

# *1st Peter*

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# *1<sup>st</sup> Peter*

## *Introduction*

- 1) The author of this letter is the apostle Peter. Most commentators believe it was written from Rome about the year 64 A.D. Others would dispute both the place as well as the date of this writing. However, of importance, is that we have recorded in this letter the inspired words of an apostle of Jesus Christ written near the end of a thirty plus year ministry.
- 2) Peter was one of the twelve and along with James and John belonged to the inner circle, so to speak, of the apostles of Christ. He was the first to proclaim Jesus as the Christ. (Matthew 16:16-17) It was Peter who was the keynote speaker to the multitude at Pentecost. It was Peter to whom it was revealed that the gospel should be taken to the gentiles.
- 3) It was Peter, however, who also told Christ He would not die. (Matthew 16:21-23) It was Peter who denied his Lord three times, and Peter, who in fear of James, refuses to fellowship with gentile believers in direct violation of the revelation given to him. (Galatians 2:11-12)
- 4) So, unlike the apostle Paul, who was saved in a flash of light, instructed by Jesus Christ, and so receiving understanding of the gospel by revelation, the scriptures in Peter allow us to observe the training and maturing of a man in the faith.
- 5) This letter, along with 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter, are a fitting conclusion to both the trials and triumphs of the apostle Peter. He writes with authority about being born again, of the importance of the word, of election, salvation, sanctification, obedience and holiness. He does not mention the law, but is in total and complete harmony with the apostle Paul whom he even refers to in 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 3:15-16.

***v.1:1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,***

The author of this letter introduces himself as Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ. Formerly Simon son of Jonah, he uses the Greek form of the name given to him by Jesus Christ. John 1:42

- a) He writes this letter backed by the full authority of the office he holds. The word apostle means a messenger or an ambassador. Unlike Paul, his apostleship was beyond question for he was clearly hand picked by Christ, with Christ and taught by Him throughout His ministry, even to the witnessing of His ascension into the heavenlies.
- b) The letter is addressed to believers living in five areas or districts in northern Asia Minor. Like Paul's letter to the Galatians, it is written to believers in a vast area comprised of many cities and fellowships. It was no doubt meant to be passed from church to church and region to region.
- c) The southern regions of Asia Minor were evangelized by Paul. The only overlap may have been Galatia, for a district as well as an entire province had that name. It is interesting to note that Paul was forbidden of the Spirit to enter into the region to which this letter of Peter is addressed. (Acts 16:6-7)
- d) Whether Peter founded churches or even personally ministered in these areas cannot be known with any certainty. Little, if anything is known of Peter's activities outside Jerusalem. The last we hear of Peter is that he was rebuked by Paul in Antioch. (Gal. 2:11) His eyes being opened, did he begin to evangelize outside of Jerusalem to Jew as well as gentile?
- e) The words "strangers" and "scattered" would seem to indicate that this letter was addressed specifically to Jewish Christians. Both words were commonly used to refer to Jews living outside of Jerusalem, however, the content of this letter shows that Jews as well as gentiles were being addressed. So Peter, being a Jew, and noticing the similarity between the dispersed Jew and the Christian, applies the phrase.
- f) The Christian is indeed a stranger in the world being described in the scriptures as an "alien" or "not of this world," but one who's citizenship is in heaven. (Phil. 3:20) Peter, in this letter, deals with the persecutions the believer faces at the hands of the world and his inability to "fit in" as a redeemed creature.

***v.1:2 Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.***

Peter addresses them as the elect of God, that is, those whom God had chosen. He introduces them to the three persons within the Godhead or the Trinity, showing the distinct role of each member of the Godhead in their election.

- a) The believers election is in accordance with the foreknowledge of God the Father. The word foreknowledge simply means 'to know beforehand.' They were chosen, for God knew them beforehand. He knew them before their physical existence in His plan and purpose. (Eph. 1:4-5)

This is much more than simply knowing the entire outcome of what man would perceive as contingent events based upon each individual's free will. If this were the case the doctrine of predestination would be false for the word means 'to determine, purpose, or decree beforehand.' So the foreknowledge of God does not simply mean knowing the future, but knowing because He Himself determined it. (Rom. 8:29-30)

*“What is foreknowledge? It is much more than the ability to predict future events. It includes the absolute sovereignty of God in determining and implementing his decision to save sinful man. The word foreknowledge appears in Peter's Pentecost sermon, where he declares to his Jewish audience that Jesus ‘was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge.’ Peter implies that God worked according to his sovereign plan and purpose which he made in advance”.* Kistemaker

- b) God's choice is made evident or is manifested in the agency of the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit that calls or convicts the elect, leading them unto obedience and to the means of their election and sanctification which is the blood of Christ
- c) It is the blood of Christ that cleanses the individual and seals the believer as elect and set apart. Peter seems to have the initiation of the old covenant in mind that prefigured the new. This would demonstrate to them God's plan had been in effect throughout the ages. (Ex. 24:7-8; Is. 52:15)
- d) For these elect, Peter prays that God's grace or unmerited favor would be showered upon them in great abundance. God's grace results in internal peace, that is, the peace produced by being right with God. He desires that they continue to dwell in a state of great mercy and peace.

***v.1:3 Blessed [be] the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,***

Peter begins a doxology of praise with the dual purpose of reminding his readers of their position in Jesus Christ and the resulting great hope that they possess as believers.

- a) Peter praises God whom he knows as the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. Through Jesus Christ, His God and Father, is the believers God and Father. (John 20:17) Only in Jesus Christ can the attributes of God, for which Peter renders rightful praise, be known. As Barnes puts it. *“That is proper thanksgiving to God which is offered through the Redeemer; that only is the proper acknowledgement of God which recognizes Him as the Father of the Lord Jesus.”*
- b) Peter introduces his readers to the doctrine of regeneration. The focal point of his expressed praise to God is the believer's new life. They were born again, that is, they enjoyed a new life in Jesus Christ. (2 Cor. 5:17-18) The phrase used literally means 'cause to be born again' which affirms God's sovereignty in the election.
- c) Regeneration as well as all God's spiritual blessings to man is a result of His mercy which is described here as being abundant or plentiful. The idea is that they were in a hopeless situation and the 'new birth' was God's remedy which was graciously bestowed upon them. It was grace and mercy that was totally undeserved on their part.

- d) Their new birth produced a true and living hope. It was a hope of everlasting life as evidenced by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. His resurrection was the foundation of their hope for it confirmed His claims as the Messiah and all His doctrines to be truth (1 Cor. 15:12-23)
- e) It is also a living hope for the Holy Spirit has been given to the believer as an earnest, as we already share in the victory of the resurrection. (Eph. 1:13-14)

***v.1:4 To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,***

The living hope of which Peter speaks, which was born in God's mercy, bestowed upon them in the new birth, and secured for all time by the resurrection of Christ is described as an inheritance.

- a) It is what God, in his purpose and according to His will, desires to give the believer as his adopted child. The believer is an heir of God, but what exactly this inheritance is remains the believers hope in this life. (Rom. 8:15-17; 1 John 3:1-3)
- b) Peter himself does not know the particulars of this inheritance for even his mind could not comprehend it. (1 Cor. 2:9) However, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he is given three words which prove to the readers that it is unlike anything they could possess on this earth.
- c) The believers inheritance is incorruptible, that is, it is eternal. It can never be taken away, lost or destroyed but is immortal and everlasting. Its is undefiled, which means it will remain pure. It cannot be polluted or spoiled in any way. Finally, it fadeth not away, that is, it will always remain at its peak in our affections. It will never induce boredom, but will always retain its full vigor or impact.
- d) This inheritance is reserved in heaven. Their portion has been set aside. They have reservation in the heavenlies. It is the Father who has secured their place. (Matt. 25:34)

The apostle Paul was caught-up into the third heaven and so viewed this inheritance in some fashion. In his letter to the Ephesians he prays that his readers would be enlightened to catch a glimpse of this inheritance, that they would be given knowledge of exactly what had been accomplished in their behalf and what awaits them. The impression is given that this would make all the difference in the world in their lives. (Eph. 1:17-20)

***v1:5 Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.***

Peter comforts his readers further by informing them that not only is their inheritance safely reserved for them in the heavenlies, (v.4) but they themselves, as believers, are kept unto it, that is, they are guaranteed that they will partake in it.

- a) Peter tells them that they themselves are eternally secure. The word "kept" is a military term that means 'guarded or protected by a garrison.' They are protected unto the inheritance. The devil, the world or even they themselves cannot prevent them from partaking in that which is reserved for them by God.

- b) Such security is possible for it is the power of God Himself that guards them. His power is invincible and infinite. (Rom. 8:31-39)
- c) The manifestations of His power to keep them is manifested in their faith. As Barnes puts it, “*God excites faith in our hearts, and makes that the means of keeping us.*” Specifically, He guards our salvation, for it is our salvation in Jesus Christ that makes us heirs and entitles us to the inheritance.

*“It implies, that not only they themselves are kept through faith, whereby they rely on the power of their keeper, and His promises of keeping them, but that they and their faith too are kept by the power of God.”* Matthew Poole

- d) Finally, in regards to salvation and the inheritance, it is ready to be revealed. It is complete. It is finished. It is no longer being prepared or in the making, but is a done deal. It, as well as we, are sealed. It only waits to be revealed in its fullness, that is, to be given to those for whom it is reserved.

***v.1:6. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations:***

All the things that Peter has so far reminded them of or has explained to them is cause for great rejoicing. The modifier “great” implies a feeling of joy that cannot be contained, but must be manifested in some outward display. It is a joy that cannot be extinguished

- a) However, in this life, which is described here as a season or a short time, the believer will experience sadness brought about by the many trials living in this world presents. Temptations refers to the everyday trials of all men and women, but also to the unique temptations present to those who are citizens of heaven living in this world. (Matt. 26:37-38, 45-46)
- b) So joy and sadness can co-exist in the believer, but the joy is greater having its source in God. It comes with His strength and is eternal, and is the overcoming force of any grief we may experience in our lives. (2 Cor. 4:17-18)
- c) Peter also offers words of comfort with the phrase “if need be.” The believer can rest assured that God is fully aware of all his afflictions and that every trial he experiences is somehow necessary. Accompanying every trial is His presence and His grace.

*“Their grief and joy were about different objects; they might be in heaviness by reason of present afflictions, and rejoice in hope of future glory; they might grieve as men but rejoice as saints; sense of suffering might affect them, and yet the faith of better things to come relieve them. If their heaviness did in any way abate their joy, yet it did not wholly hinder it; and though their joy did overcome their heaviness, yet it did not wholly exclude it.”* Matthew Poole

***v.1:7 That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:***

As stated earlier, one view of faith is that it is the manifestation of God’s power to keep us. Trials, in this way, prove the power of God to us as well as the watching universe. So the ultimate purpose or end of trials is to bring glory and honor to God by displaying His power to sustain us.

- a) In Job, trials proved that faith was strong enough to sustain a man who had lost everything, while in Abraham, faith was powerful enough to enable a man to be willing to sacrifice his only son. Trials show the affect God has on men, and so, He is glorified.
- b) Peter compares the willingness of man to subject gold, which is very precious to him, to fire, in order to make it even more brilliant and valuable, to the willingness to God to subject the believers faith to the fire of trials, that its true excellency and worth might be known.
- c) Gold is temporary, but faith is everlasting. Gold is valuable to men, but faith is precious to God and will bring Him praise, honor and glory when its true worth and accomplishments are understood by men at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

***v.1:8 Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see [him] not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory:***

It is Jesus Christ who is the object of faith. Although not mentioned here it is their faith in Christ that sustains them. It is their belief and acceptance of Him as their righteousness and salvation. It is in Him that they overcome trials.

- a) Peter commends them in that they walk by faith and not by sight. (2 Cor. 5:7) These individuals did not see Christ as did Peter and yet they possessed and exhibited the same love for Him by the hearing of the gospel message. They did not currently see Him and yet they continued in belief, their faith being manifested. (John 20:29, 17-20)
- b) It was their belief in Jesus Christ that produced inexpressible joy and an anticipation of glory. Where as earlier, Peter explained that all of the truths he had reminded them of was cause for great rejoicing ,(v. 6) he here points to Christ as the one in whom these truths have come about. He is the object of their faith, their hope, their joy and their comfort.

***v.1:9 Receiving the end of your faith, [even] the salvation of [your] souls.***

Completing a sentence that in the original language began with verse 3, and in summary of all of the spiritual blessings which they as believers enjoy, Peter tells them they are receiving the goal or end of their faith, namely, the salvation of their souls.

- a) The word “receiving” indicates a process, one that as believers they were already involved in and one which they could be certain would be brought to completion in them. (Phil. 1:6)
- b) The believer has received new birth (v. 3). The believer is being guarded by God’s power (v.5). The Christian will receive the inheritance in heaven (v. 4)

***v.1:10. Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace [that should come] unto you:***

Peter had taken them into eternity past when he spoke of their election and the foreknowledge of God. He now shows that salvation was not now suddenly thrust upon man with the coming of Christ, but was the fulfillment of an eternal plan progressively revealed to man through the ages.

- a) The Jewish believers among his readers would be familiar with the prophets he here introduced, while the gentile believers probably needed the confirmation of the apostle and instruction in these matters.
- b) The prophets are those men of The Old Testament inspired by God to reveal His plan. (Heb. 1:1) He states that the prophets themselves diligently inquired and searched. The words used allude to miners who dig and break through the earth to get to the valuable ore.
- c) They were not only prophets, but men in need of the salvation of which they wrote. They used their natural faculties to themselves come to an understanding in accordance with the revelation given to them. They longed for the salvation they wrote of, so they studied their writings and those of others before them. (Dan. 7:28)

The prophets spoke of the grace that would come unto them. Salvation was ordained by God to be of grace from the beginning. It was by His unmerited favor that those elected would be saved.

***v.1:11 Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.***

Peter states it was the Spirit of the reincarnate Christ that dwelt within these prophets and revealed to them the sufferings to be endured by the Messiah as well as the glory that would follow.

