those in Christ will be saved; the others will be condemned.

And this judgment is for both “the living and the dead.” Those who are alive at the time of judgment will be judged. Those who have died before that Day appointed for them

will be raised for judgment. No person in all of human history will be excluded from this, and it will be a perfectly fair and eternally final decision.

Life application: Idol worshippers cover the majority of people on earth. Any religion not founded on faith in Jesus Christ is idol worship. One doesn't need to bow to a stone Buddha to fit this category. Instead, any form of incorrect worship will do, whether it is pantheism (belief that everything is God); polytheism (belief in many gods); etc. Like them, liars, murderers, thieves, sorcerers, those who practice astrology, etc. are all awaiting the same fate. Either Jesus Christ is Lord in one's life, or something else is.

While considering this, take time to also reflect on those who mistreat you or persecute you because of your faith. Right now, it seems unbearable. We hear of Christian persecution around the world and it seems like the enemy is winning the battle. In America, it is becoming increasingly difficult to even mention the name of Jesus in public without having somebody from the ACLU or some other anti-Christian organization threaten to sue you, or have you tossed into jail.

If you feel their oppression, don't be surprised, these things will come. But remember that Jesus is a fair and righteous Judge. In the end, they will receive their just desserts for having fought against Him in this life. Following His path will be rewarded and fighting against it will be punished. Nothing will be left unattended on the great Day of His righteous judgment. Be at peace and continue to be a light to these people lest they share in the fate of the wicked.

Lord, our inclination at times is to pray for speedy judgment on those who persecute and fight against Your church. But You would have us do otherwise. You would have us pray for them now so that they might turn and be healed. Give us willing hearts to do this so that they may receive commendation, not condemnation, on Your great Day of visitation. Amen.

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.

1 Peter 4:6

Like verse 3:19, there are various translations which are given for the words of Peter here. Two notable differences are –

For this reason the gospel was preached also to those who are dead, (NKJV)

For this reason the gospel was also preached to those who are now dead, (CSB)

The difference between “who are dead” and “who are now dead” was resolved in the evaluation of verses 3:18 & 3:19. The preaching was to those who were alive, but who are now dead. It was referring to those people who were alive before the flood to whom Noah preached. Such is true with other dead throughout the ages as well.

The reason for Peter’s words is based on what he just said concerning the coming judgment of “the living and the dead.” The question may arise, and indeed it is asked often, as to how someone who has never heard the gospel can be judged. But they have heard it. As Paul says elsewhere –

“But I say, have they not heard? Yes indeed:
‘Their sound has gone out to all the earth,
And their words to the ends of the world.’” Romans 10:18

There is the hope of Messiah in all ages as was first promised to Adam and his wife at the very beginning. It is a hope that calls for righteousness in man in hopes of restoration with God. This is the message of Noah and others. Just because Noah didn’t know who the Messiah would be, it does not mean that he didn’t preach concerning Messiah. His words came through his understanding that God had a plan and it would be carried out in due time. His job was to preach concerning God’s righteousness until that time.

It is “For this reason the gospel was preached.” Peter wants his audience to know that the gospel, although limited in its understanding of God’s plan, was preached. As he next says, “also to those who are dead.”

This does not refer to those who were dead and were preached to while they were dead. Such is not found in Scripture, nor can it be inferred. Rather, “it is appointed for men to die, but after this the judgment” (Hebrews 9:27). Instead, the people Peter refers to in this verse are now dead, but they were alive when they heard the gospel. This is why translators use the term “now dead” or as the ISV translates it, “those who have died.” What occurred was in the past while they were living, but now – at this time – they are dead.

The word of righteousness went forth to proclaim righteous living to all. This is exactly what Peter has been referring to in the previous verses, especially verses 4:3-5. It is a world full of dissipation and debauchery, but some (whom Peter is addressing) have

turned from that because of the gospel. It was no different at Noah's time. He preached righteousness so "that they might be judged according to men in the flesh."

This is what Peter said of the believers who had come to Christ in verse 4:4, where he said to his reader that those who failed to heed are "speaking evil of *you*." In other words, the people of the world judged the believers "according to men in the flesh." Such an instance may be, "Oh come on! You're acting like a prude. Come and join us as we party our lives away."

This is certainly the sentiment of Genesis 6, for example. It is also the sentiment of Lot while in Sodom, and etc. There is abounding wickedness. This is so much the case that those who retain a righteous spirit are judged by the wicked according to the flesh. However, those same people "live according to God in the spirit."

This is what Peter said to his reader in verse 4:2 –

"...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."

This is what happened with Noah. It is also the state of Lot, as Peter will later say of him—

"...and delivered righteous Lot, *who was* oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked ⁸ (for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented *his* righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing *their* lawless deeds)—" 2 Peter 2:7, 8

The good news of righteousness in anticipation of Messiah is instilled in man. It takes an active rejection of that good news to condemn the righteous and live one's life in wickedness. This is what the world has done, and it is what the world continues to do. Peter is not speaking of people getting a second chance after death. That is a contradictory thought which is not supported by either the context of Peter's words, or the context of the state of man as is presented in Scripture.

Life application: As a review of what has just been presented, we ask again, "Who is being talked about here?" Did someone go preach to dead people? The answer is, "No." The people who are being referred to were alive when they heard the gospel message just as we today hear the gospel.

The context of the passage is that Peter was speaking about Jesus suffering for us "in the flesh" and so we should be of the same mind, not living for sin and lust but for the will of

God. He then went on to explain that we all were also like the disobedient people of the world, having done the same wicked things. Unlike them though, we are now free from condemnation, whereas those who are still disobedient will “have to give an account to Him who is ready to judge the ‘living and the dead.’”

He then said, “For this reason,” and explained that this is the same pattern that was applied to those who are now dead, but previously heard the gospel. Here is a breakdown then of the idea we can draw from what Peter is saying –

- 1) Living a holy life, one which is honoring to God, is what should be expected when the gospel is preached to us.
- 2) God is going to bring judgment on all people who have heard the gospel, but failed to receive it; they’ve had no change in their heart or life.
- 3) It makes no difference how others judge us, particularly those who live “in the flesh,” as long as we live the way that God would have us live – in His Spirit and for the message of Christ.

Remember fellow Christian, we are accountable to God, not to men, for our actions. When someone pokes fun at you for being a faithful believer, pay it no heed. God’s commendation is infinitely more valuable than their accusations.

Praise be to God who has called us out of death and bondage, and who has brought us into the Light of His glorious Son. Lord, we could sing of your love and faithfulness forever. And, indeed, we shall! Let us not be discouraged nor ashamed when men mock us for following You. Instead, may we count it as double honor. Amen.

But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers.

1 Peter 4:7

Peter now gives a sound reason for arming oneself and for being prepared to give a sound defense for the faith. He says, “But the end of all things is at hand.” The word translated as “is at hand” is used for the last time here by Peter.

It is a common word which signifies “to draw near.” It can be near as in a location, such as “drawing near to Damascus.” It can be near in time, such as “midnight draws near.” It can be drawing near an event, such as “his death is at hand,” and etc.

Here, it is in the perfect tense, signifying extreme closeness. It is used in this same manner by Paul in Romans 13:12 and by James in James 5:8. All three speak of the imminency of the end of the age. The rapture of the church, and what comes after that, has been imminent from the start of the church age. There is no time that a believer could rightly say, "the Lord won't come back today." Therefore, that day is always at hand.

As Peter is specifically written to the Jews, and as his epistles are after Paul's Gentile-led church age epistles, it is a good indication that it is intended for the Jews of the end times, after their regathering. And so, the words apply as much to the rapture for messianic believers as they do for those who are converted after the rapture. The entire set of end-times events is "at hand."

Because of this, Peter says, "Therefore." He is summing up the thought with words of exhortation which border on warning. With that said, he continues with "be serious." The word he uses signifies to be right-minded, or clear-minded. It is an interesting word he chooses, *sóphroneó*, now used for the last time in Scripture.

HELPS Word Studies describes it as "[The whole word-family (root, *sōphro-*) comes from two words: *sōos* ('safe') and *phrēn* ('what *regulates* life,' the root of the English term, 'diaphragm'). Example: An opera singer controls the length (quality) of their tones by their *diaphragm*, which even controls our ability to breathe and *moderates* heartbeat. This *regulates* ('brings *safety*') to the body, keeping it properly *controlled*.]"

To this, Peter adds to be "watchful in your prayers." The word signifies being sober. In other words, he exhorts his reader to be rational and clear-minded in prayer.

These things are especially important, again, because of the imminency of the coming of the Lord at the rapture, which is then to be followed with the tribulation and the second advent of Christ. The sequence of events could be at any time, and so believers need to be ready at all times.

Life application: Take your prayers seriously and don't neglect them, the end of all things is at hand...Christ could return at any moment. Have you been negligent in telling others about Jesus? There is no time like the present, the end of all things is at hand...Christ could return at any moment. Whatever we do, we should do it with the expectation of Christ's possible return.

This doesn't just go for positive things; it should guide our life in not doing wrong things as well. Be honest, don't lie, don't steal, watch yourself that you don't fall into sexual immorality, the end of all things is at hand...Christ could return at any moment.

When Christ returns, whether for us individually in death (be it sudden or from age) or for the whole church in the rapture, we don't want to be found either neglecting His call or living in a less-than holy manner. Be ready, Christ is coming, and the end of all things is at hand.

Lord, how we need to be reminded of the imminency of Your coming. We often slip into unpreparedness – both in our witness to others and in the conduct of our personal life. Be with us, guide us, and carry us in a manner that will bring You glory on the day of Your visitation. Amen.

And above all things have fervent love for one another, for “love will cover a multitude of sins.” 1 Peter 4:8

Peter now cites the same verse from Proverbs that James cited –

“...let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.” James 5:20

Both of them have turned to Proverbs 10:12, cited here, to make their points –

“Hatred stirs up strife,
But love covers all sins.”

Knowing the source of his thought is right in order to understand what is on his mind. Peter then begins the thought with “And above all things.” It is an obvious expression which means, “What is most important of all,” or “What is of primary importance.” Without this understanding, there will be a void, or a lack, in everything else that he has instructed. And in the immediate sense, it refers to the words of the previous verse where he said to “be serious and watchful in your prayers.”

From there, he states what is of primary importance. It is to “have fervent love for one another.” The word signifies “fully extended.” If one were to think of a rope which is fully taut, that rope is meeting its maximum potential. This is the idea here. It is intense, constant, and a fully zealous love. This is what is to be displayed between believers, and it is because “love will cover a multitude of sins.”

As this is cited by both James and Peter, it needs careful attention. Are they speaking of forgiveness of sins by God which are then covered, or are they simply speaking of sins which are forgotten by the parties involved?

The safest interpretation is that this is speaking of the sinner's life being saved from death, and the sinner's sins being those referred to. This would be in line with, for example, Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5.

They sinned and died because of it. The passage concerning Ananias and Sapphira form a descriptive example of what could happen to those caught in sin. They strayed from the path and they died because of it.

The covering of the sinner's sins is another matter. In Christ, there is a one-time for all time judicial atonement of sin. If James was referring to a non-believer, then his words refer to that. However, taken in connection with Peter's words, which are certainly speaking of believers, it appears that the covering of the sins is not speaking of forgiveness by God in Christ, but by the overlooking of the sins of the sinner. They are covered and forgotten.

As an example: Mark begins drinking heavily. Alan intervenes and corrects Mark's way of life. Mark is saved from death, maybe from driving while intoxicated, or maybe from alcohol poisoning – whatever. In the process, his sins are covered (forgotten) by those who see his life-change. His marriage is saved, his job keeps him on, etc. He is brought to a whole state once again.

Further, a multitude of sins which otherwise would have been committed, as he continued down his wayward path, have been averted. They have been covered by the change in his course. And this was because of the love of one for another. Thus, the loving act saved his soul from death and covered a multitude of his sins.

Life application: A strong and forgiving love is the truest sign of a Christian as we learn from Jesus' words –

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. ³⁵By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” John 13:34, 35

Although Jesus was speaking to His apostles, the words are directed to all faithful believers who come after them as well. When a brother sins against you and repents,

you are obligated to forgive him of his offense. This is the model in every instance in the Bible. If they fail to repent, then you are to forgive them potentially and hand it over to the Father for Him to deal with.

By these actions, you “cover a multitude of sins” in the forgiving process. Once forgiven, the account is clear, and you can go on in the grace of the Lord. Think this through clearly and have peace with yourself, with your fellow Christian, and also in the arms of Christ.

Lord, You know the offenses committed against us and how upset they have made us. You also know the offenses we have committed against You. Their weight is far higher than what we have endured. This is certain. So, Lord, give us hearts willing to forgive when forgiveness is due, so that we won't be outside of Your will and direction for our lives. Amen.

Be hospitable to one another without grumbling. 1 Peter 4:9

The word “Be” is inserted here in order to tie it to the previous clause, as it rightly belongs. Peter had just said that we should have fervent love for one another. Using the same thought, he continues the idea with “be hospitable to one another.” It is an adjective used by Paul in 1 Timothy 3:2 and Titus 1:8. Peter now uses it for the last time.

It literally means “fond of guests,” and thus it conveys the idea of being welcoming of others and given to hospitality. One could think of the saying, “Our doors are always open to you.” And to further define this, Peter next says, “without grumbling.”

The word signifies “muttering,” and the intent is obvious. One who is supposedly hospitable should not be grudging in their hospitality. Rather, they should be filled with accommodating speech and words of blessing.

