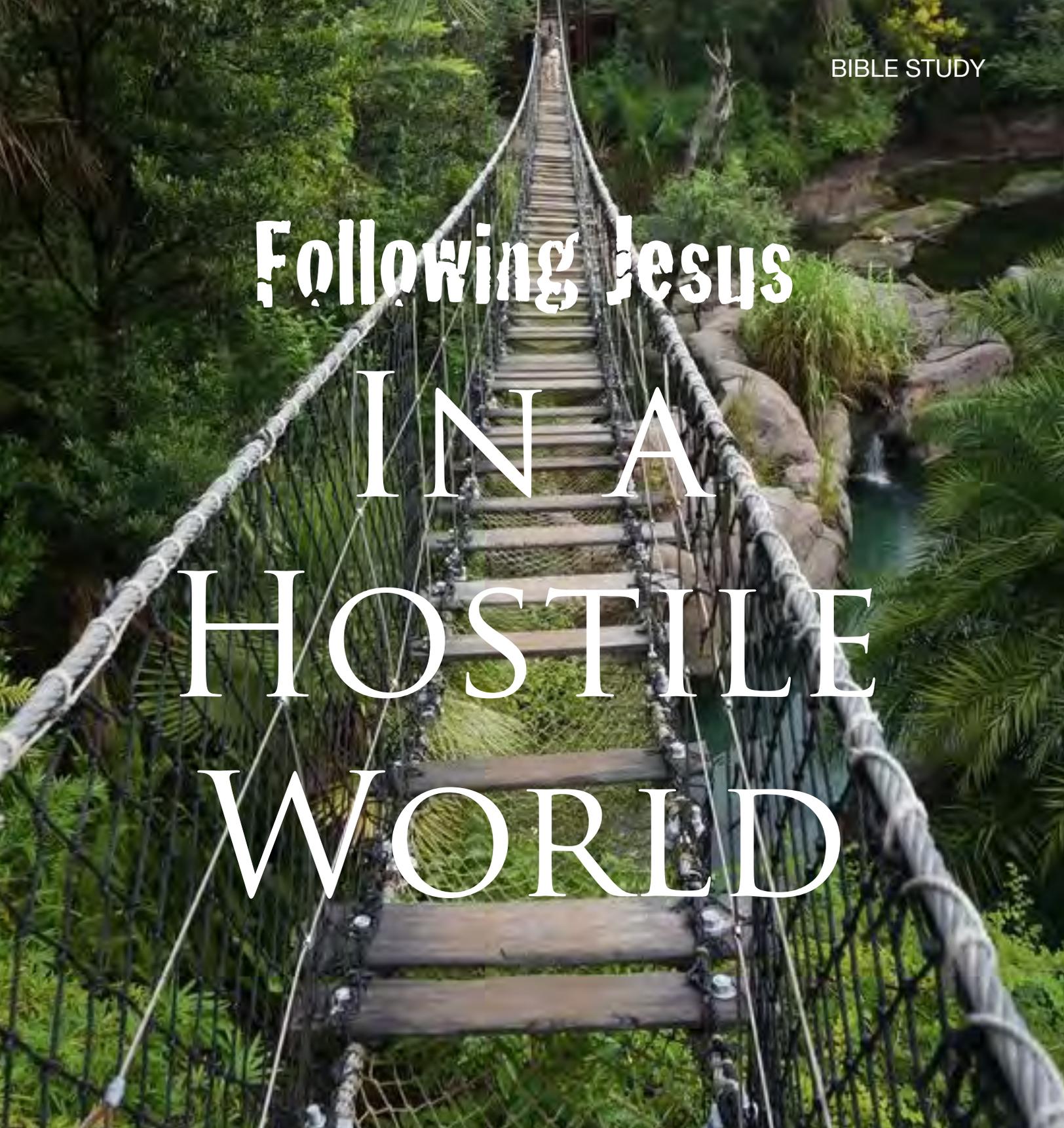


BIBLE STUDY

A photograph of a suspension bridge with wooden planks and metal cables, crossing a river in a dense, green forest. The bridge is the central focus, leading the eye from the foreground into the distance. The surrounding environment is filled with various types of trees and foliage, creating a sense of a wild, natural setting.

# Following Jesus IN A HOSTILE WORLD

**THE BOOK OF FIRST PETER**

LEADERS COPY

by Dr. Craig P. Scott

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# HOPE IN A WORLD THAT IS NOT OUR HOME

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## 1 PETER 1:1-6

First Peter is considered a Wilderness Epistle. It pictures believers journeying from the time of salvation to their inheritance in heaven or from the Cross to Glory.

In this letter, Peter is writing to encourage his brethren, (*that is, Hebrew-Christians who were scattered through-out Asia Minor*) to keep on trusting the Lord even in the midst of suffering.

1 Peter 5:12 states this purpose when he says,

“I have written briefly, exhorting, and testifying that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand.”

In other words, he is not so much writing about the grace that saves (as Paul did in Romans 5:1-2), which gave them and all true believers a perfect standing before the throne of God. Instead he is writing about the grace that God ministers to us day by day. It enables us to endure the trials of life and stand against all the wiles of the enemy.

Peter reminds us that we are not exempt from difficulties, even suffering. They are part of life. He explains how God's enabling grace is sufficient amidst the storms of life.

## STUDY QUESTIONS:

### 1. To whom is Peter writing (1 Peter 1:1) and what is their plight? - Acts 8:1-1 Peter 1:6; 3:4, 16; 4:12, 19; 5:9.

a. Peter is writing to his Jewish brethren who placed their trust in Jesus as their Messiah. They were called strangers (pilgrims or foreigners) because they were persecuted for their faith and scattered throughout the world. Some had been afflicted by their own brethren; being cast out of their synagogues, and shunned in their communities. Many lost their businesses or their jobs when the community boycotted their services.

b. The beginning of the persecution is recorded in Acts 8:1-4.

“And Saul was consenting unto his (*Stephen's*) death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles.”

As the persecution continued, many were forced to leave their homeland. They move to parts of Syria, Asia Minor and the southern regions of the Black Sea, known as Pontus.

c. The intensity of their persecution often depended upon the rulers in the various provinces. Every region was different. Some faced ridicule and unemployment, while others faced the risk of beatings, imprisonment and even death.

d. Note these passages regarding their suffering:

1) 1 Peter 1:6 “... though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations.”

2) 1 Peter 3:14 – “But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled”

- 3) 1 Peter 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.”
- 4) 1 Peter 4:12 – “Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you.”
- 5) 1 Peter 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.”
- 6) 1 Peter 5:9 – “knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.”

**2. How does Peter encourage these 1<sup>st</sup> Century Christians in their faith? - 1 Peter 1:2a. Does this also apply to Gentile believers?**

- a. Peter reminds them of their standing before God.

1 Peter 1:2a – “Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father”

- b. He calls them “**Elect** according to the foreknowledge of God . . .” Peter is writing to a Jewish remnant who placed their trust in Christ. We must remember that these Hebrew Christians were familiar with God calling their race “the chosen people” (or the elect). They knew God had chosen the Jewish race to make Him known to the world. Through them the world received the Word of God and through them came the Messiah.

But now, these Hebrew-Christians were being rejected by their Jewish brethren, scattered throughout the world and wondering how they fit into God’s plan. As Jews, they were God’s chosen people, but did something change after they placed their trust in Christ? What are they now? What kind of standing did they have before God?

Peter explains their Jewish heritage did not change, but their relationship with God did. In Christ, they (*and all Christians whether Jew or Gentile*) are “elect according to the foreknowledge of God.” They may be living like exiles in this broken world but they were none the less chosen of God, “according to the foreknowledge of God.” They were His children, planned before the foundations of the world.

Like their Jewish forefathers who wandered in the wilderness, they too are called “strangers” – pilgrims (1 Peter 1:1). Just as their forefathers were

chosen, they (as well as all genuine Christians) were also chosen by God for His high and holy purpose.

**3. “Precious” was a favorite term used by Peter to describe different aspects of the faith. How was each use an encouragement to his readers? - 1 Peter 1:7; 2:4, 7; 2 Peter 1:1, 4**

- a. 1 Peter 1:7 — precious trials
- b. 1 Peter 2:4, 7 — precious living Stone
- c. 2 Peter 1:1 —like precious faith
- d. 2 Peter 1:4 — precious promises.

**4. Peter uses two other phrases to remind his audience of their divine calling. What thoughts should these sayings stir in the minds of us and his readers? 1 Peter 1:2; Leviticus 14:1-7; Exodus 29:20-21; Exodus 24:1-8**

- a. “Through the sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience” – 1 Peter 1:2b
- b. “. . . and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.”- 1 Peter 1:2c

These are biblical terms that should stir thoughts of:

- i. **Cleansing** – Lev. 14:1-7 – the cleansing of a leper. We are cleansed from our sins.
- ii. **Setting apart** – Exodus 29:20-21 – the setting a part of the priesthood for service. Today, we are set apart for God’s service. Peter calls us “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” - 1 Peter 2:9.
- iii. **Dedication to obedience.** – Exodus 24:1-8

Though Christians may experience trouble, they are precious in God’s sight, and set apart for His service.

**5. What does Peter repeatedly tell his audience to look ahead to? How does this help us when going through various trials? - 1 Peter 1:5, 7, 13; 2:12; 4:7, 13; 5:1, 5**

They are encouraged to look ahead to the second coming of Christ.

- a. 1 Peter 1:5 – “Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation **ready to be revealed in the last time.**

- b. 1 Peter 1:7 – “. . . might be found unto praise and honour **and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:**
- c. 1 Peter 1:13 – “. . . hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you **at the revelation of Jesus Christ**”
- d. 1 Peter 2:12 – “which they shall behold, glorify God **in the day of visitation.**”
- e. 1 Peter 4:7 – “**But the end of all things is at hand:** be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.”
- f. 1 Peter 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.”
- g. 1 Peter 5:1 – “and also a partaker **of the glory that shall be revealed**”
- h. 1 Peter 5:5 – “And **when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.**”

**6. Peter uses several other phrases to remind his readers of their standing before God. What are they and how do they encourage us to stand firm in God’s grace when going through trials? - 1 Peter 1:3a; John 1:12-13; James 1:18; Titus 3:5-6; 1 Peter 1:3b, 4, 5; Philippians 4:13; John 15:5.**

- a. This passage begins with the idea of rebirth.

“Hath begotten us again unto a lively hope” – 1 Peter 1:3a

The Christian is one who is born from above. He is begotten again by to a new kind of life. It means that when a man becomes a Christian, there comes into his life a change so radical that the only thing that can be said is that life has begun all over again for him.

- b. Scripture tells reminds us that this new life happens by the will and the act of God.
  - i. John 1:12-13 “But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: <sup>13</sup> Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.
  - ii. James 1:18 – “Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.”

- c. This new life in Christ is the work of the Holy Spirit-

Titus 3:5-6 “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; <sup>6</sup> Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour”

- d. It is to a lively hope (or living hope).

“... begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” – 1 Peter 1:3

Romans 6:4-5 – “Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. <sup>5</sup> For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection”

- e. To an inheritance – 1 Peter 1:4

“To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you”

ii. It will not perish.

- f. We are kept – 1 Peter 1:5

“Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”

The word “kept” is a military word. It means that our life is garrisoned by God and that he stands sentinel over us all our days. The man who has faith never doubts, even when he cannot see Him, that God is standing within the shadows keeping watch upon his own.

God does not always remove us from the troubles and sorrows of life, but He enables us to conquer them on our march to glory.

Phil. 4:13 - “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”

John 15:5 - Jesus said, “I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.”

## **INSIGHT:**

Peter closes his letter by restating his purpose:

“... I have written briefly, exhorting, and testifying that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand” 1 Peter 5:12b.

**How does this lesson encourage you to stand firm in the grace of God?**





“BUT WILL WITH THE **TEMPTATION** ALSO MAKE A WAY TO ESCAPE . . .”

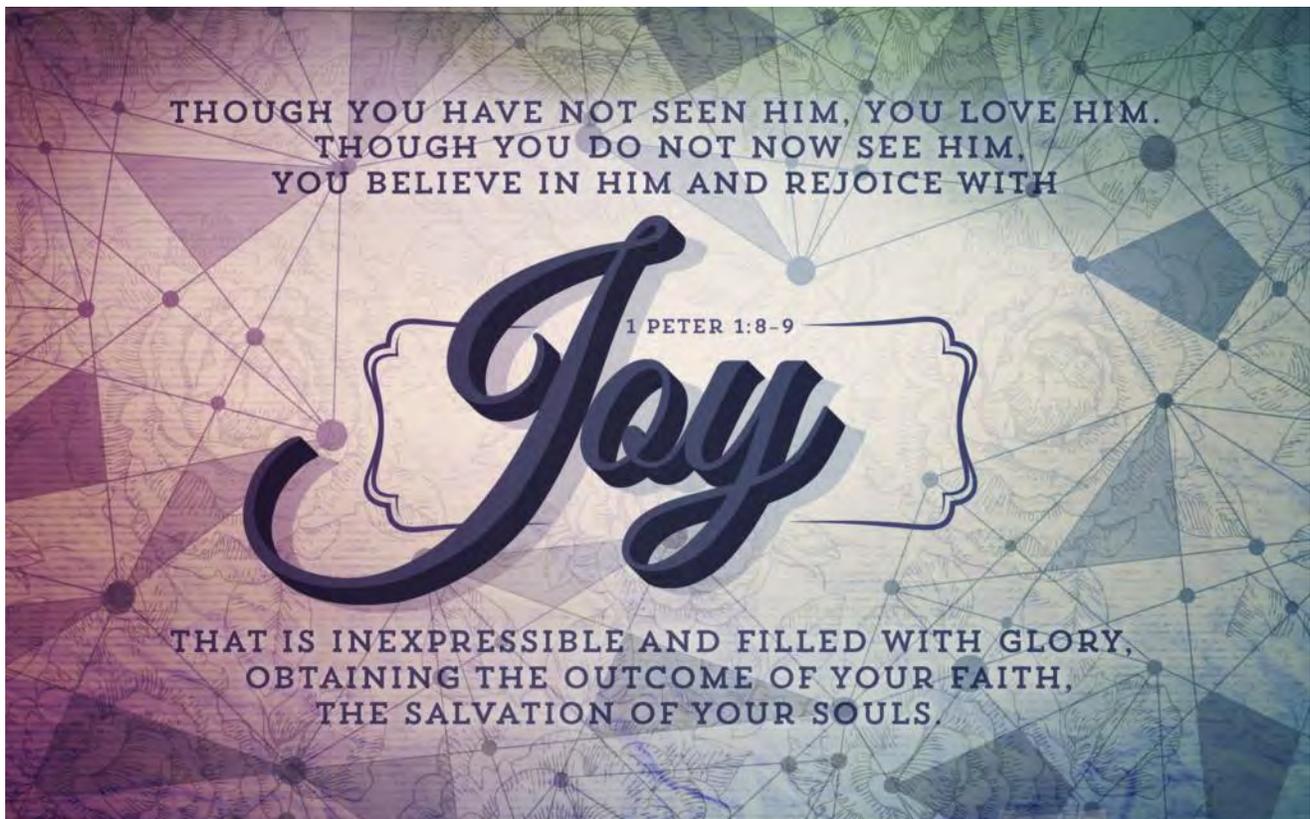


“BLESSED IS THE MAN THAT ENDURETH **TEMPTATION.**”



“MY GRACE IS **SUFFICIENT** FOR THEE: FOR MY STRENGTH IS MADE PERFECT IN WEAKNESS.”

# SALVATION’S JOY



## 1 Peter 1:6-9

Peter’s goal is to have believers understand the joy that should be theirs in light of the eternal life they have been given. This is not just a New Testament phenomenon. The Old Testament has many examples of ones joy over their salvation.

Psalm 43:3-4 – “O send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles. <sup>4</sup> **Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy: yea, upon the harp will I praise thee, O God my God.**”

Even Peter wrote,

“Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: <sup>13</sup> **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.** <sup>14</sup> 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” - 1 Peter 4:12-15.

Salvation’s joy is not some brief shallow circumstantial emotion, but rather it is something permanent and profound. Mere happiness comes from positive external events, but salvation’s joy results from the deep-rooted confidence that one possesses eternal life from the living God through the crucified and risen Savior, Jesus Christ.

No one enjoys being around miserable people. Unfortunately, way too many professing Christians display misery, anger, and bitterness over the circumstances that overtake them, rather than the joy they should have as children of God.

Think of the many circumstances we experience in life: financial difficulties, unruly children, loss of jobs, accidents, illness, death of loved ones, false accusations, ridicule, injustices, etc. In every event we should find the peace of God and rejoice in His comfort and strength.

“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.”

Our passage will examine five areas that bring joy, even amidst the most severe trials.

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***What kind of testimony will we have if we walk around being miserable, self-absorbed and hopeless? What would we be saying about our faith?***

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## STUDY QUESTIONS:

1. 1 Peter 1:6a opens with the phrase, “Wherein ye greatly rejoice . . .” It is an intense expression meaning, “to be supremely and abundantly happy.” What are we to greatly rejoice in when facing severe trials?

a. “Wherein”

The term “wherein” means, *in this*. It points to the previous context found in 1 Peter 1:1-5. Peter is reminding his readers to rejoice in their blessings from God.

- 1) We should rejoice in our election, which is according to the foreknowledge of God the Father - v. 2a.
- 2) We should rejoice in the sanctification of the Spirit, which will lead us to obedience - v. 2b.
- 3) We should rejoice in the cleansing through the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ - v. 2c.
- 4) We should rejoice in the grace and peace that was multiplied unto us through Jesus Christ - v. 2d.
- 5) We should rejoice in God’s abundant mercy wherein He gave us new birth and a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead - v. 3.
- 6) We should rejoice in our inheritance in Christ which is incorruptible, and undefiled, that will not fade away which is reserved for us in heaven - v. 4.
- 7) We should rejoice in the guarantee of our eternal security because we are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation which is ready to be revealed in the last time - v. 5.

b. “Greatly Rejoice”

- 1) In the Greek the term, “**greatly rejoice**” is an intense expression meaning *to be supremely and abundantly happy*.
- 2) Jesus used this same expression in Matthew 5:11-13, when He said, “Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. <sup>12</sup> **Rejoice, and be exceeding**

**glad: for great is your reward in heaven:** for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you. <sup>13</sup> Ye are the salt of the earth”

Peter added intensity to this phrase by using it in the **present tense** saying *we should be continually joyful and happy*.

c. **How do we “greatly rejoice?”**

1) **We Have The Presence of the Holy Spirit:**

Derived from the previous context [i.e. our election, our sanctification, our cleansing, God’s grace and peace, our inheritance and the keeping power of the Holy Spirit] we should be able to stand firm in our faith.

All genuine believers should be able to endure fiery trials because they are indwelt with the Holy Spirit. He serves as a pledge or seal, guaranteeing our eternal heritage.

Ephesians 1:13-14 – “In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, <sup>14</sup> Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.”

2) **We Have The Promise of Reward:**

A very similar exhortation was given to the diaspora in Hebrews 10:32-36. They were to stand firm amidst their trials by remembering their promised reward.

“But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions; <sup>33</sup> Partly, whilst ye were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used. <sup>34</sup> For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, *knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance.* <sup>35</sup> *Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward.* <sup>36</sup> For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.”

No matter the circumstances, we can greatly rejoice in the future hope found in our risen Savior and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

2. **What can we learned from the following terms? “ . . . though now for a season” - v. 6a; “. . . if needs be” - v. 6b (if necessary); “ye are in heaviness” - v. 6c; “through manifold temptations:” - v. 6d.**

1) “... **though now for a season**”

Trials are short when compared to eternity. Our trials will pass quickly, as does our time on this earth. Paul calls them “momentary.”

“For our light affliction, which is but for a **moment**, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” - 2 Corinthians 4:17

2) “... **if needs be**” - v. 6b (if necessary)

Trials come when they serve a purpose in our lives. See question #3 for more details on this point.

3) “**ye are in heaviness**” -. v6c

Trials refine us, but with refining comes pain.

a) Heaviness refers to physical and emotional pain. It includes anguish, sadness, sorrow, disappointment and anxiety.

b) Trials by nature are painful. By God’s design, the pain that comes along with trials are used as instruments to refine His children. The positive affects of trials can reshape us in such a way that we will be of greater use spiritually.

### Illustration:

Dr. Paul Brand was born in India to missionary parents and spent most of his life caring for people who couldn’t feel pain - people with leprosy. He spent much of life studying pain. At one point he was given a grant to develop a system of warning that would protect people who couldn’t feel pain. So he worked on a glove that would make a sound or have lights that flickered when the hand was in danger. He discovered that even though the person would receive the warning, they would not change their course from the dangerous action without a negative consequence like pain screaming for them to stop what they were doing.

One of Dr. Brand's greatest discoveries was that people with leprosy do not have "bad flesh" that just rots away. Actually, their flesh is healthy. The problem is nerve endings that have died. With the death of their nerve endings comes the inability to sense danger to their bodies. Lepers live pain free.