- a) The prophets, in turn, searched. They searched and inquired as to when these things would come about and what would be the circumstances surrounding the times. The gospel message, that is, the plan of salvation, was being revealed to them and needless to say they had much more than a casual interest.
- b) Isaiah spoke of the Christ's birth (Isaiah 7:14, 9:6). Micah gave the place (Micah 5:2) Daniel in the "seventy weeks" prophecy predicted the time. Isaiah also spoke of the Messiah's sufferings. (Is. 53:4-5, 7,9,12) as did the Psalms 22:6-8, 12-13, 16-18)

These revelations were given to different men over a period of centuries. This proves the sovereignty of God and the doctrines taught by Peter earlier in this letter.

***v.1:12 Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.***

It was revealed to the prophets that they were ministering to future generations. The things they wrote would not take place in their lifetimes. It does not mean that they themselves or the people who lived before Christ made His appearance did not benefit from these revelations, but simply that they would not see them fulfilled or understand them in their fullness.

- a) The individuals to whom Peter wrote as well as all the people of the gospel age can derive the full benefit for they have the gospel as predicted by the prophets, their fulfillment as reported to them by the apostles and eyewitnesses, and all in the

illuminating presence of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. (Matt. 13:16-17)

“The object of Peter by thus referring to the prophets, and to the interest which they took in the things which those to whom he wrote now enjoyed, seems to have been, to impress on them a deep sense of the value of the gospel, and of the great privileges which they enjoyed. They were reaping the benefit of all the labors of the prophets. They were permitted to see truth clearly, which the prophets themselves saw only obscurely. They were, in many respects, more favored than even those holy men had been. It was for them that the prophets had spoken the word of the Lord, for them and their salvation that a long line of the most holy men that the world even saw, had lived, and toiled, and suffered, and while they themselves had not been allowed to understand the full import of their own predictions, the most humble believer was permitted to see what the most distinguished prophet ever saw.” Barnes

- b) To further impress upon his readers the great privileges afforded to them, Peter informs them that the angels themselves studied these same happenings from their elevated position throughout the ages wanting to understand the things now revealed to them. (Eph. 3:10)

***v.1:13. Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;***

Peter, has in great detail, described to his readers their position in Jesus Christ. He has told them of their election, salvation, sanctification and the sure hope of the inheritance that awaits them. He has demonstrated to them their privileged position above that of the prophets and angels. He now instructs and exhorts his readers as to their present responsibilities and duties as heirs of God.

- a) The word “wherefore” means ‘in view of.’ According to everything Peter has said, what follows is the appropriate action. Their lives as believers should be consistent with their position in Christ. Their walk should be in balance with their election and calling.
- b) The mind controls the body. This is where the war takes place, so Peter makes use of a metaphor to instruct them as to what needs to be done within this battlefield of the mind.
- c) The people of the time wore flowing garments, so whenever any type of work was to be done it was necessary to pull up and tuck the clothing into a belt. Any loose ends would be a hindrance. This was known as ‘girding up the loins.’
- d) The idea is that they should have a one track mind which is focused on Jesus Christ. Nothing should hinder their mind or get in their way when it comes to serving their Lord. As Paul told the Corinthians, all thoughts should be brought into captivity. (2 Cor. 10:5)
- e) In this way they will be sober which means awake and vigilant. They will be alert to the work that needs to be done around them and constantly watchful as to spiritual dangers. They will be controlled by the Spirit within them. (1 Thess. 5:6-8)
- f) They are to persevere in the sure hope of the favor or grace that is to be bestowed upon them with the coming of Jesus Christ. This hope is their strength. It is the focal point that will carry them through the trials and tribulations of life enabling them to remain faithful and obedient.

***v.1:14 As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance:***

They are the children of God and are to conduct themselves as such. They are to be obedient children. The idea again is that their behavior should be consistent with their status or position. They are to obey their Father's commands and submit to His will in love.

- a) The negative is that they are not to conduct or model themselves after their old wants and desires. These are the "loose ends that must be girded-up." They will be a hindrance to them in performing the work now at hand. ( Rom. 12:2)
- b) Implied in the language of this verse is that they were new creatures in Christ. Their former lusts were a part of their former selves. Their new life was as obedient and favored children of God. They were in ignorance, but now they are enlightened.

*"In many cases, those who are now Christians, gave indulgence to every passion which they wished to gratify, regardless of reputation, health, property or salvation. Now they are to be governed by a different rule, and their own former standard of morals and of opinions is no longer their guide, but the will of God."* Barnes

***v.1:15 But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;***

Obedience to God and the forsaking of their former lusts is the beginning of holiness to which Peter here informs his readers that they are called. They were elected unto holiness. They were saved unto holiness. They are called to be holy, which translates to sacred and pure.

- a) They are to be holy because God their Father is holy. He is their model. As His children, they are to take on His characteristics. They are a reflection of Him. The human sayings, "A chip of the old block" and "Like father, like son" should be true as to their behavior as children of God.
- b) Holiness is to encompass their lives. Every thought, every word and every action should be motivated and carried out in accordance with their relationship to God and their love for Him. No sin can be tolerated in their lives. Perfection is ever the goal. (Matt. 5:48)

"Again, I do not, when I say a believer should be a striking likeness of Jesus, suppose that any one Christian will perfectly exhibit all the features of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ; yet, my brethren, the fact that perfection is beyond our reach, should not diminish the ardor of our desire after it." Spurgeon

***v.1:16 Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.***

God has declared Himself to be holy and it is the holiness of God that demands holiness in His children. Peter appeals to the scriptures to demonstrate the holiness of God. (Lev. 11:44-45)

- a) If God would accept anything less than perfection, He Himself would compromise His purity and holiness. (1 John 1:5) The demand of holiness was met through God's mercy in Jesus Christ, however, the Christian is called to live in the grace afforded him and to be active in striving for holiness while opposing sin. (1 John 2:1-6)

***v.1:17 And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning [here] in fear:***

Peter continues to remind his readers of their responsibility as children of God. He has told them that as heirs their future is secure, but the time they must spend on this earth is to be lived in reverence toward the Father upon whom they call.

- a) He describes believers as sojourners or pilgrims upon this earth. (Heb. 11:13) Peter points out that even though their time here is temporary it is no less important and their position should not breed complacency. They call upon a Holy Ghost and He demands respect and obedience to His children.
- b) As His children they are on display to a watching universe, men as well as angels. God has called them, supplying them in all grace, and they will be responsible for their actions. They will be judged fairly and impartially by a holy God. (1 Peter 4:17)
- c) God knows their mind, their motivations and the intents of their heart. Nothing can be hid from the Father they call upon. Their work will be judged. (1 Cor. 3:11-13) Once they have a proper view of God reverence and respect will follow. (As believers, we cannot take God's mercy and kindness for granted. Acts 5:4-5; 1 Cor. 11:28-32)

***v.1:18-19 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, [as] silver and gold, from your vain conversation [received] by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:***

Obedience and a holy lifestyle on their part should not only be a result of reverence for the One they call upon as Father, but should also be motivated by love, not only for the things He accomplished in their behalf, but also in the manner in which it was accomplished.

- a) They were redeemed, which basically translates to being ransomed from an otherwise impossible situation. Being redeemed, it is implied that they were captives, unable to gain their freedom in any way. They were powerless as to their salvation.
- b) The situation they were in was a vain lifestyle. It was empty and meaningless. Their life had no purpose and could not have purpose, since man was created to glorify God. They received this lifestyle from their fathers, who in turn received it from their fathers.
- c) They were caught in a loop from which they themselves could never escape. Only divine intervention could ransom them from their situation. This vain conversation applied to the Jews as well as the gentiles. (Mark 7:7-9; Rom. 1:28)
- d) The price of their ransom was high. They were not redeemed in what would be considered the usual manner, with silver and gold, commodities thought valuable of men, but nevertheless of a corruptible nature. Their ransom was secured with blood, that is, the precious eternal blood of Jesus Christ.

*“It accomplished what silver and gold could not do. The universe had nothing more valuable to offer, of which we can conceive, than the blood of the Son of God.” Barnes*

***v.1:20 Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,***

Jesus Christ was chosen as the lamb without blemish or spot, as the One whose blood would redeem them, from before the world was created. Just as the elect were foreordained to redemption, so too was the One through whom their redemption would be accomplished. (v. 2)

- a) This means that in eternity past it was purposed, planned and settled that Jesus Christ would be the ransom. As a distinct member of the Godhead, He voluntarily put the mantle of His Godhead aside and became a man to this end. (Heb. 10:5-7)
- b) Peter again takes them to the sovereignty of God showing that all had been determined before in the counsels of God. He reminds them of their privileged position telling them that these things were now revealed in time for their benefit. (v. 12)
- c) Peter refers to the time in which he is writing as “the last times.” These last times continue even to today. Since apostolic times with the revelation of the gospel there has been no new revelation. God speaks to man through His Word. The next revelation will be the revealing of Christ Himself, as time once again will fold into eternity

***v.1:21 Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.***

In instructing his readers to be obedient children and to stand holy before their God, Peter points them to Jesus Christ as their Redeemer. It is He who is the perfect sacrifice, foreordained to the task, and most recently, in these latter times, revealed to them. (vs. 18-20) Now by Christ, they believe in God and so only in Him can they possess true hope.

- a) The word translated “believe” gives the idea of ‘having an inner trust.’ By Jesus Christ they trust in God. In the teachings, works, miracles and general ministry of Jesus Christ the true nature of God is made known to them. Jesus Christ manifests all of the attributes of God. (Col. 2:9)
- b) A God that seemed hidden and far off in the old economy, known only in the writings and prophecies, many of which were obscured by the errors and opinions of men, had been manifested in the flesh. In Jesus Christ they could know God and trust in Him. (John 14:6-10)
- c) The fact that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead and glorified both in the heavenlies as well as among men is offered as the supreme reason that they can believe or trust in God. The resurrection of Christ offers them the sure hope that they too will be resurrected and follow Him, the captain of their salvation, into glory. (Heb. 2:9-11)

*“That seeing Christ raised and glorified, ye might be fully confirmed in the belief of a thorough satisfaction made to Divine justice for sin, and perfect reconciliation wrought (for had not Christ fully paid the price of redemption, his Father would never had let him out of the prison of the grave, in which his justice had shut him up); from which faith ariseth a hope, which looks to the resurrection of Christ your Head, as the certain pledge and earnest of your resurrection to life and glory. Christ’s resurrection and glory are the great grounds of faith.”* Matthew Poole

***v.1:22 Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, [see that ye] love one another with a pure heart fervently:***

Peter exhorts his readers to love one another. Peter assumes that this love is naturally present, to a certain degree, within the purified individual through the agency of the Holy Spirit.

- a) The word purity suggests that what has now been made clean was formerly polluted. Their souls were unclean, but now purified through the obeying of the truth of the gospel message. (Acts 15:9)
- b) The first word rendered “love” in this verse is “philadelphia.” It means brotherly love or a love naturally born in a common bond. It is a fraternal or kind love. It is not hypocritical, but love manifested in deed as well as in word. Paul concurs that such love is taught by God. (1 Thes. 4:9) John tells us that if love for other believers is not present then neither is the Holy Spirit. (1 John 3:14)
- c) The focus of this verse is to consciously cultivate love in this life. Not to hinder it in any way, but to let it increase and flourish. The word is “agape” which is perfect love, self-sacrificing love, or the love that God has for us. Such love is the command of Christ and the very mark of a believer. (John 13:34-35; 1 Thes. 3:12)

***v.1:23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.***

The believer is born again to these ends, namely, obedience to God and love of the brethren. They can be obedient children, striving for holiness manifested in perfect love, because they are born again. They are new creatures in Christ born of the Holy Spirit through the word of God.

- a) The first birth refers to the physical. It was of a corruptible seed and so our life subject to decay and death. We were born into sin and so in essence born to die. The human seed cannot produce good fruit for it is corruptible in itself. (Romans 5:12)
- b) The new birth, however, is of an incorruptible seed defined here as the word of God. It is the spiritual seed pure and eternal. It is through the imparting of Divine truth into our heart and souls that we are re-created into this image. (James 1:18; 1 John 3:9)
- c) Just as God is unchangeable, living and abiding forever, so is His word. It follows that those born of His word and so born of God take on incorruptibility. His word abides in them forever. (Rom. 5:18-19)

*“The word of God lives and abides forever. This word is a living word, or a lively word. It is a means of spiritual life, to begin it and preserve in it, animating and exciting us in our duty, till it brings us to eternal life: and it is abiding; it remains eternally true, and abides in the hearts of the regenerate for ever.”* Henry

***v.1:24. For all flesh [is] as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away:***

Peter quotes the prophet Isaiah to illustrate as well as to substantiate his contrast of the corruptible and incorruptible seed, that is, to contrast that born of man versus that which is born of God; the physical and temporary versus the spiritual and eternal.

- a) A man’s life in the eternal eyes of God is like grass. The knowledge, strength, wealth and honor which men strive for is like the flower blooming upon the grass. The flower represents all of his accomplishments.

- b) Just as the grass all human life comes to an end. It rises up in green splendor, but soon decays and turns to hay. Every man's flower no matter how big or no matter how beautiful, also decays and falls to the ground. The flesh is temporary and everything that caters to the flesh vain. (Is. 40:6-8; James 4:14)

***v.1:25 But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.***

Billions upon billions of individuals have died as so much grass, but the word of God established in eternity past, the word that spoke the earth into being and generated life itself, remains unchanged, enduring forever.

- a) This is the word, the divine truth of God that is spoken to man in the gospel message by which he is born again unto eternal life. The word by which a man can be obedient, holy and driven by love. The word in which he can live forever.

***v.2:1. Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings,***

Paul continues to exhort his readers to obedience and holiness. In reference to what he has most recently written, namely, that they are born again of incorruptible seed and are to love one another with a pure heart fervently, Peter lists the remnants of their old nature that they must lay aside.

- a) They are to put off these things. The words refer to taking off and discarding old stained clothing that is no longer of any use. It is a metaphor often used by Paul. It is an example that demonstrates to the believer that in Christ he now has the ability as well as the responsibility to remove sin from his life. (Eph. 4:22-24)
- b) All of the sins mentioned have to do with our relationships with others. Peter no doubt still has in mind his exhortation to love our brothers. “Malice” is general ill will, it is the desire to harm or for harm to com to another.
- c) The list continues with “guile” which literally means to ‘catch with bait’ and refers to the art of deception. “Hypocrisy” is pretending to be something you’re not, while “envy” is an attitude of jealousy. The list ends with “evil speakings” which is slander and gossip.
- d) It is interesting to note that the word “all’ is used three times in this verse. This emphasis demonstrates that there are no exceptions and no excuses. These sins and attitudes are to be consciously dealt with if love out of a pure heart is to prevail.