Life application: There is a ton of difficulty for many of us in these seven words! In 1 Timothy and Titus, Paul says that elders are to be hospitable; it is one of the requirements of the job. Peter now says that everyone in the brotherhood is to be hospitable.

Logically, if an elder fails to be hospitable, then the congregation is going to be equally inhospitable. The old truth that a “nation won't rise above its leader” applies to the church as well. The pastor of a church sets the tone for the entire congregation. If his doctrine is faulty, the congregation will be led astray. If he tolerates sin, the congregation

will fall into the same sin. If he is a backbiter or a gossip, the congregation will tear itself apart. Likewise, the pastor of the congregation needs to be hospitable. When he is, the rest of the congregation will normally take on this favorable quality.

Being hospitable, however, needs to be genuine. If it is done in a spirit of grumbling, can anyone expect to see it as anything but a grudgingly committed act? Of course not! It is important to keep this in mind as we relate to others. Christ didn't head towards Jerusalem hemming and hawing about the difficulty that lay ahead.

Instead, the Bible says, "Now it came to pass, when the time had come for Him to be received up, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem" (Luke 9:51). The NIV translates the word "steadfastly" as "resolutely." Jesus faced the coming trial with determination and did it in such a way that Luke, while compiling his gospel, could state the matter in this strong and reliable language. Let us have a similar steadfast and resolute demeanor when we demonstrate hospitality towards those who come across our path.

Lord, we must admit that we are not always as hospitable as we should be. In addition to this, when we attempt to be, our heart isn't always behind the act. Instead, we inwardly grumble about whatever inconvenience we perceive in the matter. Lord, give us a right heart as we deal with others – deferring to their needs and not to our own comfort. This we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. 1 Peter 4:10

Peter now gives a reasonable explanation for the courteous behavior he just exhorted his reader to display by saying, "As each one has received a gift." What gift has been given has been left indeterminate by Peter. He simply says, "a gift." Unfortunately, the older KJV uses the definite article, "the gift." This causes a confused reading of Peter's intent, as if there is a particular gift which has been received.

What is true, however, is that every saved believer has received a gift, even if it is only the gift of grace bestowed upon him by God in Christ. Supposing he cannot think of anything else he excels at, he can at least display grace towards others, just as he himself has received.

Whether only this, or one of a list of gifts noted by Peter or by Paul elsewhere, Peter says to "minister it to one another." A gift which is hoarded has value only to the

recipient, and if it goes unused, its value actually diminishes. If one has received grace, and he fails to grant it to others, the grace which was received will soon be considered as having been deserved. A person who has the gift of excellent speech could increase the blessing to others many times over. But if it is unused, the eloquence of the tongue will begin to fade.

Therefore, it is the wise person who takes the gift he possesses and passes it on to others. In doing so, others will be blessed, and the giver will be strengthened in the gift he possesses. Peter continues by saying that each one should do this “as good stewards.”

A steward is a person who tends to others. Therefore, the gift is not intended to end with the recipient of the grace. Nor is he the originator of the grace, as if he is the ultimate benefactor who is to be praised for his granting of it to others. Rather, a steward is one who carries out a duty on behalf of another – receiving and passing on as intended. And what he has received is that which consists “of the manifold grace of God.”

The word translated as “manifold” signifies “of various kinds.” One can think of a tapestry of many colors, each providing the eye with delight. Or maybe one could think of a bowl of many different types of ice cream, each providing a unique and tasty sensation.

Thus, the “manifold grace of God” is not specifically speaking of the grace which leads a sinner to salvation, but of the display of God’s care and love for His creatures which is transmitted to and through them for their doctrine, comfort, guidance, healing, and etc.

Life application: Each of us has been given different likes and different abilities. These are gifts from God, and He asks us to use them in a way which will return glory to Him. Several times in his epistles, Paul lists gifts useful to the church. Here is his list from Romans 12:6-8 –

“Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, *let us use them*: if prophecy, *let us prophesy* in proportion to our faith; ⁷ or ministry, *let us use it* in *our* ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; ⁸ he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.”

As you notice, these are the same gifts found in the secular world (prophecy, in this case, can be equated with public speaking). The difference then between our abilities and those of non-Christians is that we, as Christians, are to use them for the glory of God.

Instead of using our God-given gifts and talents only for our own benefit, we are now to exercise them –

- 1) to the glory of God's grace in our life, and
- 2) for the ministering of others.

Are you a salesclerk? Then sell with cheer and by bringing Christian light into your store. Are you a lawyer? Then administer your gift in a way which will define proper ethical behavior. Are you a service technician? Then conduct your job knowing that God has blessed the work of your hands when you do it for His glory. Whatever your life's work and skills are, remember to exercise them to the honor of the Lord who has delivered you into His eternal kingdom!

Heavenly Father, sometimes we look at other jobs that people have and think they must be closer to you because of what they do – preaching, working in a church, or serving as a missionary. But Your word shows us that we can bring just as much glory to You in the work we do. Please give us the opportunity to share Your gospel right from our place of work, by living as Christians filled with the hope we possess because of Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

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.

1 Peter 4:11

Peter now details two gifts which may have been imparted to individuals which demonstrate “the manifold grace of God,” which he referred to in verse 4:10. In naming them, he will explain how they should be handled. Along with this, he will give the reason for it. First, he begins with, “If anyone speaks.”

This display of grace is speaking. The context, however, is more than just speaking in general. And yet, it certainly should be inclusive of all speech. To define what he means, he says, “let him speak as the oracles of God.” One might think, “Oh, Peter is referring to preaching because he is referring to someone speaking about Scripture.”

It is certainly true that if a person is preaching, he is to do it based on Scripture. A sermon which is not based on the word may be a motivational speech, it may be an incitement to wage war, it may be a political rally, but it is not “preaching” as intended by Scripture. But there are other types of speaking that must surely be on Peter’s mind, such as teaching, counsel, tongues, prophecy, etc. Each of these must be “as the oracles of God.”

For example, if someone speaks in tongues, and it is not in accord with God’s will and his directives for tongues (which are laid out clearly in Scripture), then that person is in violation of Peter’s exhortation here.

Understanding this, all forms of speaking which involve Scripture are to be “as the oracles of God.” But should that be the end of the directive? No. In Deuteronomy, it says this –

“And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. ⁷ You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. ⁸ You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. ⁹ You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.” Deuteronomy 6:6-9

This set of words was probably what was on Peter’s mind. It is not merely speaking by someone invested with an office, but all people at all times. “When you speak, do so as you have the oracles of God on your lips.” And this does not mean the fulfilled law of Moses, but the entire body of Scripture. As Paul says elsewhere –

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. ¹⁷ And whatever you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.”

-Colossians 3:16, 17

Next, Peter says, “If anyone ministers.” This display of grace is ministering. The word signifies caring for the needs of others in a practical way, and as the Lord guides. This is obviously a function within the church. The word is translated into English as “deacon” in 1 Timothy 3:10. However, it is a word which is broadly used to refer to any type of ministering, serving, etc.

Again, the thought should not be limited to those in church employ, but rather to all people who minister at any time. In such, Peter says, “*let him do it as with the ability which God supplies.*”

People are given the ability to minister in an almost infinite variety of ways, but the thought is inclusive of talent, level of authority, amount of strength, level of wealth, availability of property for use, and on and on. God has supplied all people with their station in life. It is the obligation of God’s people to then use that station for His glory in the conduct of the service of others.

Peter then says this is so “that in all things God may be glorified.” What good is speaking without bringing glory to God? What good is serving without glorifying the One who gave the abilities to serve in the first place. Everything is temporary and fleeting except that which is done for the glory and honor of the Creator. Our station is not to work independently of Him, but in accord with Him and His will for us.

And this can only truly be done properly when God is glorified “through Jesus Christ.” Without Jesus, we truly only have a limited idea of who God is. Jesus is the Christ, meaning “Messiah.” It was He who was prophesied to come, even moments after the fall. It is He who was the hope of all of the faithful of ages past.

The Lord directed the people’s attention to this coming One, so that when He came, it would be He who expressed God in a way in which we could concretely see and understand. Without him, religions have formed 7 jillion “gods” out of their own imaginations. But in Christ is the image of the invisible God (Colossians 1:15), and He is, therefore, the way that God has chosen to express Himself to us.

Understanding this marvelous thing, Peter finishes with a short doxology by saying, “to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.” All things came from God, all things belong to God, and all things are to bring glory to God forever and ever. He alone is sovereign over all things, and it is right that all things are to be done by us to bring Him all of the glory that He is due.

Life application: Deuteronomy 11 repeats the same idea as cited from Deuteronomy 6, which is quoted above. Peter uses this familiar idea. Whenever we speak, our language should be continuously salted with verses and our words should be sprinkled with glorifying God. It doesn’t matter who we speak to, we should be bringing the knowledge of Jesus to those around us.

Likewise, Peter tells us that God doesn't supply half-heartedly And so, we shouldn't minister that way either. In all we do – whether speaking or ministering, we need to do it to glorify God. If we are doing otherwise, then we are depriving the Lord of the honor, glory, and dominion that He alone is due. Let us never fall into this error, but rather let us be living testimonies to the Lord, the Lord Jesus Christ – to the glory of God. Amen!

Lord, as Isaiah cried out – “I am a man of unclean lips and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips.” We ask you today to purify our hearts and souls and bring us to the place where we speak, act, and live solely for You and Your glory. On our own, we cannot do this, but with Your Holy Spirit surely we can. Glory to You O God! Amen.

Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; 1 Peter 4:12

Peter now returns, once again, to the idea of suffering and trials. In doing so, he again uses the word translated as “beloved” as he did in verse 2:11. He is tenderly addressing his flock and asking them to consider his words as a heartfelt truth that must be considered. In this, he says, “do not think it strange.”

Here, he uses the same word as in verse 4:4. It signifies “to receive as a guest.” Thus, it is something surprising. They are not to be surprised or alarmed “concerning the fiery trial which is to try you.”

Here, the verb is a present participle. It should read, “the fiery trial which is trying you.” They were already facing fiery trials, and they should not consider that this is something unusual or which was unexpected. The word translated as “fiery” is introduced here, and it will be seen two more times in Revelation 18 when speaking of the burning of Babylon. It is that which burns for purification. In this case, it is combined with another word, translated as “trial,” to signify a test of burning which purifies. One can think of silver being refined and purified through the work of the refiner.

Peter says that there should be no surprise in this. If believers are the Lord's, and we are imperfect, fallen beings, then we require purification through such testings in order for us to grow and mature. Therefore, it should not be in their minds that this is “some strange thing.”

This is how God worked with Israel while under the law –

“For My name’s sake I will defer My anger,
And *for* My praise I will restrain it from you,
So that I do not cut you off.
¹⁰ Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver;
I have tested you in the furnace of affliction.
¹¹ For My own sake, for My own sake, I will do *it*;
For how should *My name* be profaned?
And I will not give My glory to another.” Isaiah 48:9-11

As Peter’s audience is first and foremost Jewish believers, they would be aware of the words of the Lord, and they should understand that the Lord purifies His people in order that His name would be glorified. Hence, such testing was for their good and for His glory. Peter says this is why the trials “happened to you.”

Again, it is a present participle. Therefore, it should read “are happening to you.” It is something that had begun, and it is something that will continue until the end of this age. God’s hand of purification will continue until His people are finally glorified.

Life application: Each person who attempts to live a godly life will be facing their own trials. These are allowed in our lives to try us, to test us, to strengthen our armor, and to build our Christian character. However, none of these things are allowed without the approval of the Lord.

To understand God’s sovereign hand in all things – even in calamity – read the first two chapters of Job. Satan had to get permission to bring trial and disaster on Job. The Lord allowed these things to happen, and He will allow difficulties to come about in our lives as well. This doesn’t in any way demonstrate an uncaring or unloving attitude in the Lord. Instead, all things are brought about for our benefit (whether we understand it at the time or not) and for His glory.

In the end, we will see the wisdom of everything that has happened to us in our lives. The thing for us to remember now is that it is a demonstration of God’s confidence in us and our ability to learn and grow from what has occurred, or is occurring, in our lives.

Heavenly Father, we don’t like the fiery trials we have faced in the past, and we certainly don’t look forward to the ones yet to come, but we know that You have ordained them for our learning and growth. When they come, remind us of this, so that we can bear up under the pressures they bring about. In the end, we know that You will be glorified, and we will be edified. Amen.

...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. 1 Peter 4:13

To keep the context, the entire thought should be considered –

“Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; 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.”

In contrast to thinking it strange for a believer to face fiery trials, Peter says that they are to “rejoice.” To think something strange is to indicate a lack of understanding why something is occurring. There should be no doubt as to why believers face trials, and they are to not only accept them, but to rejoice in them.

Peter then provides the exact reason for this seemingly contradictory state. He says you are to rejoice “to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings.” The translation is incorrect. It says, “in the sufferings of the Christ” (YLT).

Believers do not suffer in the same sufferings as Christ. Rather, they participate in sufferings which are the same model as those which Christ suffered. The difference is similar to the concept of the Catholic mass (transubstantiation) and communion. We do not actually participate in eating the body and blood of Christ. Rather, we participate in a remembrance of that act. Likewise, our sufferings may be emblematic of the sufferings of the Christ, but we are not participating in His actual sufferings.

The sufferings, which we participate in, are because of our being in Christ, and they are a point by which we are to rejoice. Peter then explains why this is so by saying, “that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.”

Again, the translation is lacking. The word translated as “be glad” is the same verb as at the beginning of the verse, and it is followed by a second verb to highlight the state. It should say, “rejoice exulting.”