Don't you wish you could live life in the absence of pain? The absence of pain is the greatest enemy of the leper. Again and again they harm their bodies without even knowing it. They have no system of pain to warn them.

Dr. Brand knew that lepers often went blind. Why? Because they didn't blink. They didn't blink because they didn't feel the pain that we feel when our eyes dry out. He was also puzzled by the fact that lepers often lost fingers and toes overnight. He knew that they weren't simply disappearing into thin air, so he commissioned workers to observe the lepers sleeping. To the surprise of the workers, they found that rats would come in and nibble the exposed fingers and toes. The lepers, who did not feel pain, never awoke to brush away the rats.

**“Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all”  
– Psalm 34:19.**

Dr. Brand found himself at one time with an area of skin that seemed numb. He was unable to feel pain. He stuck a pin in this spot (just below his ankle) and felt nothing. He plunged it in deeper and a drop of blood spilled out and still he felt nothing. He went to bed that night assuming the worst - that he had himself contracted leprosy. The thought of it was devastating. The next morning he arose, jabbed that same spot again with the pin. This time he yelled.

Thank God for pain!

**PAIN IS A GIFT. ONE THAT CAN BE DIFFICULT TO BE GRATEFUL FOR, BUT IMAGINE WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF WE DIDN'T HAVE PAIN SCREAMING AT US THAT SOMETHING IS WRONG.**

So far our passage teaches us that trials are short when compared to eternity. Trials help refine us, but with refining comes pain.

- 4) **“... through manifold temptations”** -. v6d
  - a) Trials will come in many different forms. Manifold means “many colors.” It is impossible to list all the trials that may befall us. However, we have a sovereign God who is able to help us in every situation. Therefore, we can be confident that everything has a purpose and will work together for His glory.
  - b) In 1 Peter 1:7 we are told an additional reason for trials
 

“that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire. . .”

c) We can see this in Exodus 16:4 –

“Then said the LORD unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, **that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no.**”

d) Also in Deuteronomy 8:2 –

“And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, **to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldst keep his commandments, or no.**”

e) As well as with the life of Job.

### 3. Trials come when they serve a purpose in our lives. List some of the biblical reasons for trials?

a. God uses trials **to humble us** – 2 Corinthians 12:7-10

“And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. <sup>8</sup> For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. <sup>9</sup> And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. <sup>10</sup> Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.”

b. God uses trials **to wean us** away from worldly things and repoint us towards heaven – John 16:33

“These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”

c. God uses trials **to teach us** to value His blessings – 1 Peter 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.”

d. God uses trials **to chasten us** for our sins – 1 Cor. 11:30

“For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.”

e. God uses trials **to enable us to help others** – 2 Cor. 1:3-7

“Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; <sup>4</sup> Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are

comforted of God. <sup>5</sup> For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ. <sup>6</sup> And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation. <sup>7</sup> And our hope of you is stedfast, knowing, that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation.”

f. God uses trials **to help strengthen our spiritual character** – Romans 5:3

“And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience.”

In summary, God uses trials to humble us, to wean us away from the world, to teach us to value His blessings, to chasten us, to enable us to help others and to strengthen us.

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**AN AFRICAN PROVERB SAYS, “SMOOTH SEAS DO NOT MAKE SKILLFUL SAILORS.”**

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So . . . trials are short when compared to eternity. They are also use by God to serve a purpose in our life.

**4. How do trials bring praise to God and also elicit His praise towards us?**

1 Peter 1:7b - “. . . might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ”

- a. Our faith will be revealed as we go through our trials. The focus of this passage is in the commendation that we will receive of the Lord in that great day ahead. It says we will be “found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.” In other words, our trials bring praise to God and also elicit His praise towards us.
- b. Examples of this is found in other many passages:

Matthew 24:47 – “Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. <sup>47</sup> Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods.”

Matthew 25:21-25 – “His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. <sup>22</sup> He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them. <sup>23</sup> His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a

few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.”

Matthew 25:34 – “Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world”

- c. True saving faith results in good works and receive commendation from the Lord. In 1 Peter 1:7b it is a three-fold tribute – **praise, honor and glory**. It is received at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

### **5. In what way does our positive response to trials affect our relationship with Christ?**

“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” – 1 Peter 1:8.

- a. Love and trust are two crucial ingredients in any meaningful relationship. In this verse both aspects are seen.
  - 1) “Whom having not seen, ye love” = **love**
  - 2) “In whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing” = **trust**
- b. By faith we accept the revelation of the written word of God. The closer we draw to Christ, the greater the fellowship and comfort. In this fellowship with Christ we find joy. Therefore, we should rejoice in our present deliverance.

“Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls” – 1 Peter 1:9.

### **INSIGHTS:**

- 6. In your experience, what is the greatest struggle you have when facing trials? How does Peter’s letter help you?**
- 7. What helpful insights can you offer others facing trials?**



# OUR GREAT SALVATION

## 1 Peter 1:9-12

When under pressure, it is easy to lose sight of our great salvation. When trials overwhelm us, our eyes often focused on our pain, suffering, loss, hardships, illnesses and disappointments. It is easy to turn our eyes away from the Lord.

Last week's lesson began with a reminder of the many privileges Christians have in Christ, i.e., they are now elect, sanctified by the Spirit, cleansed through the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ, blessed with the grace and peace of God, recipients of the new birth, heirs in Christ, and kept by the power of God through faith (*see 1 Peter 1:2-5*).

This week's lesson encourages the believer to view their heritage in Christ from another perspective . . . from an eternal point of view.

When someone receives Christ, it is impossible at that moment to clearly know how every detail of their great salvation will unfold. They should know they have everlasting life, but how that sanctification plays out in their everyday life is yet to be seen. They may know about God's precious promises, but they must trust the Lord in real time as these promises unfold on earth, and later in heaven.



So, to help his readers patiently wait on the Lord, Peter explains four ways their great salvation is viewed by others. He explains how it was, and is seen through the eyes of the Old Testament prophets, the eternal work of the Holy Spirit, and the perspective of the Apostles and God's holy angels.

Let me illustrate this by retelling a true story of two men:

It was a summer day, towards the end of the nineteenth century when an English city boy was on a visit to rural Scotland. That afternoon the boy went swimming in a small countryside lake.

After swimming for quite a distance from the shore he was struck with a severe cramp and could not swim any further. He was in terrific pain and cried out at the top of his lungs for help.

A farm boy working in a nearby field heard the city boy's screams and ran as fast as he could to the lake. There he threw off his shirt, dove in the water, swam to the city boy and brought him safely to shore.

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***Here, a rescue took place. Lives were changed, but it is not yet known how this event will affect their life, and others around them.***

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Several years later the two boys met again. The city boy was still filled with gratitude for his rescue from death. He was thrilled to see the farm boy again and asked him what career he had decided to pursue.

The farm boy had chosen a career in medicine. Since the city boy's parents were quite wealthy and were greatly indebted to the farm boy who saved their son's life, they promised to pay for his medical education. They followed through on their promise and the young man went on to have a brilliant career in scientific investigation.

In 1928 that farm boy, then a physician and bacteriologist discovered the famous wonder drug, penicillin. In 1945, he shared the Nobel prize with two other scientists for the discovery and development of that antibiotic. The Scottish farm boy's name was Alexander Fleming. He died in 1955.

The rescued city boy also gained renown. During WWII he contracted a life-threatening case of pneumonia. He recovered at a hospital after receiving penicillin, which meant that indirectly the one-time farm boy saved his life twice.

The city boy's name was Winston Churchill, the famous wartime prime minister and world statesmen. Interestingly, like Fleming, Churchill also won the Nobel Prize in 1953 in

literature for his incisive writing on the history of the Second World War.

It is wonderful to recount the unfolding impact of a rescued soul. As children it was impossible to see the long time effects of that summer day rescue. But when we step back in time we can see the wonderful results that took place.

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***So it is, and much greater on the eternal scale. At the time of our salvation it is impossible to clearly see how all the amazing promises given us in Jesus Christ will unfold. We have to patiently wait on the Lord to see how they will be applied.***

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The Apostle Paul wrote"

"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" - 1 Cor. 2:9.

"For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known" - 1 Cor. 13:12.

**Today's lesson removes us from our momentary troubles and refocuses our attention on our great salvation through the eyes of another.**

## Study Questions:

1. What perspective did the Old Testament prophets have regarding our great salvation?  
- 1 Peter 1:10-11a

Discuss the three phrases:

**“the prophets have inquired and searched diligently”**

**“the grace that should come to us”**

**“the time of the Spirit of Christ . . . did signify”**

### ANSWERS:

“Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: <sup>11</sup> Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify” – 1 Peter 1:10-11a.

- a. Their goals were to understand what we already know.
- 1) They wanted to know the grace that was to come to us.
  - 2) They longed to know it. They “inquired” and “searched”
  - 3) The terms **“prophets have inquired and searched diligently”** indicate a careful study into this matter.
  - 4) Please don't take your salvation for granted. They didn't. It is something to long for.

- b. The subject of their study was **“the grace that should come to us.”**

- 1) This grace was regarding the blessings that would be bestowed upon sinners.
- 2) God's grace was present in the OT, but not like we experience today.

We can see God's grace to Israel, to Old Testaments believers like Noah, Abraham, Moses, Ruth, Rehab, David, then nation of Nineveh and more. However, they could not understand like we do today the extent of God's amazing grace.

- c. The Time of their Study

“Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify” – 1 Peter 10c-11a

- 1) They were seeking to know **the Person** and **the Time** of His coming.
- 2) They wanted to know Who the Messiah would be and When He would arrive.

- 2. List some of the revelations given the OT prophets regarding the Messiah and our salvation.** Psalm 22:12-17; Is. 53:3-5; Isaiah 53:10-11; Ps 16:10; 2,6,9; Isaiah 61:1-2; Hosea 1:10; 2:23; Isaiah 28:16; Joel 2:32; Isaiah 65:1-2

**ANSWERS:**

In regards to the Messiah they discovered

**1) He would suffer –**

Psalm 22:12-17 – “Many bulls have compassed me: strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round. <sup>13</sup> They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion. <sup>14</sup> I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. <sup>15</sup> My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death. <sup>16</sup> For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet. <sup>17</sup> I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me. <sup>18</sup> They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.

Is. 53:3-5 – “He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. <sup>4</sup> Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. <sup>5</sup> But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.”

Isaiah 53:10-11 - “Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. <sup>11</sup> He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.”

**2) He would triumph – Ps 16:10; 2,6,9;**

Isaiah 9:6 – “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. <sup>7</sup> Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.”

**3) He would bring salvation - Isaiah 61:1-2; Hosea 1:10; 2:23; Isaiah 28:16; Joel 2:32; Isaiah 65:1-2**

3. **According to 1 Peter 1:10, to whom did the prophets write? Why is this important?** (also see Matthew 13:17).

**ANSWERS:**

“who prophesied of the grace that should come **UNTO YOU.**”

- a. What the prophets were searching out was the wonderful salvation that would be bestowed on us.
- b. Their method of study was the revelation given to them by God and was later recorded in the Bible.

Matthew 13:17 – “For verily I say unto you, “That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.”

- c. How precious is our salvation! The OT prophets longed to know what we know and experience.

**THE HOLY SPIRIT'S PERSPECTIVE**

4. **What was the work of the Holy Spirit? What did He reveal?** 1 Peter 1:11; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Hebrews 11:13; 11:39-40

**ANSWERS:**

“The Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.”

- a. The prophets gained their insight through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.
  - 1) It was “the Spirit of Christ” that moved within them.
  - 2) This shows that Christ existed before He came to this earth in human form.
- b. The process is explained in 2 Peter 1:20-21 –

“Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. <sup>21</sup> For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”

- c. The Holy Spirit predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow.”
  - 1) **The glories to follow:** the resurrection, the ascension, the enthronement and the kingly rule.”
  - 2) **The sufferings:** His humbling Himself, His abuse and ridicule while on earth and suffering on the cross for our sins.”
  - 3) These are major themes in the Scriptures.

- d. The Holy Spirit revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you and me.
  - 1) Hebrews 11:13 – “These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.”
  - 2) Hebrews 11:39-40 – “And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: <sup>40</sup> God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.”
- e. The fulfillment of these OT prophecies were meaningless to the prophets but they are of immense value to us.

### **THE APOSTLES PERSPECTIVE**

#### **5. What perspective did the apostles have towards our great salvation? 1 Peter 1:12b**

##### **ANSWERS:**

“which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven” – 1 Peter 1:12b

- a. Men such as Paul, John, Philip, Barnabas and Luke preached the message of the death and resurrection of Christ.

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”

- b. The greatness of this gospel message was considered precious by these men. They risked their lives to preach this message.

### **THE ANGEL'S PERSPECTIVE**

#### **6. What perspective did the angel's have toward our great salvation? - 1 Peter 1:12c; Luke 15:7; 1 Corinthians 4:9; Ephesians 3:10; Revelation 5:8-12; 2:5**

##### **ANSWERS:**

“which things the angels desire to look into.”

- a. The Angels have an intense interest in our great salvation.

- 1) They can't experience it
- 2) They play a role in it
- 3) They glorify God for it.

“I say unto you, **that likewise joy shall be in heaven** over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.” – Luke 15:7

“For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: **for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men.**” – 1 Cor. 4:9

“To the intent that **now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places** (*the manifold wisdom of God*) might be *made* known . . . (*through*) the church” – Eph. 3:10

“And when He (Jesus) had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. <sup>9</sup> And they sung a new song, saying, ‘Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; <sup>10</sup> And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.’ <sup>11</sup> And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; <sup>12</sup> Saying with a loud voice, ‘Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.’” – Revelation 5:8-12

- b. Although the angels are not recipients of salvation, they will join in singing the redemption song. As they observe the unfolding of our salvation they will joyfully glorify God.
- c. The theme of salvation was precious to the Old Testament prophets, the Holy Spirit, the New Testament apostles, and the angels. Is it precious to you? Or have you allowed sin and the circumstances to rob you of your first love? When that happened to the Ephesian church, the Lord said,

“Remember . . . from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first” – Rev. 2:5.

- d. If you have lost sight of the preciousness and joy of your salvation, the solution is to repent and begin to live the way you did when you were first saved – when you had an exhilarating love for God, and zealous testimony for Christ, a deep hunger for His Word, and a sincere desire for Christian fellowship and prayer. Those are religious indicators that we love the Savior and appreciate our great salvation.

## **INSIGHTS:**

- 7. **Explain how we can apply these truths to our lives.**

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# PLACE OF REST

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Respond with Hope, Holiness and Honor

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## I Peter 1:13-17

*We seem to be living in the day of equally intolerable, repugnant, and futile choices and in a culture that is daily becoming more decadent and increasingly lacking in great political statesmen.*

*Which leads to the question, "Is there any hope?"*

Our passage addresses this problem. Peter is telling his 1<sup>st</sup> Century audience where they will find rest in their increasingly decadent, and hostile environment.

The early church faced numerous trials. Many were ostracized from their community, experiencing joblessness, ridicule, and abuse. Some even suffered beatings, imprisonment and death. Furthermore, they had little choice regarding their governmental leaders. They had to take what they got. More often than not the authorities were pagan, corrupt, and unfriendly to their new found faith.

Their circumstances brought upon them numerous trials. Many grew weary. Some wondered whether they made the right choice in becoming Christians. Others were so weary they wondered how much longer



they would be able to hold on before they gave into the pressures of the world.

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***Where does one find rest? In whom or what do we place our trust?***

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The truths depicted in this letter are universal. Regardless the severity of the trials we face; the same principles, when applied, will strengthen the weary soul.

So in the first part of Peter's letter he features four tools God gave them to overcome their trials. Three were covered in previous lessons. However, we will briefly review them before examining in greater detail Peter's fourth exhortation.

## Review Questions

1. Peter said, "Wherein ye greatly rejoice" or "in this" ye greatly rejoice (1 Peter 1:6a). What seven truths did Peter point out to these trial weary saints? - 1 Peter 1:2-6.

Answer:

- a. They should **rejoice in their election**, which is according to the foreknowledge of God the Father - v. 2a.
- b. They should **rejoice in the sanctification** of the Spirit, which will lead them to obedience - v. 2b.
- c. They should **rejoice in the cleansing** they received through the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ - v. 2c.
- d. They should **rejoice in the grace and peace that was multiplied unto them** through Jesus Christ - v. 2d.
- e. They should **rejoice in God's abundant mercy** wherein He gave them the new birth and a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead - v. 3.
- f. They should **rejoice in their inheritance** in Christ which is incorruptible, and undefiled, that will not fade away which is reserved for them in heaven - v. 4.
- g. They should **rejoice in the guarantee of their eternal security** because they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation which is ready to be revealed in the last time - v. 5.

**So when facing fiery trials, we are told to rejoice in what God has done for us through Christ.**

2. What truths did Peter remind his weary brethren of, in 1 Peter 1:6b-9?

Answer:

- a. **Remember** the **trials** we face **are short** when compared to eternity – therefore they are for a season – v. 6a.
- b. **Remember** regardless of how hard our trials may appear, **they are much more precious than of gold**. Their purpose is that we might be found to the praise, honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ - v. 7

So we are to **rejoice** in what God has done and we are to **remember** that through trials we are being made more like Christ.

### 3. What four features further display God's astonishing gift of grace? - 1 Peter 1:10-12

**Answer:**

- a. It was **PREDICTED** by the Old Testament prophets. They longed to see the grace we received. – v. 10
- b. This grace was **REVEALED** by the Holy Spirit of God - v.11
- c. It was **PREACHED** to the world at great cost by the apostles – v. 12
- d. It was **GAZED UPON** by angel's – v. 12c . . . meaning the grace we received is so amazing and wonderful even the heavenly hosts are astonished by it.

Because of God's grace, we should **RECOUNT** how precious our faith is, **REJOICE** in what God has done and **REMEMBER** that through our trials we are made more like Christ.

### ***Study Questions:***

It is one thing to KNOW something about an item. It is entirely another thing to trust in what we know. Peter now gives his readers three different imperative commands. Three important actions God's children must take in order to endure fiery trials. These are not suggestions. These are not appeals. These are commands . . . divine commands that we must individually put into action so that we will be able to "endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."

### 4. What imperative commands are found in 1 Peter 1:13-17?

**Answer:**

- a. "**HOPE** to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" - 1 Peter 1:13
    - 1) *You must* respond to the great hope you have
    - 2) *You must* "set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."
  - b. "Be ye **HOLY** in all manner of conversation" - 1 Peter 1:15

"Be ye **HOLY**; for I am holy" - 1 Peter 1:16

    - *You must* be holy
  - c. "**PASS** the time of your sojourning here in fear" - 1 Peter 1:17
    - *You must* "pass the time of your foreign residence in fear."
5. As soldiers ready for combat, we are told to set out onto the battlefield of life with the hope we have in Christ. **How does "girding up the loins of our minds" - (v. 13a) and "being**

**sober” (13b) help us fulfill the command, *You must “set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”?***

**Answer:**

- a. “Girding up the loins of our minds” - v. 13a.
  - 1) It is a vivid phrase. In the east men wore long flowing robes which hindered their fast progress or strenuous activity. So around their waist they wore a broad belt or girdle; and when strenuous action was necessary they shortened the long robe by pulling it up within the belt in order to give them freedom of movement.
  - 2) It is like rolling up one’s sleeve or taking off one’s jacket.
  - 3) Peter is telling his audience that they must be ready to face the most strenuous mental endeavor. Never be content with flabby and unexamined faith. We must be set to biblically think things out. We must be willing to discard wrong or secular thinking and put on Christ.
- b. “Being sober” – v. 13b.
  - 1) This phrase has two meanings. First to refrain from drunkenness and second to be steady in their minds. Therefore, we must not be intoxicated with liquor or with wrong thoughts.
  - 2) We must preserve a balanced judgment. It is easy to be carried away with sudden enthusiasm, desires or feelings. Peter is appealing to us to maintain a steadiness to our faith and in what we believe.

## **6. What is the hope described in 1 Peter 1:13c?**

**Answer:**

- a. *You must “Hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”*
- b. Hope defined is the Christian’s attitude towards the future (Acts 24:15; Titus 1:2; 2:13; 3:37). The term is an aorist active imperative by which Peter exhorts believers in military fashion to a decisive kind of action, to a hope that is an obligatory act of the will, not merely an emotional feeling. We are commanded to live expectantly, anticipating our “a living hope” and our inheritance . . . reserved in heaven . . . to be revealed in the last time.”
- c. Hope is beneficial in settling and strengthening the saints, but it is also a form of worship that rest in the faithfulness of God and in doing so glorifies His name. Biblically, hope affirms the integrity of God’s promise and declares that He is a covenant keeping God.
- d. The ultimate feature of the believer’s hope is the grace to be brought at the appearing of Jesus Christ. The fixation of our focus “is the grace that is bestowed on us” and will be climaxed at the Second Coming. We should be humbled by the thought that we are

glorified in Christ, and by this ultimate act we will be consummated at His return. Therefore, focus on the amazing “grace that is brought unto you.”