***v.2:2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:***

Putting off the things of the corruptible nature is not enough, but the things of the new nature are to be desired and pursued. Their desire for sin and mischief which they are to lay aside are to be replaced with a desire for the word of God.

- a) The word they are to desire, which has already been likened to an incorruptible seed, is now described as milk. Just as milk is a simple and complete source of nourishment for the body, so the word is the perfect food for the soul. It must remain sincere or unadulterated to be of use, that is, not contaminated with the ideas and philosophies of men. (2 Cor. 2:17)
- b) It was through the word that they knew God. (v. 1:10-12) It was through the word that they had come to God. (v. 1:23) Peter here informs them that it is through the word that they will grow in God. The word is all inclusive. It is God’s complete revelation and designed to meet all of their needs. (2 Tim. 3:16-17)
- c) They are to desire the word as newborn babes. Milk represents everything to the newborn. The newborn demands milk and will to everything in its power to satisfy its hunger for it. In the same way the believer should desire the word of God. (Matt. 4:4)

*“Strong desires and affections to the word of God are a sure evidence of a person’s being born again. If they be such desires as the babe has for the milk, they prove that the person is newborn. They are the lowest evidence, but yet they are certain. Growth and improvement in wisdom and grace are the design and desire of every Christian; all spiritual means are for edification and improvement. The word of God, rightly used, does not leave a man as it finds him, but improves and makes him better.”* Matthew Henry

The word of God is synonymous with truth. The scriptures tell us it is established in the heavens; that it is tried and right. His word is the object of trust and hope. It is described as a lamp and a light. He places it above His name. Jesus Christ is Himself the Word made flesh. The believer should truly hunger for the word and find growth in it.

***v.2:3 If so be ye have tasted that the Lord [is] gracious.***

Having instructed his readers to put off the things of the flesh and to find spiritual growth in the word of God, Peter here reasons that their desire for the word of God, their desire for growth, should be a product of their experience. Having tasted, they should desire more.

- a) They were born again by the word of God, and in that birth had experienced the graciousness or goodness of God. All of the truths he had introduced them to (and reminded them of) in the beginning of this letter was proof of the goodness of God of which they were partakers through the gospel message they had believed and accepted.
- b) They had tasted the goodness of the Lord. They had experienced His graciousness. By continuing to drink in the word they will grow in knowledge and understanding of the love of God. (Eph. 3:17-19)

Peter probably has in mind the words of David in which the hearers are invited to taste the goodness of God. (Ps. 34:8)

***v.2:4. To whom coming, [as unto] a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, [and] precious,***

They come into Christ in whom they have tasted in the daily exercising of their faith. The verb is in the present tense and so points to their on going relationship with Christ and their continued growth in Him.

- a) The Messiah was often referred to in the Old Testament as a stone. Peter here renews the metaphor and so makes the connection by referring to Christ as the living stone. Peter will expand this metaphor to describe the church which is the New Testament temple of God.
- b) The one whom they come to, the Messiah, was disallowed or rejected by men. They did not believe His claims or accept His teachings. They saw no value in Him, seeing fit to kill Him which is the ultimate rejection. (Acts 3:13-15)
- c) However, in opposition to the opinions and beliefs of men, is the truth of God. He is chosen and precious as are all who recognize His eternal worth as their Lord and Savior.

*“However Christ may be disallowed by an ungrateful world, yet he is chosen of God and precious in his account. He is chosen and fixed upon to be the Lord of the universe, the head of the church, the Savior of his people, and the Judge of the world. He is precious in the excellency of his nature, the dignity of his office, and the gloriousness of his services.”* Matthew Henry

***v.2:5 Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.***

Peter expands the metaphor calling his readers (whom he has already established as believers) living stones akin to their Savior, The Living Stone. They, as living stones and along with Christ, are built up to make a spiritual house or temple.

- a) The words of Christ to the women at the well had come to pass, for men no longer needed to worship in a physical building, but themselves were the temple of God worshipping Him in spirit and in truth. (John 4:20-24)
- b) Peter understood the church to be abstract, that is, not clearly and wholly seen as they would a building, and yet seen clearly by God who views it through spiritual eyes. (2 Tim. 2:19) It was the Holy Spirit who placed the living stones upon the living foundation and continues to do so in accordance with the plan of God.
- c) Paul also frequently described the church in the same manner, that being a spiritual house or building. It is a living, growing building and the habitation of God through the Spirit, built upon the foundation which is Jesus Christ. (1 Cor. 3:9-11; Eph. 2:19-22)
- d) As living stones they have the dual purpose, not only serving as a habitation of God, but also forming a holy priesthood. The physical temple with its caste of priests was but a shadow of the things that had now come to pass in Jesus Christ.
- e) Believers are priests in a general sense only, for Jesus Christ alone is the one eternal High Priest after the order of Melchisedec, who offered Himself once for all for the forgiveness of sins and will perfectly hold the office forever. He fulfilled the physical priesthood in Himself. (Heb. 7:24-28)
- f) All believers are called priests to show that there is no distinction between them. There is no priestly caste, but all offer spiritual sacrifice which are themselves. (Rom. 12:1) The spiritual sacrifices of the believer are prayer, thanksgiving and praise. (Heb. 13:15-16)
- g) Finally, the believer, and so his sacrifices, are acceptable to God solely through the agency of Jesus Christ. It is His sacrifice that was accepted by God as proven by His resurrection and only in Him are we also accepted by God. (Rev. 1:6)

***v.2:6 Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.***

Peter quotes the prophet Isaiah from the Old Testament scriptures to support and confirm his metaphoric description of Jesus Christ as a living stone, the foundation upon Whom all believers will stand. That the Messiah was depicted in the scriptures as a stone centuries earlier again provides proof of the sovereignty of God with its fulfillment in Jesus Christ.

- a) God Himself declared through the prophet that He would lay in Sion (Jerusalem) a chief corner stone, which was the principal stone on which a building rested. It was large, solid and carefully squared. It supported the building as well as united its walls.
- b) The individual whom this cornerstone depicted would be elect, that is, chosen by God for this very purpose. He would be precious in the sight of God and of the utmost value. The idea is that He would be “one of a kind,” perfect and ideal for the position as was the only begotten Son of God.

- c) It was promised through the prophet that those that put their faith in Him and so were built upon Him would not be shamed or disappointed. (Is. 28:16)

***v.2:7 Unto you therefore which believe [he is] precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner,***

Peter applies the above prophecy of Isaiah to his readers emphasizing what he had pointed out earlier, namely, that unto them the prophets did minister. These things were written of Christ and the gospel age of which they were now a part.

- a) They, as believers, saw the preciousness of Christ. They saw His inestimable value and worth as the Savior of their souls, the controller of their destiny, and the supplier of all their strength.
- b) Peter contrasts the believers with all other men whom he simply calls the disobedient. He introduces another prophecy taken from the Psalms to demonstrate the folly of the disobedient. (Ps. 118:22-23)
- c) The quote strengthens the argument presented in verse 4. In the prophecy, the builders represent the Jewish leaders and more broadly all whom fail to see Christ as elect and precious of God. (Matt. 21:42-44)

***v.2:8 And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, [even to them] which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.***

Peter returns to the prophet Isaiah providing a quote to demonstrate what becomes of those who are disobedient to the word thus rejecting Jesus Christ. (Is. 8:14)

- a) If one does not see a rock in his path he stumbles over it. If the rock is such that it is firmly planted, the individual can hurt himself in stumbling over it. This is the meaning of the continuing metaphor picturing Jesus as a foundation stone, planted by God, being firmly fixed and immovable.
- b) Those who do not see Him as the elect and precious One of God stumble over Him and His word to their own destruction. Being laid in their path by God, he is constantly in their way. They cannot move Him and they cannot build anything of worth without Him.

*“The same blessed Jesus who is the author of salvation to some is to others the occasion of their sin and destruction. He is set for the rising and fall of many in Israel. He is not the author of their sin, but only the occasion of it; their own disobedience makes them stumble at him and reject him, which he punishes as a judge, with destruction. Those who reject him as a Savior will split upon him as a rock. God himself hath appointed everlasting destruction to all those who stumble at the word, being disobedient. All these who go on resolutely in their infidelity and contempt at the gospel are appointed to eternal destruction; and God from eternity knows who they are. Matthew Henry*

***v.2:9 But ye [are] a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:***

In contrast to the disobedient, Peter once again turns his attention to believers, to his readers who viewed Christ as elect and precious. He uses four Old Testament concepts in describing the assembly of individual believers which make up the church or spiritual house he had described earlier.

- a) The phrase “chosen generation” implies being related or of a common heritage. They were chosen and of a line that began with Abraham, the father of those saved by faith. (Gal. 3:7-9) They were adopted by God, one in Christ through the Spirit and so brothers and sisters in the faith. (Rom. 8:15-15)
- b) Peter has already established all believers as priests in the general sense for all offer spiritual sacrifices to God. Here he emphasizes their unity in the office and affords it the proper dignity with the word “royal.” They were indeed a kingdom of priests. (Ex. 19:5-6; Rev 5:9-10)
- c) The church is as a nation for they are under one head, guided by the same laws written upon their hearts, sharing in common goals and having the same hope. The word “holy” shows it is a spiritual nation, devoted to God and one in His Spirit.
- d) As a generation, as a priesthood, as a nation, they belong to God. They are God’s own purchased possession. As Matthew Henry puts it, *“they are a people of his acquisition, choice, care, and delight.”*
- e) The reason God has chosen us and accomplished these things in the believer, the reason we are afforded these privileges is that we might honor and show forth the praises of God. (Is. 43:21)

*“Everywhere they should vocally proclaim God’s praiseworthy virtues, deeds, power, glory, wisdom, grace, love and holiness. By their conduct, they must testify that they are children of the light and not of darkness.”* Kistemaker

***v.2:10 Which in time past [were] not a people, but [are] now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.***

Peter has contrasted the believer with the disobedient or unbeliever. He now contrasts the believers former and current state. He reminds his readers that they did not always hold the lofty position just ascribed to them. (v. 9), but were rescued from their former condition solely through the agency of God.

- a) The contrast begins at the end of the previous verse when he states that they were called out of darkness. They, both Jew and gentile, resided in spiritual darkness. They lived in ignorance, unbelief, sin and misery. They were without hope, destined to live out their days in this condition rightly described as darkness.
- b) God, however, effectually called them out. It was he who took action and brought them into the light, which is representative of faith, knowledge, understanding and holiness. The light of the gospel is marvelous for it can take a man from the bleakest of darkness and transform him into a child of light. (Col. 1:12-13)
- c) In their former condition in darkness they were not a people. They had no common head, no common direction, cause or hope. They were strangers to each other and to God. In the case of the Jew and gentile they hated each other.

- d) Now they were the people of God forming a holy nation. They had been spiritually joined, serving the common Head, and having a common hope. They were called to “love one another with a pure heart fervently.”
- e) Their former condition can be explained in that they had not obtained mercy. They were hopelessly lost in the darkness of their sin and ignorance. Mercy is by definition unmerited forgiveness. It was obtained in Jesus Christ. It was His mercy that brought them out of darkness and made them the people of God.

*“The best people ought frequently to look back upon what they were in time past. The people of God are the most valuable people in the world; all the rest are not a people, good for little. To be brought into the number of the people of God is a very great mercy, and it may be obtained.”*  
Matthew Henry

***v.2:11 Dearly beloved, I beseech [you] as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;***

Peter loves these individuals with a “pure heart fervently” as seen in his tender address. They are dearly beloved, not only by himself, but more importantly of God. He challenges them, literally begging them in the spirit of love and concern, to live their lives as those called into the light, who have obtained mercy and are now the people of God.

- a) He further describes the people of God as strangers and pilgrims. A stranger is basically a foreigner, that is, one who is not a citizen; who doesn’t really belong in the place he now resides. A pilgrim, on the other hand, is a traveler. He is one who is merely passing through on his way to a specific destination.
- b) The idea is that Christians are citizens of heaven and as such they are strangers in the world. (Phil. 3:20 They are as travelers on a journey home. (Heb. 11:13-16)
- c) With this in mind they are to abstain from fleshly lusts or desires. They are to avoid temptation not letting it have it way with them. (James 1:14-15) According to the analogy, they are not to partake in the wicked standards and customs of the country they are passing through, namely, the world. To do so will impede their journey, slowing it down and making it more difficult.

*“A sojourner in a land, or a pilgrim, does not give himself up to the indulgence of sensual appetites, or to the soft pleasures of the soul. All these would hinder his progress, and turn him off from his great design.”* Barnes

- d) Peter’s language is strong as he tells his readers that these lusts war against the soul. They are traveling in a hostile land. They are behind enemy lines and he pleads with them to be up to the task. (Gal. 5:16-17)

***v.2:12 Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by [your] good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.***

Continuing to exhort his readers, Peter instructs them to live good and honest lives for their own benefit, but especially for the benefit of the non-believers among whom they lived. His previous exhortation to holiness comes to mind. (v.1:15-16) They were to be above reproach in every

aspect of their lives. Their actions should be in total harmony and consistent with their profession. They were the light of the world and were to shine as beacons to the heathen around them.

- a) The reason being, they were the foreigners. They were different, having forsaken the practices of those around them and separating themselves. So they were naturally the targets of every rumor and slander. They were the minority and the ones to be blamed for every problem.
- b) The answer to their persecution was good works. The world should see by their meek and upright behavior that they do not pose a threat of any kind, and that all of the accusations and slander waged against them is totally unfounded. Others should behold or see their honest lifestyle. Again, it should be apparent to all. The light should not be kept under a bushel.
- c) God chooses to use the holy lifestyle and example of believers in the conversion of sinners. Believers are blessed of God to partake in this work. In this way God is glorified in the holy and consistent lifestyle of a believer.
- d) The phrase “day of visitation” probably refers to the conversion of sinners, to His bringing others into the fold. It is the day He visits these sinners with saving grace, and they glorify God for the efforts of those they once hated, whom God used in their conversion.