There is a time ahead which will put all sufferings of Christ's faithful into its proper perspective. Today, if we have joy, it will be remembered for the rest of our lives. However, if we have sickness or trouble, the memory – though maybe still painful to an extent – will fade. This is all the more so as joys of life fill up the painful thoughts. When believers come before the Source of all joy, the trials and the sufferings that were once

faced will be completely forgotten as they are consumed by the everlasting joy which fills the once painful space of our memories.

Peter was probably thinking of Christ's words which were spoken on the Mount of Beatitudes. Though spoken under a different dispensation, the truth of what Christ said is an eternal truth concerning suffering for the sake of Christ –

“Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. ¹² 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

Life application: When you suffer as Christ did, as a believer you are likewise partaking afflictions as He did. This is obviously of great value to the Lord and something for which you will be rewarded, so don't be disheartened. Like Matthew above, Luke also speaks of this in Luke 6:22, 23.

Paul also used this same terminology in 2 Corinthians 7:4 when he said, “I am exceedingly joyful in all our tribulation.” Jesus set the pattern, Paul and the other apostles confirmed the pattern, and we are to live by it to the greatest extent possible.

Peter likewise suffered in this way, both as recorded in the book of Acts and at the end of his life – something he will mention later in his writings. Peter isn't asking us to do anything that he and the other apostles hadn't already endured. Be firm in your convictions now that you will be willing to suffer for Christ. When He appears, you will be exceedingly joyful at the approval He lavishes upon you!

Jesus, if we are to face persecution and reviling, we ask that You fill us with Your Spirit of grace so that we may be a pleasing example of patience and faithfulness during the fiery trial. This we ask so that You – You, O Lord – will be glorified through our sufferings. To Your honor and glory we pray. Amen.

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. 1 Peter 4:14

Peter continues with the same general idea as he has written about for the past two verses. He mentioned the fiery trial of believers, and of partaking in Christ's sufferings.

These things are to be expected and actually are to be a point of honor for those who face them. As he now begins to say, “If you are reproached for the name of Christ.”

The Greek reads, “in the name of Christ.” In other words, this is not speaking of suffering which is a result of faith in Christ as much as it is a title of honor for bearing the name of Christ. The reproach is because of the honorable name the believer bears, but which is used as a reproach by those who do not bear it. It is a title which can belong, and only belongs, to a “Christian.” This will become evident in verse 4:16.

If one is reproached in this way, Peter says, “blessed are you.” One who bears the name of Christ, and who is reproached for bearing that name, carries with him a blessing. In being a Christian, it means that something happened when they became a Christian. That is then seen with Peter’s next words. He says, “for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.”

Very few translations properly render these words. Vincent’s Word Studies explains –

“Lit., the spirit of glory and that of God. The repetition of the article identifies the spirit of God with the spirit of glory: the spirit of glory, and therefore the spirit of God: who is none other than the spirit of God himself.”

A more suitable translation would be, “the Spirit of glory and the Spirit of God.” It is a note implying the doctrine of the Trinity – One essence with individual “Persons” within the Godhead.

The blessing, then, is that this Spirit of Glory, meaning the Spirit of God, rests upon the person who bears the name of Christ. This is what Paul refers to in Ephesians 1 –

“In Him you also *trusted*, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, ¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.” Ephesians 1:13, 14

A person has the Spirit of God resting upon them, because they have trusted in Christ. In trusting in Christ, he bears the name of Christ. Peter calls this a blessing because it is the sign and the seal that we are restored to God. Therefore, to be reproached in the name of Christ can only be the highest honor of all.

Peter then explains this by saying that the reproach does not fall on the believer as much as it does on Christ (the subject of the verse) in whom the believer is reproached. As he says, “On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified.” Christ is blasphemed when people reproach “Christians,” it is true, but Christ is glorified at the same time by those Christians who are willing to stand and receive reproach in His name, because it is He who is honored by the believer in the process.

The contents of the verse are important to follow properly, because Jesus says elsewhere these words –

“And anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but to him who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven.”

-Luke 12:10

It is these words which were probably on Peter’s mind. In Peter’s words, he speaks of being reproached in the name of Christ – something which can be forgiven. It is not the Holy Spirit who is being reproached, but rather the name of Christ. Those who reproach Christians because of the title they bear are doing so for exactly that reason. The Spirit has sealed the person and rests upon him, but that is unseen to the one who is reproaching. It is the name of Jesus, the Christ, who is the Subject of Peter’s words.

Life application: A few points to consider –

- 1) You cannot logically be reproached for the name of Christ if you are not a Christian;
- 2) Normally and rightfully, you won’t be reproached for the name of Christ, even if you are a Christian if you keep it a secret;
- 3) You can’t expect the blessing promised here if you are not reproached for the name of Christ, but this doesn’t mean you won’t be otherwise blessed.
- 4) Having the Spirit of glory, which is the Spirit of God, upon you is not necessitated upon bearing reproach for the name of Christ.

These four points should be obvious, but some people tend to miss one or more of them. For example, some people in the church age have been openly belligerent in their Christian life, seeking to be reproached and even martyred. They did this expecting a greater blessing in the afterlife (see point 4). This kind of thinking is abnormal. We are to live our lives in a manner which brings glory to Jesus, not to ourselves.

This then leads back up to point 2. You cannot bring glory to Jesus if you keep it a secret. What is the point of growing in the knowledge of Jesus if we don't share it with others? Being timid about His role in your life is like being timid about eating dinner. When you share your faith in, and love for, Jesus – whether you are reproached or not – you can expect the Lord to favor it and bless you (see point 3). No matter what you face, a pat on the back or a punch in the head, you will be rewarded.

Don't worry about your here and now! Instead, look to the needs of those who haven't heard about Jesus, and share His name with them. If you do, the Spirit of glory, which is the Spirit of God, will lead you and support you because He rests on you. Have no fear in what man can do; the Lord can do so very much more!

Heavenly Father, how glorious You are. May we be willing to openly, and without timidity, stand on the title which we bear - Christian. Overwhelm our reticence, and give us the desire, ability, and action necessary to proclaim the name of Jesus. Whether we suffer reproach or thanks, may our words be filled with His great name! Amen.

But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters. 1 Peter 4:15

Peter had just spoken of receiving reproach in the name of Christ, and when it occurs, as he said, "on your part He is glorified." Now as a means of explaining that, he cites the words of this verse by saying, "But let none of you suffer."

The Greek reads, "For let none of you suffer as a...," which is followed by several negatives. He is expressing cause, not contrast, from the preceding verse. Peter's words are precautionary because many Christians have come from the troubled of society. Not every believer is from a Christian home and raised in a godly atmosphere. People are brought out of all kinds of wicked lives. Further, even those who were raised in a godly home may think that they are immune from judgment because they were raised as Christians. In spite of the cause for their behavior, Peter will speak against those who do these improper things.

Believers are "in Christ," and when they are reproached as Christians, it is "in the name of Christ," just as he said in the previous verse. It is contrary to being "in Christ" to be one of the negatives which he will next state. If one is reproached as a Christian, God is blasphemed by them, but he is glorified by the believer. So how can God be glorified by something negative?

The suffering itself is not the thing which brings blessedness to the individual and glory to God. Rather, it is the faith and endurance of the believer which brought about the reproach, and which then brings about the blessedness and glory. This is the thought that is being presented, and it is why the Greek word *gar* should be translated as “for” and not “but.”

With that in mind, he begins with, “as a murderer.” The idea of murder is that of an action which is unsanctioned and which results in death. Killing in war is not murder. Executing a capital criminal is not murder. It is an act defined by the Fifth Commandment in the Old Covenant, and it is sanctioned under the New (see Galatians 5:21 and elsewhere).

Next, Peter cites being “a thief.” The word is *kleptés*. One can see the root of the word kleptomaniac there. It is a thief, someone who steals in secret, rather than someone who does so openly and with violence.

Peter then says as “an evildoer.” The Greek word is used in Scripture only by Peter. This is the last of three times he uses it. It is someone who makes trouble and looks for opportunities to injure others or cause unnecessary damage.

Finally, he says, “or as a busybody in other people’s matters.” This is a word found only here in Scripture. A literal translation would be an overseer in the affairs of others. In other words, he takes authority in matters which he has no right to meddle in. Thus, it speaks of a busybody, sticking his nose into the business of others and failing to mind his own business.

Life application: All of us are susceptible to doing wrong and falling back into evil patterns, and we need to be continuously on guard about how we conduct our lives. Should we fail and turn back to the things Peter mentioned, we are bound to get caught and suffer for our actions.

His point then is that we should rather suffer for Christ than for something so inappropriate.

Also, realizing the severity of the first three categories mentioned – those of murderers, thieves, and evildoers, it is notable to see the fourth item in the list, that of busybodies. Most of us would agree that being a murderer is a really bad thing. Thieves are a scourge in all societies, and there are usually strict penalties when one is caught stealing. Likewise, the term “evildoer” isn’t the type of label most people would want to be

associated with. There are plenty of modern terms we use to describe a person who is a general evildoer, none of which are light and flowery.

But here Peter adds in something which carries the same weight, and yet which is as common as birds chirping in the morning – busybodies. We tend to dismiss this type of person as someone not to be trusted and to stay away from, but they don't receive prison sentences, nor do we have colorful metaphors we direct towards them. From a biblical perspective though, this type of behavior is held on the same level as murder!

This is because being a busybody destroys the lives of those it touches. It infects and ruins congregations, and it never accomplishes anything but unhappiness and disaster. The next time you are tempted to mention a private matter, get involved in someone else's business, or interfere in some unwanted way, remember that Jesus will hold you to account for your actions. Determine now to be the epitome of ethical behavior in all of your dealings.

Lord Jesus, we pray that you keep us from the willful desire to get involved in areas that are none of our business. Should we hear a busybody in action, please don't let us get sucked into their poisonous trap, but rather keep us from them so that harmony may prevail. This is a tough area and we pray that You keep us safely from it. Amen.

Yet if *anyone suffers* as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter. 1 Peter 4:16

Peter now turns from the negative traits that a person may suffer for, and to the highest and most glorious state for which a person might suffer. To contrast his thought from the previous verse, he says, "Yet if *anyone suffers* as a Christian."

This is the third and last time that the title "Christian" is used in Scripture. The other two occurrences are in Acts 11:26 and Acts 26:28. The word simply signifies a follower of Christ. Countless commentaries state that the term "Christian" is one which was considered lowly and derogatory, even disgracefully used by others. This is an unfounded claim. The first use of the word states –

"Then Barnabas departed for Tarsus to seek Saul. ²⁶ And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people. And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch."

There is nothing to suggest that the term here is used exclusively by those outside of the body of believers, or the other only by those inside the body. It is simply a statement of fact. Just as today a Presbyterian is identified as such, and just as a Baptist is identified as such. It is true that those outside may have used the term in a negative way – “Look at those holy-roller ‘Christians’ over there.” However, to a believer in the Greek-speaking world, the name is the only logical and proper title.

The word Christos is transliterated into “Christ,” and it has the same meaning as “Messiah.” Both mean “Anointed One.” As the majority of believers moved from Jews to Gentiles, as would be the case in Antioch, the title “Christian,” or “Christ-follower,” would naturally and gladly be used. There would be no hint of derision, but only a welcome bearing of the word.

For those on the outside who were not at enmity with the believers, it would be a name to be used without either derision or exaltation. And for those who disliked believers, it would be a title of derision. This is how any name is given. For a family – “Those ‘Garretts’ are a bunch of yahoos.” For a nationality, “I really respect those Americans.” For a type of car – “A ‘Ford?’ No way Jose! That means ‘Found On Road, Dead.’ I would never own a ‘Ford!’”

Peter, acknowledging this now commonly used term (the term “Christ,” which leads naturally to the use of “Christian,” is used almost 600 times in the New Testament) to instruct his audience. Remember that Peter is writing to Jews, but they are Jews of the dispersion. Therefore, the commonly used language would have been Greek. Therefore, writing in Greek, and using the term “Christian,” are in perfect harmony with that thought. And so, he says, “let him not be ashamed.”

One can see very clearly that the title was, in fact, also being used as a term of derision by those outside in his words. These Jews certainly were proud of the title, but family, friends, and other opponents used it in a negative way – just as Jews are proud to be Jews, but those outside will call them “Jews” in a negative way. Peter lets them know that the title should not be borne with any sense of shame at all. Rather, he says, “but let him glorify God in this matter.”

His words tell the believers that they should take what may be another’s form of derision and to turn it around and make it a point of honor – as if wearing it as a cloak which all could see and decide upon. In their conduct, in their attitude, and in their allegiance to Christ, they would exalt and bring glory to God. Each person who saw them as “Christians” would have to decide which way they would speak the term – as derogatory

or as a compliment – but all would see that the intent of these believers was to bring glory to God.

Life application: Here is the account of when the apostles were beaten by the ruling leaders of their time –

“And they agreed with him, and when they had called for the apostles and beaten *them*, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. ⁴¹ So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name. ⁴² And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus *as* the Christ.”

-Acts 5:40-42

The apostles were called into the ruling council and strictly warned to not speak in Jesus’ name. They were beaten for their witness, and then were warned to not speak in the name of Jesus in the future.

One would think that facing the highest court in the land, and being threatened by those who sat there, would scare these men. Additionally, one would think that being beaten would make them timid about speaking out in the future. Instead, it says they departed “rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.”

The next sentence then proclaims that they “did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.” If you think it through clearly, what is there to worry about if your faith is sound? We proclaim Jesus as Lord and that we believe His promises. One of them is that we are given eternal life through His name. Whatever little trouble we face in this world, if this promise is true (and it is!), then every trial and every pain is simply a temporary matter.