**7. How are we to respond to God’s amazing grace that is bestowed upon us - 1 Peter 1:14-16?**

**Answer:**

a. This second command explains how we are to respond . . . **In Holiness. – 1 Peter 1:15, 16.**

b. Peter opens his letter by reminding his readers that they are sanctified by the Spirit unto obedience – v. 2. It is the power of the Holy Spirit that enables us to overcome sin and temptation. He is now commanding us to responded by yielding our lives.

“This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind . . . *but* . . . be renewed in the spirit of your mind; <sup>24</sup> And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” – Ephesians 4:17, 23-24.

c. Therefore, we are told, don’t be “fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in our ignorance” – 1 Peter 1:14 but rather be holy in all our conduct.

d. Several reasons for this. We are new creatures in Christ. We have the power of the Holy Spirit available to us. Finally, we are to be holy because God is holy. We are being transformed into His image.

**8. The final imperative command is found in 1 Peter 1:17 - *You must* “PASS the time of your sojourning here in fear.” **What does this mean? How do we do this?****

**Answer:**

a. If we say God impartially judges. If we sincerely believe God is all powerful and true. If we believe the blessings given to us are truly from God. If we honestly believe the fact that God enables us to endure trials, and believe there is hope laid in store for us. Then we must “pass the time of our sojourning here in fear.”

b. We are to honor God with proper reverence, awe and respect. Hope and holiness produces a life of worship and the most foundational of all spiritual virtues is the fear of the Lord. For this is the beginning of true wisdom, knowledge and understanding.

c. We are to pass the time of our sojourning in fear because God is also the One who impartially judges according to each one’s work. As long as people live on their earth as believers, God is keeping the record of their works. At the return of Jesus Christ, there will be a judgment of all believers (1 Corinthians 3:10-15; 4:3-5; 2 Corinthians 5:9-10; 1 Peter 4:17; Hebrews 12:5-11).

d. How we conduct ourselves before God’s omniscient presence matters in both time and eternity - 1 Thessalonians 2:10-12.



# New Birth

## How Does God Regenerate Us?

### 1 PETER 1:18-25

One of the unsettling things about the new birth, which Jesus says we all must experience in order to see the kingdom of God (John 3:3), is **that we don't control it.**

**We can't make it happen apart from a divine work of God.** We can't make it happen any more than dead men decide to give themselves life.



The reason we need to be born again is that we are dead in our trespasses and sins. That's why we need new birth, and that's why we can't make it happen apart from the divine work of God.

We are blind to spiritual things in our natural state. Our minds are so darkened and we are **so rebellious at the root of our fallen human nature that apart from God's illuminating work we cannot see our need for a Savior.**

Scripture says, "For all have sinned and come short of the Glory of God." – Romans 3:23

All humanity is guilty of this. There is real evil in us. We were all spiritually hardened and dead.

Scripture confirms this when it says,

"There is none righteous, no, not one:  
<sup>11</sup> There is none that understandeth,  
 there is none that seeketh after God. <sup>12</sup>  
 They are all gone out of the way, they  
 are together become unprofitable;

there is none that doeth good, no, not one." – Romans 1:10-12

Furthermore, our conscience bears witness to these facts, while our thoughts either accuse us of our sinful condition or our mind attempts to excuse us from our rebellious state. However, we are powerless to do anything about it.

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***Therefore, something outside of us has to happen in order for us to be rescued from this miserable state.***

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This is why Jesus said we must be born again (John 3:3). The Holy Spirit has to work a miracle in our hearts and give us spiritual life.

We were dead and we need to be made alive. We need ears that can hear the truth about ourselves. We need eyes that can see Christ. We need a mind and a heart that is able to perceive that His way is the only way of salvation.

We need hearts that are soft and receptive to the word of God. In short, we need a new life that is divinely given. We need to be born again.

## SO HOW DOES GOD REGENERATE US?

The answer is given in at least three ways in our passage. First, 1 Peter 1:3 says that God caused us to be born again by Christ's resurrection from the dead

“hath begotten us again unto a lively hope  
**by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.**”

Second, 1 Peter 1:23 says God caused us to be born again

**“by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.”**

And third, in 1 Peter 1:18 it says that God redeemed, or ransomed us from the futile ways inherited from our forefathers.

“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were **not redeemed with corruptible things**, . . . received by tradition from your fathers . . . But with the precious blood of Christ. – 1 Peter 1:18, 19

So we can see that Peter is writing to remind us of the eternal nature of our new life we now possess in Christ. This lesson will examine these points.

## STUDY QUESTIONS

### 1. What three items does Peter identify as incorruptible (1 Peter 1:4, 18-19, 23)?

In all three of these divine works of God, there is a reference to “incorruption” or “imperishability.”

1. **To an inheritance incorruptible**, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away – 1 Peter 1:4. Our inheritance will never perish.
2. “Ye were **not redeemed with corruptible things** . . . But with the precious blood of Christ” – 1 Peter 1:18-19. The blood of Christ will never perish.
3. “Being born again, **not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible** by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever” – 1 Peter 1:23. The Word of God will never perish.

### 2. Discuss our imperishable inheritance. What does this mean? How does this expand our understanding of the new life we received from Christ?

First, our new life in Christ involves an imperishable inheritance. So one of the points being made in this passage is that by the new birth, God intends us to have something more than just a new life. He intends us to have eternal life.

Verse 3: We are “born again to a living hope.” So the **emphasis falls on the hope** of our new life. We live—and will not die. We inherit an imperishable inheritance. That’s the emphasis of this passage. Our new life in the new birth is forever. We will never die.

### 3. Discuss the imperishable value of Christ's blood - 1 Peter 1:18-19.

“ . . . know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; <sup>19</sup> But with the precious **blood of Christ**, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot”

The blood of Christ mentioned in verse 19 is the ransom price paid for our life, and **this blood is contrasted with the less valuable silver and gold that might have been paid.** The reason silver and gold are less valuable is that they will one day “perish.”

Verse 18: “we were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold.”

So again the point is that the new life that Jesus ransoms with his blood is not in danger of going back into captivity because the price he pays for our new life (our new birth) is not perishable. The blood of Christ is of infinite value, and therefore its value never runs out. It is an imperishable value.

That is how Christians are ransomed. That’s the price of the new life – Christ’s blood. Through faith in His blood, we are saved (“Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood” - Romans 3:25; “Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him” - Romans 5:9). It is our faith in the work of God. It is us believing that Christ and His blood is a sufficient to satisfy God wrath for our sins. This ransom is the foundation for our new birth. And Jesus paid it for us.

#### 4. What is the imperishable seed? - 1 Peter 1:23, 25.

Notice the same emphasis on imperishability in 1 Peter 1:23:

“Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.”

Peter then, quotes Isaiah 40:6-8 in verses 24-25:

“The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field: <sup>7</sup> The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the LORD bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass. <sup>8</sup> The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: **but the word of our God shall stand for ever.**”

The point here is the same **as with the resurrection** (1 Peter 1:3) **and the ransom** (1 Peter 1:18-19). The seed that comes through the word of God is imperishable, and therefore the life that it generates and sustains is imperishable.

So now we have a summary view of Peter’s emphasis in the new birth. The emphasis is that we are born again unto a living hope. In other words, the life God creates in the new birth is eternal life, imperishable life. The new nature that comes into being in the new birth cannot die. It lasts forever. That is what Peter is emphasizing about the new birth. **What comes into being in the new birth will never die.**

#### 5. How can the above information help us when we are suffering?

Peter is emphasizing these points because the overarching context of his letter is suffering. Don’t be daunted by your suffering. Even if they take your physical life, they cannot take away the life you have by the new birth. That is imperishable.

## 6. What does it mean when it says, “God ransomed us by the blood of Christ?” 1 Peter 1:18-19

The point here, in regard to the new birth, is that new eternal life is not possible for enslaved sinners without a ransom being paid.

- a. This text implies that we were all in bondage to ways of thinking and feeling and acting that would have destroyed us. In other places Scriptures declare that we were under the wrath of God who had handed us over to these futile ways (Romans 1:21, 24, 26, 28). Our slavery to these sinful ways would destroy us if we could not be ransomed from this slavery. God paid this ransom price by sending Christ to bear the wrath that was due us (Romans 8:3; Galatians 3:13).
- b. This is the foundation of our new birth. There had to be some objective, historical event in real time in order to rescue us from our eternal separation from God. Hence we see the life of Jesus Christ. In real time the Son of God came and bore our sins on a tree making it possible for us to have new life.

Mark 10:45, says “For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

- c. This is why the historical event of the incarnation happened. The Son of Man came “to give his life a ransom for many.” This had to happen and is the basis of any new birth. Since the new birth is the gift of eternal life, not just new life, the ransom price had to be imperishable—not like silver or gold. The blood of Christ is infinitely valuable and, therefore, can never lose its ransoming power. The life it obtains lasts forever. So the way God brings about the new birth is by paying a ransom for the eternal life it imparts.

## 7. What does it mean when it says we are regenerated . . . born again . . . "begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead?" - 1 Peter 1: 3-4.

We are “Born again . . . by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” So the second way that God brings about the new birth is by raising Jesus from the dead. This was an actual historic event. The new birth is something that happens in us when the Holy Spirit takes our dead hearts and unites us to Christ by faith so that his life becomes our life. The new birth happens, in conjunction with the incarnate Christ. This new life we get from the new birth is the life of Jesus.

Therefore, if Jesus did not rise from the dead, there is no new life to have. So the second way God brings about the new birth is to raise Jesus from the dead.

## 8. What does it mean when it says we are born again, not of incorruptible seed, but of incorruption, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever?" - 1 Peter 1:23. What is the necessity of the call mentioned in 1 Peter 1:15 "But as he which hath called you . . . ?"

Peter also says in 1 Peter 1:25 that the seed “is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.” We know the gospel is to be preached to all people. But not all people respond to the gospel. So why do some believe while others do not? Why do some see and hear while others don’t? The answer is stated in many different ways in the New Testament. One is here in verse 23: Some are “born again . . . of incorruptible seed through the . . . gospel.” The gospel is to be preached to all.

Peter is telling us to live differently now because of something that happened to us in the past. Verse 15: “**as he which hath called you** is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation.” This act of calling is necessary for us to be born again. He ransoms us with the blood of Christ. He raises Christ from the dead.

The Scripture also state that the Holy Spirit will “convict the world of sin, and of righteousness and of judgment” – John 16:8

But as Romans 1:18, 19-21 says,

“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, **who hold the truth in unrighteousness**” In other words, men suppress the truth.

Therefore, men suppress the truth, they resist the convicting and the convincing work of the Holy. Furthermore, that which may be know of God is manifest in them . . .

“Because that which may be known of God is manifest **in them**; for God hath **shewed it unto them**. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; **so that they are without excuse:** <sup>21</sup> Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

Spirit. John 3:19, says,

“Light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.”

In 1 Corinthians 1:22-24 it says,

“For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: <sup>23</sup> But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; <sup>24</sup> **But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.**”

All hear the gospel — Jews and Greeks. But some Jews and some Greeks stop seeing Christ as a stumbling block and as foolishness. Instead. they now see him as “the power of God and the wisdom of God.” So what happened?

**“But unto them which are called, . . . Christ (*became*) the power of God, and the wisdom of God.”**

Therefore, Scripture gives an appeal to respond to His voice three times in the book of Hebrews.

Heb. 3:8 - **“Harden not** your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness”

Heb. 3:15 – “While it is said, To day **if ye will hear his voice, harden not** your hearts, as in the provocation.”

Heb. 4:7 – “Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day **if ye will hear his voice, harden not** your hearts.”

In God’s Sovereign grace, in a literal historic event God has sent His Son to die for our sins and raised His from the grave that we might know His power. Again in God’s sovereign grace, in literal historic events He sends His Spirit to convict the world of sin, righteousness and Judgment. God creatively opened our eyes, to the power and the wisdom of God that is in Christ Jesus. For is says that which may be known of God is manifest in them; **for God hath shewed it unto them.**

But not all men respond.

## 9. How should we respond to this lesson?

God makes the light of the glory of His grace shine in hearts through the preaching of the gospel. If you are here today without Christ, “Harden not your heart” to His call.

You’ll know it when it happens. It is that tugging at your heart.

If you are a Christian then, know the glory of what has happened to you! Know what God has done for you and in you. Remember you were ransomed with the imperishable blood of Christ. You were raised with Christ from the dead to an eternally living hope. You were called from death to life.

Never forget that you were born again by and through the marvelous work of God. By God’s grace you received Christ and were saved.

Perhaps the next time you apply Romans 8:28 to a hardship in your life it will have new power because of what we have seen:

“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, **to them who are the called** according to his purpose.”

If you have responded to the call you are born again—all things work for your good. All things.

And if you are not yet born again, hear the call! Hear God’s call in this gospel of Christ and believe. If you receive Christ for who he is, you will be saved.

# DESIRING GOD

**As new born babes, desire the pure milk of the Word**



It had to be amazing for the 1<sup>st</sup> Century believers to hear firsthand testimonies of Jesus' life, ministry, death, burial and resurrection. Imagine what it would have been like to hear Peter, or James- the brother of Jesus, or the Apostle John give their eyewitness accounts of Jesus' life.

Think about it. Many of those Peter wrote to in this letter may have had that experience. They heard from eyewitnesses the amazing

news of Jesus being raised from the dead. Some may have even been in Jerusalem at the time of Pentecost and were saved when Peter preached. As a result, they experienced the conviction of the Holy Spirit which led them to repent of their sins and were transformed by the power of Christ. Then, not long afterwards, they found themselves exiled because of their faith.

Yes, they gained new life in Christ; they watched the Jerusalem church explode into existence. Their Christian walk was exciting until persecution fell upon the church, scattering many to the regions of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.

Nothing could have prepare them for this. Their intense trials forced them to leave their homeland. Husbands, wives, children, brothers, sisters, grandparents, cousins and friends all left under harsh circumstances. Jobs were lost. They faced serious financial issues. The daunting task of arranging transportation, finding new jobs and housing, along with the sorrow of leaving familiarity and family was overwhelming.

They were like their forefathers who fled the harsh treatment in Egypt for the Promised Land. Their fathers witnessed the 10 plagues followed by the dividing of the Red Sea. They witnessed firsthand the spectacular deliverance of God . . . Then came the unexpected hardships of their wilderness wanderings.

It only took three days for their forefathers to forget what God had done. Now Peter is writing to this new generation of believers, exiled in their wilderness of trials. It is amazing what a little bit of hardship reveals.

We face the same struggle. Gloriously saved! Wonderfully changed! Fantastic fellowship! . . . Then the trials of life come.

I can remember the excitement I experienced when I placed my trust in Christ. The fellowship, the songs, the growth, and the astonishing things I learn from the Word of God were wonderful. . . . Then my company transferred me to another state.

My moving van was broken into. Most of my belongings were stolen. I was alone, in a new job, living in a new city, with no friends, and no church home.

Trials come in many forms, but trials they are. The believers Peter wrote to were facing all sorts of hardships which caused many to struggle with their faith.

So Peter wrote to these suffering exiles to explain what they will needed to do to remain faithful to the end. This passage suggests five perspectives that, if followed, will lead us to a stronger, more consistent desire for the Word of God.

## Study Questions:

1. **The 1 Peter 2:1 passage begins with a “wherefore” (therefore). What is Peter referring to?**

**“WHEREFORE.”** It is a reminder of what He just wrote. It is an important pause. It connects the writers thoughts to the previous passage and encourages the reader to reflect again on the words already given.

- A. To **REJOICE** in their what God had done – 1 Peter 1:5
- B. To **REMEMBER** that their trials are but for a season and for a purpose – 1 Peter 1:6-9

- C. To **RECOUNT** for it was – 1 Peter 1:10-12
- **PREDICTED** by the Old Testament prophets. They longed to see the grace we received. – v. 10
  - **REVEALED** by the Holy Spirit of God - v.11
  - **PREACHED** to the world at great cost by the apostles – v. 12
  - **GAZED UPON** by angel's – v. 12c . . . meaning the grace we received is so amazing and wonderful even the heavenly hosts are astonished by it.
- D. To **RESPOND** to this marvelous grace from God
- With hope, holiness, and honor – 1 Peter 1:13-17
- E. And to **REST** in the amazing life they now possess. It is an incorruptible inheritance; with imperishable value, planted by an incorruptible seed, the word of God. – 1 Peter 18-25

**2. The last item in chapter one refers to the imperishable value of God's Word. How can this help us stay on course?**

**First, We must see the Word as our Life Source**

A. Wherefore, (2:1a)

1) Wherefore refers back to 1:23-25

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

And also “. . . The word of the Lord endureth for ever” – 1 Peter 1:25

2) In those verses “the seed, which is ... imperishable”—the gospel – produces the new birth.

3.) God's Word is the source of salvation (2 Tim. 3:15). God's transforming grace works through the Word to create new life

“Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures” - James 1:18

The Word, operates not as a perishable natural seed but as an imperishable divine seed. It is the life source of the believers' continued spiritual transformation and growth.

**3. In view of what has already been written, what is the second feature Peter is telling his readers to do?**

“laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings” - 1 Peter 2:1

**Second, We Must Eliminate Sin**

- A. Sin draws us away from the Lord. It robs us of a desire to be near him. It us steals the delight we once had in God's Word. Therefore, we must “laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings”
- B. “Laying aside” is an imperative participle – Literally, “you must continually be laying aside” Stripping off those spoiled garments of sin.
- C. In ancient Christian baptism ceremonies, those being baptized customarily took off and discarded the clothes they wore to the ceremony. Following their baptisms, they put on new robes they received from the church. Exchanging clothes symbolized the salvation reality of laying aside the old life and taking up the new (Rom. 6:3-7; 2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 4:24). If such a transformation really occurred in someone's life, he should be putting aside all sins that are a hindrance to fully desiring God's Word
- D. Note the emphasis on the word “all” used three times in this verse.

- 1) **ALL MALICE:** is the first category of sin Peter lists. Malice (which in English has the idea of desiring to harm someone else) is an all-inclusive word (kakia) for sin referring to general wickedness and baseness.
- 2) **ALL GUILE:** Second, believers are commanded to eliminate all guile or deceit, a term (dolos) literally referring to “bait” or a “fishhook.” It denotes dishonesty, falsehood, and treachery. Luke used the same term in Acts 13:10 when citing Paul's rebuke of Elymas the magician for being “full of all deceit and fraud”

**Hypocrisies:** (hupokrisis), the term originally identified an actor who wore a mask. It refers to spiritual insincerity and pretense The word describes any behavior that is not genuine or consistent with what one really believes or says he believes

**Envy:** this term (phthonos) defines the attitude of those who resent others' prosperity. It often leads to grudges, bitterness, hatred, and conflict.

- 3) **ALL EVIL SPEAKING:** or all slander (katalalias), this is a word designed to sound like the whispers and tattles reported behind someone's back in gossip and backbiting. It referred essentially to defamation of character.

Peter's list of specific sins is not exhaustive but certainly is representative of evil. In fact, the first term, all malice, could encompass all the sins so that his readers were called to confession and repentance. This clears the way for an unhindered desire for the truth of God.

4. Remember, Peter is writing to believers of all ages. Some have known the Lord many years. In the past, some were used in mighty ways, but now, due to their afflictions, their desire for the Lord is waning. **So what does Peter tell them to do next?**

1 Peter 2:2 - "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word"

- A. Believers need God's truth like a baby needs milk. Peter compares the strength of that longing for divine revelation to the singular and dominant desire of newborn babies.
- That sole and desperate hunger for milk is the newborn's first expressed longing designed by God to correspond to their greatest need, and it illustrates how strongly believers ought to desire the Word. It is singular and relentless because life depends on it.
- B. To desire or to long for (epithēsatē) is an imperative verb (You must desire the sincere milk of the word.)
- a. God commands believers to strongly desire or crave something.
  - b. The apostle Paul used the word "desire" seven times and in each instance it expresses an intense, recurring, insatiable desire or passion.
  - c. Believers are to desire the pure milk of the Word. We are to crave what is unmixed and pure, that provides real sustenance, namely, the pure milk of the word.
- C. It is notable what Peter did not command. He did not charge believers **to READ the Word, STUDY** the Word, **MEDITATE** on the Word, teach the Word, **PREACH** the Word, **SEARCH** the Word, or **MEMORIZE** the Word. All of those things are essential, and other passages do command believers to perform them. However, Peter focused on the more foundational element—which believers need before they will pursue any of the other things—a deep, continuous longing for the Word of truth.
- D. Whether believers are recent converts or more mature in the faith, craving the Word of God is always essential to spiritual nourishment and growth. Jesus affirmed this when He told Satan in the wilderness, "It is written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God'" (Matt. 4:4).
- E. In view of postmodern culture's relentless output of informational junk food through radio, television, films, the Internet, computer games, books, periodicals, and even so-called Christian pulpits—all of which causes spiritual malnourishment and dulls appetites for genuine spiritual food—believers must commit to regular nourishment from God's Word.