*“God calls us to be his people in the society in which we live. He wants us to be living testimonies of his love and mercy toward sinners because through our lives he calls others to himself. Our conduct and confusion, then, ought never to be stumbling blocks for our unbelieving neighbors.”* Kistemaker

***v.2:13-14. Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well.***

Having given his readers the general exhortation to live honestly among the gentiles and to continue in good works, Peter will now instruct them in specific areas relating to their lifestyle among the heathen beginning with the question of governmental authority.

- a) Peter tells them that they are to submit, that is, to place themselves under, to become subordinate to, or simply to obey the ordinances of man. The word “ordinances” is a general term not only referring to rules and regulations, but also those who make them as seen by his reference to kings and governors.
- b) Their obedience belongs first of all to the king, representative of the one in charge or the one who has final authority in a particular system of government. Next, it is to all those legitimately appointed by him and themselves in obedience to his commands.
- c) They are to do this for the Lord’s sake. In other words they submit with their eyes fixed on the Lord, knowing that submission is what He desires of them. They do it to further His kingdom and His cause, following His example, who Himself submitted to earthly powers in the fulfillment of God’s plan.

- d) They must remember that God is sovereign. He has the ultimate control over all creation, building up kings and governments and bringing them down to accomplish His purposes. For the most part, God uses governments to restrain evil and to encourage good. (Rom. 13:1-8)
- e) Any individual law of government that is directly opposed to the law of God is not to be obeyed. The only example of such disobedience recorded in the New Testament was in the preaching of the word. (Acts 4:18-20; Acts 5:28-29) But even in these instances it was not a command of the king as supreme.

With the use of the word “every,” one is hard pressed to find excuses to justify civil disobedience no matter how unjust or oppressive a law or government may be perceived. It is interesting to note that when this letter was written the emperor Nero was the “king as supreme.”

***v.2:15 For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men:***

The emphasis once again is put upon the general well doing on the part of the Christian. Described earlier in this letter as having an honest conversation and simply as being holy, Peter says that such behavior is the will of God.

- a) Specifically, it is their good behavior that will be used of God to silence their persecutors and critics. The phrase “put to silence” means ‘to muzzle, to stop the mouth.’ The idea is that such a lifestyle will have the same effect on a believers detractors as a muzzle has on a vicious dog.
- b) A muzzled dog can growl and snarl, but cannot bite. In the same way the opponents of a believer who walks uprightly can growl and snarl out their accusations and evil speakings, but they will have no bite or substance to them.
- c) Their slanders and accusations are a result of their ignorance, that is, their ignorance of God, of His existence, of His demands and of his ways, as well as His love for them.
- d) They are foolish for they have chosen to be ignorant. They ignore the light H has provided them both in creation and in the manifestation of Himself in those whom they slander. (Rom. 1:18-20)

*“In the early days of Christianity believers were often accused of being hostile to the government and blamed for all sorts of crime and general mischief. They were easy targets providing a scapegoat for evil officials and those who were losing power an influence as the result of men turning away from pagan superstitions and embracing Christ. It was the will of God that with well doing they both win over and shut the mouths of their opponents.”* Matthew Henry

***v.2:16 As free, and not using [your] liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God.***

In light of his command that they are to submit to civil authorities, Peter explains to them what they perceived as a paradox between, on the one hand, freedom in Christ, and on the other hand, submission to worldly governments and ordinances.

- a) They were indeed free in Christ. Their allegiance was to Him and Him alone. No man or government could oust Him from their spirit, mind, heart and will. They were free from sin and death. They were now captivated by Christ, no longer being in bondage to Satan and the world. (Eph. 4:8)
- b) They were not to use the liberty they had in Christ as a covering or cloak, meaning they were not to use their freedom as an excuse to engage in evil. As Kistemaker puts it, “*As soon as the Christian employs freedom to advance his own cause, he no longer obeys the law of love; in fact, he fails to serve God.*”

Paul often dealt with this misconception on the part of Christians as to their freedom in Christ. Some insisted they had liberty to sin, while others sought to use their freedom in Christ to get out of undesirable situations or to further their own interests in some way. Specifically, using liberty in Christ to get out of an undesirable marriage or to rebel against a slave owner was condemned by Paul.

- c) They were free from the world, but servants of Christ. They were bought with a price and belonged to Him. They were subject to His will, free and empowered by Him to do good. (1 Cor 7:22-23)

***v.2:17 Honour all [men]. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.***

With four short pointed commands, Peter summarizes their duty as servants of God. These behaviors are the will of God that they should incorporate into their lives as those free in Christ and which will put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.

- a) As believers they are to honor all men according to the respect that is due them in view of the rank or office they hold. In general, every man is to be respected as made in the image and likeness of God.
- b) There is to be love manifested among themselves. As brothers in Christ they have the same Head, and are indwelt by the same Holy Spirit. Love and commitment among them should abound. (Gal. 6:10)
- c) Believers are to fear God, that is, to reverence and honor Him as God. They are to be in awe of Him in all duty and submission. His will should be their will and His ways their ways.
- d) Finally, they are again reminded to respect the king with that honor that is particularly due him in light of the office he holds.

*“In respect to those duties which pertain to others, we are open to public view. The eye of the world is upon us. The judgment of the world in regard to us is made up from their observation of the manner in which we perform them. If religion fails there, they judge that it fails altogether; and however devout we may be in private, if it is not seen by the world that our religion leads to the faithful performance of the duties which we owe in the various relations of life, it will be regarded as of little value.”* Barns

***V.2:18 Servants, [be] subject to [your] masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward.***

Peter specifically addresses the servants and slaves among his readers on the subject of submission to men and their institutions. He does so probably because of their great numbers among the converts, but also because it provides the meanest example of such commanded submission.

- a) The command is for the servant to submit to the master with all the respect that is due him. The character or the disposition of the master was to be of no consequence. Whether gentle or harsh their duty as believers was clear.
- b) Peter demonstrates that as believers they were not to be reactionaries. Their behavior was not to be relative in respect to the behavior of others. As Christians they were to think and act independently, always in accordance with their prime directive which is to bring glory and honor to God.

***v.2:19 For this [is] thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.***

With the word “man,” Peter is no longer primarily addressing the servants, but all of his readers who at some point or under some circumstances would suffer wrongfully or be exposed to some injustice. The slaves, however, remain the extreme example and serves as the point of reference and comparison for all the others.

- a) Peter tells them it is commendable to endure the grief brought about by injustice, that is, it is acceptable to God; He is pleased with such behavior on the part of the believer. The qualification is that it be endured being mindful of God or with a consciousness that such is His will. (Eph. 6:5-8)
- b) Christianity is the religion of service, sacrifice and self-denial. It's virtues are meekness, patience and longsuffering. God tells us that only good can overcome evil. (Matt. 5:38-48)

All have an innate sense of justice. God is well pleased with the believer and, in fact, calls him to suppress this feeling and voluntarily surrender his rights to promote peace and the greater good. As the apostle Paul stated, “Love covers a multitude of sins.”

***v.2:20 For what glory [is it], if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer [for it], ye take it patiently, this [is] acceptable with God.***

Peter emphasizes his point by stating the negative, asking them to what credit is enduring suffering patiently if they are a fault of if it is deserved.

- a) The word “buffeted” means to ‘strike with the fist.’ Peter again uses the extreme example telling them that if they take a beating it is not noteworthy in the least if they are at fault.
- b) However, if their actions were righteous, if their consciences were clear and they in some way suffered for it and bore grief with patience with Christ in mind, with this behavior God is well pleased. It is an acceptable sacrifice. (Matt. 5:11-12)

***v.2:21 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:***

Lest there be any argument with what he has said, lest there be any debate, Peter puts before them the example of Christ. It is Christ who represents the ultimate example of meekness, patience, longsuffering and love.

- a) It is Jesus Christ who endured the ultimate in grief and who suffered the ultimate wrong. He took it all patiently in their behalf and for their benefit. This, in turn, is their calling. They are to pick up their cross and follow Him, walking in the path that he Himself walked.
- b) Through what He endured, they have become the holy people of God. They, being pilgrims and strangers, are now His representatives in a hostile land. As His followers are they to expect better treatment than what He Himself received? (John 15:20-21)
- c) Paul considered it a privilege not only to know Christ, but to suffer for His sake. (Phil. 1:29) It is obvious that we cannot endure the same degree of suffering and injustice as did Christ. We cannot take the sins of the world upon our shoulders. The example we are to follow is to endure suffering in the same manner as did Christ.

***v.2:22 Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:***

Peter puts before them the example of Christ, first showing that His case represents the greatest record of injustice ever perpetrated upon a man. Peter knows that when the example of Christ is fresh in their minds living a holy life becomes an easier task.

- a) Jesus Christ was sinless. He was totally innocent of any wrongdoing. He was without deceit or hypocrisy being everything He proclaimed to be. (Is. 52:9)
- b) Unlike Christ, no suffering can ever come our way which is completely unjust, for we, far from being innocent, are sinners. The idea is that, if He, who is perfect patiently endured grief, how much more should we His imperfect followers follow in His footsteps.

***v.2:23 Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed [himself] to him that judgeth righteously:***

Having established that Christ suffered wrongfully, Peter now relates to his readers that Christ endured it all patiently. Peter was an eyewitness. He saw Christ surrender Himself in the garden and was a spectator at His trial before the high priest. He now relates to them the example of their Savior which they are called to follow.

- a) When he was mocked, blasphemed and false accusations brought against Him, He stood silent. He did not lash out at them or partake in their foolishness. When they physically beat Him, He did not resort to threats or violence of any kind.
- b) Instead, He placed Himself in the hands of the Father, submitting Himself and His cause to the One who judges righteously. He knew that only God could ultimately render true and perfect justice.

*“Provocations to sin can never justify the commission of it. The rudeness, cruelty, and injustice of enemies, will not justify Christians in reviling and revenge, the reasons for sin can never be so great, but we have always stronger reasons to avoid it.”* Matthew Henry

***v.2:24 Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.***

Peter reminds them of the extent of Christ’s sufferings as well as their glorious design. Much more than simply an example of patience under suffering, he bore the weight of the penalty for their sins.

- a) Jesus Himself was both Priest and Victim. In this way He offered Himself, excluding all others from any participation in the act of redemption. He who knew no sin became sin, taking our curse upon Himself. (2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 3:13)
- b) As a result, those who are made righteous through the sacrifice of Christ are dead to sin. In Christ they are free from sin and death, so this spiritual reality or position they held in Christ should be manifested in their lives. (Rom. 6:6-14)
- c) Peter quotes Isaiah to show that it is Jesus Christ of whom Isaiah prophesied. The healing spoken of is the healing of our souls, that is, our salvation. It is through the suffering and death of Christ that the believing sinner is made whole. (Is. 53:5-6)

***v.2:25 For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.***

Continuing to quote Isaiah, Peter contrasts their former and current positions. Having shown them Christ as their Savior and their example, he now presents Him as their protector and guide.

- a) In their former condition they were as sheep, an animal not noted for its intelligence, but prone to wander and in need of constant care and protection.
- b) Christ came to seek and to save those that were lost. He is the Good Shepherd and the Overseer of their souls. (John 10:27-29)

***v.3:1. Likewise, ye wives, [be] in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives;***

Continuing his discussion on submission, Peter instructs wives to be in subjection to their husbands. Although the command applies to all women in a marriage relationship, Peter's focus is on the Christian woman married to an unbelieving husband.

- a) Christianity did not excuse the believer from civic duty, it did not give the Christian slave the right to rebel against his master, likewise, the Christian wife did not have the right to challenge or to usurp the authority and position of her husband whether a believer or not.
- b) They are to submit only to their own husbands which shows women are not inferior to men, however, when a woman enters into the God ordained institution of marriage she submits to the leadership role of the husband according to the divine ordering that God has established. (Eph. 5:22-24; Col. 3:18)
- c) The phrase “obey not he word” refers to the husband who is not receptive to the gospel message. When this is the case, the believing wife could win him over through her behavior.
- d) No one can be saved apart from believing the word of the gospel message. The idea is that the behavior of the wife can silently point to the message, that is, demonstrating it constantly as it is manifested in every aspect of her life. This may cause the husband to revisit or take another look at the message once he observes first hand its worth.
- e) The word “may” shows that this is not some foolproof formula guaranteed by God to save an unbelieving husband, but this is behavior in which God is well pleased. It is the example the believing wife is called to give.

***v.3:2 While they behold your chaste conversation [coupled] with fear.***

Peter describes some of the specific behaviors that the husband should behold or observe in his wife. This should not be taken as behavior that only women with unbelieving husbands should exhibit for the distinct purpose of winning them over, but Peter gives a description of the lifestyle or behavior that should be manifested in all godly women.

- a) Using some of Paul's previous thoughts, the behaviors he will now describe are the will of God. They are thankworthy and will put to silence the ignorance of foolish men and foolish husbands. They are good works that will glorify God.
- b) The word “fear” refers to reverence, respect and honor shown to one to whom it is due. In this context it most likely refers to God. The husband should behold the wife's holy lifestyle together with a great reverence for her Lord. It would be synonymous with Peter's earlier phrase “for conscience toward God.” The husband would know her behavior is a direct result of her relationship with God.

The word “fear” can also be in reference to the husband, the sense being that the wife is to render to the husband the honor and respect due him as the one in the leadership role. (Eph. 5:33)

***v.3:3-4 Whose adorning let it not be that outward [adorning] of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But [let it be] the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, [even the ornament] of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.***

The women knew how to enhance their beauty and to cover or distract from physical flaws. Peter uses this tendency of the women to adorn themselves outwardly to setup a comparison, and so, help them to understand the importance of cultivating inner virtue.