Jesus Christ has prevailed, and we really do have a sure hope. If you suffer for His name, don’t be ashamed. Instead, glorify God because of it.

We know in our hearts that Your word is true, and that Jesus Christ is Lord. O God, please help us to understand this in a rational way and never to forget that with this confession comes the promise of eternal life. What can man do to us when You are at our side? We are safe and secure in the hands of our Creator! Amen.

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? 1 Peter 4:17

Peter has been speaking of suffering – either for doing good or evil. Now he speaks of the consequences of our earthly conduct which leads to suffering if it is because of evil doing, meaning judgment. And so, he begins with, “For the time *has come* for judgment.” The word translated as “for” gives the sense of “because,” or “for it is.” More literally translated then, the words say, “...because it is the time of the beginning of the judgment” (YLT).

Those who die in Christ will be judged by Christ. Our conduct in this life is what defines what our judgment will be like. There are no second chances, and there is nothing that can be amended after we die. What we do now is what our judgment will be based on. Peter then continues with, “to begin at the house of God.”

In other words, God’s judgment is directed first towards his own people who are in His own household, meaning those who are in Christ and who are sons of God through adoption. Paul speaks in the same manner in his epistles concerning the household of God, such as –

“...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

Paul speaks of the household of God in 1 Corinthians 3:16, and etc. It must be noted that Scripture speaks of one such household, not two. The lie of hyperdispensationalism is that God is giving out two different gospels to two different groups of people, and which then leads to two different households. Scripture does not teach this false doctrine. There is one gospel and those who believe it are adopted into God’s one household.

Peter says that judgment will begin at this household of God. This is a judgment, as clearly revealed in Scripture, not for salvation or condemnation, but for rewards and losses. This is then made evident by his next words when speaking of unbelievers. He says, “and if *it begins* with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?”

The obvious first meaning of this is that those who are saved cannot lose their salvation. Judgment will be rendered upon God’s people. There is one end, and it is the same for all of them, despite the individual judgment being different in terms of rewards and losses (see Paul’s words of 1 Corinthians 3:9-15 & 2 Corinthians 5:9-11).

There is then another end for those who are not believers. It is a judgment for condemnation. Peter's words then take that premise and basically say, "If there is condemnation for all who do not believe, then how great will be the judgment upon believers. They have believed and yet they have either lived properly or they have squandered their time here. God is not a cosmic pushover, and we need to be ready to face this awesome and terrifying moment."

What Peter has done is repeat a concept which reaches back into the Old Testament – that judgment begins at the house of God. In Ezekiel, during the time of the destruction of the first temple in Jerusalem at the time of the Babylonian exile, we read this –

To the others He said in my hearing, "Go after him through the city and kill; do not let your eye spare, nor have any pity. ⁶ Utterly slay old *and* young men, maidens and little children and women; but do not come near anyone on whom *is* the mark; and begin at My sanctuary." So they began with the elders who *were* before the temple. ⁷ Then He said to them, "Defile the temple, and fill the courts with the slain. Go out!" And they went out and killed in the city.

⁸ So it was, that while they were killing them, I was left *alone*; and I fell on my face and cried out, and said, "Ah, Lord GOD! Will You destroy all the remnant of Israel in pouring out Your fury on Jerusalem?"

⁹ Then He said to me, "The iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah *is* exceedingly great, and the land is full of bloodshed, and the city full of perversity; for they say, 'The LORD has forsaken the land, and the LORD does not see!' ¹⁰ And as for Me also, My eye will neither spare, nor will I have pity, *but* I will recompense their deeds on their own head." Ezekiel 9:5-10

God didn't spare those who sinned against him then; He didn't spare them at the destruction of the second temple. Further, those who were saved were still exiled from the land because they were a part of God's corporate judgment on Israel. The severity of God's judgment is not to be overlooked or dismissed. What we do has real consequences which must be considered. All will be presented before God for judgment.

Life application: What would make anyone think that the God, who is unchanging and perfect in all His ways, would suddenly do "something different?" Rather, God has judged, and He promises to continue to judge all wickedness. And His judgment begins at His house. The religious leaders who are filled with bloodshed, greed, and perversity will receive both the first and also the strictest judgment. The Bible records that "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Hebrews 10:31). Let us prepare

ourselves for that great Day when we stand before the Lord now. Let us live by faith, and let us live in obedience to His word.

Lord God, You are filled with love and compassion, but You are also Holy and righteous. You cannot tolerate sin and we know You will judge all wickedness. We pray for the faithless religious leaders – that they will repent and turn to You before they are swept away. May You be exalted by their conversion to the truth of who You are, so that those they lead will also come to a saving knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

Now

**“If the righteous one is scarcely saved,
Where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?” 1 Peter 4:18**

Peter now explains his words concerning judgment beginning at the house of God. The house of God means those who have come to Christ. They have an imputed righteousness which covers their sins. However, there will still be a judgment for reward and loss. In this, the things which are of no value will be burned up (see 1 Corinthians 3:11-15). As Paul says there, and as Peter agrees with here, “If anyone’s work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.”

In complete agreement with Paul, Peter says, “If the righteous one is scarcely saved...”

Peter’s words are a direct quote, word for word, from the Greek translation of Proverbs 11:31. The Hebrew version reads –

“If the righteous will be recompensed on the earth,
How much more the ungodly and the sinner.”

Paul says that in the judgment there will be loss, “but he himself will be saved.” Peter says that “the righteous one is scarcely saved.” What does being “scarcely saved” mean? It means he is...? Anyone? Yes, you get an A+! He is “saved.” The doctrine of eternal salvation is, once again, explicitly taught in both Paul’s and Peter’s words. There is no verse which says a person will go from being “in Christ” to “out of Christ.” Once one is in Christ, they are covered in Christ. He has moved from Adam to Christ and the change is complete. He is deemed “righteous.” From that point on, he is saved.

In contrast to this being “scarcely saved,” Peter then says that if this is so, “Where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?” Here, there are two terms, almost being used synonymously. First are the “ungodly.” The word signifies “lacking due respect.” It is a

person who doesn't care about God, and he shuns him in his life's walk. The second is the "sinner." This is a person who misses the mark God has set out for salvation. He falls short of God's approving standard and is never converted from his state. He remains in fallen Adam.

So, the question is asked, "Where will these type of people appear?" The answer is, "The ungodly and the sinner will appear for judgment leading not to salvation, but to condemnation." The thought is obvious on the surface. In theology, 1+1 will inevitably equal 2.

A person who is a sinner is a person who has his sins imputed to him. A person who is not a sinner does not mean he will not sin, but that his sin is no longer imputed to him. Paul speaks of such a person in Romans 4:8 and 5:13. He further speaks of him in 2 Corinthians 5:19. In Christ, God is no longer imputing trespasses to the people who have come to Him. Rather, those who come to Christ "become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Life application: What is implied here is that there is a fixed and firm standard of righteousness and ungodliness. This standard wasn't unknown to either Solomon, who recorded the proverb or Peter who used it. They both speak with the knowledge that "the righteous" are in one category and the "ungodly and the sinner" are in another. If they speak in this manner, then they must know what the dividing line is. As both of these men participated in the Day of Atonement ritual, they would certainly have reasoned out that their righteousness didn't come from them. If it did, they wouldn't have needed a Day of Atonement at all.

Peter, unlike Solomon, saw the fulfillment of the Day of Atonement in the Person of Jesus Christ. He understood that the righteousness of God is imputed, not through the blood of bulls and goats, but through the substitutionary death of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the propitiation for our sins and is the dividing line of righteousness the Bible records. If you have called on Jesus as Lord (see Romans 10:9, 10), you will be saved (even if "scarcely" due to a failure to grow in sanctification). If you are trusting in anything else under the heavens for your righteousness, you will appear – not in heaven and God's glorious presence – but in hell and eternally separated from the goodness which was offered to you as a gift. Choose life, choose heaven...choose Christ!

Lord, we know that in us is nothing good, but through Jesus we are declared righteous. Thank You for canceling our infinitely large debt and covering us with His righteousness.

Thank You for the garments of white that He alone has given us. Glory to You, O God – thank You for Jesus! Amen.

Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator. 1 Peter 4:19

Peter now sums up his thought concerning suffering. He has been speaking of it in various ways, but in the immediate context, he has been referring to his words of verse 4:12 concerning the fiery trial which may try believers. In such trials and sufferings, he says, “Therefore.”

This is the hint that his words will sum up what has been said, and they will provide an explanation and admonition for the believer who suffers concerning his situation. The admonition begins with “let those who suffer...” If a believer, and if suffering for your faith, Peter will instruct what should be done about that situation. However, before giving the rest of his admonition, he says, “according to the will of God.”

This is the explanation. It is suffering which is “according to the will of God.” In other words, if one suffers, it may or may not be a noble thing. If a Christian gets in trouble with the law and winds up in prison, his suffering is a self-inflicted wound. It wasn’t according to the will of God if he disobeyed the law of the land. Peter is referring to suffering reproach in the name of Christ (4:14, for example).

Understanding this, if any believers are suffering according to God’s will, let them “commit their souls to Him.” The words “to Him” are inserted, but they carry the correct meaning. Believers are to take the suffering of their souls and commit it to God who is the One who sees all things, knows all things, and understands the reason for the suffering. As it is for His glory, then He will attend to it according to His infinite wisdom. This is certain, because the word which means “let them commit” is the same word Jesus uttered on the cross when He committed His spirit to the Father. It means to set before, or present.

So, believers are to likewise present their souls to God “in doing good.” Even in suffering, the believer is to continue on in a state of doing good. Thus, he continues his testimony, both before those who need Jesus, and before the Father who will judge all actions according to the state in which those actions were conducted. There should be a stress on doing good to ensure that it shows forth the act in order to convict those who see it, and also to continue to glorify God.

The word translated as “doing good” is found only here. It signifies not just doing good at something, but the attitude behind it – which is that it originates from faith. It is a surrendering of the individual to God while actively practicing that which is proper. This is because the act is directed to Him “as to a faithful Creator.”

As the Creator, He knows what is best for His creatures. As He is loving, He would not allow those creatures who are faithful, and who acknowledge Him, to suffer without a reason. Therefore, in suffering for what is good, there will be a time when the reason for what has occurred is made manifest. The job of the believer is to accept the suffering as His will, and to continue to bring Him glory through it.

Life application: If we go skiing and become paralyzed from a broken neck, we commit our soul to whoever will tend to us for the duration of our years. But if we suffer according to the will of God, for any reason, we can confidently commit our soul to Him because of our good deed – whatever it may be.

And what else can we do but rejoice at the suffering we experience? What occurred was done according to His will and was thus ordained by Him for the benefit of

- 1) ourselves (see Romans 8:28),
- 2) for those who participate in the process, and
- 3) for the sake of the gospel.

As Peter says, God is a “faithful Creator.” Knowing this allows us to understand that what we face is serving a good and logical purpose. So be content with this knowledge. The instance of the skiing accident can be used by God as well for His great purposes. Those who have been in accidents which resulted in physical trauma have used their disabilities to touch thousands and even millions of others.

A classic example is Joni Eareckson Tada who was paralyzed in a swimming accident. Her suffering through pains and trials is great, but her ministry has tended to multitudes in the name of Christ. Be content in your suffering such as she is, and as so many others have been. Remember that our loving Creator is working out His plan in a glorious way.

Lord God, when we suffer – whether it is from another’s hand or from our own aches and pains of this earthly body – may You use our suffering in a way which will bring You great glory. We commit our souls to You, knowing that Your plan is far greater than the one we

*would otherwise follow. Thank You for using us in the way that is appropriate to You!
Amen.*

CHAPTER 5

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: 1 Peter 5:1

Peter now begins the final chapter of the epistle with an exhortation to the leadership. Remember that he is writing to “the pilgrims of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia (1:1). Therefore, his words are being addressed to leadership throughout these regions. How many individual congregations are addressed is unknown, but the number is less important than that he is writing to them all. As the epistle is now in Scripture, the exhortation continues to all congregations.

Understanding this, he says, “The elders who are among you I exhort.” The word “elders” generally speaks of those who are older in years, but from that comes the idea of one who is seasoned in judgment. And so, the expression signifies one who is wise and thus worthy of leadership. Because of what he says in the coming verses, it is obviously referring to those considered as leaders of each congregation. Further, these leadership positions are restricted to the masculine only, as is consistent throughout the New Testament.

From there, he says, “I who am a fellow elder.” Peter does not place himself above these men at all. Rather, the word he uses, and which is found only here in the New Testament, signifies one who is on the same level of authority as those he is writing to. This argues against any notion of primacy which is later imposed on the person of Peter by Roman Catholicism. It is true that he is writing in an authoritative manner, but that is from a position of experience, not specifically positional authority – as is evidenced by the word he uses here.

In support of that, he then says, “and a witness of the sufferings of Christ.” In the Greek, there is an article before “Christ.” A literal rendering would be “of the sufferings of the Christ.” Peter is making a point that the Head of the faith, in His position as the Head, suffered for His flock. He wants them to fully grasp the significance of this point.

Further, Peter has an experiential knowledge of the Person and work of the Lord. As he says, he is a “witness” to what Christ endured. The word is *martus*, literally translated as “martyr.” Its use is more than having seen as bystander beholding events, but as one who was then to bear witness to what he saw.

In the law, a witness confirmed a fact, such as in a trial. If that person was a false-witness, then the same penalty that would have been imposed upon the accused would fall upon him. In this, there is the sense that the witness bears the responsibility of faithful testimony – even to his own harm. Thus, a witness, or martyr, must be willing to hold fast to his confession, even when it means that he will suffer for it.