5. **What is the fourth feature found in this passage? What must they add to their faith? Discuss how we can effectively do this.**

**Fourth, We Must Seek to Grow Spiritually**

“that ye may grow thereby.” – 1 Peter 2:2b

A. It is always sad to see a human being who is malnourished, weak, and underdeveloped. But far sadder is seeing believers who are spiritually malnourished and underdeveloped. All believers should be motivated by the opportunity to grow strong and mature in Christ, enjoying greater blessing and usefulness.

B. The Word will grow them into the full, final expression of the sanctification aspect of their salvation, as Paul commanded the Philippians,

“Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. <sup>13</sup> For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.” – Phil. 2:12-13

C. Peter’s exhortation for believers to grow through the Word strongly implies the necessity of discontent with the present condition of spiritual development. It also recalls what Paul said about his dissatisfaction with the status quo in his life:

Phil. 3:7-14

“But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. <sup>8</sup> Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, <sup>9</sup> And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: <sup>10</sup> That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; <sup>11</sup> If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. <sup>12</sup> Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. <sup>13</sup> Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, <sup>14</sup> I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”

6. **What does Peter mean when he writes in 1 Peter 2:3, “If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious?”**

A. Since his readers had tasted or experienced the kindness—goodness and grace—of the Lord in their conversion, they already knew how blessed and wonderful it was.

B. Therefore, they should have desired more of that goodness through feeding on His Word. Believers ought to regularly survey the blessings of their salvation,

- 1) Remembering the many times God has answered their **PRAYERS**,
- 2) All the times He has **TOUCHED** their lives with His kindness and mercy.

C. The prophet Jeremiah wrote:

“Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts.” Jeremiah 15:16

D. Peter’s simple analogy comparing a newborn baby craving for its mother’s milk with a believer of any maturity level passionately longing for the Word of God concludes the apostle’s series of exhortations that began at 1:13.

- 1) First, as a result of their salvation, Christians are to respond to God by pursuing holiness (1:13-21).
- 2) Second, believers must respond to others in the church by loving them as brothers and sisters in Christ (1:22-25).
- 3) Finally, believers must respond to their essential need for the Word by continually desiring it (2:1-3).

“Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, <sup>2</sup> As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: <sup>3</sup> If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.” – 1 Peter 2:1-3

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# THE RIGHT FOUNDATION

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## Jesus, the Rock of our Salvation

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“To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious . . . Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. 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, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.”

## 1 Corinthians 10:4

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“And did all (Israel) drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.”



## 1 Peter 2:4-10

Whether we are building a house or building our lives we need a solid foundation upon which to build. The Scriptures are filled with illustrations to support this point.

In Matthew 7 we find the parable of two builders where Jesus said,

“Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: <sup>25</sup> And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house;



and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. <sup>26</sup> And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: <sup>27</sup> And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.”

We also find in the book of Psalms the prophetic words of Asaph. He wondered why wicked men seemed to prosper without any rebuke. However, when he sought the Lord on this matter, he was shown they built their life on a slippery slope and faced terrifying consequences.

“But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well-nigh slipped. <sup>3</sup> For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. . . . until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end. <sup>18</sup> Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction. <sup>19</sup> How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors.”

They may for a time appear to prosper, but since they built their lives on a wrong foundation they will one day face a terrifying end.

Peter is writing about the necessity of having the right foundation. He is assuring his readers that they (unlike their persecutors) built their lives on the right foundation — Jesus, the Christ, the Son of the Living God. The wicked may appear to be prosperous, but their worldly gain is temporary . . . an illusion. When faced with eternity, what appears today as prosperity, will in a moment change forever.

### 1. Identifying Key Terms:

- a. List the six times Peter uses the terms “Rock” or “stone” in this passage ( 1 Peter 2:4-10).
  - 1) 1 Peter 2:4 – “a living stone”
  - 2) 1 Peter 2:5 – “Ye also, as living stones”
  - 3) 1 Peter 2:6 – “a chief corner stone”
  - 4) 1 Peter 2:7 – “the stone that the builders disallow.”
  - 5) 1 Peter 2:8a – “stone of stumbling”
  - 6) 1 Peter 2:8b – “a rock of offense”
- b. How does Peter use the following terms, “**chosen/elect**” and “**precious.**” Note, he uses these terms three times (1 Peter 2:4-10).
  - 1) 1 Peter 2:4 - “Living Stone . . . is **chosen**<sup>1</sup> of God, and **precious**<sup>1</sup>”
  - 2) 1 Peter 2:6 - “chief corner stone, **elect**<sup>2</sup>, **precious**<sup>2</sup>”
  - 3) 1 Peter 2:7 - “Unto you therefore which believe he is **precious**<sup>3</sup>”
  - 4) 1 Peter 2:9 - “Ye are a **chosen**<sup>3</sup> generation”

2. **Discuss how the Lord came to be known as the “Rock” or “Stone” in the Old Testament era.** See Exodus 17:5-6; Numbers 20:8-11 cf. 1 Corinthians 10:4; Deuteronomy 32:3-4, 18, 2 Samuel 22:2, 32-37, 47 and Isaiah 8:14.

**Also note how the Lord uses this same terminology when speaking to Peter in Matthew 16:15-16, 18.**

3. **How do the above verses help us understand 1 Peter 2?**

#### **Answer**

Peter pulls his thoughts from the Old Testament in order to help us understand just how firm our faith is in the LORD. He uses the analogy of the LORD being the “Rock” or a “stone.” That concept was first used in Exodus 17:6 and occurred a second time in Numbers 20:8-11. Both events took place in a time of crisis. The nation was without water and facing certain death. Then the LORD instructed Moses to . . .

“Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and **speak ye unto the rock** before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the **rock**: so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink. <sup>9</sup> And Moses took the rod from before the Lord, as he commanded him. <sup>10</sup> And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the **rock**, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this **rock**? <sup>11</sup> And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the **rock** twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts *also*.”

In 1 Corinthians 10:4 – Paul speaks of this same Rock saying,

“And did all (Israel) drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.”

The rock from which the water flowed was a literal rock. It produced water only by the miraculous power of the LORD. His presence never faltered. He was with them through-out their wilderness wanderings. The rock became a symbol of His power and presence. He was their Protector, Provider and Savior. The literal rock symbolized the LORD who was the foundation of their salvation. Christ in His pre-incarnate state followed Israel throughout their wilderness wanderings and provided for them. He is the right foundation. He is the true Rock of our salvation.

By the time we get to Deuteronomy 32:3-4, we find Moses saying,

“Because I will publish the name of the Lord: ascribe ye greatness unto our God. <sup>4</sup> **He is the Rock**, his work *is* perfect: for all his ways *are* judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right *is* he.”

and in Deut. 32:18 –

**“Of the Rock *that* begat thee thou art unmindful, and hast forgotten God that formed thee.”**

King David later said, in 2 Samuel 22:2 and Ps. 62:2 –

**“The Lord *is* my Rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer.**

2 Samuel 22:32-37 –

“For who *is* God, save the Lord? and **who *is* a rock, save our God?** <sup>33</sup> God *is* my strength *and* power: and he maketh my way perfect. <sup>34</sup> He maketh my feet like hinds’ *feet*: and setteth me upon my high places. <sup>35</sup> He teacheth my hands to war; so that a bow of steel is broken by mine arms. <sup>36</sup> Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation: and thy gentleness hath made me great. <sup>37</sup> Thou hast enlarged my steps under me; so that my feet did not slip. . . .

<sup>47</sup> **The Lord liveth; and blessed *be* my rock;** and exalted be the God of the rock of my salvation.”

Later, the same Rock is referred to as “the stone that Israel rejected”.

“And he (*the LORD*) shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem” - Isaiah 8:14.

In this letter, Peter is pointing his brethren back to “the Rock.” He is writing to his trial worn brethren. They are discouraged and wondering if they had misplaced their trust. The trials of their faith were causing them to question whether they placed their trust on the right foundation. They took their eyes off Christ.

So Peter says in 1 Peter 2:4 “To whom coming, *as unto* a living stone.” In other words, this One you have come to is the same ROCK referred to in the Old Testament. It is also a reminder of Matthew 16:16 where Jesus asked Peter, “Who do you say I am?” And Peter answered and said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” To this Jesus replied, “Upon this **rock** I will build my church.” That is, Jesus Christ is the Rock, the Son of the living God. This is the foundation of the saints. That is why Peter continues in 1 Peter 2:4 by saying “Coming as unto a living Stone.” We have not come to an inanimate object, but to the Living Stone that followed Israel in the wilderness — the Messiah, the Son of the Living God. He is the only true foundation for our faith.

#### **4. How do the following references encourage Peter’s audience?**

- a. “disallowed indeed of men” (1 Peter 2:6).
- b. “but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner; <sup>8</sup> 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” (1 Peter 2:7-8).

**Answer:**

1. He is, “disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, *and* precious.” - 1 Peter 2:4b
  - a. ***Disallowed by men.*** Sadly, men have rejected this foundation. By doing so they have rejected the only true foundation — Jesus. He is God’s chosen plan and the only way in which we are saved.
  - b. ***He is precious.*** Precious to God — His Son. Precious to us — our Savior. He is the only foundation that is safe. All other foundations will crumble.
2. The world rejects Him - 1 Peter 2:7-8:
  - a. To the saints, Jesus is precious. To the disobedient, He is rejected. He is a stone of stumbling. He is a rock of offense. He is an offence to those who reject God’s Holy word. Remember, because they rejected the only true foundation which leads to eternal life, their position before God remains unchanged — appointed to wrath.

John 3:18 – “He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”

John 3:36 – “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.”

John 8:24 – “I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am *he*, ye shall die in your sins.”
2. Peter continues to remind his readers of who they are in Christ. They are on the right foundation.

“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”
5. **How does Peter describe God’s view of those who have placed their trust in Him? (1 Peter 2:7a, 9-10).**

**Answer**

<sup>7a</sup> Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: . . . <sup>9</sup> 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: <sup>10</sup> 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.

We are called chosen, royal, holy, special and are designated to show forth praises of Him who called us out of darkness.

<sup>10</sup> 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.” – 1 Peter 2:9-10

This is a reference to Hosea 1:6-10 where God calls Israel not His people because of their rejection of Him.

“And God said unto him, Call her name Loruhamah: for I will no more have mercy upon the house of Israel; but I will utterly take them away” — Hosea 1:6.

But Hosea reminds us that one day that will change . . .

“Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God. <sup>11</sup> Then shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered together, and appoint themselves one head, and they shall come up out of the land: for great shall be the day of Jezreel” — Hosea 1:10-11.

- 6. What does 1 Peter 2:5 tell us to do?** What are the seven spiritual sacrifices that a believer can offer unto God? Romans 12:1-2; Hebrews 13:15, 16a, 16b; Rom. 15:15-16; 1 Peter 4:8, 7.

**Answer:**

So what should we do?

We are called a “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.” – 1 Peter 2:5

The following are the seven spiritual sacrifices we should be offering to God by Jesus Christ.

**1) Our Bodies** – Romans 12:1-2

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service. <sup>2</sup> And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”

**2. Our Praise** – Hebrews 13:15

“By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of *our* lips giving thanks to his name.

**3. Our Good Works** – Hebrews 13:16a

“But to do good”

**4. Our Possessions** – Hebrews 13:16b

“and to communicate (share) forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.”

**5. Our Converts** – Romans 15:15-16

“Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God, <sup>16</sup> That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, *that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.*”

**6. Our Love** – 1 Peter 4:8

“And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.”

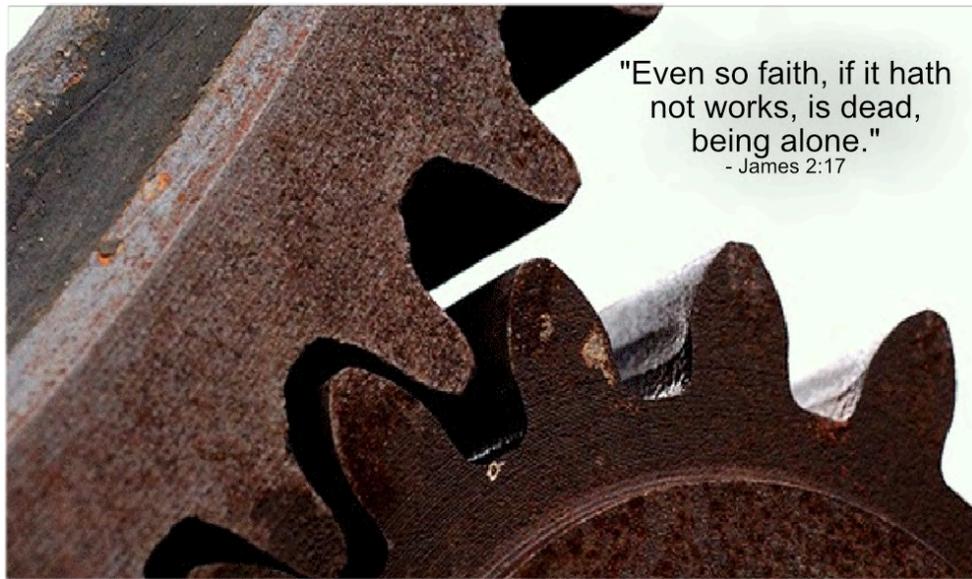
**7. Our Prayers** – 1 Peter 4:7

“But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.”

Teacher

# Godly Department

“For even hereunto were ye called”



"Even so faith, if it hath  
not works, is dead,  
being alone."  
- James 2:17

## Matthew 5:16

“Let our light shine before men in such a way that they may see our good works, and glorify our Father who is in heaven”

If you have not notice, the world has a different standard by which they judge us.

**F**or example, the Jewish community judges us by past acts of persecution brought against them by those naming Christ as their Savior. There were, and still are, terrible atrocities being carried out against the Jewish people by so-called “church leaders” and government officials. Even today the mainline Lutheran Church along with the Main Stream Protestant church have teamed up with the so-called “Palestinian Christians” and Arab Muslims against Israel. They have called for sanctions against Israel and provide support for questionable more violent action.

The Jewish nation does not distinguish between the various groups naming Christ as we do. We understand there are many groups within Christianity that may not be saved, or who wrongly interpret the Bible to legitimize their depraved works. Unfortunately, we get lumped together with these degenerate workers of evil because they are claiming the name of our Lord while they do their wicked deeds.

The world sees Christianity in a tainted light. They highlight our inconsistencies. They are eager to point out someone who names Christ who habitually lies, acts without love or acts immorally. Nor, does it help when the leaders within the church fall to child molestation, murder, adultery, theft or are stirrers of strife.

The world quickly sees the inconsistencies within our ranks, especially when we cannot even keep the standards we preach.

Historically the world tends to distort true biblical standards. They try to lump all Christians with the abortion protestor who burns down clinics or murders doctors. It does not matter if the person was claiming Christ or not. The world just assumes it must have been another nut-case Christian.

They tend to lump all Christians as homophobic, narrow minded and uneducated. We are seen by many as flat-earthers who hold to unsupported ancient myths straight out of primeval times or the middle ages.

These thoughts were no different in Peter's day.

1. The Roman world characterized Christians as rebellious and harmful to the government.
2. Many actually believed Christians practiced cannibalism. This false accusation came through a misunderstanding of the Lord's Supper.
3. Romans commonly thought Christians were engaging in incest because they would not marry outside of the faith.
4. The government commonly considered Christians engaging in subversive activities because the church often gathered in closed meetings in private homes.

5. Furthermore, many in the Roman world felt the church hindered social progress by holding to repressive rules on morality.
6. They saw the church as preaching atheism. This charge was based on Christians refusing to offer a pinch of incense in Roman emperor worship.
7. Finally, they saw the church as a serious threat to the economy because many opposed slavery. This was seen as an attack against the whole fabric of the Roman infrastructure.

These problems and more were part of the reason why the early believers in Peter's day were experiencing persecution.

### 1. Therefore, how does Peter tell these persecuted believers to live in 1 Peter 2:11?

*(Scandalous conduct provides fuel for the critics' and skeptics' while godly conduct does the most to silence our opponents.)*

Up to now, Peter was telling his readers about their privileged position in Christ. Now he describes the importance of their godly deportment before the Lord. This is both an inward and outward spiritual journey.

We are to be a light unto this world. Those of us who follow Christ ought to

“Let our light shine before men in such a way that they may see our good works, and glorify our Father who is in heaven” – Matthew 5:16

The nineteenth-century Scottish preacher Alexander MacLaren rightly said,

“The world takes its notions of God, most of all, from the people who say that they belong to God's family. They read us a great deal more than they read the Bible. They see us; they only hear about Christ.”

This is the essence of Peter's exhortation. Live godly lives. This is the single most effective way in which to make the gospel attractive and believable.

“Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims” – 1 Peter 2:11

#### a. Why does Peter call them strangers and pilgrims?

- 1) The last phrase clearly states the problem

“fleshly lusts which war against the soul.”

- 2) Though we are residents on this earth, we are citizens of heaven.
  - a) Therefore, we are called “strangers” – foreigners.
  - b) Literally a “stranger” is a person who lives in a country that is not his own and is therefore considered a foreigner. That is what Christians are in this world.
  - c) Furthermore, we are called “Pilgrims” because we are foreigners in this world. We are to act like travelers who pass through a country while making only a brief stay.

**b. What does Peter mean by saying we are to “abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul” - 1 Peter 2:11b.**

- 1) While visiting a foreign land we might live in a cottage for a time or travel to various places on our stay. However, in time we will return to our eternal home in heaven. Since we (as Christians) are not part of this world’s system, but citizens of heaven, we must abstain from the fleshly lusts that are openly practiced around us.

It’s like passing through Nevada on our way to California. The road may take us through Las Vegas, but just because we passed through Las Vegas, does not mean we should engage in all the worldly activities of the city. As Christians, we are called to abstain from fleshly lusts.

**“FLESHLY LUSTS ARE NOT LIMITED TO SEXUAL IMMORALITY, BUT RATHER ENCOMPASS THE EVILS OF HUMANITY’S SINFUL NATURE.” (MACARTHUR, 1 PETER, PG. 138.)**

- 2) We are told these desires wage war against our soul – that is, the new nature we received at salvation. Therefore, we must prepare our souls to live like what we say we are – Christians. This is the inward battle.

**2. According to 1 Peter 2:12, what should our outward conduct look like?**

“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” – 1 Peter 2:12.

- a. Therefore, our conduct must be honest, or honorable or excellent before the nations. So that those that do slander us may be silenced by our godly conduct. They may try to say evil things about us, but our daily works will be proving them wrong, over and over again.
- b. In this, God will receive the glory in the day of visitation. There is some question as to the time “*the day of visitation*” will occur. Some point to the Old Testament usage which refers to the time God visited mankind with judgment or blessing. While others point to the New Testament which often uses the term in regards to someone’s redemption.

Luke 1:68 – “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people”

Luke 7:16 – “And there came a fear on all: and they glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us; and, That God hath visited his people.”

Perhaps both are in view.

3. **According to 1 Peter 2:13-17, what should our conduct be towards civil authority?** Proverbs 24:21-22; Jeremiah 29:5-7

### WHAT OUR DEPARTMENT SHOULD LOOK LIKE?

Our passage cites the type of conduct we should have towards civil authority 1 Peter 2:13f, and employers 1 Peter 2:18.

#### **Our Conduct Towards Civil Authorities:**

- a. We are to submit ourselves to those over us.

“Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake” – 1 Peter 2:13a

- b. Submit yourselves is a military expression meaning “to arrange in formation under the commander.”

**Proverbs 24:21-22** – “My son, fear the Lord and the king; do not associate with those given to change; for their calamity will rise suddenly, and who knows the ruin those two can bring?” (NKJV).

The idea in Proverbs is to submit to the rulers because it is right. God has appointed them. Therefore, there is no place for supporting “those who are given to change” or to “rebels who might seek to overthrow the government.”

- c. An example of civil obedience is found in **Jeremiah 29:5-7** where God instructed the exiled Israelites in Babylon to . . .

“Build ye houses, and dwell in them; and plant gardens, and eat the fruit of them; <sup>6</sup> Take ye wives, and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons, and give your daughters to husbands, that they may bear sons and daughters; that ye may be increased there, and not diminished. <sup>7</sup> And seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the LORD for it: for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace.”

- d. Peter is writing to a group of people living in an environment that was openly sinful and decadent. There was open homosexuality, infanticide, government corruption, abuse of women, immorality, and violence. Neither, the Apostle Peter or Paul offered any exemption to the believers to defy civil authority. Even Jesus commanded us to “render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s”
- e. Even unreasonable, evil, harsh rulers and oppressive systems are far better than anarchy. All forms of government, from dictatorships to democracies are filled with evil because they are led by fallen sinners. Still, civil authority is from God, though the individual rulers may be godless.

4. **Regarding Civil Obedience: Why must we obey all civil authority? To whom are we to submit? What is the purpose behind this command? What should our attitude be? What is the extent of our submission?** - 1 Peter 2:13-17; Romans 13:3-4

#### **a. WHY MUST WE OBEY ALL CIVIL AUTHORITY?**

“for the Lord’s sake” – 1 Peter 2:13b

**b. TO WHOM ARE WE TO SUBMIT?**

“... be to the king, as supreme; <sup>14</sup> 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” – 1 Peter 2:13c-14

There are three essential purposes for government — 1 Peter 2:13-14 and Romans 13:3-4.