- a) Much time and effort would be put into the arranging and decorating of the hair, in the wearing of jewelry and the selection of clothing. This is how they were taught to keep their husbands, win them over, and please them, in order to survive as the weaker sex in a repressive culture.
- b) Peter does not prohibit these things in themselves, but questions the motives behind them as well as the priority they held in the women's lives.
- c) Now, as those begotten again, they were to cultivate the spiritual qualities and virtues bestowed upon them by the Holy Spirit. It is the beauty of the changed heart, which is hidden or concealed, but must now be made manifest to the glory of God.
- d) Unlike the physical adornments, all of which will inevitably be rendered useless, their spiritual beauty is incorruptible. It will never fade, but, in fact, if cultivated, will not only retain its beauty but become even more beautiful with time.
- e) Specifically, Peter mentions a meek and quiet spirit which he deems a type of spiritual ornament that in the eyes of God is most becoming and valuable. It is valuable for He chooses to use it to manifest Himself and His truth to the unbelieving husband as well as to the watching world.
- f) A meek and quiet spirit is described by Matthew Henry as, "*a tractable easy temper of mind, void of passion, pride and immoderate anger, discovering itself in a quiet obliging behavior toward their husbands and families.*"

***v.3:5 For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands:***

Peter offers as an example an unnamed group of women from the Old Testament. These were the great women of old, their stories recorded in the history of God's people. He probably had especially in mind the wives of the patriarchs.

- a) His appeal to these women of old demonstrates that his commands to those whom he now addressed were not new. Such behavior was God's intent from the beginning and those who took to heart His way were deemed by Him to be holy.
- b) Their behavior was born in their trust in God. Trust in Him was their source of strength and the enabling force in their lives. They did not trust in the abilities, judgment and leadership of their husbands, but in God. It was "with a conscience toward God" or "for the Lord's sake" that they adorned themselves with a meek and quiet spirit submitting to their own husbands.
- c) These women set the example or created the pattern as to how a wife should behave. By

laying their example before them Peter stresses the fact that Christianity had not changed their role as wives, but, had enhanced it, enabling them through the Holy Spirit to better carry out their God ordained duties.

***v.3:6 Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.***

From among the holy women of whom Peter spoke, he singles out Sara, the wife of Abraham, and puts her example before them. They are to submit to their own husbands, obeying them as did Sara who gave to Abraham all the respect that was due him as her husband.

- a) Calling him lord was customary of the time and culture, but nevertheless provides a striking example of her acceptance of her God ordained role.
- b) Peter tells them that if they follow her example in these regards they are the daughters of Sara. This is to be taken in the spiritual sense for just as Abraham is the father of those that be of faith, (Gal. 3:7-9) so Sara is the mother of those women who out of faith and trust in God submit to their husbands.
- c) A direct translation of the phrase “not afraid with any amazement” is “not fearing any fear.” The idea seems to be not to give way to fear in the discharge of this duty, that is, to persevere and to remain submissive even if it does not appear to be in your best interests. Matthew Henry puts it, “*do not, through fear of your husbands, either quit the truth you profess or neglect your duty to them, but readily perform it, without either fear or force, out of conscience towards God and sense of duty to them.*”

Abraham put Sara into some pretty interesting predicaments through his own lack of faith. In every instance Sara obeyed Abraham, herself trusting in God, and was delivered directly by God before any harm could come to Sara or her purity threatened.

***v.3:7 Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with [them] according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.***

Next, Peter addresses Christian husbands instructing them as to their duty toward their wives whether their wives be believers or not. As with his instructions to the wives, the commands he gives are the will of God. It is behavior in which God is well pleased and a manifestation of His Spirit within them.

- a) They are to dwell with their wives in accordance with knowledge, that is, according to the truth of God and not according to the pagan and even Jewish ideas that had perverted the institution of marriage. As Barnes puts it, “*they should seek to obtain just views of what Christianity enjoins in regard to this relation, and that they should allow those intelligent views to control them in all their intercourse with their wives.*”
- b) They are to give honor unto the wife. This knowledge had all but been lost up to the time of Christ. Women of every society and religion were given little honor or respect being thought of and treated as property by their husbands.
- c) This honor should come from the knowledge that the man is not superior in himself, but was given greater strength by God according to His design. Man’s leadership role and

authority was also God given. Likewise, the woman was created the weaker vessel or body in accordance with her God ordained role.

- d) The husband is to honor, respect, provide and care for his wife in accordance with the will of God. In the Christian marriage the husband must never forget that the wife voluntarily submits to him in trust of God. (Eph. 5;25-28)
- e) Finally, They are due honor because they are equal spiritually in the sight of God. They are, together with the man, children of God and heirs of eternal life. (Gal. 3:28)

“Under every other system of religion but the Christian system, woman has been regarded as in every way inferior to men. Christianity teaches that, in respect to her highest interests, the interests of religion, she is every way his equal. She is entitled to all the hopes and promises which religion imparts. She is redeemed as he is. She is addressed in the same language of tender invitation. She has the same privileges and comforts which religion imparts here and she will be elevated to the same rank and privileges in heaven.” Barnes.

- f) Lest the husband fail to submit to this knowledge and not so honor his wife, Peter tells him such disobedience and rebellion will remain an obstacle between himself and God. (Matt. 5:23-24)

***v.3:8. Finally, [be ye] all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, [be] pitiful, [be] courteous:***

Having offered specific instructions to servants, wives and husbands respectively, Peter now returns to addressing them all. The general theme continues to be the practice of submission and humility among themselves and with others. Their lifestyle is to be a witness to the world and a means of winning others to Christ.

- a) Peter instructs them all to be of one mind. He says this in view of the fact that together they are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a peculiar people, forming a holy nation unto God. They are all joint heirs with Christ, energized by the same lively hope, being indwelt by the same Holy Spirit. (Gal. 5:15)
- b) Being of one mind does not mean that they all share the same opinions or that no differences exist between them, but presents the idea of being in harmony, that is, heading in the same general direction with a common goal and purpose. It is all recognizing the same Head and all placing themselves under the authority of the word. (Rom. 15:5; Phil. 3:15)

*“In view of the variety of gifts and talents God has given his people, differences of opinion exist. Peter, however wants Christians to be governed by the mind of Christ, so that differences do not divide but rather enrich the church. Therefore, he exhorts the believers to ‘live in harmony with one another.’”* Kistemaker

- c) One-mindedness should generate within them true care and concern for each other which is the meaning of the word compassion. They should be united with others sharing in their joys as well as their sorrows. As Barnes puts it, “*It describes the state of*

*mind which exists when we enter into the feelings of others as if they were our own, as the different parts of the body are affected by that which affects one.”* (Rom. 12:15-16)

- d) They are to love each other as those of the same family. So not only should this love be great and genuine, but should flow naturally from their bond in Christ. (v. 1:22; 2:17)
- e) Pitiful means tenderhearted. It is a manifestation of their love for each other that enables them to become emotionally involved in the needs and sufferings of others. Included is the idea of being merciful or always being ready to show mercy.
- f) In a way, the command to be courteous sums up all of the above. It incorporates being friendly, polite and approachable. It is displaying a humility that enables one to put others above himself and to be a servant in the example of Jesus Christ.

***v.3:9 Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.***

Peter instructs his readers that they are not to repay evil with evil neither in word or in deed. Whether dealing with believers or unbelievers there are no set of circumstances which justify a sinful response on the part of the believer.

- a) Although totally contrary to their natural inclinations in the flesh, they are to bless their enemies. To such behavior they have been called as followers of Jesus Christ, who taught them that evil is overcome with good both in His words as well as with His example. (Matt. 5:38-48)
- b) The motivation of such behavior is that the believers portion from God is blessing, both now and in eternity. The blessings of the believer were not earned or even deserved, but inherited. (Eph. 2:4-7)
- c) Being recipients of such blessings, the greatest of which is eternal life, how can the believer desire anything less than that others may share in it. Believers are told that one of the ways to spread His favor is to follow His example.

*“Knowing that you were called to be Christians in order that you should obtain a blessing infinite and eternal in the heavens. Expecting such a blessing yourselves, you should be willing to scatter blessings on all others. You should be ready to bear all their reproaches, and even to wish them well. The hope of eternal life should make your minds calm; and the prospect that you are to be so exalted in heaven should fill your hearts with benignity and love.”* Barnes

***v.3:10 For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile:***

Peter quotes from the Old Testament, specifically the Book of Psalms, both to add authority to his teachings as well as to demonstrate that God honors a holy lifestyle. Incorporating the behaviors and virtues into their lives which he has been describing will bring blessings from God in this present life.

- a) Those that love life and desire good days, that is, days of joy, happiness and comfort are those addressed. It is implied in the Psalm, as well as here, that such is the desire of all men. It is a desire instilled within them by God and so it is good.
- b) Christians especially are to love their life treating it as the precious gift of God that it is. They are to live it to the fullest, finding purpose and fulfillment in Jesus Christ. Their

days are to be meaningful and worthwhile as they seek to glorify God in the life they have been given. (Ps. 118:24)

- c) Peter expands upon verse 9 where he dealt with evil deeds and evil words. He first addresses the latter, employing the Psalm, that tells them, in essence, to tame their tongue. Keeping their tongue from evil will go a long way in promoting good days. They should refrain from slander, lies, obscenity and all so-called evil speaking. (James 3:6-12)
- d) Further, they should refrain from the use of guile or deceit. Included would be erroneous and false opinions as well as anything that would lead others astray or tend to deceive them.

***v.3:11 Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it.***

Still through the use of the Psalm, Peter deals with evil deeds, telling them simply to avoid (eschew) all evil. The apostle Paul's advice to the Thessolonians was for the believer to avoid even the mere appearance of evil. (1 Thess. 5:22)

- a) To remain neutral or stagnant is never an option to the believer. He cannot dwell in some imagined safe-haven between good and evil, but in refraining from evil, must do good. To do good is the way of Christ, who Himself did good unto all men. (Gal. 6:9-10)
- b) Again in accordance with the teachings and example of Christ, the believer is to desire peace in his life. The word is general and refers to peace in every aspect of our lives, that is, the believer is to seek peace with God, with his own conscience and with all others. (Matt. 5:9)
- c) The word "ensue" gives the idea of pursuing after something that is fleeing; or running after something to catch it or grab hold of it. Peace in this life is so elusive because the "net" that will catch it must be woven with many virtues that are so contrary to our nature. Love, humility, self-denial and contentment are its ingredients.
- d) Compromise is a way of peace, but not where Christian truth and principal are at stake. Sound doctrine can never be compromised in the name of peace. The believers first duty is always to the truth of God. (Matt. 10:34-35; Rom. 12:18)

*"The avoiding of evil, and doing of good, is the way of contentment and happiness both here and hereafter. It is the duty of Christians not only to embrace peace when it is offered, but to seek and pursue it when it is denied: peace with societies, as well as peace with particular persons, in opposition to division and contention, is what is here intended."* Matthew Henry

***v.3:12 For the eyes of the Lord [are] over the righteous, and his ears [are open] unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord [is] against them that do evil.***

Continuing to quote the Psalm, the reason is given why practicing the above behaviors, namely, keeping the tongue in check, avoiding all evil, doing good, and pursuing peace, will generally lead to a long and happy life. The reason being that God is attentive and sympathetic to those who live righteously.

- a) Such behavior is his way. His eyes are on the righteous which means that their efforts do not go unnoticed by Him. He looks upon them with special favor affording them His divine protection.
- b) He hears their prayers meaning He is sympathetic to their needs and to their situation. He will come to their aid for they have submitted to his ways. (Ps. 34:12-16)
- c) On the contrary, the face of the Lord is against those who practice evil. The expression means that He is displeased with them. They have gone their own way and will be chastised or punished. He will abandon them to their unrighteousness to be consumed by the unholy things they desire. Their days will tend to be shortened being full of stress, tension and anxiety, which their chosen lifestyle brings upon them.

*“The general sentiment in these verses is, that while length of days is desirable, it is to be secured by virtue and religion, or that virtue and religion will contribute to it. This is not to be understood as affirming that all who are righteous will enjoy a long life; and that in fire, and flood, and war, and the pestilence, the righteous and the wicked often perish together. But still there is a sense in which it is true that a life of virtue and religion will contribute to length of days.”* Barnes

***v.3:13 And who [is] he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?***

Seeing that the Lord is with those who are good or who are practicing righteousness, Peter asks them the rhetorical question. It is synonymous with the question Paul put to the Romans, namely, “If God be for us, who can be against us?”

- a) The obvious answer to both Peter’s as well as Paul’s question is no one. No real harm can come to them for they are spiritually secure, being kept by the power of God. (v. 1:5) Even in this life God will not forsake them for He ever stands by their side, ever ready to provide them grace and strength.

***v.3:14 But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy [are ye]: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled;***

Peter has been instructing his readers that evil is overcome by good, the reason being that God is with those who are righteous, but against those who practice evil. The results, however, are not always immediately realized and suffering for righteousness will occur.

- a) The phrase “but and if ye suffer” conveys the idea that this is a rare occurrence. The chances that righteous acts will promote an evil response are remote, however, such an occasion is cause for rejoicing.
- b) As Barnes puts it, “*The meaning here is, not that they would find positive enjoyment in persecution on account of righteousness, but that they were to regard it as a blessed condition.*” They would have the peace of mind knowing they were in God’s will, that their actions brought him glory, and that they were the benefactors of His grace. (Matt. 5:10-12)

The world in these times was a rough place. The strong survived. Any weakness was exploited. An eye for an eye mentality kept the balance for evil was sure to be repaid with evil. Believers it would seem were reluctant or were at least hesitant to put into practice the truths which the

apostle taught and to which the Holy Spirit within them bore witness. Peter calls them to step out in faith practicing goodness and righteousness while trusting in God. Scholars tell us that words such as “meekness” and “humility” had a negative connotation in these times. In the language they were words of cowardice and weakness. It was the Christian movement and specifically those who did step out in faith in obedience to the Holy Spirit that made them words of virtue.

- c) They are to practice righteousness in faith, not fearing what others might or could do to them; not fearing the evil they would bring upon them. They are not even to worry or to be disturbed by their threatenings as they put their trust in God. (Matt. 10:28)

*“To suffer for righteousness sake is the honor and happiness of a Christian; to suffer for the cause of truth, a good conscience, or any part of a Christian duty, is a great honor; the delight of it is greater than the torment, the honor more than the disgrace, and the gain much greater than the loss.”* Matthew Henry

***v.3:15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and [be] ready always to [give] an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:***

Instead of fear and worry they are to sanctify God in their hearts. The word means to ‘honor and venerate,’ that is, they are to have a proper view of Him as the Lord God in their innermost being. The idea is that such action would combat and so replace the fear of men.