In his witness, he is in a position to express what is intended by the Lord for doctrine and conduct. He was called by Christ, was with Him throughout His ministry, and saw all that he had endured through it, even to the end where the sufferings took on the full and final purpose of atoning for sin in a substitutionary manner – Christ died for His flock (as will be noted by Peter in his words to come).

The obvious thought, then, is that Peter is setting a baseline for the elders he is writing to. “The Christ was faithful to us. I am faithfully conveying what I know about this. Now, it is your turn to be faithful in your witness, carrying this knowledge on to those you lead.”

Finally, the verse finishes with, “and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed.” If Christ’s suffering and death was all there was, it would be a great story to tell others, but it would have no personal meaning beyond the act itself, except for the few that were personally connected to the event. However, Christ didn’t merely suffer and die. He did so for all others, and then He rose again in glory – for all others.

The event takes on a universal significance. Any and all who desire to partake of the glory that will be revealed may do so because of the glory that was revealed. Peter’s words shout out, “I may die (be a martyr) for my witness, but there is a glory which lies ahead for me. I am already a partaker of it, even if it is not yet fully realized. You too have this same hope. As a partaker along with me, you are to now hold fast to it and be a witness (a martyr) for what you know is true as well!”

It is a beautiful expression of Peter’s desire that the truth of Christ be properly conveyed through living and continued testimony. Christ has prevailed! You too are to stand fast in your witness of this fact!

Life application: The Roman Catholic Church has held for eons that Peter was the first pope, and that since him there has been a line of succession leading down to the current day. They claim the title and right to their authority because of this. However, this is nowhere indicated in Scripture, and just the opposite is true. Peter was one of a crowd of elders, fallible and completely dependent on his Lord.

Secondly, Peter is termed in Galatians 2:8 as the “apostle to the circumcision” (meaning the Jews). Four times it is Paul who is called the apostle or teacher to the gentiles. As the modern church is made up of a vast majority of gentile believers, the reasoning given for Peter being their first pope is faulty.

Thirdly, it was James – the Lord’s brother, who was the recorded leader of the early church. This is documented in Acts 15 and is quite clear in its content. Having set aside this notion, we read here his exhortation.

Peter speaks to these fellow elders and reinforces their faith by stating that he was a personal witness to the sufferings of Christ. They are walking by faith and not by sight, whereas Peter actually has sight added to his walk. This was a valuable assurance, and it remains so today. Because of Peter’s witness of both the sufferings and then of the resurrection of Jesus, he can now – with complete confidence – tell his fellow elders of the glory that will be revealed. The Lord rose! The Lord is victorious! The promises of the Lord are completely reliable! Peter went to his death at the hands of the Romans for what he knew to be true.

Lord God, what a blessed assurance we possess in Christ Jesus! We have the written testimony of His sufferings from first-hand witnesses. They, in turn, were corroborated by other witnesses. And down through the ages, the line of truth has remained because of the word we have been given. We can, with full assurance, call on Jesus as Lord. Because of this, we will be partakers of the glory to come! Amen.

Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; 1 Peter 5:2

Peter now instructs the elders to “Shepherd the flock of God.” The word is fitting. It means to tend to the flock. It is inclusive of all aspects of caring for the flock – feeding them, leading them, protecting them, bringing them to safety, and so on. It is the responsibility of the shepherd to do all of these things for those in his care.

It is what Jesus told Peter to do in John 21. Using two different words, He said for Peter to first *boskó*, or feed His sheep. He then used the same word Peter uses now, *poimainó*, or shepherd. Then, a third time, Jesus told Peter to *boskó*, or feed, His sheep. Peter is probably looking back on that exchange and considering it while writing to the elders now. Shepherding is something he was commanded to do by the Lord, and now he is passing on that important precept for those who will also care for those under them. As he says, it is inclusive of all in the flock “which is among you.”

Each elder is in a position of influence. Whatever size of the flock, that is what the Lord has given them for their care. Thus, in this capacity he says they are to be “serving as overseers.” The Greek is a single word which signifies to look upon, or to focus upon with concerned interest. The elders are to actively look at the state of each person and know what is going on in their lives.

After this, Peter says, “not by compulsion but willingly.” The words are well translated. An elder shouldn’t have to be forced to do these things, but rather he should – of his own accord – desire to tend to, and look after, those under him. To do less would bring about an unhappy relationship between the two, and eventually the flock he is to care for will wander away.

The verse then finishes with, “not for dishonest gain but eagerly.” Peter uses an adverb found only here in Scripture, but it stems from the same word Paul uses as an adjective in 1 Timothy 3:8 and Titus 1:7 in exactly the same context. It means to be eager for base gain. Rather than being eager for getting rich, the elders are to be eager to care for others, watching over them and ensuring their needs are met first.

Life application: The qualities of an elder are to be the qualities of a shepherd –

- 1) A shepherd feeds his sheep with their necessary food. He leads them, but he also searches for those who stray, prods along the slow pokes, and is tender to his sheep. He spends an enormous amount of time with his flock and gets very little in return for his efforts. He works under the blazing sun of the day and through the cold of the night. He cares for them in the rain and during the snows that fall. But he also looks at the magnificent stars placed in the heavens and enjoys the smells and sounds of the wilderness – fresh grass, howling animals, birds alone and birds in flocks. A shepherd takes time to appreciate the created majesty around his flock and thus learns to appreciate his flock even more.
- 2) He is to oversee the affairs of his flock willingly and cheerfully. If a pastor is in a denomination with a hierarchy and he is assigned a cruddy location, for example, he is to accept his duties as having been directed by God, to accomplish them for His glory, and not out of a grudging sense of getting to the next pastorate.
- 3) Finally, he is to work according to the strict principles of honesty and for the fair wage he is allowed, never looking for inappropriate gain. Any pastor or evangelist who promises his flock “a financial blessing” in return for sending him money is dishonest and should be immediately rejected as unqualified and untrustworthy.

Lord God, we can imagine how difficult it is to cheerfully shepherd a flock in the church, and so we pray that You give us the desire to be good to our leaders in the church, and to support them in every way which will encourage them. May we be examples to the other believers around us so that they will feel the same way about this. May our actions in this bring them the comfort and relief they need. Amen.

... nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock;

1 Peter 5:3

Peter continues with his words of proper conduct for the elders that he is addressing. In this verse, he adds to what he has already said with, “nor as being lords.” The translation here is better stated as, “not lording it.” One who is a lord over another may or may not be heavy-handed. The intent of Peter’s words is that elders, though appointed over others, are not to act in a demeaning or tyrannical way towards those under them.

The phrase Peter uses, which is translated as “those entrusted to you,” is literally “over the lots.” In other words, it is an assigned portion. When Israel went into the land of Canaan, the land was divided by lots. The Lord oversaw the division (see Proverbs 16:33), so that everything was left to His providence, not mere chance. The same is true with each person who falls under the authority of an elder. The Lord provides the flock according to His wisdom.

For those who are so entrusted to an elder, Peter then says that rather than lording it over them, they should be “examples to the flock.” It is the same word for “flock” that he just used in the previous verse. This is its fifth and last use in Scripture. Jesus first used it in Luke 12:32. From there, Paul twice used it in almost the same way that Peter uses it now in Acts 20 –

“Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. ²⁹ For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. ³⁰ Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.” Acts 20:28-30

Paul’s words were to those at Ephesus. Both Acts 18 and 19 make it clear that the gospel Paul preached went to both Jew and Gentile and it was received by both. There, the church at Ephesus was established as such. Peter’s words reflect the same gospel, and the same terminology, concerning the body of believers as Paul. There is one flock and

one gospel which goes to both Jew and Gentile, and the elders of this body are given charge over all under them for care and right doctrine.

This then shows, once again, that the doctrine of dividing the church into two gospels, one for Jew and one for Gentile, is both false and heretical.

Life application: Power, even a little bit of it, is an intoxicant. When people come up to a pastor, week after week seeking resolutions to their problems, bringing compliments on a great sermon, or seeking favor within the church, it can certainly lead to a feeling of superiority over those under them. The larger the church, the more susceptible to this one will often become.

But it is not limited to larger churches. Congregations of 30 or 40 people can often be at the most risk of falling prey to charismatic leaders. The attendees willingly give up their identity and are led down the paths of evil conjured up by a devil with a stronger will. This was the case with cults such as Heaven's Gate, the Branch Davidians, etc.

Congregants need to constantly evaluate the direction of the pastor to ensure he is sticking to the Bible and following the admonitions laid out for his position. Pastors likewise need to evaluate themselves and determine if they have strayed from what is sound and appropriate. Having a faithful confidant, who will be willing to call to account any diversion from the right path, is useful and wise.

The Old Testament kings had prophets and seers who would openly speak to them about what was right, to hopefully direct them back from wrong choices. Leading a congregation is a sacred trust, and the Lord holds those in authority to a higher standard of judgment. So, watch your elders, and help keep them humble while honoring them for their faithful service.

Lord, we certainly wouldn't attend the churches we are at without respecting our pastors. We find them to be faithful leaders, and so we stay and faithfully attend. Today, we pray for those given to lead us. Keep their hearts humble and their eyes focused on You. Keep them faithfully proclaiming Your word. May our congregations be lights in the darkness of the communities around us. Amen.

...and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away. 1 Peter 5:4

Peter is speaking to the elders (5:1), and he is continuing his exhortation to them to properly shepherd the flock which is entrusted to them. He now finishes this thought by saying, “and when the Chief Shepherd appears.”

It is a passive aorist participle which would be more correctly translated as “And the Chief Shepherd having been revealed...” It signifies that He is currently concealed from us, but at some point, that will change. The veil which conceals Him will be removed, and He will be presented in all of His glory. It is a verse which implicitly tells us that “visions” or “visitations” of Jesus at this time are untrue. Christ is, at present, not revealed to His flock.

Peter’s words reveal that Christ is, like the elders he is addressing, a Shepherd over His flock. This is already seen in several ways elsewhere in the use of the term “Shepherd” when speaking of Him, or “flock” when speaking of those under Him. The New Testament assigns three different adjectives to Jesus’ title as the “Shepherd” –

- Good Shepherd – John 10:11
- Great Shepherd – Hebrews 13:20
- Chief Shepherd – 1 Peter 5:4

Today Peter calls him the “Chief” Shepherd. The word used in Greek is *archipóimén*. The prefix *archó* signifies to reign or rule. Peter is using this term to show the preeminent position of Christ Jesus in the role of shepherd. He has done this because, in verses 1-3, he has been addressing elders or “shepherds” of individual churches.

Those elders who are shepherds are obviously subordinate to Christ. But more, Peter never goes beyond that, to imply some type of hierarchy where he is a chief among them. There is simply the Chief Shepherd and all other shepherds after him. Hence, there is no hierarchy. Peter notes to them that at the appearing of Christ, the Chief Shepherd, “you will receive the crown of glory.”

This ties directly back to verse 5:1 where he said, “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.” Peter is reminding them that their trials, faithful care of the flock, and patient endurance was a small thing compared to what lies ahead. Christ suffered, but he then entered His glory. So shall it be for those who are in Christ.

The term “crown of glory” does not necessarily mean that shepherds will wear a literal crown based on their office. Rather, it could simply be a metaphorical way of describing

the glory which will adorn them. A crown is a symbol of honor and achievement, but there is no need to take the instances of the word “crown” given in the New Testament epistles as literal crowns that people will walk around with.

Whether the crowns are literal, or simply stand as metaphors of the state of glory which lies ahead, Peter says that it is a “glory that does not fade away.” Here he uses a word, *amarantinos*, which is unique to this verse in the New Testament. It substantially comes from *aramanths*, a type of flower which was used in ancient times to refer to that which never fades away. HELPS Word Studies notes, “The *amaranth* flower has incredible resiliency (ability to endure). It easily revives when moistened, even after it is uprooted.”

Thus, it was symbolic of perpetuity and immortality. The suffix Peter applies to the word connects the elders to this unfading glory of God which is bestowed upon them.

Life application: What Christ promises His redeemed is something eternal and unfading. All of our earthly treasures will fade, but such will not be the case concerning what lies ahead. For those leaders within the church who are faithful, something much greater will replace all that they have suffered through or been blessed with. If you are a shepherd of a flock, be careful to lead faithfully – the Lord is watching and will reward or judge your actions.

We look to You as our Chief Shepherd, Lord Jesus. Our eyes and our hearts are set upon the joy of the day when You appear and lead us to our eternal dwelling. Until that day, may our earthly shepherds faithfully execute their duties so that You will be glorified by them. Praises be to You, now and forever! Amen.

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.” 1 Peter 5:5

Peter now turns from the elders to those younger in the congregation. As he says, “Likewise you younger people.” This, however, can include those younger in the faith, even if older in years. The word signifies young and youthful, but also new. Rather than new in quality, it is something new in time. This would be inclusive of all who are not elders then. Even those in subordinate offices, such as deacons and the like.

Peter says to them to “submit yourselves to *your* elders.” This is the same word that was used in 5:1 when speaking of the elders, and so it is a confirming note that this is

referring to all who are younger in the faith in relation to those who are more mature. Submission to them does not mean blind obedience, but a respectful attitude concerning their authority and the position they hold. Paul, when writing to Timothy, said that those in such positions are to “be counted worthy of double honor” (1 Timothy 5:17). This is the general idea that Peter now also puts forth.