- 1) To restrain evil
- 2) To promote public good
- 3) To punish evildoers

The command does not exclude authorities who make bad or unjust decisions. The OT acknowledges the existence of corrupt leaders and God retains the right to judge them. Remember God is sovereign over them.

**c. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE BEHIND THIS COMMAND?**

“For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men” – 1 Peter 2:15

If you missed it, there are two reasons behind this command. First, it is the will of God. Second, by doing this we will put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. “Ignorance” means more than just a lack of knowledge. It comes from the Greek work *agnosian* which means it will silence “a willful, hostile rejection of the truth.” The term means “senseless, without reason” and may express a lack of mental sanity due to spiritual blindness.

**d. WHAT SHOULD OUR ATTITUDE BE?**

“As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God” – 1 Peter 2:16

**e. WHAT IS THE EXTENT OF OUR SUBMISSION?**

“Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king” – 1 Peter 2:17

We are to honor all people. We are to love the brethren. We are to fear God. We are to honor the king. Unfortunately, in our culture, everyone feels they are entitled. It is their right to work. It is their right to have time off. It is their right to go to any school they want. It is their right to have a car. People want every flavor of ethnic rights, reproductive rights, sexual orientation rights, and even bathroom rights. And if they do not receive what they think they are entitled to, they believe it is within their rights to express their grievances in the form of walkouts, strikes, boycotts, riots, and even to the extent of violent political rebellion. I am not belittling the fact that in a fallen world there are many wrongs that need to be righted. But I fear Christians get caught up in the entitlement mentality of the world and tend to forget the biblical structure that God has laid in place.

**5. Regarding the workplace: How does God expect us to conduct ourselves in the workplace? - 1 Peter 2:18-21.**

“Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the forward (unreasonable).” 1 Peter 2:18

- a. The Roman workforce consisted of slaves, and the way they were treated was wide-ranging. Some masters loved their slaves as trusted members of the household and treated them like family, but many did not. There were few protections and virtually no rights for slaves, who were considered property.

Slaves owned little or nothing and had no legal recourse to appeal to when mistreated.

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### **ONE ROMAN NOBLEMAN WROTE:**

*“The only thing distinguishing a slave from a beast or a cart was that the slave could talk.”*

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Yet, amazingly Peter wrote,

“Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the forward (unreasonable)” - 1 Peter 2:18.

- b. In the workplace, employees are to submit to employers as if they were serving Christ Himself. Such submissiveness precludes all rebellions, protests, mutinies, strikes, or workplace disobedience of every kind, even if the employer is unreasonable.

### **WHAT IS THE MOTIVE BEHIND DOING SUCH A THING AS THIS?**

“For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.

<sup>20</sup> 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. <sup>21</sup> For even hereunto were ye called”

- 1 Peter 2:19-21a

- a. The overarching reason is that we maintain our testimony whether we receive a raise or not. Even if they cut our salary and move us to another location the most important thing is to maintain our testimony before the watching world of sinners.

- b. One preacher wrote,

“As one sees the apparent defeat of the right, and the triumphing of might and the wrong . . . it seems as though Satan were getting the better of the conflict. But as one looks above, instead of around, there is plainly visible to the eye of faith a Throne . . . This then is our confidence – God is on the Throne.”

- c. “For this is Thankworthy” v. 19a – or “for this finds favor” or “for this is grace.”

God is pleased when believers do their work in a humble and submissive way for their superiors. Did not Joseph do this before Potiphar and Pharaoh? Did not David do this before King Saul?

- d. Where is the credit if you sin first and then receive harsh treatment? You would be no different than the world. Imagine stealing from your employer or angrily spouting off at them. It most likely would result in getting fired. What kind of testimony is that? It is entirely different if you are honest, and a profitable hard worker and you are mistreated and you take it humbly for the Lord’s sake. First it would be pleasing to God and secondly it lays a foundation upon which a faithful testimony for the Lord is seen.

“Our confidence is that God is on the Throne.”

## **OH, THERE IS ONE LAST REASON:**

<sup>21</sup> For even hereunto were ye called . . .”  
– 1 Peter 2:21a

### **6. Does this mean we are never to open our mouths in protest?**

**Does this mean we should never refuse to do a job even if it is immoral? (see 1 Peter 3:14-17).**

### **Review from Sunday School Class on 7/3/2016:**

#### **Is there ever a time we should protest our government, or take up arms against our government?**

The Scripture teaches that we are to submit to government even if that government does not function entirely (or even primarily) by biblical principles (Romans 13:1-7). That principle is explicit in Peter's message to servants (1 Peter 2:18-19), which directly follows his more general comments regarding government (1 Peter 2:13-17). And that epistle teaches the same thing over and over again in varied ways: Submit even if you suffer, because in doing so you identify with Christ and are blessed (cf. 1 Peter 2:21-24; 3:1-2; 4:12-14; 5:9-10).

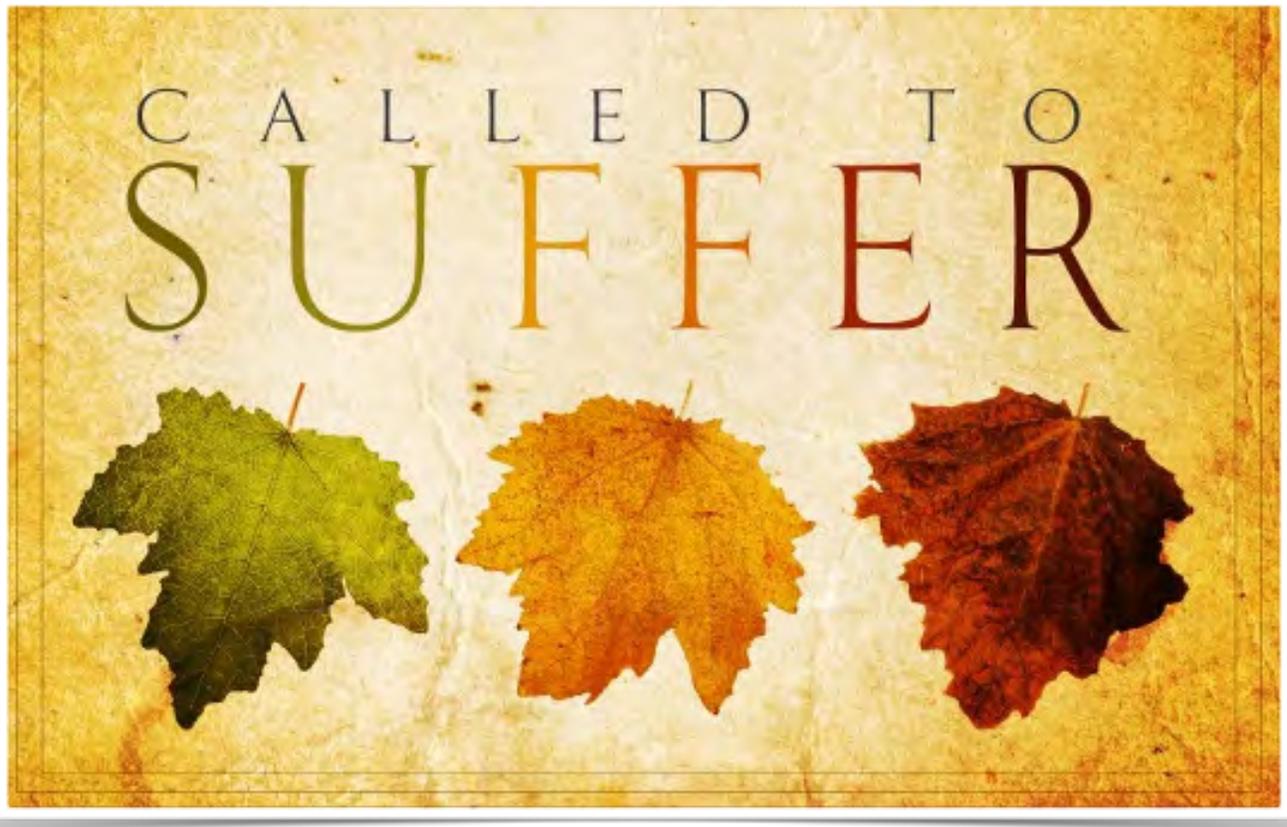
There are times when we must obey God rather than men, but we believe that we should disobey the authorities only if they command us to do something directly against God's law (e.g. Acts 5:29 and its surrounding context). That is a fine distinction, but it is precisely where the issue lies. If we say that Christians are only required to obey their government when it is functioning by scriptural principles, we then nullify the teaching of Romans 13:1-7 and 1 Peter 2:13-17 in just about any age of history-especially the time during which those passages were written! The Roman government was as corrupt and godless as any in history, and yet Paul and Peter told Christians to "live in subjection," "submit to every ordinance," and "honor the king."

So it is my belief that civil disobedience is justified only when government compels us to sin, or when there is no legal recourse for fighting injustice. The reason I draw the line there is simply because all the scriptural examples of civil disobedience fall squarely into those two situations. Any other kind of activism has no precedent in the Word of God and violates the spirit of Romans 13 and 1 Peter 2.



# OBEDIENCE

## MAY LEAD TO SUFFERING



It is not popular to tell Christians they have been called to suffer for their faith and may even have to endure persecution. Nevertheless, we are to obey the LORD, no matter the cost. When hostility occurs in the workplace, or in any other realm of life, we are called to graciously stand firm.

This message runs countercultural in our entitlement society. Furthermore, it is diametrically opposed to the growing popularity of the health, wealth and prosperity gospel, and the convenient Christianity often practiced in the church.

However difficult as it is to hear, and even harder to practice, we are called to obey. Even if we suffer because of it. It is biblical.

Peter wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit,

**“This is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called . . .”**

1 PETER 2:21A

“For even hereunto were ye called” – 1 Peter 2:21

Even Jesus said,

“Blessed are they which are **persecuted** for righteousness’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. <sup>11</sup> Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and **persecute** you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. <sup>12</sup> Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so **persecuted** they the prophets which were before you” - Matthew 5:10.

“Then said Jesus unto his disciples, ‘If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his **cross**, and follow me’” - Matthew 16:24.



Our context surrounds the 1<sup>st</sup> Century Christians who were persecuted for their faith. As a result, many were scattered into other countries. Unfortunately, their dispersion did not end their suffering. In some instances, it only intensified. It was like moving from the frying pan into the fire.

So, after reminding his audience of their privilege position in Christ (1 Peter 1:1-2:12), and their duty to obey the civil authorities (1 Peter 2:13-17) and those over them in the work place, even if their superiors were harsh and abusive (1 Peter 2:18-20a). He now explains the foundation for this obedience.

“... because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us and example, that ye should follow his steps” – 1 Peter 2:21b.

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## *Study Questions*

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### **1. In what ways are we to follow in Christ’s suffering?**

“... because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us and example, that ye should follow his steps” – 1 Peter 2:21b

### **HOW CHRIST SUFFERED FOR US**

I think we understand this fact, but allow me to elaborate.

- a. He is our sin-bearer. His atoning work on the cross was efficacious. It was a substitutionary work. He bore our sins.

1 Peter 2:24 – “Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree”

- b. This is something we cannot do for another. Only Christ, who is God and Man can do this for us. However, there are certain facets we need to observe in Christ's suffering and death.

First, He was crucified as a criminal even though He committed no crime. He was perfectly sinless.

Second, we already know that life in this world is Billed with injustices. Yet, His life demonstrates that one may be absolutely faithful to God's will and still experience unjust suffering.

Third, Christ's attitude in His death on the cross provides us with the ultimate example of how to respond to unmerited persecution and punishment.

Finally, Peter says, that Christ left us an "... example, that ye should follow in his steps" - 1 Peter 2:21b. The term, "example" literally means, "writing under." It refers to the practice of placing tracing paper over an object in order to copy it.

When we face trials and suffering, we must copy the action and the attitude of our Savior.

## **2. What aspects of Jesus suffering are described by Peter - 1 Peter 2:22-23?**

i.e no sin, no guile, no reviling, only complete surrender to the Father's sovereignty.

When we face trials and suffering, we must copy the actions and the attitude of our Savior. Who committed no sin (1 Peter 2:22a). "Nor was there found any guile in his mouth" (1 Peter 2:22a).

Therefore, He has provided an example to follow.

- a. Both terms, "no sin" and "no guile" come from Isaiah 53:9 – where it says, "because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.
- b. It refers to Jesus when examined by the priests and Pharisees they could Bind no violation of God's law nor did they Bind any words that were deceitful or untrue. So they had to make up false charges.
- c. Jesus was a man of clean lips and upright heart. There was no charge that they could bring against Him that held. All accusations against Him were false.

Peter continues, "Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again." – 1 Peter 2:23a

"Revile" means to use abusive and vile language over and over again. In other words, people were hurling blasphemous and the most abusive language one can imagine at Jesus. And He did not return or rebut the accusation.

Furthermore, while suffering 1 Peter 2:23b says, "He threatened not." He is the sovereign omnipotent Son of God and the Creator and Sustainer of the universe. Jesus could have blasted His accusers into an eternity in hell. But while He suffered, He uttered no threats. He chose to accept the suffering.

Ultimately, “He committed himself to Him that judges righteously” (1 Peter 2:23c). Jesus handed over His life to the safekeeping of the Father. He had the unshakable confidence that He who judges rightly would vindicate Him in the end.

### 3. Why didn't Jesus respond to the charges brought against Him?

Two things are going on in this passage.

**ON ONE HAND**, Jesus did not respond to the false charges because He was acting as our substitute. He was not guilty of any of the charges, BUT we are.

He, as the sinless Lamb, had to trust that the Father in His holiness and justice would one day vindicate Him. He was taking our place and bearing our sins. He did not protest at what He had to suffer for our sake, and for the glory of God.

**ON THE OTHER HAND**, Jesus is our perfect example in suffering for righteousness. The world is full of injustices. He sets the example in how we are to trust in God when falsely charged.

Though we have been made holy, we are not sinless as is Christ. What we can glean from this passage so far is that we need to trust in the Father's sovereign plan. In this life we may experience suffering, however, when that time comes, we are given a living example in how to conduct ourselves.

### 4. What is the purpose of Christ's suffering as stated in 1 Peter 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” – 1 Peter 2:24

- a. Redemption is substitution because He paid the price that we could not pay. He paid it in our stead, and we go free.
- b. Justification interprets our salvation judicially. Christ took on our legal debt.
- c. Reconciliation means the taking away of the hostility that separated us and bringing us together again. Our sin is what separated us and Christ removed that cause. We could not deal with the sin. He could, and He did.
- d. Propitiation points to the removal of the divine wrath. Christ bore the wrath that was due us when He hung on the cross.
- e. He paid the price and laid the foundation for a new life in Him.
- f. Christ died so that we might live to righteousness.

### 5. What is the meaning of the phrase, “we were as sheep going astray” - 1 Peter 2:25a

“As sheep going astray” – 1 Peter 2:25 is another reference to Isaiah 53 where it says,

“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way” Isaiah 53:6.

- a. The passage refers to our rebellion against God and turning to our own ways. It is a picture of a pathetic sheep who wanders aimlessly from the Block by moving thoughtlessly, and at times rebelliously, from one clump of grass to another. It eventually looks up only to Bind itself hopelessly lost or mortally in trouble.
- b. Just like a foolish sheep we have gone astray. Every one of us have turned to our own ways.
- c. But Isaiah 53:6b continues to say, “and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.” Again this is a reference to the Lord bearing our sin in His own body of the tree.

**6. What is the connection between “we are as sheep going astray” and the Lord being our Shepherd and Bishop - 1 Peter 2:25?**

The good news for Peter’s audience is that they have now returned to the Shepherd and Bishop of their soul.

The term “Shepherd,” conveys His role as feeder, leader, protector, cleanser and restorer of the Block. Later, this word is used to describe the role of a pastor or an elder. Bishop describes His role as overseer. It is to Him they have returned.

**7. What insights can we glean from this passage? (1 Peter 2:21-25; Daniel 3:16-18.)**

- a. We should not shy away from doing what is right even if it means we will suffer for it.
- b. This passage should impact the way we conduct ourselves in the workplace, in our homes and towards those in civil authority. It should cause us to temper our tongues and weigh our words even when being falsely accuse. It should cause us to carefully consider our actions towards those over us. We should pray for them. We should obey them in all things that do not violate God’s holy standard.
- c. We need to distinguish between what is our preference and what is clearly unbiblical. Often our conflict over doing or not doing something is rooted in the fact that we just don’t like what those in authority have decided. It’s not the way we would do it. For of course, our way is always better. Sometimes our rebellion is ignited because we feel slighted, or because we were not asked.
- d. I saw this happen at a town meeting. Some people did not like the decisions made by the town council. Each meeting I attended got more aggressive. The few who did not like what was proposed were going to stop at nothing to block the council’s decision from happening. Because they could not get what they wanted at previous meetings, some brought false charges against a council member. The idea was, if they get rid of him they may be able to sway the council to their way of thinking. I also found a previous board member expressing hurt over the board hiring several reputable consulting firm’s with out personally consulting him. However, when you are working under someone’s authority, unintentional slights can easily happen. This does not give us any reason to rebel.
- e. When asked to do something contrary to Scripture we should take our cue from the pages of Scripture. Like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Their response to authority

was measured and respectful when speaking to the king. Even when refusing to worship the golden image.

“O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O King. But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up” – Daniel 3:16-18.

Yes, we may suffer for refusing to do something unrighteous, but when this happens, we have Christ as our example.

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# SUBMISSION:

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## WHEN IT IS DONE RIGHT



When it seems the world cannot get any more upside down than it already is, we wake up the next day to hear about another law that is passed, or another event occurring which takes us to a whole new level of absurdity. Our culture is being shaken and turned on its heels, from wars and rumors of wars, increased terrorism, economic instability, corporate and government corruption, to the disintegration of the institute of marriage and the home.

And then we turn to the pages of Scripture to seek sanity and peace, only to find that what we read is now considered radical, controversial and countercultural. The very words of Scripture are inflammatory. Often it flies in the face of contemporary practice. It is offensive to the world and

“Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands . . .

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”

1 Peter 3:1-7

even shunned by some Christians.

When I perform a wedding ceremony I often say,

“Marriage is a holy institute. It is ordained and sanctified by God. In our day, the fundamental elements of this institute are being challenged. The very idea of marriage is sometimes called old fashion, unnecessary, and too narrow. Even the biblical nature of marriage is being redefined and reshaped into something God never intended or sanctioned. With these changes, God’s design and order for society is being undone. That’s why it is important for us to understand some key elements that make up a biblical marriage.”

I know that in most crowds, there are those who hold to biblical concept on marriage – that is, one man for one woman in a pure and faithful relationship. This may even include the biblical model of the divinely assigned roles for a man and a woman.

However, in growing numbers, there are others in the crowd who have in varying degrees set aside biblical values. Which leads me to our text this morning. It once was a passage that was widely regarded as common teaching on the subject of marriage; whereas today it is considered offensive.

### **IT HAS TO DO WITH SUBMISSION.**

“Likewise, ye wives be in **subjection** to your own husbands . . .” -1 Peter 3:1;

“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. 1 Peter 3:7 and

“Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren . . .” 1 Peter 3:8.

**1. In 1 Peter 2:13, 18; 3:1 the terms “submit”, “subject” and “subjection” are from the same Greek term ὑποτάσσω (*hoop-ot-as'-so*), meaning, “to submit to,” or “to rank under.” Examine each use and discuss what this type of submission should look like in real practice.**

a. 1 Peter 3:1 – “Likewise, ye wives be in subjection . . .”

It is the same word in

1) 1 Peter 2:13 – Submit

2) 1 Peter 2:18 – Subject

3) 1 Peter 3:1 – Subjection

It is a present middle voice verb emphasizing the **voluntary submitting of oneself.** Literally, the term means, “to submit to,” or “rank under.” This submission does not imply any moral, intellectual, or spiritual inferiority in the family, workplace or in society. Rather, it is God’s design for roles necessary to mankind’s well-being.

It is along the same lines as a commanding officer to his troops. He is not necessarily superior in character to the troops under him, but his authority is vital to the proper function of the unit.

- b. As Peter exhorted every one of us to voluntarily submit ourselves to the civil authority or to those who are over us in the work place; so should wives voluntarily submit to the authority of their husbands over them. Note, this authority is not based on personal superiority but rather is rooted in an authority granted by God. Therefore, everyone granted this authority will be held accountable to God.

**2. Discuss the cultural differences between the roles of men and women in the first Century and now. Since our cultures are two millenniums apart, is 1 Peter 3:1-7 still relevant or was it just a cultural directive for Peter's day? If you think it is still relevant, then explain in what ways it is still applicable.**

- a. Note that the passage does not end with only the wives submitting:
  - 1) 1 Peter 3:7 – Likewise, ye husbands
  - 2) In other words, as the wife is voluntarily submitting to her husband, the husband is also voluntarily submitting certain rights.