- a) Boldly living righteously, displaying reverence to God and fearlessness of men, will elevate God and His ways above those of the world. It will display a faith and trust in Him and His word over the wisdom and philosophies of the world. (Ps. 27:1)
- b) Righteousness in an evil world will stand out as a light in the darkness. The curiosity of friend as well as foe will be aroused. Their beliefs, ways and motivations will be questioned, challenged, and ridiculed. Peter’s instruction is to be “ready always to give an answer to every man.”
- c) No matter what the situation or circumstance, no matter who is involved, they are to be prepared to give an answer or if need be to defend their faith, which Peter calls “the hope within them.” The gospel message is the source of their hope and they are to ever be faithful witnesses to its truth and power. (2 Tim. 4:2)

*“Whereas unbelievers, your persecutors especially, may suffer at your hope of future glory, as vain and groundless, and at yourselves, as mad or foolish, for venturing the loss of all in this world, and exposing yourselves to so many sufferings, in expectation of ye know not what uncertainties in the other; do ye therefore be always ready to defend and justify your faith against all objectors, and to show how reasonable your hope of salvation is, and on how sure a foundation it is built.”* Matthew Poole

- d) Furthermore, the answer must be rendered with a proper spirit, that being, in meekness and with a reverence for God. The believer must be ever mindful of his former ignorance and that his own recovery can only be attributed to the grace and mercy of God. He must answer with courage and in truth, but always as a representative of His Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (2 Tim. 2:23-26)

***v.3:16. Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.***

In answering men and in giving witness of the faith and hope within them it is important that they themselves have a good conscience. Their own mind and heart must judge them favorably as to their lifestyle, not detecting hypocrisy, but testifying to them that their words and actions are in harmony with the position they hold in Christ.

- a) They will be accused and evil spoken of, but there must not be any substance to the accusations brought against them. (2 Tim. 3:12) One who has a good conscience has the peace of Christ in his heart and can stand face to face with an accuser in confidence without fear.
- b) It is their perseverance in a holy lifestyle that will prove the accusations of their accusers to be false. The doctrine and example of Jesus Christ, as well as His Spirit that lives within them, will be vindicated by God. His followers will not be put to shame if they abide in Him. (v. 2:12; Ps. 37:5-6)

There is another aspect of good conscience, that being, that it is enlightened or grounded in truth. It must have a proper view of right and wrong, good and evil, as established in the teachings and example of Jesus Christ. It is a conscience in which the indwelling Holy Spirit rules. Peter assumes this is true of his readers and here instructs them to have what we might call a clear conscience. The consciences of unsaved men and women are faulty. They are under the dominion of error, superstition, ignorance or even fanaticism. (Acts 26:7-11; Prov. 14:12)

***v.3:17 For [it is] better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing.***

This verse is transitional as it sums up the topic at hand and also introduces to them the example of Jesus Christ who Himself suffered greatly, even though he was without sin or fault.

- a) Peter tells them it is better to suffer for well doing then for evil doing, for in suffering with a clean conscience the believer knows his trial is the will of God. He knows it was not his own doing or that it could have been avoided, but simply is the hand of God at work in his life.
- b) He knows that he will emerge from it, all the better, and that it will be used by God to His glory according to His divine will and purpose. Such suffering will directly benefit the believer or be to the benefit of another, but was surely necessary in the mind of God for it was His will. (v. 1:7)

***v.3:18. For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:***

For the second time in this letter, Peter presents to his readers Jesus Christ who is the ultimate example of one who experienced suffering for doing nothing but good. He was just, that is,

totally sinless and yet He endured great humiliation and suffering in order to secure a people for God.

- a) Believers are those whom He secured and who are called to follow His example.

(v. 2:21-25) “Christ hath once suffered,” that is, He temporarily put aside His Godhead before being restored to sit at the Father’s right hand. Likewise, the believer is called once to suffer. This life is temporary along with all of its trials and tribulations. The believer will be quickened by the same Spirit to live forever in glory.

- b) Their suffering also parallels that of Christ in that when they suffer for well-doing, having a clear conscience, it is usually for the benefit of others. It is to put to shame their accusers and to win them to Christ by their example. (v. 2:12, 3:16)

***v.3:19-20 By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.***

Peter presents to his readers, in Noah, an Old Testament example of one who lived righteously before God having a good conscience and endured great suffering and ridicule as a result. For some 120 years Noah preached the word of God and was persecuted relentlessly.

- a) It was the preincarnate Christ who through the Spirit spoke God’s message through Noah. Earlier Peter had told them it was the preincarnate Spirit of Christ that spoke through the prophets. (v. 1:11) Peter impresses upon his readers that salvation is one continuous plan orchestrated by the one unchanging God and so again re-enforcing his teaching of the foreknowledge of God.
- b) Peter demonstrates that the “eyes to the Lord are over the righteous and his ears open to their prayers.” He shows them that suffering for righteousness sake is sometimes God’s will and pleasing to Him. He demonstrates that God delivers the righteous in His time. Such was true with Noah in what is called the old world, such was true with Jesus Christ, and such is true with believers who follow after Him.
- c) The spirits in prison are the spirits of those disobedient individuals who contended with Noah and so the Spirit of Christ that energized him. They have been judged and are kept in the prison of hell on account of their disobedience.
- d) Noah, his wife, his sons and their wives, were delivered by God. They were rewarded for their suffering in righteousness as the same water that destroyed the world carried them to physical salvation.

***v.3:21. The like figure whereunto [even] baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:***

The story of Noah and his being saved or delivered by the water brings to Peter’s mind the rite of baptism. In the words of Barnes, “*baptism corresponded to, or had a resemblance to, the water by which Noah was saved.*” Peter however does not share the specific correspondence or resemblance that he had in mind, but only that a relationship existed.

- a) So the deliverance of Noah symbolized baptism, but baptism in itself is a symbol of the believers salvation, as Peter goes on to explain in a parenthetical expression.

- b) They are not saved by the external rite itself which amounts in essence to simply a washing of the flesh, but instead by the spiritual reality that it represents, namely, a profession resulting in a good or enlightened conscience before God.
- c) The true power to save them is manifested or proven in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. In His resurrection lies their sure hope. (v. 1:3) Baptism is the outward sign that demonstrates the spiritual reality of their identification in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

To the first century Christians to whom Peter wrote, baptism was a major step of faith. It was a public proclamation of their identification with Jesus Christ. It opened them up to persecution and the suffering for righteousness sake.

***v.3:22 Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.***

Peter digressed from his original example of Jesus Christ, speaking about Noah and then baptism, but has now come full circle in speaking of Christ's resurrection from the dead. Taking up where he left off in verse 18, Peter will complete his illustration of Jesus Christ speaking of His triumph and reward.

- a) Having been quickened by the Spirit, Jesus ascended into the heavens where He sits at the right hand of the Father exalted above every creature. His victory complete, He intercedes on behalf of those who trust in His name. (Phil. 2:9-11)

***v.4:1. Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin;***

Peter again places Jesus Christ before his readers as their example as to suffering. Whereas Christ is their example as to how they as Christians should behave when treated unjustly, He is also their example as to their inner battle and sufferings against sin.

- a) Jesus Christ truly and completely became a man, and as a man, suffered in the flesh. He was tempted. (Heb. 4:15) He learned obedience in the flesh, something that was foreign to his nature as God. (Heb. 5:8) In the garden He resisted temptation to the point of blood. (Luke 22:44) He went to the cross, and dying, he defeated the reign of sin in the flesh.
- b) The mindset of Christ was one of humility and obedience. He submitted his will to that of the Father and walked the path of holiness and righteousness to the point of sacrificing his life.
- c) Peter calls this mindset a weapon as he instructs them to arm themselves with it. Keeping their mind focused on their position in Christ, their eternal destiny, their call to holiness and obedience, all within view of the example of Christ will keep the flesh in check. (v.1:13)
- d) The battle is fought in the mind. They must be determined in their mind and in their will to deny the flesh; to suffer in the flesh with the goal of putting it to death. The writer in the letter to the Hebrews puts the example of Christ before his readers prior to asking them the very pointed question if they had “resisted unto blood, striving against sin.” (Heb.12:1-4)
- e) When one resists and denies the flesh, he does not sin. The implication of this final phrase is that the believer is identified with Christ in His death. He shares in the victory of Christ over the flesh through the indwelling Holy Spirit. (Rom. 6:6-12)

*“As Christ suffered in his human nature, do you, according to your baptismal vow and profession, make your corrupt nature suffer, by putting to death the body of sin by self-denial and mortification; for, if you do thus suffer, you will be conformable to Christ in his death and resurrection, and will cease from sin.”* Matthew Henry

***v.4:2 That he no longer should live the rest of [his] time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.***

Having proved that they as believers now, in Christ, possess a real power over sin, Peter exhorts them not to live out their earthly lives catering to the lusts that are common to men. Instead, they are free to do the will of God.

- a) Peter tells them they have been freed from the world and its power over them in order that they could follow the will of God. The argument once again is that their lives should be in harmony with their position in Christ. (Rom. 6:12-14; 1 John 2:15-17)

***v.4:3 For the time past of [our] life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries:***

Peter reminds them of their past, reasoning with them that they had spent sufficient time following after their own will being driven by their heathen lusts.

- a) Peter's argument is not that they had their fill of those things and it was now time to try something new, but he speaks to those who have been enlightened, who can now look back on their past and view it through the eyes of God.
- b) He wants them to see their former lifestyle as reckless, empty, and without direction or purpose. He wants them to see the time they wasted, the people they hurt, the general mischief they had caused, and the offense they had been to their Creator.
- c) Peter provides a vivid reminder of the things and behaviors that dominated them in their not to distant past. These are the things they had been delivered from, which they should now be ashamed of and which they should leave far behind as they strive to do the will of God, walking in His ways.
- d) The course of their lives were in the past ruled by general outward acts of immorality which is lasciviousness. Lusts refer to the inward desires and motivations in which both the above and the following described acts are born. They sought escape and fulfillment in drink, literally "overflowing with wine."
- e) Revellings, banquetings, and the committing of abominable idolatries have to do with irresponsible corporate behavior in its escalating stages. It is being out of control and includes gluttony, drunkenness and sexual immorality. In this type of setting many pagan gods were worshipped.

*"Those who are now Christians, take the church at large, have had ample opportunity of making the fullest trial of what sin and the world can furnish. They all feel that the past is enough for this manner of living. It is 'sufficient' to satisfy them that the world cannot furnish what the soul demands. They need a better portion; and they can now see that there is no reason why they should desire to continue and experiment in regard to what the world can furnish. On that unwise and wicked experiment they have expended time enough; and satisfied with that, they desire to return to it no more."* Barnes

***v.4:4. Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with [them] to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of [you]:***

From the vices that once controlled their lives, the apostle proceeds to speak about the company they once kept. Their acceptance of Jesus Christ and their identification with him had not only brought about a change in their lifestyle, but also a change in their relationships to their former companions and the world in general.

- a) Their former companions cannot understand why they no longer recklessly pursue or run to what was considered the good and worthwhile things of the world. The readers were now as strangers to them. Their former companions no longer felt that they knew them or shared in the same motivations and interests.
- b) "The natural man cannot understand the things of God" and so they were at a loss to explain why the believers among them would deny themselves the sure pleasures this life had to offer; the things that in their mind made their miserable existence worthwhile, for what Barnes calls "a severe and gloomy superstition."

- c) Not able to understand, when the believer's unconverted companions realized they could no longer influence or change them back, they felt betrayed, judged and convicted. Different became evil, which led to slander and persecution.
- d) They were viewed by the unconverted community as hypocrites, fanatics and even as fools. They were the troublemakers and those who would "turn the world upside down." (Acts 17:6) A philosopher of the time wrote, describing Christians as "haters of the human race."
- e) Paul reminds them of these things to enforce to them the fact that they no longer belong. They feel it in their hearts. They knew it in their spirits. They observe it in their relationships seeing how they are viewed and treated by those they once called friends. They should complete the break with their former life and move on to holiness which is their calling.

***v.4:5 Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.***

Those that blaspheme or speak evil of them will be judged by God. They are responsible for their actions and must give account to God for all of their evil doings. The believers can rest assured that their enemies and persecutors will be brought to justice by the Almighty God.

- a) God is ever ready to execute such judgment. He is prepared. The evidence has been gathered and his verdict is in. Nothing can stop His judgment from being rendered against the unregenerate in due time.
- b) All will be brought before Him. Death is not an escape for he is the judge of both the living and the dead.

*"Observe, the malignant world shall in a little time give an account to the great God of all the evil speeches against his people. (Jude 14-15) They will soon be called to a sad account for all their curses, their foolish jests, their slanders and falsehoods, uttered against the faithful people of God."* Matthew Henry

***v.4:6 For for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.***

Peter presents to his readers the example of those believers who had gone on before them in death. They had accepted the message putting off their old lifestyle and putting on the new. As a result they were judged by unregenerate men.

- a) They too were thought to be strange and spoken evil of, and yet they remained faithful living according to God in the spirit. Many that had gone before them were martyred for their belief, thus suffering the ultimate judgment of men, as did Christ their supreme example, but who now live in God in the spirit.
- b) The apostle may even be going back to the Old Testament saints for he has already mentioned the spirit of Christ through Noah as well as the prophets. If this is the case, he is presenting to them a long line of witnesses who believed in God and lived a life dedicated to Him thus feeling the judgment and wrath of men.

- c) At any rate, the apostle seems to be encouraging them by informing them that they are not alone. Many had put off the things of the world in faith and had suffered for it in this life. They turned their backs on the world and chose to live in the Spirit of God. (Heb. 11:24-26)

***v.4:7. But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.***

Peter has assured his readers that their persecutors would be judged by God. He presented to them the example of those who had gone before them and had experienced the judgment and wrath of men. In a further attempt to encourage them in their trials and excite them to holiness the apostle tells them the end of all things is at hand.