Peter then goes further by saying, “Yes, all of *you* be submissive to one another.” This is directed to all, from the elders down to the newest member in the congregation. There should be a humble spirit which permeates all. Those of wealth should not assume they have a more important position than those who are poor. And those who hold high secular office are to be submissive even to those who clean bathrooms. Paul speaks in the same way several times, such as in the following verses –

“...giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ submitting to one another in the fear of God.” Ephesians 5:20, 21

“*Let nothing be done* through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. ⁴ Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.” Philippians 2:3, 4

Peter then says to all to “be clothed with humility.” The word translated as “clothed” is found only here in Scripture. It signifies girding oneself. Figuratively then, it signifies the apron which was worn as a badge of servitude, even that worn by a slave. Peter must have been thinking of the last supper as he wrote out these words –

“Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God, ⁴ rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself. ⁵ After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples’ feet, and to wipe *them* with the towel with which He was girded.” John 13:3-5

He had seen God’s Messiah do exactly what he is now telling his reader to do. The scholar Bengel writes of these words, “Put on and wrap yourselves about with humility, so that the covering of humility cannot possibly be stripped from you.”

Finally, Peter says –

“for

‘God resists the proud,
But gives grace to the humble.’”

Like in Chapter 4, Peter goes to the wisdom of the Proverbs. This is the same quote that was made in James 4:6. It is a quote from Proverbs 3:34. The idea is that by dropping one’s prideful attitude, and by pursuing the course laid out by God, rather than that of this world, God’s grace can and will be fully realized. This thought looks to the working of the Spirit in the person, when he is walking as he should, in a covenant relationship with God. Such a walk includes walking in humility before others, dropping all sense of pride, and acting in the same humble manner as Christ did by acting in service of others.

Life application: All of us are to submit to one another and give honor and respect in all directions. We should keep in mind that not everyone is going to follow this advice, and many people, due to a lack of knowing the Bible, would think this a foreign idea. However, submission has to start somewhere. Because of this, it is up to those who know God’s word, and have taken Peter’s advice to heart to be the initiators.

Submission doesn’t mean allowing oneself to be abused or misused by others, but it does include overlooking slight offenses and unintentional breeches of courtesy towards one another. In the quote from Proverbs, we see the reason for this congenial and meek attitude – it is because God resists the proud. He does this actively. Pride is the great destroyer of fellowship with Him, and between us and others. When pride steps into the room, a joyous and happy atmosphere quickly fades away.

In contrast, God gives grace to the humble. This means that God’s unmerited favor rests on those who are humble and contrite in spirit. We still fall short of His merit; thus, the term “grace” is used. But God notices our attitude and lavishes His caring and guiding love upon us when we act in this manner towards others. If we receive it from acting this way in a sympathetic environment, how much more in an unfriendly one! Be humble, submit to one another, and love the Lord your God with all your heart. God attends to those who act in such a way.

Lord Jesus, you know how hard it is for us to be submissive at times, especially when it involves someone who is less than kind in his demeanor. But God, give us grace to act in the way Your word tells us to act. May our lives be a testament to the grace shown us at the cross and the grace You continue to show us as we act properly towards those around us. Amen.

Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, 1 Peter 5:6

Peter just quoted the proverb which noted that God resists the proud, but He gives grace to the humble. With that thought in mind, he says, “Therefore.” In other words, “Because of what Scripture clearly teaches, pay heed to the words I now give.” From that thought, he says to his audience, “humble yourselves.”

If God gives grace to the humble, then it is appropriate that believers should humble themselves. But more, he continues with, “under the mighty hand of God.” Peter had just stated that “all of *you* be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility” (5:5). Now, his words of this verse imply that being submissive to one another is to humble oneself under God’s mighty hand.

In other words, what we do before others in regard to humility is seen as an act of humility before God. The two are not separate, but are rather tied together. God is aware of our actions and His hand of power is there with us through our acts of humility. Peter then notes the purpose of referring to His mighty hand by saying, “that He may exalt you in due time.”

If there is some supposed shame in one humbling himself before others, there will be a grant of exaltation by God at some point for that same act. Jesus’ words, repeated several times in the gospels under various circumstances, were surely on Peter’s mind as he wrote out these words. One such time is found in Luke 14–

So He told a parable to those who were invited, when He noted how they chose the best places, saying to them: ⁸ “When you are invited by anyone to a wedding feast, do not sit down in the best place, lest one more honorable than you be invited by him; ⁹ and he who invited you and him come and say to you, ‘Give place to this man,’ and then you begin with shame to take the lowest place. ¹⁰ But when you are invited, go and sit down in the lowest place, so that when he who invited you comes he may say to you, ‘Friend, go up higher.’ Then you will have glory in the presence of those who sit at the table with you. ¹¹ For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.” Luke 14:11

Life application: God *resists the proud*. By demonstrating pride, we alienate ourselves from the Creator. He is the glorious One who set the stars in place, made bumblebees, and gave each of us our abilities. All things are from Him and therefore all credit is due Him; pride is excluded.

God *gives grace to the humble*. One should humble himself under the mighty hand of God. When we humble ourselves before the Creator, He lavishes on us unmerited favor; His grace. However, He doesn't do this when we stand and act pious in front of others as a mere show. Instead, He searches our hearts and minds and He extends His grace to those who truly walk in a humble and contrite manner, recognizing His sovereignty in all things.

When we humble ourselves in His presence, we not only receive grace for the day, but a future blessing is also set aside for us. There is a glorious day coming when the trumpet shall sound, and all the saints of the ages will be translated. At this time, we will stand at the judgment seat of Christ and receive our rewards and losses based on our conduct in Christ. May we be about His business until that glorious (Oh yes! That glorious) day!

Lord Jesus, look on us with the favor promised so long ago through the prophet Isaiah – “For all those things My hand has made, And all those things exist,” Says the LORD. ‘But on this one will I look: On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, And who trembles at My word.’” May You be glorified as we walk humbly and in contrition before You. Amen.

...casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you. 1 Peter 5:7

Peter now makes somewhat of a paraphrase of the Greek version of Psalm 55:22. The Hebrew version reads –

“Cast your burden on the LORD,
And He shall sustain you;
He shall never permit the righteous to be moved.”

In this, Peter completes the thought which began in the previous verse by saying, “casting all your care upon Him.” The word translated as “care” signifies a part separated from the whole, and thus “anxiety.” It is that which divides and fractures a person's being into parts.

The translation “casting” gives an active and ongoing sense, but the word is an aorist participle, and thus “having cast” is more appropriate. It signifies one act which is effective for all time. One takes the whole of his life's anxiety and casts it upon Christ. From this point, the anxiety should rightly no longer be a concern.

Peter then explains the thought by saying, “for He cares for you.” Here, the word “care” is different than “cares” in the first clause. It signifies being an object of care. One could say, “because He takes an interest in you,” or “because He is concerned about you.”

Vincent’s Word Studies notes that “The sixth and seventh verses should be taken together: Humble yourselves and cast all your anxiety. Pride is at the root of most of our anxiety. To human pride it is humiliating to cast everything upon another and be cared for.”

Understanding this, the whole thought was presented by Jesus in Matthew 6. Peter is, once again, thinking about the words of the Lord for those who were under law, and he is now showing that Christ – the fulfillment of the law – is the One to whom our anxiety is to be cast –

²⁵“Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? ²⁷ Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?

²⁸ “So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; ²⁹ and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. ³⁰ Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, *will He* not much more *clothe* you, O you of little faith?

³¹ “Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ ³² For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. ³³ But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. ³⁴ Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day *is* its own trouble.” Matthew 6:25-34

Life application: Peter remembers the tender care the Lord showed for him after the resurrection. Jesus restored him even though he had three times denied Him on the night of the crucifixion. Peter, as well as anyone else, could honestly say that Jesus truly cares for the people of the world. While writing today’s words, he may have also thought of another time when Jesus spoke to Israel –

“Come to Me, all *you* who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.²⁹ Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.³⁰ For My yoke *is* easy and My burden is light.”

-Matthew 11:28-30

These words echo down through the ages. If you are hurting, troubled, anxious, and distraught over life in general, or overburdened with the difficulties around you, Jesus tells you where to find rest. Likewise, Peter tells us how to obtain that rest. Cast your care upon the Lord, and in place of them take up His easy yoke.

We are told to do these things because He truly cares for us. He is the Shepherd of the sheep Who was willing to lay down His life for us. How much more now, since the resurrection, can we find complete assurance in His tender care. Take your trouble and hand it over to the Lord. In its place, ask for His peace and contentment in the challenges you anticipate. When you mentally make the leap that Jesus really can do these things, you will come to the place where nothing can truly steal your joy. Yes, cast your cares upon the Lord, for He cares for you.

Here we are Jesus, facing another day of trials and burdens. Instead of facing them alone, we place them in Your tender care. Handle them for us and give us the peace – that true peace – which can only come from You. We thank You for leading the way through this veil of tears and bringing us safely to a place of happiness and contentment. Amen.

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. 1 Peter 5:8

Peter now begins two verses of warning. He had just noted that the believer was to have cast all of his cares upon the Lord. But now he shows that despite being carefree of anxieties, we are not to be carefree in our walk. This is because there is an enemy who lurks about us. And so, he says, “Be sober.”

It is a word now used for the last of six times, three by Paul and three by Peter. It speaks of literal soberness, but that then extends to being clear-minded, free from the intoxicating influences of sin, and etc. A good positive thought to describe it is to have one’s wits about them and to think clearly and rationally.

Next, he says, “be vigilant.” The word used signifies to be awake and watchful. It is what Jesus said the disciples failed to do in the Garden of Gethsemane. Like Peter, Paul used

both of these Greek words in 1 Thessalonians 5:6, where he says, “Therefore let us not sleep, as others *do*, but let us watch and be sober.”

Peter then gives the reason for this beginning with, “because your adversary.” The Greek word, *antidikos*, comes from two words meaning “against justice.” It is one who brings charges against another, as if in a lawsuit. He is seeking formal charges against another. In this, the word “adversary” speaks in legal terms then. This is the only time it is used in the New Testament when speaking of “the devil.”

The term, “the devil,” signifies an accuser, but more especially a false accuser who purposefully maligns others in order to sever relationships. Peter says that this wicked one “walks about.” The thought comes directly from Job 1:7 –

“And the LORD said to Satan, ‘From where do you come?’

So Satan answered the LORD and said, ‘From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it.’”

The devil doesn’t just sit idly by and wait for someone to fall into his snare. Rather, he actively goes about seeking targets. Vincent’s Word Studies notes that the Arabs call him “the Busy One.” He is active and he is malicious, as is evidenced by the words, “like a roaring lion.”

Peter uses a word found only here in Scripture, *óruomai*. It is an onomatopoeic expression; the sound of the word represents what it speaks of. In this case, it is to roar or howl. Albert Barnes says of this –

“The lion here is not the crouching lion - the lion stealthfully creeping toward his foe - but it is the raging monarch of the woods, who by his terrible roar would intimidate all so that they might become an easy prey. The particular thing referred to here, doubtless, is persecution, resembling in its terrors a roaring lion.”

It is a good analogy. The believer has cast his cares upon the Lord. In this, there is a feeling of safety and security. But without being vigilant and sober, such a carefree person can suddenly get overcome by a great and terrible foe. Such a vociferous and strong foe has one thought in mind, which is to seek “whom he may devour.”

A hungry, roaring lion has one thing on its mind, to feed himself. Whoever or whatever gets in his way will face his anger until he satisfies that hunger. But Peter’s words indicate that the devil is always walking about and roaring. He is like the fire which

consumes until all is gone. There is never a point where he is satisfied and retreats to his lair. Thus, there is to always be a state of constant vigilance by the believer. Peter will give further admonition concerning this fierce foe in the verse ahead.

Life application: Earlier in the chapter, the role of the shepherd was discussed. He is the one who tends to the sheep. However, when the sheep are in the fold and a lion roars, they may be scared into flight – away from the rest of the sheep. This leaves them as easy prey.

The devil is looking to devour anyone he can, and it is far easier to go after someone who isn't fellowshiping with other believers, attending church and Bible studies, and actively engaged in other Christian activities. The devil is looking for just this sort of person to tempt – whether through pride or lust – into his trap. Once they are there, they have nothing of substance to fall back on.

This doesn't mean such a person can lose his salvation, but depending on the sin, he could lose his marriage, his freedom in society, or even his life. This is exactly what Satan wants. By accomplishing this, he can bring discredit on the name of Jesus. Determine now to be ever-vigilant, awake, and watchful, lest you become a victim of the devil's wiles.

Lord Jesus, in You we have the victory. By staying in Your word and in fellowship with other believers, we know that there is safety. Help us to prioritize our lives so that we don't let the necessary things be put off for that which is far less important. Keep us on the path of righteousness so that the devil has no ability to come after us with his temptations. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world. 1 Peter 5:9

Peter continues with his words concerning the devil from the previous verse. Here he says, "Resist him." The word is different than that translated as "resist" in verse 5:5. It more appropriately means "withstand," and thus to stand one's ground. One might think of it as standing face to face with the devil and saying, "Not an inch...!" But the verb here is second person plural. He is not speaking to individuals, but to the whole. And so, to bolster this, he says, "steadfast in the faith."

The word is *stereos*, and it is the last of four uses in the Bible. It signifies standing fast without buckling. As he is addressing a whole, one could think of the three hundred

soldiers at Thermopylae who closed ranks and held their position against countless thousands. Believers are to close the ranks of their group, stand firm, look the devil in the eye, and let him know that not an inch of ground will be yielded.

Then, to give his reader a note of confidence, he continues with, “knowing that the same sufferings are experienced.” Vincent’s Word Studies notes the peculiar construction of the words, which is ignored by almost all translations. It more literally reads, “the same things the sufferings.” Darby says, “the selfsame sufferings.” The GNT says, “the same kind of sufferings.”