You see how this passage is meddling. It was meddling then in Peter's day and it is meddling still in our day.

- b. **IN THE FIRST-CENTURY GRECO-ROMAN CULTURE** women received little or no respect. As long as they lived in their father's house, they were subject to the father's power. The man also had life and death power over his wife. Under these conditions, a husband could take grave offense when his wife came to know the Lord. Hostile conditions in the marriage could result in severe abuse, or death. So Peter instructs women in how to live with their husbands under potentially volatile circumstances. Their godly conduct could win their husband's to Christ.
- c. **IN OUR DAY** the pendulum has swung to the other side of the spectrum. Husbands no longer have life and death power over their wives and children. Nor is abuse legal. When uncovered, it can and should carry with it serious penalties. Furthermore, submission is misunderstood and biblical roles are often ignored and in some instances reversed.
- d. **HOW IS THIS PASSAGE RELEVANT IN BOTH CULTURES?** *(First, it is God's word, so it is always true in every age.)* Second, at one time this passage taught 1st Century Christians how to move from abusive pagan practices to create a biblical home where love and grace thrived and where biblical order and function built up the family unit. Now this passage is instructing our out of control society with all its ME-isms and selfish individual rights how to stop the erosion of biblical values before we move head long back into paganism. It teaches every generation how to have Spirit-filled homes where love and grace thrive. But will we listen?

3. **According to 1 Peter 3:1-6, what are the key responsibilities of the wife?** - Proverb 11:22; Isaiah 3:16-24; Genesis 12:11f & 20:2f

### **THE WIFE'S RESPONSIBILITY**

It involves six verses to the husband's one, probably because of the serious issues faced by the women in the 1<sup>st</sup> century. However, the instruction given is not cultural. Nor is it to be dismissed as not relevant today. Rather, the passage presents timeless - biblical instruction. It tells us how to cultivate a godly home where love and grace thrive and children can be nurtured.

a. **A GODLY OUTWARD ATTITUDE** - 1 Peter 3:1-2

- 1) A disobedient husband is one who rejects God's word.
- 2) The wife can win her husband to Christ without a word. It is all in her conduct. Conversation in the KJV means conduct.
- 3) 1 Peter 3:2 - While her husband sees her "**chaste conversation**" – her life composed of irreproachable and pure conduct toward God and her husband.
- 4) It is coupled "**with fear**" - Respect for God and respect towards her husband as unto the Lord.

b. **GODLY MODESTY** – 1 Peter 3:1-6

- 1) **Hairstyle** - *Not by* "the outward adorning of hair"
- 2) **Jewelry** - *Not by* "Wearing of gold"
- 3) **Clothing** - *Not by* "Putting on of apparel"

Nothing is wrong with styling hair, or with these outward items. But these are surface. Proverbs 11:22 – "As a jewel of gold in a **swine's** snout, so is a fair woman which is without discretion."

Isaiah 3:16-24

"Moreover the LORD saith, Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet: <sup>17</sup> Therefore the LORD will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and the LORD will discover their secret parts. <sup>18</sup> In that day the Lord will take away the bravery of their tinkling ornaments about their feet, and their cauls, and their round tires like the moon, <sup>19</sup> The chains, and the bracelets, and the mufflers, <sup>20</sup> The bonnets, and the ornaments of the legs, and the headbands, and the tablets, and the earrings, <sup>21</sup> The rings, and nose jewels, <sup>22</sup> The changeable suits of apparel, and the mantles, and the wimples, and the crisping pins, <sup>23</sup> The glasses, and the fine linen, and the hoods, and the veils. <sup>24</sup> And it shall come to pass, that instead of sweet smell there shall be stink; and instead of a girdle a rent; and

instead of well set hair baldness; and instead of a stomacher a girding of sackcloth; and burning instead of beauty.”

c. **GODLY HEART - Instead, they are to cultivate the inward man** – 1 Peter 3:4

1) Meek = Gentle

2) Quiet = tranquil spirit

Those two items “in the sight of God *is* of great price..”

Such was the spirit of holy women of old – 1 Peter 3:5

d. **EVEN AS SARAH** – 1 Peter 3:6 (See Genesis 12:11f & 20:2f for her example).

**4. According to 1 Peter 3:7, what is the responsibility of the Christian husband?**

The Husband’s responsibility

The biblical role includes a believing husband who submits by serving his wife in three areas.

a. **CONSIDERATION** – 1 Peter 3:7a

“dwell with *them* according to knowledge” – 1 Peter 3:7a

This speaks of being sensitive and considering the wife’s deepest physical and emotional needs. “Dwell with them,” refers to living with them by cherishing them and nurturing them in the bond of love and grace.

b. **CHIVALRY** – 1 Peter 3:7b

1) He should also be chivalrous by realizing that she is someone who is physically weaker. Not inferior in character or intellect, or spiritually but physically weaker. Col 3:19 – “Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.”

2) He should protect his wife. Husbands are the sacrificial providers and protectors of their wives. Eph. 5:25 – “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it”

c. **COMPANIONSHIP** – 1 Peter 3:7c

“and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.”

1) Marriage is a divine providence given to man regardless of his attitude towards the Giver. The intimate companionship in marriage is the richest blessing of this life. It was a foreign concept to the pagan culture of Peter’s day. Husbands were generally uninterested in friendship with their wives. However, in the Christian home the husband is to cultivate all the richness God has designed for marriage.

2) The husband is to honor His wife in loving consideration, chivalry and companionship.

d. **SO HIS PRAYERS BE NOT HINDERED.**

5. **Why do so many people in our day find the idea of submission in marriage difficult?**

6. **For married couples and those single:**

**If you are married:**

a. Take a few moments and write down what you can do in your marriage that might further reflect our passage. If comfortable, relate your thoughts to your group.

**If you are single:**

a. Take a few moments and write down what areas you might find difficult to do. What steps can you take now that would prepare you to biblically submit to one another?

b. What should you look for in a “dating” / “courting” relationship that would indicate your perspective mate would qualify as a godly candidate?

# God Is On The Throne

**“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” - 1 Pt. 3:8-22**



Peter is writing to a troubled people. They fled their homeland to escape religious persecution. They scattered to the northern regions of the Roman empire, today known as Syria, Turkey, Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan.

By fleeing they hoped to find freedom from oppression, prosperity and some element of peace, yet it did not always end up that way. Peter notes their ongoing suffering in 1 Peter 1:6 where he wrote,

*that “now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations.”*

Of course their ongoing plight cause disappointment, and discouragement. In some cases, these Christians were stretched to the point of despair and hopelessness.

Now we do not have to be refugees to become discouraged. Nor do we have to be pressed to the point of despair and hopelessness to find ourselves in difficult trials. There are innumerable sets of circumstances that can bring us to our knees, i.e. the loss of a loved one, an ongoing illness, cruelty and pressures at work, the deterioration of a relationship, a wayward child, and the list goes on.

What Peter does in this passage is remind his audience of the genuine hope they have in Christ. This hope should impact our relationship with our government (2:11-17), our employers (2:18-25), and our marriages (3:1-7).

So, in this final section of Chapter 3, he reminds his audience that God is still on the throne. When ones faith firmly takes hold of this truth it will have a profound impact on how one goes through the trials of life.

Peter quotes from Psalm 34:15 & 16 when writing 1 Peter 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.”*

In the lesson we will examine three aspects of this passage as it relates to our passage. 1) **God sees** – “for the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous;” 2) **God hears** – “and his ears are open unto their prayers” and 3) **God is just** – “but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.”

**1. It appears that Peter was meditating on Psalm 34 when he wrote to these suffering Christians. Compare Psalm 34:11-22 with 1 Peter 3:8-15 and list their similarities.**

**What does this tell us about Peter?**

- a. **Psalm 34:12** “What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many days, that he may see good?” and **1 Peter 3:10a** - “For he that will love life, and see good days
- b. **Psalm 34:13** - “Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile:” and **1 Peter 3:10b** - let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile.”
- c. **Psalm 34:14** - “Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it;” and **1 Peter 3:11** - “Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it.”
- d. **Psalm 34:15** - “ The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry and **1 Peter 3:12a** - “For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers:
- e. **Psalm 34:16** “The face of the LORD is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth;” and **1 Peter 3:12b** - “but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.
- f. **Psalm 34:18** - “The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit;” and **1 Peter 3:15a** - “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts”

Also compare **1 Peter 3:13** with **Proverbs 16:7** and **1 Peter 3:14** with **Isaiah 8:12b**

**2. What three things does God’s see or do in 1 Peter 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.”

- a. **God sees** – “for the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous”
- b. **God hears** – “and his ears are open unto their prayers”
- b. **God is against** – “but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.”

3. **What does the phrase, “the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous” imply?** 1 Peter 3:12; John 10:27; 1 Peter 1:5

a. God sees, knows and keeps His own.

1) He sees His children - 1 Peter 3:12, “for the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous”

2) He knows the righteous - John 10:27, “**My sheep hear my voice, and I know them**, and they follow me . . .”

3) He keeps the righteous until the end - 1 Peter 1:5, “**Who are kept by the power of God** through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

4. **What does God see and know about His own? - Revelation 2:2, 9, 13, 19; 3:1, 8, 15**

a. Revelation 2:2 “I know thy **works**, and thy **labour**, and thy **patience**, and how thou **canst not bear** them which are **evil**”

b. Revelation 2:9 - “I know thy works, and **tribulation**, and **poverty**, . . . and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not”

c. Revelation 2:13 - “I know thy works, and **where thou dwellest**”

d. Revelation 2:19 - “I know thy works, and **charity**, and **service**, and **faith**, and thy patience, and thy works”

e. Revelation 3:1 - “I know thy works, **that thou hast a name** that thou livest, and art dead.”

f. Revelation 3:8 - “I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door”

g. Revelation 3:15 - “I know thy works, that **thou art neither cold nor hot**”

b. Regardless the circumstances we face we should remember what Christ has done for us. This should affect our conduct towards one another

5. **How do the above references of God seeing the righteous tie in with 1 Peter 3:8-11?**

a. When it says, “for the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous” it implies more than just protection. God also sees our works of righteousness or lack thereof.

1) 1 Peter 3:8a - We ought to be of one mind

2) 1 Peter 3:8b - Having Compassion = (Greek - *sumpatheis*) = sympathy

3) 1 Peter 3:8c - Love – (Greek - *philadelphoi*) Brotherly Love

4) 1 Peter 3:8d - Be Pitiful = compassionate

5) 1 Peter 3:8e - Be Courteous = kind

This is possible even in the midst of trials for Christ is our strength.

b. It should cause us to refrain from evil – 1 Peter 1:9

1) We are not to render evil for evil and railing (abuse) for abuse – 1 Peter 3:9

- 2) Rather we should bless – “but contrariwise blessing; **knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing**” – 1 Peter 3:9

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## OUR PURPOSE AS THE CALLED OF GOD IS TO BLESS OR BE A BLESSING

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- c. 1 Peter 3:10a quotes from Psalm 34:12 which states the question,  
“What man *is he that* desireth life, *and loveth many days*, that he may see good?”
- 1) Let us refrain from an evil tongue – 1 Peter 3:10a
  - 2) Let us refraining our lips from guile (deceit) – 1 Peter 3:10b
  - 3) Let us eschew evil and do good, let him seek peace.
  - 4) (also see Ps 34:13-14)

## THE LORD IS ON HIS THRONE AND HE SEES WHAT THE WICKED DO, AS WELL AS HE SEES OUR CONDUCT

6. **What does 1 Peter 3:13-14 imply and how does it aid the already trial burdened saint? What does it mean when it says, “if you suffer for righteousness’ sake, happy are ye . . .?”**

“But and if ye suffer for righteousness’ sake, happy *are ye*: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled”

- a. God hears our troubles and prayers. It is possible that even with all the good we do, that we still might be targeted by the unredeemed. So if we suffer (1 Peter 3:14), do not be afraid, do not be troubled, but be “Happy.”
- b. The term happy in the Greek does not mean “joy” but rather BLESSED - (Greek - *makarios*.)

1 Peter 5:10 - “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.**”

When Mary was called blessed by the angel of the Lord in Luke 1:42 “And she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed *art* thou among women, and blessed *is* the fruit of thy womb.” It was a bitter sweet blessing because Luke 2:35 says, (Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.)”

Also Jesus called those who suffer persecution for righteousness sake “blessed” “happy” (Same Greek word - *makarios*.) Matt. 5:10-12.

“Blessed *are* they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. <sup>11</sup> Blessed are ye, when *men* shall revile you, and persecute *you*, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. <sup>12</sup> Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great *is* your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.”

**7. What should we do to prepare ourselves for trials? - 1 Peter 3:15 What does it mean to sanctify the Lord in our hearts?**

- a. To sanctify the Lord in our heart is an allusion to Psalm 34:15 - "The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit."

The idea is when believers sanctify Christ as Lord in their hearts, they are affirming their submission to His control, instruction, and guidance. In doing so they also declare and submit to God's sovereign majesty and demonstrate that they fear only Him. They set apart their lives for the Lord's use.

- b. Along with this we are instructed to "Be ready with an answer . . . *for* . . . reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" - 1 Peter 3:15

**8. What is happening in 1 Peter 3:18-22? How would you interpret this difficult passage?**

- a. Did not Christ, who was just, suffer in order to bring us to God? Was He not quickened (made alive again) in the Spirit? - v. 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"

If God was just with His Son, He will be just with us.

- b. "**By which also**" - v 19 refers to the last phrase in the previous verse "By the Spirit v. 18. In other words, By the same Spirit in which Christ endured the suffering on the cross, is the same empowering Spirit that Christ was preached to the disobedient spirits who lived in the days of Noah, through Noah.
- c. **These "spirits"** were the ones who harassed and abused Noah. In fact, The world had become so corrupt that only 8 souls would be saved from God's wrath. But God deliver Noah and his family from the wickedness of that day. He delivered them by locking them in the Ark while he wiped out the corrupt world by water.
- d. Verse 21 says the historic events in Noah's life is a type. That is, those of us who are in Christ are spiritually baptized into His body. (Peter is not referring to water baptism. Note the words he used in this passage, "Not the putting away of the filth of the flesh." Remember, the water did not save Noah and his family. It was their faith in God and God locking them in the Ark.) As Noah was placed in the Ark for his deliverance, we are placed in Christ and will be resurrected (and thereby taken from this corrupt world - Romans 6:3f.) As Noah was delivered from this corrupt world through the Ark, God will likewise deliver all those in Christ by taking them out of this wicked world while He destroys it with fire.

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**THE POINT IS: GOD SEES, GOD IS JUST, AND GOD WILL DEAL WITH THE WICKED WHILE PROTECTING HIS OWN - 1 PETER 3:12**

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# SHUNNING SIN

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That you may give the rest of your lives in the flesh to the purpose of God



Sin is deadly. What the world glamorizes as good is often toxic, but as deadly as sin is, men still run headlong after it. The Bible, in Proverbs 7:21-23, graphically describes the alluring call of sin:

“With her much fair speech she caused him to yield, . . . he goeth after her straightway, as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks; till a dart strike through his liver; as a bird hasteth to the snare, and knoweth not that it is for his life.”

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**IF MEN REALLY UNDERSTOOD HOW DEADLY SIN IS, THEY WOULD AVOID IT LIKE THE PLAGUE**

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The book of James also reminds us “when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.” Furthermore, before we came to Christ we “were dead in trespasses and sins” (*Ephesians 2:1*). Scripture makes it clear that, “sin is the transgression of the law” (*1 John 3:4*) “and He that committeth sin is of the devil” (*1 John 3:8*). By definition, “all unrighteousness is sin” (*1 John 5:17*) and “all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (*Romans 3:23*).

Therefore, apart from Christ “we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags” (*Isaiah 64:6*). The truth is, sins separates the unredeemed from God, and because of this “the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness” (*Romans 1:18*).

Peter’s purpose is to remind these 1st Century Christians of the deadly effects of sin. We are to “have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness” (*Ephesians 5:11*), . . . “for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness” (*2 Corinthians 6:14*)? Even though Christians are delivered from the wrath of God, they can still break fellowship with God by continually sinning and thereby miss many of the blessings God has in store. “If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth” (*1 John 1:6*).

Our passage examines three effects of sin. Peter uses this sobering realization to encourage believers in their efforts to shun sin. If we do not see how deadly sin is, we will not avoid it.

1. Even though Jesus never sinned, he suffered the wages of sin for us. In other words, our sin resulted in Jesus’ death on the cross. Our sin is costly! Discuss how costly our sin nature and our personal sins were to Jesus . . . (and would have been to us), if we had not placed our faith in Him — 1 Peter 2:24, 4:1a; and 2 Corinthians 5:21.
  - a. Our sin killed Christ! Not that Jesus sinned. He never sinned. “For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin,” (*Hebrews 4:15*). “For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (*2 Corinthians 5:21*).
  - c. This is how Peter begins Chapter 4:1, “Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh.” Our sin is the reason Jesus was nailed to the cross for us. Sin is deadly and when we look at the cross we can see the wages. There, God poured out his wrath that was due us on Christ. For it says, “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” 1Pet. 2:24. Sin is deadly. It is costly. It has temporal and eternal consequences.
2. Discuss how sin can keep the believer from becoming all he should be for Christ? - 1 Peter 4:1b; 1Corinthian 3:14; Colossians 2:18; Revelation 22:12
  - a. Therefore, we are to “arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin” - 1 Peter 4:1b

- b. For example, because of sin many in the Corinthian assembly fell short of what they should have been for Christ. They sued each other, they followed men rather than Christ, they tolerated sin and allowed incest into their congregation and much more. They missed the blessings of peace. They brought reproach to God's name, and most likely missed a number of eternal rewards.
  - c. 1Corinthian 3:14 - "If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward."
  - d. Colossians 2:18 - "Let no man beguile you of your reward"
  - e. Revelation 22:12 - "And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be."
3. Discuss how sin opposes God's holy will? - 1 Peter 4:2; James 4:1-4; James 5:1-6

"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" - 1 Peter 4:2

We should no longer act like the rest of the world. Think of all the ways sin is in conflict with God's will.

4. Discuss how sin affects our culture, our society and us personally. We need to remember how devastating sin has been on lost humanity.
- a. Think of it this way. Remember what sin has done to lost humanity.
    - i. Drug addiction
    - ii. Broken Homes
    - iii. Violence
    - iv. The breakdown of society
    - v. Greed, Materialism, Covetous, etc.

James 4:1-4 says, "From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? <sup>2</sup> Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not . . . know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

James 5:1f goes on to say, "Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. <sup>2</sup> Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are motheaten. <sup>3</sup> Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. <sup>4</sup> Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth. <sup>5</sup> Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have

nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter. 6 Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you.”

5. What is Peter telling his audience to remember in 1 Peter 4:3? What do the following terms mean? How are they practiced today?

- a. Lasciviousness
- b. Lusts
- c. Excess wine
- d. Drunkenness
- e. Reveling
- f. Banqueting
- g. Abdominal idolatry

**Answer:**

- a. Lasciviousness means “sexually promiscuous behavior and lewdness” “to engage in immoral sexual excess” “unbridled lust, wantonness”
  - b. Lusts - “means “evil desires and passions” “a longing for that which is forbidden”
  - c. Excess wine - “Drunkenness “implying the consumption of a large quantities of alcohol`
  - e. Reveling - “Noisy partying or merrymaking” and “carousing” which means drinking or using illicit drugs with others in a loud and lively way.
  - f. Banqueting - “drinking parties involving unrestrained indulgence in alcoholic beverages and accompanying immoral behavior”
  - g. Abdominal idolatry - usually associated with pagan rituals, man and female prostitution and much more.
6. Why do the unredeemed become so aggravated when we do not participate in their unbiblical practices? - 1 Peter 4:4
- “Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you”
7. What does Peter remind his audience of in 1 Peter 4:5?
- 1 Peter 4:5 – “Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.”
8. What is Peter saying in 1 Peter 4:6? How does this help his readers?
- “For for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead (*Martyrs*), that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.

# Imminency

**Of the Rapture: Jesus Christ coming for His church**



## Is Christ's Return Imminent?

John 11:17-27; 1  
Thessalonians 4:15-17;  
1 Thessalonians 5:1-9;  
2 Thessalonians 2:1-3;  
Titus 2:11-13;  
Hebrews 10:24-25;  
James 5:7-9; 1 Peter  
4:7; 1 John 2:18;  
Revelation 1:1

The New Testament is consistent in its anticipation that the return of Christ will occur at any moment. That pervading perspective of imminence prompts three questions. The first question pertains to whether the Tribulation will occur before Christ's coming for the church. The answer to that question is that it will not because the church is never asked to look forward to the tribulation, but they are asked to look forward to Christ's coming. The second question revolves around how the return of Christ could have been imminent in the early church. The answer here is that no one but the Father knows when the coming will occur, so that Christians including the early church must always be ready. The third question asks why Christ's imminent return is so important. This answer relates to the motivation it supplies for believers to purify their lives and thereby progress toward the goal of sanctification and Christlikeness. The threefold call of the imminence doctrine is to wake up and obey right now, to throw off the works of darkness, and to put on the garments of holy living.