- a) The phrase no doubt refers to the end of the world when time will be swallowed up and fold into eternity. The end of the apostolic age ushered in the last days as the writers of the New Testament instructed Christians to live in anticipation of the coming of Christ. (Rom. 13:11; James 5:8-9)
- b) Peter has already reminded them of the temporary nature of their lives. Their flesh will wither away as so much grass; their troubles and persecutions will end in death, but their spirit will live on in Christ, and so, they should live their days in the flesh in obedience to Him.
- c) Specifically, he instructs them to be sober which is awake and alert. It is the opposite of the believers associated with their past as described in verses 3 and 4. Furthermore, they are to watch or to be vigilant. Such is the proper mindset for a effective prayer. (1 Thes. 5:2-9)
- d) So they are to know what is going on around them at all times, viewing situations and circumstances through the eyes of God, that they might pray earnestly and intelligently in accordance with the will of God. (Luke 22:45-47)

***v.4:8 And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.***

For the fourth time in this letter Peter instructs his readers to love one another. For the second time he uses the adjective “fervent” which refers to love that is earnest, strong and lasting. Love is the virtue that binds them together in Christ and the necessary ingredient that will enable them to function as one body.

- a) Above all things they are to love one another. Peter places the utmost importance on this virtue. Paul calls love the “bond of completeness” that ties together mercy, kindness, meekness, patience and forgiveness. (Col. 3:12-14) In his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul places it above faith and hope. (1 Cor. 13:13)
- b) Salvation is the result of God’s love for man. It is the same love that Christ commands His disciples as well as all believers to have for one another. Christ proclaims that such love would be the distinguishing mark of Christians. (John 13:34-35)
- c) Peter quotes from the book of Proverbs to show them the merits of fervent love. It acts as a covering of their many imperfections and faults. The believer who loves his brother

in the prescribed manner will be less likely to find fault with him and so more likely to give him the “benefit of the doubt.” Love covers sins by promoting understanding, humility and forgiveness. (Prov. 10:12)

*“It inclines people to forgive and forget offences against themselves, to cover and conceal the sins of others, rather than aggravate them and spread them abroad. It teaches us to love those who are but weak, and who have been guilty of many evil things before their conversion; and it prepares for mercy at the hand of God, who hath promised to forgive those that forgive others.”*  
Matthew Henry

**v.4:9 Use hospitality one to another without grudging.**

Yet another manifestation of love that the apostle wants them to be particularly aware of is the showing of hospitality which Peter says should be in practice among them. Hospitality is the entertaining of guests as well as strangers, sharing food and lodging with them in the name of Christ.

- a) Entertaining guests, especially strangers, and for a lengthy period of time can be very disrupting to the routines of a household, not to mention taxing on the budget. The Christian, however, is instructed to respond and in a cheerful manner. He is to remember that “freely he has received and freely he is to give.”
- b) The word “grudgingly” means ‘with murmuring or complaint.’ The believer is not to make his brother feel burdensome or unwanted. He is not to speak behind his back complaining to others or make his brother feel indebted to him in any way.
- c) Hospitality among Christians was very important at the time this letter was written. Christians could be driven from their homes or from the area they lived with no place to go. Christian women could simply be put out on the street by their unbelieving husband. The world was and still is in many places a hostile place for the Christian. (Heb. 13:1-2)

**v.4:10 As every man hath received the gift, [even so] minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.**

Extending hospitality to one another is but one aspect of ministering among Christians. Peter here instructs his readers to minister to each other in all ways and in all areas according to what they have been given or have received from God.

- a) The phrase “the gift” is very general and refers to any power, ability, talent, or office. It includes both the physical possessions of an individual as well as their spiritual gifts and abilities. As Barnes puts it, *“it seems to refer to every kind of endowment by which we can do good to others.”*
- b) The idea is that any capacity that the believer has to do good, whatever the degree or whatever the kind, is a gift from God. The Christian is not the master of this all inclusive “gift” but merely a steward. It does not belong to him alone, but to the Christian community or the church. (James 1:17)
- c) As good and faithful stewards of the Master’s goods, they are to disperse them to the people. The gifts are to be used and perfected to the welfare of those who are His. They are to be used as the Master prescribes and directs.

- d) Every believer has a unique “gift set” and we are here told that it is needed by all. The Christian who avoids all fellowship and fails to become involved in some capacity with the community of believers is as the steward in the parable who buried his master’s money.
- e) Parallel to their thoughts of Peter is Paul’s analogy of the church being as the human body, with each individual representing a unique and vital part of the corporate body. (1 Cor. 12:11-13; Rom. 12:3-16)

*“His favors are not confined to one single thing; as, for example, to talent for doing good by preaching; but are extended to a great many things by which we may do good to others – influence, property, reputation, wisdom, experience. All these are to be regarded as his gifts; all to be employed in doing good to others as we have opportunity.” Barnes*

***v.4:11 If any man speak, [let him speak] as the oracles of God; if any man minister, [let him do it] as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.***

Having instructed his readers as to the importance of ministering their gifts one to another, Peter here proceeds to tell them how or with what spirit it is to be done. He gives particular instructions as to the gifts involving speaking before again addressing the gifts in general.

- a) The phrase “oracles of God” means that which is spoken by God, and so, His word. Those that preach, teach, counsel or who are involved in any such ministry or activity where the main purpose is to communicate the word of God is to do so rightly. (2 Tim. 2:15; 1 Tim. 5:17)
- b) He is to speak the pure unadulterated word of God. As Poole states, he is to preach the “*pure word of God and not obtrude upon the hearers, the fancies, figments or traditions of men.*” He is to speak truth. Also implied is he that speaks has himself faith in the word and the proper reverence for it as that being spoken by God.
- c) All who minister to God’s people in any way are to do so wholeheartedly and to the best of their ability which was given to them by God. Ever before them in their “Christian work” should be the example of Jesus Christ, whom they serve, as well as the great reward He has reserved for them.
- d) The result is that God will be glorified in all of the gifts and abilities of His people as they are used and exercised to fulfill His purposes. (Matt. 5:14-16; v.2:12)
- e) This glory is ever and always through Jesus Christ who has secured and given those gifts to man, and who sits at the right hand of God as the only mediator between God and man. Only through Him are the prayers, works and services of his people accepted. (Eph.4:8)
- f) Peter concludes his thought with a doxology of praise to Jesus Christ ascribing to Him everlasting praise and dominion. He alone as the Redeemer of God’s people is worthy of such honor. (Rev. 1:5-6)

***v.4:12. Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:***

A recurring theme in this letter is the suffering they will experience as a direct result of their embracing Jesus Christ. Peter instructs them how to approach such persecution as well as how they are to deal with it.

- a) The persecution these readers were dealing with was likely more mental or psychological than physical. Their newfound Christianity effected their relationships with family, friends and how they were viewed in the pagan community in which they lived. (v.4:4)
- b) Physical harm or even the threat cannot be totally discounted for we know this was the case many times and in many regions, however, the trials brought about by criticism and rejection by family and friends, which would affect their relationships, business, jobs and community standing seems to be the situation being discussed.
- c) Whatever kind of trials, they were fiery, that is, sharp or hard. These trials put their faith to the test and were to prove them to be genuine in their beliefs and commitment just as the fire tries or proves metal. (v.1:7)
- d) Calling them beloved, and so, addressing them as a father would his children, Peter tells them that such trials are to be expected and even anticipated. They are not to be shocked or surprised by them as though suffering or rejection was foreign to the Christian calling. (John 15:20)

***v.4:13 But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.***

Their approach to the fiery trials they were going through, which were a direct result of their profession of Jesus Christ, was not to be shock and dismay, but cause rejoicing.

- a) They should not rejoice in the suffering itself, but with the fact that they were privileged to be partakers or to share in the sufferings of Christ. Like their Savior before them they were being rejected for the sake of truth and righteousness.
- b) The believer is called to pick up his cross and to follow the Savior. He is called to be a pilgrim and as a foreigner in a strange land. When he experiences trials and troubles in the following of his call he is to rejoice in that he is identified with his Savior and has been recognized as a follower of Christ by the world. (Matt. 5:11-12)

*“But rejoice; be so far from being offended at your sufferings, as rather to reckon that there is great matter in rejoicing in them; there being trials makes them tolerable, but your being in them partakers of Christ’s sufferings makes them comfortable.”* Matthew Poole

- c) Jesus Christ will be vindicated before all who rejected Him as the truth of God. Every enemy will be put under His feet. Every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord. His glory will indeed be revealed.
- d) All believers will share in His triumph. Now they rejoice in the expectation, sharing in the sufferings of Christ with the anticipation of the lively and sure hope of their eternal

reward. On that day their joy will be realized and they will be glad with exceeding joy with Christ for eternity.

***v.4:14 If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy [are ye]; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.***

Paul continues to comfort and encourage his readers, telling them that when they are slandered or insulted as a direct result of their belief in Christ they can be certain the Holy Spirit rests upon them. Such treatment is an assurance that they are indeed the people of God and not of this world.

- a) The phrase “happy are ye” does not have to do with emotion, but with their condition. They are to consider themselves happy, that is, in a good state or in a blessed condition when such trouble comes their way.
- b) The idea is, they are reproached because the glorious and divine Spirit of God which rests upon them and dwells within them is being manifested in their lives. Again, this is a blessed condition and a thing to be desired.
- c) Peter goes on to say that their identification with Jesus Christ and their relationship with the Holy Spirit is such that the reproaches directed against them are in reality blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. As Poole puts it, “*They revile that good confession into which the Spirit led you, deride the consolations he gives you, and speak evil of your persons, who are the temples in which he dwells.*”
- d) On the believers account, however, the Holy Spirit is glorified as they patiently endure, and in staying true to their Lord manifesting the power of the Spirit to keep and to sustain them. They are witness to the truth of God and His light in the world. (2 Cor. 4:6-11)

***v.4:15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or [as] a thief, or [as] an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters.***

No doubt that charges such as these were brought against believers. History tells us that they were easy targets and many times played the role of the scapegoat. The apostle finds it necessary to warn them that such charges must never be true of them as Christians.

- a) Suffering in itself is not noble, but only when it is borne unjustly. There is nothing noble in punishment that is deserved. All such charges against them must be unfounded so their accusers will eventually come to shame.
- b) Those who follow Christ proclaiming truth and holiness are scrutinized by the world. Atrocities such as murder and thievery, or even general lawlessness; any criminal activity would ruin their testimony bringing even more suspicion and persecution upon them.
- c) He adds the word “busybody”, that is, one who meddles in others affairs. It is not a criminal activity and seems out of place in the list. The idea seems to be that they should not be guilty of any undesirable behavior that would reflect unfavorably upon the Christian religion or not in harmony with the teachings of Christ. The term used by the apostle Paul is “above reproach” (1 Thess. 5:22)

***v.4:16 Yet if [any man suffer] as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.***

To be a Christian, that is, identifying one's self with Jesus Christ brought with it slander, mockery and persecution. Because of this, it was probably a constant temptation to conceal or keep secret their affiliation to the church, and so, to be ashamed.

- a) Peter exhorts them not to be ashamed if their only "crime" is their Christianity, but instead, to glorify God considering it an honor to share in the sufferings of Christ considering themselves blessed to have been enlightened to the truth.
- b) Paul admitted the preaching of Christ crucified was foolishness to the world. (1 Cor. 1:18) That a dead Jew was God in the flesh, that he was raised from the dead, or a religion that believed power came out of weakness was true folly. Not only believing the above, but then subjecting yourself to ridicule and scorn, taking it to the point of being imprisoned or killed over such folly, was proof to the world that they were at best, mad.
- c) The young pastor Timothy wavered under such persecution, needing to be encouraged by Paul not to be ashamed of Jesus Christ and the gospel message or his mentor Paul, who was himself imprisoned at the time as a criminal. (2 Tim. 1:8, 12)

***v.4:17 For the time [is come] that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if [it] first [begin] at us, what shall the end [be] of them that obey not the gospel of God?***

In this difficult passage, Peter seems to be telling his readers that as those who are of the house of God, who obey the gospel of God and are His church, they will undergo much suffering in the world. He has already told them that they should not think it to be a strange or unusual thing for God's people to experience suffering, but instead to expect it. It would be their calling as the true church in this world.

- a) Poole describes the judgment here spoken of as, "*temporary, and for good, Peter means all these afflictions God brings upon His children for their correction, trial, instruction and mortification.*" The Wycliffe Bible Comintary calls it "*divinely permitted purging.*" (John 15:1-2)
- b) Paul the apostle was appointed to personally suffer greatly for the sake of Christ. (Acts 9:15-16) Here Peter seems to be referring to what the true church would go through, its individual members as well as the church as a whole. (Acts 14:22)
- c) In the form of a question, Peter implies that the fate of the unbeliever will be far worse. If the children of God are judged to suffer in this life, and much of the time that suffering brought about by the hands of the unbeliever, how dreadful must their end be.

*"The sufferings of good people in this life are demonstrations of the unspeakable torments that are coming upon the disobedient and unbelieving."* Matthew Henry

***v.4:18 And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?***

In presenting his readers with yet another question, Peter confirms the doom of the ungodly,

that is, those that obey not the gospel of God. Implied in the previous verse was the judgment and suffering these individuals would eventually face, while here Peter intimates their total hopelessness.

- a) Peter wants his readers to understand that they themselves were scarcely saved. The phrase means that they were saved with the greatest of difficulty. The idea is that there was one perfect plan and one perfect way in which they could be saved.
- b) The plan was devised in the infinite wisdom of God, carried out according to His infinite love, and applied by His infinite power. It was an act of God that displayed perfectly all of His attributes and for which He would be praised and glorified forever. It was the “greatest” thing he would accomplish, both the act as well as its ramifications of infinite proportions and of eternal worth.
- c) From a human perspective man could not know of salvation or even that he was in need of it. He could not understand it or even desire it. In himself, he could not keep it or sustain it even if it was given to him. What was impossible to man was accomplished by God, and in this respect Christians themselves are truly saved with great difficulty. (Matt. 7:13-14; Luke 18:24-27)
- d) Peter contrasts the saved with the unsaved, described here as the ungodly and sinners. The question is, “What will be their fate?” As Barnes puts it, “*The doctrine in the passage is, that the fact that righteous are save with so much difficulty is proof that the wicked will not be saved at all.*” (2 Thess. 1:7-9)

***v.4:19 Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls [to him] in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.***

With the word “wherefore” Peter summarizes this section of the letter that began with verse 12 and concerned the trials and sufferings Christians would experience in this life.