The stress is on the similarity between the sufferings of various groups of believers. It is a hint that the devil employs the same tired tactics again and again. If believers simply pay heed to the word, they will understand this, be aware of his actions, and be able to stand firm in the face of his onslaughts. Peter then says that these selfsame sufferings are “experienced by your brotherhood in the world.”

It is a correct rendering, brotherhood. This is its second and last use in Scripture. It speaks of the church in a collective sense. What is experienced by those in the church is not only in isolated instances, but it is common to the brotherhood throughout the church. Peter’s words are then a note that if others are facing such things, and if they are able to prevail, then so can those who are reading his words. The force of his words is that of unity of determination in standing against the devil.

Life application: Peter tells the individual believer that no matter what we are going through, other believers in the world are going through the same things elsewhere. He certainly knows that this doesn’t lessen our own suffering, but it should help in the sense that at least we know we are not alone in what we are dealing with.

God isn’t allowing something unique to overtake you, and your burden is something that you can – in fact – deal with. So, stand fast in the faith you have, and resist what the devil is sending your way. Paul spoke in the same terms as Peter does in Ephesians 6. Here is a portion of that for you to consider –

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. ¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. ¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*. ¹³ 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 6:10-13

When we face the temptations or the sufferings the devil sends our way, we need to be prepared for them by putting on “the whole armor of God.” The only way we can do this is to be prepared in advance. If we don’t know the Bible, then when the time of trial comes, we cannot use it for our defense. If we haven’t developed strong faith, we can’t exercise it when needed. Now is the time for us to prepare for life’s trials. Stand firm and steadfast, grounded in the gospel of your salvation.

Lord Jesus, You know our trials and temptations all too well. You know the areas where we are lacking the proper discipline to handle more. So, Lord, be with us and protect us from the rage of the devil. Be our Shield and our Defender as we head through the maze of life’s challenges. Thank You Lord Jesus. Amen.

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. 1 Peter 5:10

Peter has been speaking of the necessity to be vigilant because the devil is out there and looking for a meal, and Christians are his meal to devour if he can get the upper hand over them. From there, he exhorted the brotherhood to remain steadfast, resisting the devil with the understanding that his attacks are not unique to individuals, but are the same throughout the brotherhood.

As this is so, he now provides words of comfort, beginning with, “But may the God of all grace.” The words here speak of God as being the Source of grace. No matter how much grace is exhibited, it could not be done so without Him first demonstrating it. All other grace is a shadowy reflection of His. The words also speak of God as the giver of all needed grace for the believer in Christ. No grace is lacking, even for the greatest afflictions we face. Paul came to understand this thought now conveyed by Peter –

“And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. ⁸ Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. ⁹ And He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”

-2 Corinthians 12:7-9

This is why, in the same epistle, Paul could say to those at Corinth words comparable to those written by Peter now –

“And God *is* able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all *things*, may have an abundance for every good work.”

-2 Corinthians 9:8

It is this God, who is the Source of all such grace, He is the same God who provides such grace and “who called us to His eternal glory.” Those who believe have been called. This is reflective of Paul’s words to those at Rome –

“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to *His* purpose. ²⁹ For whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to be* conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. ³⁰ Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.” Romans 8:28-30

This calling, as noted by both Paul and Peter, is to a state of glory. Peter says, “to His eternal glory.” Paul says that the calling leads to being glorified. Both speak of the doctrine of eternal salvation. God doesn’t call, justify, and glorify potentially. He does so actually. There is no hint in the writings of Scripture that God will fail to glorify those He has called. The idea is abhorrent to the very nature of God and His calling.

Peter next says, “by Christ Jesus.” The Greek reads, “in Christ Jesus,” though some manuscripts leave off the name “Jesus” and simply say “in Christ.” God has done all of the work necessary, as an act of grace, and He has done it in the sphere of the Person and work of Christ. This extends beyond His physical Person to the concept of what He would do, as was explicitly prophesied in Genesis 3:15 and from that point on. The “spirit of Christ” is seen throughout Scripture, and it is this sphere in which God has called us to His eternal glory.

With this understanding, Peter then notes the temporary state in relation to that eternal aspect by saying, “after you have suffered a while.” This is what he has referred to throughout his epistle, but specifically in the past two verses. Though the devil will cause believers to suffer, it is a part of God’s plan to allow it to happen. But at some point, God will “perfect” His people.

Unfortunately, the NKJV, following the KJV, leaves off an important possessive pronoun – “Himself.” It should say something like, “the God of all grace shall ... Himself make you perfect.” There is a personal touch which is blown to smithereens by any translation which excludes this pronoun. God is personally interested in His people. He is aware of their sufferings, and He Himself will bring those things to an end, perfecting His people.

The very sufferings which we face, and which seem too overwhelming to us are the same things which a part of leading us to being perfected. It is the refiner’s fire which purifies the metal. In like manner, the afflictions God allows provide us with a spiritual refining, if we will allow them to be used in this manner.

Peter then says, “establish.” The word gives the sense of setting something fast. It becomes immovable. In this, there is no vacillation, but a complete establishment of the person. Without such sufferings, this would be lacking.

Next, he says, “strengthen.” The verb is only found here in the Bible and follows after the previous word in intent. It is to make strong or confirm in spiritual power and knowledge. The learning process which is found in suffering leads to a confirmed state of understanding. The believer can look at the process and exclaim, “I fully grasp why these things occurred.”

In such knowledge, Peter says, “and settle *you*.” The word signifies “to lay the foundation.” Everything that occurs in a seemingly negative sense is actually something that has led the believer through a process leading to a positive establishment of his foundation.

Remember that it is God who personally is involved in the process, and He is doing it in Christ Jesus. As this is so, we should attempt to always view the world, and what occurs to us, in that most positive and glorious light.

Life application: As is found throughout the Bible, even dozens of times in the New Testament, Christians who have been called to God’s eternal glory can and should expect to suffer. Churches that teach otherwise and that promise oodles of earthly blessings without trials should be dismissed.

Expecting trials and sufferings should be the norm, not the exception. It is these very times that demonstrate God’s grace in our lives. Furthermore, it is these trials that mold us into that image our Creator desires for us. There is no shame in sufferings and in fact

the opposite is true. Even more, taking trials with grace is pleasing to God who set the example for us in the cross of Jesus.

A noteworthy example from our own time is Bill Bright, the founder of Campus Crusade for Christ. In his later years, Bill got pulmonary fibrosis of the lungs which caused him great suffering and eventually led to his death. However, during the ordeal, he never lost his testimony for Christ or his expectation of being perfected, established, strengthened, and settled. His example, along with countless other faithful believers, is noteworthy and demonstrates a true and sound faith. These people encourage us that the promises of the Lord transcend even final suffering and death.

There is a great day coming when our physical pains will be set aside for everlasting joy. Our headaches, backaches, cancers, and other diseases will be no more. As the book of Revelation triumphantly proclaims –

“And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.” Revelation 21:4

When you are suffering, in whatever form, be of the attitude that it is serving a good purpose. Determine to reflect Christ, even in your time of affliction. God has trusted you to accomplish a personal demonstration of grace on His behalf.

Heavenly Father, despite our trials and sufferings, may our lives be examples to others of the grace You have lavished upon us. May our times of trials lead others to understand that Your sovereign purposes are being worked out, even in each of us. Be with us during these times so that You will be glorified. Amen.

To Him *be* the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen. 1 Peter 5:11

Here, Peter pens forth a doxology of great praise and honor. But there is a question which arises, and which must be resolved right at the beginning of it. He says, “To Him.” Who is Peter speaking of here? If you review the previous verses, and if you are stuck in a particular theology, your answer may be biased. Or, if you are unsure, it may be hard to decide.

The previous verse said, “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*.” So, is Peter speaking of God or of Jesus? Jesus is the nearest antecedent, but God

is the main subject of the verse. Before reading further in the comments, think about it, decide, and have in mind why you made your decision.

With your decision in mind, be it “God” or “Jesus,” Peter says, “To Him *be* the glory.” If you chose “God,” is it because to Him alone belongs the glory? This is surely true. It is stated explicitly in Isaiah 42:8 and 48:11 –

I *am* the LORD, that *is* My name;
And My glory I will not give to another,
Nor My praise to carved images.

For My own sake, for My own sake, I will do *it*;
For how should *My name* be profaned?
And I will not give My glory to another.

Peter is a Jew, writing to Jews (1 Peter 1:1). For Him to speak of the glory belonging to anyone but God would be the epitome of blasphemy. His recipients would quickly track him down, stone him to death, and then pile up a heap of stones over his broken body. So “God” is surely correct. And so, he continues with, “and the dominion.”

In 1 Timothy 6:16, Paul says –

“...who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom *be* honor and everlasting power. Amen.”

It is clear that Jesus has been seen, and that He can be seen. Therefore, Paul is speaking of God. But there he speaks of God’s everlasting power using the same word, *kratos*, as Peter does in this verse. Therefore, Peter must be speaking of God. For him to ascribe the “dominion,” meaning “power,” to Jesus would once again bring on the wrath of his fellow Jews for ascribing something which belongs to God alone to a mere mortal. This is certain.

And Peter continues next with, “forever and ever.” It is a Hebrew expression, derived from the words *olam v’ed*. *Olam* signifies to the distant horizon and thus “to the vanishing point.” By itself, it can signify eternity, but it can also mean “to the end of something,” such as when the Law of Moses would, at some point, come to its end. When it was given, that point was unknown. *V’ed* means “and again.” This is a stress which would extend the meaning of *olam* to “eternity” in the absolute sense. The Greek reads *eis tous aiōnas tōn aiōnōn*, or “to the ages of the ages.” It is comparable

expression to the Hebrew, and therefore, a suitable English translation would be “Forever and ever.” Each signifies an unending time to this glory and dominion.

Again, Peter’s words must be speaking of God, because only God is eternal, and only God possesses the attributes which he is speaking of. However, the exact same words were written out by Peter just one chapter earlier –

“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.” (4:11)

If God receives these things “through Jesus Christ,” and it is received “forever and ever,” then it means that Jesus Christ is the eternal means by how this comes about. It elevates Jesus to the position of deity within the Godhead. This is then further confirmed elsewhere in Scripture where one or more of the terms is again used when speaking only of Jesus. For example, Peter closes out his second epistle with the assured words that he is referring to Jesus –

“You therefore, beloved, since you know *this* beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked; ¹⁸ but 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 3:17. 18

With the understanding now that Peter is referring to both God and Jesus, who is God, he finishes with, “Amen.” So be it. His doxology is complete and finished, and his “Amen” proclaims that it is so.

Life application: An Old Testament reference to the deity of Jesus is found in Daniel 7. The fact is that Peter is also speaking of Jesus, who is God. Glory and dominion properly belong to God, but the same terms refer back to the book of Daniel when referring to the Son of Man –

“I was watching in the night visions,
And behold, *One* like the Son of Man,
Coming with the clouds of heaven!
He came to the Ancient of Days,
And they brought Him near before Him.
¹⁴ Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom,

That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him.
His dominion *is* an everlasting dominion,
Which shall not pass away,
And His kingdom *the one*
Which shall not be destroyed.” Daniel 7:13, 14

God guards His glory and refuses to allow it to be shared with another. Jesus is the One who reveals to us the glory of the invisible God. Jesus is God. To Him then belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen!

What a marvelous story the Bible tells of Your love for us! Though You are infinitely beyond our comprehension, You came and clothed Yourself in the form of a Man so that we may know who You truly are in a way that we can understand. Thank You, O God, for our Lord Jesus! Amen.

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.

1 Peter 5:12

Peter now begins the closing section of the epistle. He begins with, “By Silvanus.” This is certainly the same person who traveled with Paul, known both as Silas and Silvanus. The shorter name is something commonly seen, just as a nickname today would be. Someone named Richard is shortened to Dick. Someone named James is shortened to Jim. In the Bible, Priscilla is shortened to Prisca. And the name Silvanus is shortened to Silas. He is seen with Paul in Acts quite a few times, such as in Acts 18 –

“When Silas and Timothy had come from Macedonia, Paul was compelled by the Spirit, and testified to the Jews *that Jesus is the Christ.*” Acts 18:5

Lining the timeline of that account up with his words in 2 Corinthians, it is evident that this is the same person as Silvanus –

“And in this confidence I intended to come to you before, that you might have a second benefit— ¹⁶ to pass by way of you to Macedonia, to come again from Macedonia to you, and be helped by you on my way to Judea. ¹⁷ Therefore, when I was planning this, did I do it lightly? Or the things I plan, do I plan according to the flesh, that with me there should be Yes, Yes, and No, No? ¹⁸ But *as God is faithful*, our word to you was not Yes and No. ¹⁹ For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was

preached among you by us—by me, Silvanus, and Timothy—was not Yes and No, but in Him was Yes.” 2 Corinthians 1:15-19

With this established, it is apparent, once again, that because Silvanus is ministering the gospel with both Paul and Peter, that he is ministering the same gospel, not two different gospels – one for Jew and one for Gentile. This is evidenced by the rest of the words of the verse, beginning with “our faithful brother.”

The Greek rather reads, “the faithful brother.” The words here tell us several things. Silvanus was well known by his name alone among the churches. It is evident that he had traveled through them extensively. This is evidenced by his frequent travels with Paul throughout all of the area. It also tells us that he was considered highly trustworthy, as is evidenced by Paul’s epistles. His character was well known and well-received by all.