## Could Christ Come At Any Moment?

Christ could come at any moment. I believe that with all my heart—not because of what I read in the newspapers, but because of what I read in Scripture.

From the very earliest days of the church, the apostles and first-generation Christians nurtured an earnest expectation and fervent hope that Christ might suddenly return at any time to gather His church to heaven. James, writing what was probably the earliest of the New Testament

epistles, expressly told his readers that the Lord's return was imminent:

"Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: **for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh**. Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door" - James 5:7-9.

Peter echoed that same expectation when he wrote,

"The end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer" - 1 Peter 4:7.

The writer of Hebrews cited the imminent return of Christ as a reason to remain faithful:

"And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is*; but exhorting *one another*: and so much the more, **as ye see the day approaching**." (Hebrews 10:24-25).

He wrote,

"For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry." (v. 37).

And the apostle John made the most confident pronouncement of all:

"Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour" (1 John 2:18).



When John recorded his vision in the book of Revelation, he prefaced it by saying these things "must shortly come to pass" (Revelation 1:1).

The New Testament writers often wrote of Christ's "appearing," and they never failed to convey the sense that this could happen imminently. "And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming." (1 John 2:28; cf. 3:2; Colossians 3:4; 2 Timothy 4:8; 1 Peter 5:4).

All those texts suggest that in the early church expectation of Christ's imminent return ran high. A solid conviction that Christ could return at any time permeates the whole NT. When the apostle Paul described the Lord's coming for the church, he used personal pronouns that show he clearly was convinced he himself might be among those who would be caught up alive to meet the Lord:

"For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive *and* remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep . . . Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." (1 Thessalonians 4:15, 17).

He obviously looked for Christ to return in his lifetime. He furthermore made it plain that a

watchful, hopeful expectancy about Christ's Second Coming is one of the godly attitudes divine grace teaches all believers:

“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that,

denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;” (Titus 2:11–13).

- 
1. **What does “imminent” mean? Examine the verses listed in the introduction of this lesson and discuss how their reference points us to Christ’s imminent return.** - James 5:7-9; 1 Peter 4:7; Hebrews 10:24–25, 37; 1 John 2:18; 1 John 2:28; cf. 3:2; Colossians 3:4; 2 Timothy 4:8; 1 Peter 5:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:15, 17; Titus 2:11–13.
  2. **When the New Testament cites the phrase “Last Days,” to what time period does it refer?** - 1 John 2:18; Hebrews 1:1–2

#### **ANSWER:**

We live are living in the “last days”: First, all the general “signs of the times” given in the NT *have* been fulfilled—and *are being* fulfilled before our eyes. They are, in fact, characteristics of the entire church age. Apostasy and unbelief, self-love and sin, wars, rumors of wars, and natural disasters have all been common throughout the church age. Practically every generation of Christians since the time of Christ has believed they were seeing the end-times signs fulfilled before their very eyes. So how are *we* to know whether our own time is the true “last days” of Bible prophecy—or just more of the same general apostasy and calamity that have characterized the entire Christian era?

The apostle John settled that question under the Holy Spirit’s inspiration when he wrote, “Little children, it is the last time (*last hour*): and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time (*last hour*.)” (1 John 2:18). The church was *already* in “the last days” even before the apostolic era ended. In fact, “last days” is a biblical term for the Christian era itself (Hebrews 1:1–2). This entire age is a prelude to the final culmination of human history. These *are* the last days—and so was the early church era.

3. Examine the context of 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3 and compare it with Paul’s previous letter to the Thessalonians. **To what time period does 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3 speak? How does this link with what Paul previously wrote in - 1 Thessalonians 1:10; 2:19; 3:2-4, 13; 4:13–17; 5:1-3?**

Note, because of suffering, the Thessalonians thought they missed the rapture and had plunged into the Great Tribulation Period, but Paul assured them in the above 1 Thessalonians passages they had not missed the rapture. In his second letter to the Thessalonians Paul explains a few items that would happen during the Great Tribulation Period, (items the early Christians were not experiencing). The conclusion to his point: (1) they were not in the Great Tribulation Period and, (2) they had not missed the rapture.

#### **INSIGHT #1:**

Paul spent his entire first epistle urging them to be watchful and expectant and to encourage one another with the news of Christ’s imminent return (cf. 1 Thessalonians 1:1–9; 4:15–18; 5:6, 9, 11). If the apostle now meant to teach them that all the events of the Tribulation must be fulfilled *before*

Christ could return for them, that would be scant “comfort” indeed. In fact, it would overturn everything the NT has to say about Christ’s return being imminent, comforting, and hopeful.

So the consistent teaching of the NT is that Christians should be looking for the imminent coming of Christ for His church, and 2 Thessalonians 2:1–4 is no exception.

## **INSIGHT #2:**

Some say the Tribulation will precede (*come before*) Christ’s coming for the Church? -How do we reconcile their arguments? Those who say the tribulation will come first often cite these verses - Matthew 24:21, 30; 2 Tim 3:1–3; 4:1; 2 Thessalonians 2:1–3.

So on the one hand, the NT is permeated with an eager sense of expectancy and conviction that the blessed hope of Christ’s return is imminent. On the other hand, we are warned about trouble and affliction that will precede Christ’s return. How can we reconcile these two threads of prophecy? How can we cultivate a daily expectation of Christ’s return if these preliminary signs must yet be fulfilled before He returns? To find the answer to this question we must first understand the following:

The NT never suggests we should defer our expectation of Christ’s appearing until other preliminary events can occur. The one apparent exception is 2 Thessalonians 2:1–3, which says,

“For that day [*the day of the Lord*] shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition”

However, “the day of the Lord” here refers to Christ’s return to judge the earth, not His coming for the Church in the air. The expression “day of the Lord” always refers to judgment and usually to a time of apocalyptic judgment—cf. Isaiah 13:9–11; Amos 5:18–20; 1 Thessalonians 5:2–3; 2 Peter 3:10; Revelation 6:17; 16:14. The day of the Lord is an extended period of time, beginning with the tribulation and including the events of the second coming of Christ and the millennial kingdom on earth. It will begin unexpectedly as a thief in the night.

If 2 Thess. 2:1–3 actually means Christ’s coming for the church, then the rapture would happen after the seven years of Tribulation. However if this were true it would nullify the multitudes of passages the New Testament teaches about the imminence of Christ’s return.

So . . . context, context, and context is extremely important here. Often when we grasp the context of a passage, what appears to be a problem text will longer a problem. This is true with the above passage (again see insight #1 above).

4. **How could Christ’s coming have been imminent in the early church?** - Matthew 24:42; James 5:9; Philippians 4:5; 1 Peter 4:7; Hebrews 10:25; Revelation 3:11; 22:7

## **ANSWER:**

- a. Some argue that Christ’s coming could not possibly have been imminent for the early church, given the obvious fact that two thousand years later, He has still not returned. Skeptics often ridicule Christianity or challenge the inerrancy of Scripture on that very ground. After all, the verses cited at the beginning of this chapter do prove that James, Peter, John, Paul, and the writer of Hebrews all believed Christ’s return was very near—“at the door” (James 5:9); “at hand” (Philippians 4:5; 1 Peter 4:7); “approaching” (Hebrews 10:25); “com[ing] quickly” (Revelation 3:11; 22:7).

- b. How can it be, then, that two thousand years later Christ still has not returned? Could the apostles have been in error about the timing? That is precisely what some skeptics claim. Here's a typical excerpt from a newsletter whose sole aim is to attack the inerrancy of Scripture:

"Paul, himself, showed . . . that he was among those who awaited the imminent return of Christ. Yet, as the history of that era clearly shows, all was for nought. No messiah appeared . . . The NT repeatedly says the messiah was to return in a very short time. Yet, mankind has waited for nearly 2,000-years and nothing has occurred. By no stretch of the imagination can that be considered "coming quickly." . . . It is, indeed, unfortunate that millions of people still cling to the forlorn hope that somehow a messiah will arise to extract them from their predicament. How many years (2,000, 10,000, 100,000) will it take for them to finally say, "We can only conclude that we are the victims of a cruel hoax"?  
Dennis McKinsey, ed., "Imminence" in "Biblical Errancy," issue 89 (May 1990)

What shall we make of this charge against the truthfulness of Scripture? Does the passing of two thousand years indeed prove that Christ's coming was not imminent in the early church era, and that the apostles were mistaken?

**Certainly not.** Remember the clear statement of Christ in Matthew 24:42: "for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come." The exact time remains hidden from us, as it was from the apostles. But Christ could nonetheless come at any time. The Judge is still at the door. The day is still at hand. There are no other events that must occur on the prophetic calendar before Christ comes to meet us in the air. He could come at any moment. And it is in *that* sense that Christ's coming is imminent. In the very same sense, His coming was imminent even in the days of the early church.

I suppose it is *also* possible that Christ could delay his coming another two thousand years or longer. Given the rapid decline of society, I do not see how that is possible, but neither did the apostles when they surveyed the state of the world in their time. He still *could* delay His coming. That is why Christ taught us to be prepared, whether He comes immediately or delays longer than we think possible (cf. Matthew 24:42-25:12).

In any case, the passing of two thousand years is no reproach whatsoever against the faithfulness of God or the trustworthiness of His Word. This is precisely the point Peter made when he anticipated the scoffers who would arise, mocking the promise of Christ's return (2 Peter 3:3-4). Peter's reply to those scoffers? "With the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" (2 Peter 3:8). The amount of earthly time that passes is of no consequence. It is certainly irrelevant from God's timeless point of view. A moment is like many eons in His mind, and eons pass like moments. He is not bound by time as we are, and no amount of time can ever nullify His faithfulness. "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9).

In other words, the real reason for the Lord's delay is not that He is negligent or careless in fulfilling his promises, but simply because He is longsuffering and kind, delaying Christ's coming and the wrath that will accompany it while he calls out people to salvation. And Christ will not return before the merciful purposes of God are complete. Far from suggesting apathy or neglect on God's part, the long delay before Christ's appearing simply underscores the remarkable depth of His nearly inexhaustible mercy and longsuffering.

And therefore the fact that two-thousand years have elapsed is utterly irrelevant to the doctrine of Christ's imminent return. Christ's coming is *still* imminent. It could occur at any moment. The command to be ready and watchful is as applicable to us as it was to the early church. In fact, the return of Christ should be an even *more* urgent issue for us, because it is drawing nearer with the

passing of each day. We still do not know *when* Christ is coming, but we do know that we are two thousand years closer to that event than James was in those earliest days of the Christian era, when the Holy Spirit moved him to warn the church that the coming of the Lord was at hand and the Judge was already standing at the door.

## 5. Why is Christ's imminent return so important? - Romans 13:8-14

### ANSWER:

- a. Why is it so important to believe that Christ could come at any moment? Because the hope of Christ's imminent coming has a powerful sanctifying and purifying effect on us.

"And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." (1 John 3:3).

The knowledge that Christ's coming is drawing closer should motivate us to prepare, to pursue Christlikeness, and to put off all the things that pertain to our former lives without Christ.

The apostle Paul took this very line of argument near the end of his epistle to the Romans. He reminded the believers at Rome of their duty to love their neighbors as themselves, saying love is the one principle that fulfills all God's moral commands (Romans 13:8-10). Then stressing the urgency of living in obedience to this Great Commandment, he wrote,

"And that, knowing the time, that now *it is* high time to awake out of sleep: for now *is* our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to *fulfil* the lusts *thereof*" - Romans 13:11-14.

**That is the apostle Paul's wake-up call to the church. Christ's return is approaching.** The time now is nearer than when we first believed. Every moment that passes brings Christ's return even closer. How are we to redeem the time? He calls for a three-part response that perfectly sums up the Christian's proper perspective on the imminent possibility of Christ's return.

- b. **Wake up!** "Awake out of sleep," he pleads (Romans 13:11)—and he underscores both the urgency of this command and the imminency of Christ's return, with four phrases: "now it is high time"; "now is our salvation is nearer" (Romans 13:11); "The night is far spent"; and "the day is at hand" (Romans 13:12).

Time is short; opportunity is fleeting. The Lord is coming soon, and the event draws nearer every moment. The time to obey is now. The only time we can take for granted is now. And since there is no guarantee of *more* time, it is unconscionable to defer our obedience.

Consider this: The apostle Paul was stressing the urgency of this commandment in *his* day, two thousand years ago. He believed the coming of Christ was near—and getting nearer by the moment. How much *more* urgent are these things for our time? "Now is our salvation nearer" (Romans 13:11)—two thousand years nearer, to be precise. Now is certainly not the time to let down our guard or fall asleep. Although some might be tempted to think the long delay means Christ's coming is no longer an urgent matter, a moment's thought will reveal that if we believe Christ was speaking the truth when He promised to come again quickly, we *must* believe that the time is drawing nearer by the moment—and the urgency is not lessened by the delay, but heightened.

It is perfectly natural for infidels, skeptics, and unbelievers to think Christ's delay means He will not fulfill His promise (2 Peter 3:4). But no genuine believer should ever think that way. Rather than despairing because He tarries, we ought to realize that the time is nearer now than it has ever been. He *is* coming. As we saw earlier, His Word guarantees that He will come. Our hope should be growing stronger, not diminishing, as He delays his coming.

When Paul writes, "And that, knowing the time" (Romans 13:11), he employs a Greek word for "time" (*kairos*), that speaks of an age or an era, not the time (*chronos*) told by a clock. "Knowing the time" therefore speaks of understanding this age, being discerning, like "the children of Issachar, *which were men* that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do" (1 Chronicles 12:32).

Christ rebuked the Pharisees for lacking this same kind of discernment: "The Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, and tempting desired him that he would shew them a sign from heaven. He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, *It will be* fair weather: for the sky is red. And in the morning, *It will be* foul weather to day: for the sky is red and lowring. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not *discern* the signs of the times? [*kairos*]" (Matthew 16:1-3).

Perhaps Paul had seen signs of spiritual lethargy or dullness among the believers at Rome. No doubt life in that great city held many distractions and earthly enticements that drew hearts away from the earnest hope of Christ's appearing. Like the society in which we live, Roman life catered to the flesh, offering many material comforts and earthly amusements. Perhaps they were inclined to forget they were living in the last days. Spiritually, they were falling asleep.

It sometimes seems as if the entire church today is in an even worse state of spiritual drowsiness. There is widespread indifference concerning the Lord's return. Where is the sense of expectation that characterized the early church? The sad legacy history will record about the church of our generation is that as we neared the dawn of a new millennium. As we entered the year 2000, most Christians were far more concerned about the arrival of a computer glitch known as the "millennium bug" than they were with the arrival of the millennial King! How much worse this drowsiness has become today!

Too many Christians in our time have settled into a state of insensate lethargy and inactivity—an unresponsiveness to the things of God. They are like Jonah, fast asleep in the hold of the ship while raging storms threaten to sweep us away (Jonah 1:5-6). They are like the foolish virgins, who "While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept." (Matthew 25:5). It is high time to awake from that slumber.

Paul sent a similar wake-up call to the church at Ephesus: "Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil." (Ephesians 5:14-16). Never was such an alarm more needed than today. In the words of our Lord Himself, "Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping." (Mark 13:35-36).

When Paul says "now *is* our salvation nearer than when we believed." (Romans 13:11)—he is speaking, of course, about the *consummation* of our salvation. He was not suggesting that the Romans were unregenerate. He was not telling them their *justification* was a yet-future reality. He was reminding them that the culmination of what began at their regeneration was drawing

closer by the moment. “Salvation” in this context refers to our *glorification*, the final goal of God’s saving work (Rom 8:30).

Throughout Scripture, this is connected with the appearing of Christ: “but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him” (1 John 3:2). “Also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body” (Phil 3:20–21). “When Christ, *who is* our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.” (Colossians 3:4). “He *will* appear the second time without sin unto salvation.” (Heb 9:28). Notice that the writer of Hebrews employs the word *salvation* the same way Paul uses it in Romans 13:11.

This final aspect of salvation is what Paul referred to a few chapters earlier, in Romans 8:23: “And not only *they*, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, *to wit*, the redemption of our body. That is the aspect of our salvation that is nearer than when we first believed, and it only awaits Christ’s coming.

So Paul’s penetrating appeal here in Romans 13 assumes that Christ’s return is imminent. If another eschatological age (*kairos*)—especially the Tribulation—were going to occur prior to Christ’s return for the church, Paul would have surely pointed to the onset of that era and urged the Romans to prepare for it. But far from warning them that a dark era of Tribulation was in their future, what he told them was virtually the opposite: “The night is far spent, the day is at hand” (Romans 13:12). The *kairos* of persecution, hardship, and darkness was “far spent” (*prokopt\_* in the Greek text—meaning “advancing quickly,” or “being driven out”). Daylight—the final consummation of our salvation when Christ returns to take us to glory—is imminent.

We have no idea how much sand remains in the hourglass of human history. But we ought to realize that a lot of sand has passed through the hourglass since the apostle Paul said the dawning of daylight was already at hand. How much more urgent is this wake-up call for the church today!

The nighttime of Satan’s dominion will soon give way to the dawn of Christ’s coming for His own. The apostle Paul used precisely the same imagery of darkness and dawn when he wrote to the Thessalonians:

“But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as *do* others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thessalonians 5:1–9).

God did not appoint us to wrath. The day of wrath that shall come in the Tribulation is not what we are to be preparing for. The sudden appearing of Christ to take us to glory is our hope. Wake up! Be sober. Be alert. Your redemption draws near.

c. **Throw off!** The approaching of dawn means it is time for a change of garments:

“Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light” (Romans 13:12).

Paul's imagery evokes the picture of a soldier who has spent the night in a drunken orgy. Still clad in the garments of his sin, he has fallen into a drunken sleep. But dawn is approaching, and now it is time to wake up, throw off the clothes of night, and put on the armor of light.

The Greek verb translated "cast off" was a term that spoke of being ejected or expelled forcefully. The Greek term is used only three other times in the New Testament, and in each case it speaks of excommunication from a synagogue (John 9:22; 12:42; 16:2). So the term carries the idea of renouncing and forsaking sin (or the unrepentant sinner) with vigor and conviction. Paul is calling for an act of repentance. He wants them to cast off—excommunicate, or break fellowship with—the "works of darkness." It is the same expression he uses in Ephesians 5:11: "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove *them*."

Paul often employs the imagery of changing garments to describe the putting off of sin and the old man. "Put off concerning the former conversation, the old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts" (Ephesians 4:22). "Put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to one another, seeing you have put off the old man with his deeds" (Colossians 3:8–9). Notice the twofold putting off: "you *have put off* the old man with his deeds"; but *keep putting off* "all these" works of darkness. The picture this evokes is that of Lazarus, raised from the dead, given new life, but still bound in old grave-clothes that still needed to be put off (cf. John 11:43–44).

Employing similar imagery, the writer of Hebrews urges believers to "lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us," (Hebrews 12:1). There he pictures the Christian like an athlete, stripped of all encumbrances and ready to run. There is much we must throw aside if we are to be prepared for the coming day. James sums it up succinctly: "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness" (James 1:21). And Peter echoes the thought: "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings," (1 Peter 2:1).

- d. **Put on!** There's another aspect of being prepared for the Lord's appearing. We are not fully prepared for the dawn of the new day unless we have put on the appropriate attire: "put on the armour of light . . . put on the Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 13:12, 14).

Again, the imagery is that of a soldier who had spent the night in drunken carousing. He had stumbled home and fallen asleep in clothes that were now wrinkled and befouled with the evidence of his reveling. Day was dawning. It was time to wake up, to cast off the old clothes, and to put on something clean and polished and battle-ready. "Armor" suggests warfare, and that is fitting. Though the return of Christ is imminent, that is no warrant to forsake the battle. Scripture never suggests that His people should sit on a hillside somewhere to await His coming.

In fact, between now and His coming, we are locked in a battle "against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*" (Ephesians 6:12). The nearness of our Lord's return does not mitigate the seriousness of the battle. Now is not the time to slacken our diligence, but the opposite. We should engage the battle with new vigor, knowing that the time is short. "Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand." (Ephesians 6:13).

In other words, we are not off-duty soldiers, free to carouse and indulge in the fleshly pleasures of night life. We are on duty, and our Commander-in-Chief might appear at any moment. Therefore, "Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying." (Romans 13:13). The Christian who is not living a

holy and obedient life with heavenly priorities is a Christian who does not grasp the significance of the Lord's imminent return. If we genuinely are expecting our Lord to appear at any time, that blessed hope should move us to be faithful and walk properly, lest our Lord return to find us walking improperly, disobeying, or dishonoring Him. In Christ's own words,

“Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.” (Mark 13:35–37).