- a) Peter has established that believers will suffer in this world and that such is the will of God. They will be reproached for the name of Christ and suffer for nothing more than doing good as did their Savior. They are called to be strangers and pilgrims in this world as they pick up their cross and follow Christ.
- b) Believers are to commit or to entrust themselves to God, their lives and their souls they are to put in His care. They were to grow weary, but to continue in well doing and holiness despite their persecution. Peter here calls them to persevere in the truth of their calling. (1 Thess. 3:3-4)
- c) In so doing they will fulfill the purpose for which they were created. They will “show forth the praises of Him who hath called them out of darkness and into His marvelous light.” They will glorify God in their good works.
- d) Finally, they can rest assured in Him that they are saved, that they will be rewarded and the unrighteous punished for their Creator is faithful. He is faithful in His plan, His design and His promises to them.

***v.5:1. The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed:***

Peter addresses the elders or the leadership of the churches to whom he writes. He exhorts them as a fellow elder, that is, as one who shares with them the same office. He humbly lays aside the authority he holds as an apostle of Christ (v.1:1), appealing to those who are appointed ministers within the church.

- a) The word “elder” simply means ‘one who is old.’ It was probably adopted by the early church to refer to its leaders for it was the only Jewish term for leadership that was not connected with the priesthood or the monarchy. It is used interchangeably with the word “bishop” (overseer) and the word “pastor” (shepherd) within the scriptures. (Titus 1:5, 7)
- b) Following the apostolic era the elder became the highest office within the church. The scriptures say nothing of a hierarchy among elders or any outside authority that has jurisdiction over a local church. Peter probably addresses them in this way to demonstrate that they now held the primary responsibility for the oversight and shepherding of the church.

*“Would he have used this language if he had been the ‘head of the church’ on earth? Would he if he supposed that the distinction between apostles and other ministers was to be perpetuated? Would he if he believed that there were to be distinct orders of clergy? The whole drift of this passage is adverse to such a supposition.” Barnes.*

- c) Peter further identifies himself as “a witness of the sufferings of Christ.” He was no doubt unique among his readers for he was an eyewitness, however, his intent here is to further identify with the leadership as their primary responsibility was to be witnesses of the sufferings of Christ as part of the gospel message that they preached among the people. He, as they, proclaimed the gospel message which centered around the sufferings and death of Christ for sin, and were fellow teachers of the doctrines it established.
- d) Finally, not only with the leadership, but with all believers, he was a partaker of the glory that would be revealed. He was a fellow heir of God, a partaker with them in the inheritance he had described earlier. (v.1:4)

***v.5:2 Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight [thereof], not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;***

Peter appeals to the elders among his readers to govern and to protect the church similar to the manner in which a shepherd would care for his flock. It is the flock of God that they tend and not their own. Implied is that they are responsible and will give account to Him whose flock has been entrusted to their care.

- a) The word “feed” in this instance is a general term incorporating not only the nurturing of the flock, but all of the duties that a shepherd would be called to perform. As Barnes puts it, *“it is the kind of faithful vigilance which a shepherd uses to guide his flock, and to make provision against their wants and dangers.”*
- b) Peter passes along the same solemn command given to him by Jesus Christ when he

appeared to Peter after the resurrection. (John 21:16) The fact that he passes along the same command is further proof that the office of elder would be the chief and common office of church leadership.

- c) The word translated “oversight” is synonymous with the word translated “feed” and refers to the same duties and office. As mentioned earlier, the same two words in other places are translated “pastor” and “bishop” respectively.
- d) With this in mind, they are to take on the duties of an overseer or shepherd of the church not out of constraint or by compulsion. They are not to take the office because they have been deemed best qualified; because they have been nominated, appointed or voted-in. They themselves must love the work and desire the office. (1 Tim. 3:1) They must take the duties of the office upon themselves willingly and freely.
- e) The caution against taking the position for monetary reasons, denoted by the term “filthy lucre” is also given by Peter. He warns that personal gain or wealth is the wrong motivation and not to be present in a church leader.

*“We are to labor in this work, not under the influence of the desire of gain, but from the promptings of love. There is all the difference conceivable between one who does a thing because he is paid for it, and one who does it from love –between, for example, the manner in which one attends on us when we are sick who loves us, and one who is merely hired to do it.”*  
Barnes.

- f) One is to take the oversight of the flock with a ready mind, that is, sincerely and cheerfully. He is to be motivated by a love for God as well as a love for God's people. As Matthew Henry puts it, *“regarding the flock more than the fleece.”*

***v.5:3 Neither as being lords over [God's] heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.***

A third exhortation is given by Peter to the leadership of the churches. They are not to be as lords. The phrase means they are not to exercise authority over the people as did their civil rulers. They as elders possessed no temporal power over the people.

- a) The church or the flock belong to God. His people were His heritage or inheritance. They were the possession of God. To attempt to rule over God's people would put the leaders in a position in which they were usurping the authority that belongs only to God.
- b) Instead, they were to rule by example employing reason and persuasion in accordance with the will of God. They were to be examples to God's flock, that is, patterns. As Matthew Poole puts it, *“in holiness of life, practicing before their eyes what you preach to their ears.”* (1 Tim. 4:12; Titus 2:7-8; 2 Cor. 1:24)

In the time of Ezekiel, the leaders or shepherds of Israel acted as lords over God's heritage. God through the writings of Ezekiel describes their sin and pronounces judgment upon them. It is likely Peter had this chapter of scripture in mind when addressing the church leadership. (see Ezekiel chapter 34)

***v.5:4 And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.***

Peter instructs the elders of the churches to whom he writes, reminding them that their true reward is in the heavenlies. Their reward is not in the power they might gain or the wealth they could accumulate as a direct result of the position they hold, but their reward is spiritual. They will receive it with the coming of Christ.

- a) Jesus Christ is called the chief Shepherd, that is, the Supreme Pastor and Overseer. It is He to whom they as leaders are subject. It is He from whom they got their authority and charge. It is He to whom they are accountable. (Heb. 13:20)
- b) Not only the chief Shepherd, but the good Shepherd who laid down His life for the sheep. (John 10:14-15) Among whom are the elders, who now through Him and His name, shepherd His flock.
- c) Those elders that carry out their duty faithfully and rule well will receive their reward from Christ at his coming. They will receive a “crown of glory” representative of that prize or reward that they will wear in eternity. Their reward will never lose its luster, become old, taken for granted or forgotten, but will remain as glorious for all eternity as the day in which it was received.
- d) The true glory of the shepherd is in the flock. It is in the lives and accomplishments in the body of Christ of those whom they shepherd. (Phil. 1:4; 1 Thess. 2:19-20)

***v.5:5. Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all [of you] be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.***

In the same way that the elders or leaders are to respect those of whom they have been put in charge, so those in the church are to submit to their leadership.

- a) The word “younger” means ‘lesser in age’ but is also used to refer to one of lesser rank. (Luke 22:26) They are to acknowledge and respect the leadership being open to their wisdom and instruction. (Heb. 13:17; 1 Thess. 5:12-13)
- b) With the command to be subject to one another, Peter reminds them of the mutual respect and corresponding duty they are to have one for another in all of their relationships. He outlined the duty and respect that should exist between the shepherds and the flock, but the same holds between husband and wife, parents and children, masters and slaves ...
- c) He instructs them to be clothed in or to put on humility, that is, to cover themselves with humility viewing it as an outer garment. Humility is the key, enabling all of the various relationships which exist among them to work.
- d) Humility is knowing that everything you have has been given to you by God. It is not esteeming yourself more highly than you ought and realizing that you can do nothing apart from Jesus Christ. It is following His ultimate example of humility by taking on the burdens of others and esteeming others better than yourself. (Phil. 2:3-5)

*“Humility is the great preserver of peace and order in all Christian churches and societies, consequently pride is the great disturber of them, and the cause of most dissensions and breaches in the church. There is a mutual opposition between God and the proud, so the word signifies;*

*they war against him, and he scorns them; he resisteth the proud, because they are like the devil, enemies to himself and to his kingdom among men.”* Matthew Henry.

- e) So pride is the enemy, the great destroyer of peace and harmony, of mutual respect and duty. It is against the very nature of God. Peter appeals to the scriptures to show God blesses the practice of humility, but puts Himself against the proud. (Prov. 3:34)

***v.5:6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:***

In view of the scripture, namely, that God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble, Peter commands them to humble themselves. This is the logical and wise choice of action based on the truth expressed. Do you want to be in opposition to God or to be the receiver of His grace?

- a) He appeals to God’s omnipotence. He wants them to consider that God is almighty and true to His word. He is able to resist them, to bring them down as well as to raise them up.
- b) Therefore, they are to place themselves in His care. As Matthew Henry puts it, “... *patience under his chastisements, submission to his pleasure, repentance, prayer and hope in his mercy will engage his help.*” Pride arrogance, stubbornness and complaint will bring His opposition and judgment upon them.
- c) Being patient in their situation and trouble, they can know with confidence that He will exalt them in His time in accordance with His will. If not in this life then surely in the next.

***v.5:7 Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.***

In humility, they were to cast all of their cares upon God in submission to His divine providence. In so doing they would demonstrate their trust in Him.

- a) All of their pain, worry and concern; all of their burden and temptations, difficulties and anxieties, they were to literally throw upon Him, upon Jesus Christ who is ever willing to accept them.
- b) The reason given as to why they were to cast their cares upon the Lord is one of the most comforting phrases in all the scripture, namely, that the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords, that the Creator of all things, the Holy God of the universe, cares for us.
- c) He is mindful of all of His creatures, so how much more for those whom He paid such a great price. Those for whom He gave His life to redeem, even while they were yet alienated from Him. (Matt. 10:29-31; Ps. 40:17, 84:11-12)

***v.5:8. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:***

Peter warns his readers of an enemy far more dangerous than their earthly antagonists, that being, the devil. In fact, he is the enemy behind many of the trials and persecutions they endure.

He is called the “prince of this world” and “he who deceives the whole world,” and is permitted to war against the saints of God.

- a) Satan is their adversary, the one who comes against them and against their efforts, who endeavors to bring them to discouragement and render them ineffective using all of the methods at his disposal.
- b) He is further described by Peter as a roaring lion, that is, proud and powerful. He walks about in his domain seeming fearless as he looks for those whom he can destroy. The picture Paul paints is vivid as he describes an enemy that is not to be taken lightly.
- c) Peter has already described believers as strangers and pilgrims in the world which is Satan’s domain. With this in mind, he instructs them to be sober and vigilant.
- d) The word “sober” means they are to have self-control and to remain disciplined. They are to take the adversary seriously. The word “vigilant” means alert and ever watchful. It is being aware of the enemy’s ways and tendencies taking great care not to fall into a trap. (2 Cor. 2:11)

Peter speaks from experience. He was warned by Christ that he was singled out by Satan as one whom he sought to devour. (Luke 22:31-32) He did not heed the advice of Christ. (Matt. 26:40-44) As a result, when the final trial came upon him, he took up the sword against his Master’s wishes, ran away in cowardice, and later denied his Master in fear.

***v.5:9 Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.***

They are commanded to resist the devil, that is, to oppose him at every turn. They are to fight him ever refusing to yield. Their strength against him is in their faith and their consolation is that they are not alone, but battle the adversary with all of God’s people.

- a) They are to stand firm or to be solid in the faith. The faith includes all of their beliefs and doctrines. It is the truths and the foundation established and once delivered by the apostles. Their strength lies in Jesus Christ and in their salvation. (James 4:7; Eph. 6:11) Christ himself resisted the devil with the word of God.

***v.5:10-11. But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle [you]. To him [be] glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.***

Peter closes the body of the letter with a prayer calling upon the God of all grace on their behalf. In so doing he reminds them that God is the source of all strength and favor to whom they must look upon and trust in their trials.

- a) Peter reminds them that they, as believers, had already been called to eternal glory through the merits of Jesus Christ. Any suffering they were experiencing was only temporary and would be “swallowed up” in eternal glory.
- b) He assures them that in this life and though their trials, God was at work in them. He prays that God would make them perfect, and in doing so, refers to their restoration. They are being made complete and sanctified as God continues the work He had begun in them.

- c) The words “stablish, strengthen and settle” are overlapping and pretty much synonymous. He prays that God will make them firm and solid in the faith, that he will provide in times of trouble, and that they will be established, being built upon firm foundation and proved unshakeable.
- d) To the God who keeps them strong in opposition to the enemy, Peter offers praise and glory recognizing His eternal rule. With the word “Amen” Peter submits to His rule and confirms the words he writes to be true.

***v.5:12 By Silvanus, a faithful brother unto you, as I suppose, I have written briefly, exhorting, and testifying that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand.***

Peter, in closing, confirms to his readers that the doctrine by which they live and the gospel they have embraced is indeed the truth of God. It is the message that perfectly manifests His grace and is the message by which they stand.

- a) In the brief letter he had written, Peter had testified to the truth of the gospel and had exhorted them in obedience to its tenants and to hold fast to its promises.
- b) Silvanus is a brother with whom his readers are well aquatinted. He had been faithful to the churches and is acknowledged by Peter. The wording suggests that he is the deliverer of this letter. Some think that this is Silas, one of the gentile companions of Paul, but this cannot be proven.

***v.5:13 The [church that is] at Babylon, elected together with [you], saluteth you; and [so doth] Marcus my son.***

Peter wrote this letter from Babylon and sends the greetings of the believers with whom he is with to his readers. Opinions differ as to whether Peter refers to the literal Babylon or if he uses the word as a code for the city of Rome.

- a) Marcus is probably John Mark who is thought to have penned his gospel work influenced by Peter. Again, opinions differ and there is no proof as to the true identity of this individual.

***v.5:14 Greet ye one another with a kiss of charity. Peace [be] with you all that are in Christ Jesus. Amen.***

Peter instructs them to manifest their bond of love among themselves symbolized by the kiss. It was the common form of affectionate greeting of this time. He prays the peace of God upon all the believers, that is, those who have been identified with Jesus Christ.

Amen!

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