Peter then adds in, “as I consider him.” In other words, Peter gives his stamp of approval along with Paul’s. It is a note of complete conviction. Silvanus was a careful herald of the one gospel preached by both men, and he was trustworthy to proclaim that unified message to both Jew and Gentile.

Peter then says, “I have written to you briefly.” The Greek reads, “through few.” In other words, he has used very few words to train and exhort those he is addressing. He could have gone on and on, but the length of the letter, and its precision of thought, was sufficient to convey his intent concerning what was on his mind.

He next sums up the entire letter by saying, “exhorting and testifying.” Peter has both spurred them on in their knowledge and walk with Christ through exhortation, and he has testified to what he knows to be the truth when necessary. The word translated as “testifying” is only found here in the New Testament. It intensifies the word which signifies “to bear witness,” and thus it means something like “attesting further.” Peter has been full and complete in his words, despite the short nature of the letter. And this exhortation and testifying is “that this is the true grace of God.”

Peter had previously waffled on the gospel. This is found clearly written out by Paul in Galatians 2:11-21. Paul rebuked Peter because he had allowed the Jews to intimidate him and draw back from the freedom found in Christ. Since that time, Peter had corrected his deficiencies to the point where he was useable by God to even write his own epistle on the surety of the gospel. With his now firm stand on the gospel of Jesus Christ, he is assuring the recipients of his letter that what he is telling them is not a word of waffling, but of conviction. It is the word “in which you stand.”

It is the gospel which Paul preached, and which Peter was in complete agreement with, as Paul notes in 1 Corinthians 15 where Paul calls him Cephas. First Paul uses the same terminology by saying, “Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand.” (1 Corinthians 15:1). He then mentions Peter, or Cephas,” along with the other apostles in 1 Corinthians 15:5-7. And then he says of all of them in 1 Corinthians 15:11 –

“Therefore, whether *it was* I or they, so we preach and so you believed.”

There is one, unified gospel preached by all of the apostles, and it is that one gospel in which all stand.

Life application: Two questions for each of us arise from this verse –

- 1) If Peter were here today, would he consider you, as he considered Silvanus, a “faithful brother?” Are you trustworthy to handle and transmit the word of God faithfully? Think on this and evaluate how you treat the Bible and if you are willing to share it with others who are lacking in the grace of God.
- 2) Do you stand firmly on the Person of Jesus Christ? And if you feel you do, what gospel are you placing your faith in? There is one gospel presented in the Bible – God united with human flesh, lived the perfect life we can’t live, died on a cross to pay for our sins, and was resurrected to eternal life. His death is fully sufficient to reconcile us to God and He now sits at the right hand of God ever interceding for those who have called on Him as Lord.

Stand firm in the gospel of Jesus Christ, be willing to share this gospel with others, and ensure that when you do share the gospel, you do it in a manner which squares with the biblical account.

Heavenly Father, we trust in your grace, displayed in the gospel of Jesus Christ our Lord. Be with us as we head out into the world. Like Silvanus who carried this message with both Peter and Paul, send us as tried and true servants to share with others the same grace we have received and by which we stand. May You be pleased with us as we faithfully go forth. Amen.

She who is in Babylon, elect together with you, greets you; and so does Mark my son.
1 Peter 5:13

After noting that Silvanus was the one who was with him in the writing of the epistle, Peter now says, “She who is in Babylon.” The word translated as “She” is simply a feminine article, and it is debated who or what is being referred to. It could be a prominent woman, Peter’s wife, or the church. As the address is made to the “pilgrims of the dispersion,” it seems likely that Peter is speaking of the church where he is at. Otherwise, if an individual, it would have to be someone known to every single addressee simply as “she.” It is unlikely that anyone would be in such a position of renown. If it was Peter’s wife, it would be far more likely that he would indicate it as such.

Further, it then says, “who is in Babylon.” This brings in greater need for speculation. Is Peter referring to a literal Babylon, or is he using the term in an allegorical sense. Babylon as a church location is otherwise unknown in the New Testament, and as Rome was a city of great pagan worship and debauchery, and because Rome was the military power which ruled over Israel at the time – just as literal Babylon once ruled over Israel in the past – it is highly likely that Peter is using what had become a commonly used phrase concerning Rome.

An argument against this comes from Professor Salmond, who is then cited by Vincent’s Word Studies. His commentary is a bit long, but worth citing because it is filled with fallacious arguments. A short rebuttal will be inserted and underlined against some of his thoughts –

"In favor of this allegorical interpretation it is urged that there are other occurrences of Babylon in the New Testament as a mystical name for Rome (Revelation 14:8; Revelation 18:2, Revelation 18:10); that it is in the highest degree unlikely that Peter should have made the Assyrian Babylon his residence or missionary centre, especially in view of a statement by Josephus indicating that the Emperor Claudius had expelled the Jews from that city and neighborhood (Historical writings clearly indicate that literal Babylon had been cleared of Jews by the Romans. The obvious anger over such a thing would then make assigning the term “Babylon” to Rome all the more likely); and that tradition connects Peter with Rome, but not with Babylon (The same writers who hold steadfastly to the traditions of the apostles – such as their types and locations of death – suddenly refuse to hold to the same traditions over this issue? It is almost universally accepted that Peter was in Rome and was eventually martyred in Rome). The fact, however, that the word is mystically used in a mystical book like the Apocalypse - a book, too, which is steeped in the spirit and terminology of the Old Testament - is no argument for the mystical use of the word in writings of a different type (Of course it is, especially when the exact same type of terminology is spoken about concerning Jerusalem in Revelation

11:8. Further, an exacting description of this “Babylon” is given in Revelation 17:9, clearly identifying it as Rome – known as the city of seven hills into antiquity). The allegorical interpretation becomes still less likely when it is observed that other geographical designations in this epistle (1 Peter 1:1) have undoubtedly the literal meaning (This is ridiculous. Every epistle is addressed to real people in real locations. Then, within the epistle, allegorical and metaphorical terminology is used as it seems fit to the author, such as in 1 Corinthians 15:32). The tradition itself, too, is uncertain. The statement in Josephus does not bear all that it is made to bear (It is of the highest convenience to use an ancient writing when it fits one’s presuppositions, and then to disregard it when it doesn’t!). There is no reason to suppose that, at the time when this epistle was written, the city of Rome was currently known among Christians as Babylon (Illogical. If John is writing about Rome in the Revelation, then it is a 100% reason to so suppose). On the contrary, wherever it is mentioned in the New Testament, with the single exception of the Apocalypse (and even there it is distinguished as 'Babylon, the great'), it gets its usual name, Rome (Fallacy. This is an argument from silence, and has nothing to do with Peter’s intentional use of the word, if he is applying it to Rome. Further, the same could be said of the name “Babylon” as used in Scripture. It is a literal city referred to three times in Matthew and once in Acts 7, but in Acts it cites Amos 5:27, which originally referred to Damascus, not Babylon. Further, the very fact that it says “Great” as a qualifier of “Babylon” demonstrates that something other than the literal Babylon is being referred to there). So far, too, from the Assyrian Babylon being practically in a deserted state at this date, there is very good ground for believing that the Jewish population (not to speak of the heathen) of the city and vicinity was very considerable. For these and other reasons a succession of distinguished interpreters and historians, from Erasmus and Calvin, on to Neander, Weiss, Reuss, Huther, etc., have rightly held by the literal sense (Fallacy. This is an appeal to popularity and an appeal to fame. Just because a group of people, or someone of importance (or some level of fame), holds to a position, it does not make that position correct)."

Unless one has a presupposition that this cannot be Rome which Peter is referring to, it is far more probable that it is – in fact – Rome. The use of “Babylon” in this case is logical, consistent with Revelation which is certainly speaking of Rome, and it is also consistent with the use of other such designations and allegorical statements in the New Testament writings.

Peter, most probably writing from Rome as argued for here, next says, “elect together with you.” Those in “Babylon” are considered elect together with those he is addressing as noted in 1 Peter 1:1. The very fact that Rome is not mentioned in Peter’s initial greeting there further substantiates that he is writing from Rome. Otherwise, he would

have certainly included them in his epistle. The omission of such a great body of believers, who are also elect (see Romans 1:7), is improbable at best.

After this, the words “greet you” are given to expand on the words “She who is in Babylon.” It is a way of saying that one church of elect believers is greeting another church of elect believers through the epistle. From there, he ends with, “and *so does Mark.*”

Here it is certainly referring to John Mark, the author of the Gospel of Mark. He is the same person who traveled with Paul and Barnabas on missionary journeys. He eventually came to be with Peter during the time of the writing of this letter. In this, the affection Peter had for him is so great that he calls him – as Paul refers to Timothy several times – “my son.” It is a tender note of the love between the two which had grown throughout the years they had been together.

Life application: In the ultimate sense, you too are being greeted in this letter because the letter made its way into the Bible. See, a personal letter from Peter to you from Babylon. Save the stamp, it could be a collector’s item!

Thank You Lord for including each of us who have called on Christ Jesus in the unfolding pages of Your glorious plan for the redeemed of the ages! How precious it is to be one of the elect, holy and chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world! Here’s a great “Hallelujah” to You! Amen.

Greet one another with a kiss of love.

Peace to you all who are in Christ Jesus. Amen. 1 Peter 5:14

In the final verse of his first epistle, Peter begins with the thought, “Greet one another with a kiss of love.” This is the same general sentiment that Paul uses four times in his epistles by saying, “Greet one another with a holy kiss” (Romans 16:16).

This was, and still is, the custom in many parts of the world. The kiss is intended as a greeting, just as western nations today shake hands or possibly hug, depending on familiarity. In the Far East, a deep and respectful bow is given in substitute of this.

Although this is a prescriptive epistle, intent must always be considered. Is Peter mandating that all people in all churches “Greet one another with a kiss of love?” The answer must be considered carefully.

The first kiss noted in the Bible in Genesis 27:26 when Isaac blessed his son Jacob before he departed to Padan Aram. From that point, the kiss is seen among the covenant people and among those who aren't yet in the covenant, thus demonstrating the cultural nature of the greeting. It is used in the same way we use a handshake. When Jacob met Rachel, without knowing her in any familiar way yet, he kissed her. In 2 Samuel 20, the following exchange begins with a kiss of greeting and ends in death –

“Then Joab said to Amasa, ‘Are you in health, my brother?’ And Joab took Amasa by the beard with his right hand to kiss him. But Amasa did not notice the sword that *was* in Joab’s hand. And he struck him with it in the stomach, and his entrails poured out on the ground; and he did not *strike* him again. Thus he died.”

-2 Samuel 20:9, 10

In 1 Samuel 20:41, David and Jonathan, close male friends, gave a fraternal kiss in accord with the culture before departing. And, Proverbs 27:6 notes the following –

“Faithful *are* the wounds of a friend,
But the kisses of an enemy *are* deceitful.” Proverbs 27:6

This demonstrates clearly that the kiss is cultural because even enemies will kiss rather than shake hands. This is seen in these parts of the world today when leaders who are at war with each other still greet with a kiss. Exchanging “kiss” with shaking of hands in this Proverb would hold exactly the same meaning and intent.

And as a premier example of this, read the following exchange between Jesus and Simon the Pharisee –

“And He said to him, ‘You have rightly judged.’ Then He turned to the woman and said to Simon, ‘Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has washed My feet with her tears and wiped *them* with the hair of her head. You gave Me no kiss, but this woman has not ceased to kiss My feet since the time I came in. You did not anoint My head with oil, but this woman has anointed My feet with fragrant oil. Therefore I say to you, her sins, which *are* many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, *the same* loves little.’” Luke 7:43-47

And of course, the most famous kiss in history is recorded concerning Judas’ betrayal of Jesus and reflects the sentiments of Proverbs 27:6 (above) perfectly.

It is important then to understand the cultural nature of this admonition by Peter lest we get swept up into legalism over something which is actually not intended for all cultures and in all situations. If a person with an immune deficiency were to use this verse in a prescriptive manner, he could soon be dead from receiving the germs of others.

Finally, the kisses, in these and other verses throughout the Bible, which are between men and men (such as David and Jonathan noted above) are not in any way intended to convey the perverse sin of homosexuality as modern liberals often imply. They are merely cultural and welcoming displays, just as handshakes are today. To imply this in their writings shows a disregard for God's order in the natural world.

After this note of fraternal affection, Peter next says, "Peace to you all who are in Christ Jesus." To a Jew, the word "peace" is deeper than what we may think of it today, that of a state of quiet. It involves an entire state of contentment and calm. Thus, Peter's words are a petition for wholeness and blessing, leading to what one might call a "fully satisfied soul." He then finishes with, "Amen." The word signifies "so be it." And for all who read his letter of five chapters and 105 verses, taking it to heart, may it be so. Amen.

Life application: Thank you for sharing in the journey we have made through this wonderful inspired letter. May we take heed the admonitions given, remember the instructions provided, and meditate on the wisdom imparted all the days of our lives.

Peter was an eyewitness to Christ. He was there all during His ministry, saw firsthand the transfiguration, stumbled at the crucifixion, and was restored at the resurrection. He beheld the ascension and participated in the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Peter sat with the early elders in the church and continued his witness of the work of Jesus Christ throughout his life.

This letter, along with the other 65 books of the Bible, testifies to the Person and work of Jesus Christ. He is the focus of Scripture and we are to keep our eyes and thoughts directed at Him alone. Next stop, 2 Peter. Amen!

Oh Heavenly Father! Thank you for the wisdom and instruction imparted through the hands of your servants who have brought us the words of Scripture. Help us to remember what we have learned and to follow You all the more faithfully because of it. We look forward to reading Your word daily, and with anticipation and expectation of great wonders to come as we do. Amen.