There's more: “But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to *fulfil* the lusts *thereof*.” (Romans 13:14). Again, when we are glorified, we will be instantly conformed to the image of Christ—made as much like Him as it is possible for human beings to be. Christlikeness is therefore the goal toward which God is moving us (Rom 8:29). Even now, the process of sanctification should be conforming us to His image. As we grow in grace, we grow in Christlikeness. We are to become a reflection of Christ's character and His holiness. And that is what Paul means when he writes, “put on the Lord Jesus Christ.” We are to pursue sanctification, to follow after Christ in our conduct and character, to let His mind be in us, and to let His example guide our walk (Philippians 2:5; 1 Peter 2:21).

Paul compared his pastoral duty of disciplining the Galatians to birth pains, as he sought to bring them to Christlikeness: “I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you” (Galatians 4:19). Writing to the Corinthians He also described sanctification as the process by which they would be remade in Christ's likeness: “We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, *even* as by the Spirit of the Lord.” (2 Corinthians 3:18). In other words, we progress from one level of glory to another as we progress toward the ultimate goal. So “put on the Lord Jesus Christ” is simply a command to pursue sanctification (the whole theme of Romans 12–16).

When Paul told the Galatians, “as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” (Galatians 3:27), he was in essence saying sanctification begins at conversion. From the first moment of faith, we are clothed in his righteousness. That is justification. In the words of the prophet Isaiah, “I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness” (Isaiah 61:10).

But that is just the beginning of what it means to put on Christ. Justification is a once-for-all completed event, but sanctification is an ongoing process. And the command to “put on . . . Christ” in Romans 13 is a command to pursue the Christlikeness of sanctification.

The hope of Christ's imminent return is therefore the hinge on which a proper understanding of sanctification turns.

6. **Review some of the key texts that speak of the imminence of Christ's return, and notice specifically what kind of practical duties this doctrine places on us.** - James 5:8, 9; 1 Peter 4:7; Hebrews 10:24-25; 2 Peter 3:11; 1 John 3:2-3
  - a. **Steadfastness:** “Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.” (James 5:8).
  - b. **Kindness:** “Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door.” (James 5:9).

- c. **Prayer:** “But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.” (1 Peter 4:7).
- d. **Faithfulness in assembling together and encouraging one another:** “And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting *one another*: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching” (Hebrews 10:24–25).
- e. **Holy conduct and godliness:** “*Seeing then that* all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in *all* holy conversation and godliness” (2 Peter 3:11).
- f. **Purity and Christlikeness:** “When he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.” (1 John 3:2–3).

Those cover several broad categories, embracing every aspect of our sanctification. The hope of Christ’s imminent return is a catalyst and an incentive for all these things—every fruit of the Spirit, every Christian virtue, everything that pertains to holiness and Christlikeness, and everything that belongs to life and godliness.

That is why it is so important to cultivate a watchful expectancy for the imminent coming of Christ. The point is not to make us obsessed with earthly events. In fact, if your interest in the return of Christ becomes a consuming fixation with what is happening in this world, you have utterly missed the point. The knowledge that Christ’s return is imminent should turn our hearts heavenward, “from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ” (Phil 3:20).

“Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.” (2 Peter 3:14).



# REJOICING

## IN TIMES OF SUFFERING

The epistle of 1 Peter is mostly about suffering and how to live in a hostile culture. Now I am not one who looks forward to suffering. I would rather avoid it if it were possible. But I have come to realize that pain and pleasure are strangely joined and intertwined. The deepest and rarest and most satisfying joys of life often come after a period of pain and suffering.

An example of this is found in the life of Samuel Rutherford. He was a Scottish Presbyterian and theologian who wrote the political book *Lex, Rex, or The Law and the Prince* in 1644. Arguing from Scripture, Natural Law and Scottish law, he presented a comprehensive defense of the Scottish Presbyterian ideal in politics. The book defended the rule of law and the lawfulness of defensive wars (including pre-emptive wars) and

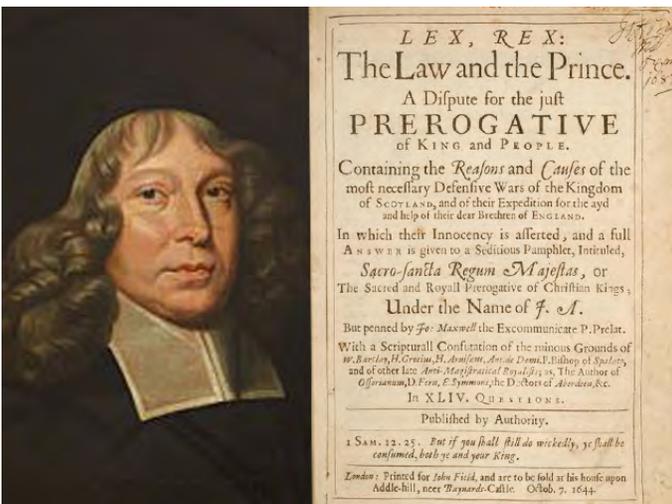
(which advocated distinct realms of church and state but opposed religious toleration). It greatly influenced the leaders of the American Revolution and the thought behind the Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution.

The Scottish and English authorities immediately banished the book and charged Rutherford with high treason, however he died in prison before his charge could be tried. He regarded his confinement as the “cellars of affliction” and wrote, “The Great King keeps his wine there”—not in the courtyard where the sun shines. In other words, when you are in the darkest hours of suffering, God will provide all the necessary strength and comfort you will need.

The 19th Century English preacher Charles Spurgeon said, “They who dive in the sea of affliction bring up rare pearls.” Therefore, Christian’s who go through the deep sorrows of affliction have the King’s wine and the rare pearls.

1 Peter is the handbook for Christian persecution and martyrdom. It explains how one can rejoice in the midst of hardship and have peace. Today’s text, in fact, commands us to rejoice and gives at least six reasons why we should be and can be joyful, even when we are experiencing suffering. The command is found in 1 Peter 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.”



advocated limited government and constitutionalism in politics and the “Two Kingdoms” theory of Church-State relations

Keep on rejoicing. When you are thrown in the cellars of suffering, keep on rejoicing. When you dive in the sea of affliction, keep on rejoicing. In fact, keep on rejoicing not in spite of the affliction but even because of it.

This is not a little piece of advice about the power of positive thinking. This is utterly radical, abnormal, and a supernatural way to respond to suffering. It is not in our power. It is not for the sake of our honor. It is the way

spiritual aliens and exiles live on the earth for the glory of the great King. **"Count it all joy** when ye fall into divers temptations" – James 1:2 is foolish advice, except for one thing—God.

Peter gives six reasons why we can "keep on rejoicing" when suffering comes. Each point relates to how God sovereignly works in and through us.

### **1. What does 1 Peter 4:12, 19 imply regarding God and our suffering? Also, what do we learn about suffering when we compare 1 Peter 4:12 with 4:17-18.**

God is not surprised when suffering occurs. Rather, verse 12 implies it is part of a plan.

"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:"

Suffering isn't strange. It isn't absurd. It isn't meaningless. It is purposeful. It is for our testing. Look at 1 PETER 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. "

"According to the will of God" makes it clear that suffering is not outside the will of God. It is in God's will. This is true even when Satan may be the immediate cause. God is sovereign over all things, including our suffering, and including Satan. But why? For what purpose?

When you compare 1 Peter 4:12 with 17 you will find that fiery ordeals come **"to try you."** It is **"for our testing."** 1 Peter 4:17 says the fiery trial which is to try you is part of God's purging

"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? "

The point is that God's judgment is moving through the earth. The church does not escape. When the fire of judgment burns the church, it is a testing, proving, purifying fire. When it burns the world, it either awakens or destroys. 1 Peter 4:18 continues

"And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?"

Believers pass through the testing fire of God's judgment—not because he hates us, but because he loves us and wills our purity. God hates sin so much and loves his children so much that he will spare us no pain to rid us of what he hates.

So reason number one is that suffering is not surprising to God; it is planned. It is a testing. It is purifying fire. It proves and strengthens real faith, and it consumes "performance faith."

**OUR FIRST PRINCIPLE: GOD IS NOT SURPRISED WHEN SUFFERING OCCURS; IT IS PART OF A PLAN.**



## 2. What does Peter suggest suffering is for in 1 Peter 4:13a?

We are to keep on rejoicing because our suffering as a Christian is an evidence of our union with Christ.

1 Peter 4:13a: " But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings."

In other words, our sufferings are not merely our own. They are also Christ's. This is cause for rejoicing because it means we are united to Christ.

Joseph Tson, a Romanian pastor who stood up to Ceausescu's repressions of Christianity, wrote,

"This union with Christ is the most beautiful subject in the Christian life. It means that I am not a lone fighter here: I am an extension of Jesus Christ. When I was beaten in Romania, He suffered in my body. It is not my suffering: I only had the honor to share His sufferings." (undated paper: *A Theology of Martyrdom*)

### **OUR SECOND PRINCIPLE: SUFFERING GIVES EVIDENCE OF OUR UNION WITH CHRIST.**

## 3. What is another principle of suffering found in the latter part of 1 Peter 4:13b?

We are to keep on rejoicing because this joy will strengthen our assurance that when Christ comes in glory, we will rejoice forever with him. 1 Peter 4:13b: "[As you share the sufferings of Christ] Keep on Rejoicing because

"when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy."

Notice: The **"But Rejoice"** or "Keep On Rejoicing," so that you may rejoice when you are with Christ in glory. When we suffer for His name sake we will be rewarded a thousand-fold in glory, therefore rejoice. First there is suffering, then there is glory. Peter confirms this when he wrote "the Spirit of Christ . . . testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow" 1 Peter 1:11.

The Apostle Paul also said, "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him" – 2 Tim. 2:12 and in Romans 8:17 he said, "if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." First the suffering, and then the glory—both for Jesus and for those who are united to him. Therefore, we should not become embittered at life and the pain it deals us. We are being prepared by God. All the more we will rejoice at the revelation of Christ's glory. Keep on rejoicing now in suffering in order that we might rejoice with exultation at the revelation of His glory.

### **OUR THIRD PRINCIPLE: THERE IS GREATER JOY AHEAD OF US IN GLORY**

## 4. What principle of suffering does Peter reveal to us in 1 Peter 4:14?

Keep on rejoicing in suffering because then the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.

"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" - 1 Peter 4:14.

This means that in the hour of greatest trial there is a great consolation. In great suffering on earth

there is great support from heaven. We may think now that we will not be able to bear it. But if we are Christ's, we will be able to bear it, because He will come to us and rest upon us.

As Samuel Rutherford said, "the Great King keeps his finest wine in the cellar of affliction." He does not bring it out to serve with chips and on sunny afternoons. He keeps it for extremities. The Spirit will reveal enough of glory and enough of God to satisfy your soul, and carry you through the trials. Seek to be holy; seek to bring truth; seek to bear witness; and do not turn aside from risk. And sooner or later we will experience the Spirit of glory and of God resting upon us in suffering.

#### **OUR FOURTH PRINCIPLE: THE SPIRIT OF GLORY AND OF GOD WILL REST UPON US**

##### **5. What is the fifth principle regarding suffering found in 1 Peter 4:16?**

Keep on rejoicing in suffering because this glorifies God.

"If any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf" - 1 Peter 4:16

Glorifying God means we are showing by our actions and attitudes that God is glorious to us—that He is valuable, precious, desirable, satisfying. The greatest way to show that someone satisfies your heart is to keep on rejoicing in them when all other supports for your satisfaction are falling away. When we keep rejoicing in God in the midst of suffering, it shows that God, and not other things, is the great source of our joy.

#### **OUR FIFTH PRINCIPLE: OUR SUFFERING FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS WILL GLORIFY GOD**

##### **6. What is the sixth principle regarding suffering found in 1 Peter 4:19?**

Finally, keep on rejoicing because our Creator is faithful to care for our soul.

"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" - 1 Peter 4:19

The degrees of suffering and the forms of affliction will differ for every one of us. But one thing we will all have in common till Jesus comes: we will all die. We will come to that awesome moment of reckoning. If we have time, we may see our whole life played before us as we ponder if it has been well-spent. We will tremble at the unspeakable reality that in just moments we will face God. And the destiny of our soul will be irrevocable. Will we rejoice in that hour? We will if we entrust our soul to a faithful Creator. He created our soul for His glory. He is faithful to that glory and to all who love it and live for it. Now is the time to show where our treasure is—in heaven or on earth. Now is the time to shine with the glory of God. Trust him. And keep on rejoicing.

#### **OUR SIXTH PRINCIPLE: GOD IS FAITHFUL TO THE CARE OF OUR SOUL**

# Committing To Christ

THE KEEPING OF OUR SOULS - 1 PETER 4:19-5:11

## Easy to Say, Hard to Do

In this lesson, Peter is telling a suffering, battle weary people to again commit their souls unto Christ in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator.

Of course, that is easy to say but very hard to accomplish when in the midst of conflict. Difficulties can overwhelm us, and when they do, they can cause us to lose sight of our position in Christ and our purpose.

The same is true of soldiers. They can lose sight of their objective when in the middle of a military conflict. This is called the fog of war. When the bullets suddenly fly, and mortar rounds explode, it is not unusual for soldiers to become uncertain of their real strength and position, not only of their foes, but also of their friends. The stress of combat, brings moments of uncertainty and confusion.

In military terms, there are five factors generally used in overcoming the fog of war: technology, leadership, training, experience, and planning. Military leaders understand the serious dangers associated with the fog of war. If the soldiers are



not properly prepared, they can become so disoriented that they can lose their lives.

In like manner, Peter is writing to his spiritually battle worn brethren and calling upon them to be soldiers for Christ. In this passage, he reminds them of five elements God provided. When heeded, they will get them through life's trials. He begins by telling them to, "commit the keeping of their souls to him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator" – 1 Peter 4:19.

But how does this help? What does this mean? What does this look like? What action is Peter calling these saints to do?

This lesson will examine the five vital truths revealed in this passage. We will then discuss practical ways to apply them in our lives.

**“Casting all your care upon Him; for He cares for you”**

## 1. What is Peter asking his readers to do in 1 Peter 4:19?

**WE MUST COMMIT THE KEEPING OF OUR SOULS TO CHRIST** — 1 Peter 4:19.

- a. The power we need in any conflict is from God.

“For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds” — 2Cor. 10:4

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. <sup>11</sup> Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. <sup>12</sup> For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” – Eph 6:10-12

- b. Peter is entreating his audience to commit the keeping of their souls to Christ . . . “as unto a faithful Creator.” It does not matter if our conflict is a physical illness, emotional struggle, persecution, ridicule, or a spiritual battle. The first thing we must remember is to commit the safe keeping of our souls to Him. When we do this, we can be brave in conflict. We will be confident of His promise that He will never leave or forsake us. Furthermore, through the conflict He will mature us and thereby establish, strengthen and settle us in our faith. Notice 1 Peter 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. “

## 2. To whom is Peter appealing in 1 Peter 5:1-4? What is his purpose?

**THE ELDERS MUST LEAD** – 1 Peter 5:1-4.

- a. “It is no accident that God has chosen to call us sheep” – W. Phillip Keller.

“The behavior of sheep and human beings is similar in many ways . . . Sheep do not ‘just care of themselves’ as some might suppose. They require, more than any other class of livestock, endless attention and meticulous care.” (A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23 [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979], 20-21.

For example, God has created most animals with an uncanny instinct to find their way home. But if sheep stray into unfamiliar territory, they become completely disoriented and cannot find their way back home. Sheep need a shepherd to guide them, provide for them, protect them and sometimes also to rescue them from harm. Sheep spend most of their time eating and drinking. But if they become lost, they are helpless to find adequate food and water. Left to themselves, sheep will indiscriminately eat both healthy and poisonous plants, or overgraze and ruin their own pasture. They need to be led to water that is not impure and stagnant.

Because sheep are naturally passive and virtually defenseless against predators, and when attacked their only recourse is to flee in panic. The Shepherd must be continually on guard to defend and rescue the sheep from attack. — John MacArthur, 1 Peter [Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2004], 1 Peter 5:1.

- b. Because of this, Peter is exhorting the elders to feed (*Shepherd*) and to take oversight of the assembly of believers.

In 1 Peter 5:2, the Greek term for “feed” is ποιμαίνω *poimaino*, which means, “to tend as a Shepherd”

This passage is linked to the early parts of the letter where Peter addresses Christians who were suffering persecution. They were being attacked for righteousness sake. So Peter exhorts the elders among them to shepherd their troubled assembly.

- c. The first and obvious point is that the Holy Spirit has appointed spiritual leadership within the assembly with the responsibility of leading God’s children. They are men who rule while laboring “in the word and doctrine.” They are to lead every church in every city. Their qualifications are listed in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.

He is calling this group to feed and lead the flock of God. The assembly needs leadership. This leadership is part of God’s provision. They are to help His church through the fog of spiritual conflict.

- d. These leaders are to Shepherd.

This term ποιμαίνω (*Feed/Shepherd*) embodies all the aspects of shepherding. They are to edify and strengthen the assembly with the deep truths of God’s Word. This will produce discernment, conviction, consistency, power and effective testimony to the greatness of the saving work of Christ. No matter what the New Testament terminology identifies the shepherd and his task, underneath it all is the primacy of biblical truth. He is to feed the flock. As Peter tends to God’s heritage, the other elders are to do the same for the flock they are appointed over.

Peter include several aspects of Shepherding.

- 1) First, elders are to oversee the flock.

In 1 Peter 5:2b we find the Greek term *episkopos*. It means “to have oversight.” Sometimes it is translated “Bishop.” The Shepherd must watch over the flock. He is to assess their condition, so as to lead, guard, and feed them.

- 2) The second aspect: The life of the elder must be an example for the flock to follow— 1 Peter 5:3b.

- a) They should willingly serve according to the will of God — 1 Peter 5:2b.

- b) It is not for undue profit or ill gain. Filthy lucre or sordid profit goes beyond seeking wealth but speaks of shameful acquisition – stealing or dishonest gain — 1 Peter 5:2c.

- c) Rather, they should serve with eagerness, according to the high calling and privilege they are given — 1 Peter 5:2d.

- 4. They must not lord over the Lord’s heritage. That is, they must not domineer over people and circumstances. They must not be oppressive, or use intimidation to lead. Those traits of demagoguery are what the unredeemed use, not what God’s appointed leaders should use — 1 Peter 5:3a

Godly leadership is what God's flock needs to survive the fog of war and be successful in the task God has appointed His church. And when Christ, the Chief Shepherd shall appear there will be a crown of glory.

### 3. What is Peter asking the young men and the rest of the assembly to do in 1 Peter 5:5?

#### **THE CHURCH MUST LINE UP UNDER**

- a. "Likewise" — 1 Peter 5:5a. Don't miss the meaning of this word. Likewise, refers to what was commanded of the elders. In other words, just as the elders were exhorted to fall in line with the chief Shepherd and submit to His leadership. So must the younger fall in line according to rank. I am not sure why the younger are singled out. Perhaps their youthfulness caused some to run ahead of the leadership. Whatever it was, it was causing problems within the community.
  - b. The terms, "submit" and "subject" are the same Greek word *ὑποτάγητε (hupotasso)*, meaning, everyone in the church should "be subject one to another" or "to line up under."
  - c. **First**, God's provision for His people entails us yielding to Him. He is the Creator of all things. He provides all the power we need. He provides the light and guidance when in battle, and in the midst of the fog of war. **Second**, part of God's plan is leadership. He blesses the organized effort of the leadership to move the assembly forward so the church will walk according to His plan. God does not ordain chaos nor does He bless the idea of everyone being out for themselves. **Third**, for God's plan to work smoothly, it requires everyone falling into line. As the word, submit *hupotasso* implies, the church must "line up under" as God has instructed.
4. What five items are mentioned in 1 Peter 5:6-9a. Discuss what these terms mean and what they will look like when we practice them.

#### **WE MUST REMEMBER OUR TRAINING**

- a. We must be clothed in humility, with each other and under the hand of God. See Psalm 25:9; Daniel 10:12; Micah 6:8; Matthew 5:3-5; Ephesians 4:1-2; James 4:10. Humility is inseparably linked to submission, because the truly humble and only the humble submit. The term clothe literally means "to tie something on oneself," such as an apron worn by servants. Here it figuratively describes how one should cover themselves with humility.

Furthermore, the term humility is *tapeinophrosunen*, or "lowliness of mind," or "self-abasement." It describes the attitude of one who willingly serves, even in the lowliest of tasks. (see John 13:3-17)

- God is opposed to the proud - Proverbs 3:34, 6:16-17a; 8:13; James 4:6
- God gives grace to the humble - Job 22:29; Ps. 37:11; Prov. 22:4; 29:23; Matt. 11:29; Luke 10:21; 18:13-14; 1 Cor. 1:28-29; 2 Cor. 4:7-18

- b. We must trust God. We do this by casting all our cares upon Him; for He cares for us.

As believers endure humbly and submissively, they find their strength in the midst of trials, by means of confident trust in God's perfect purpose. Casting, means to throw something on someone else. It is used in Luke 19:35 of throwing a blanket over an animal. We are to cast or to throw all our anxieties, discontentments, discouragements, despair, questions, pain, sufferings, and whatever else we encounter upon the Lord.

- c. We must be self-controlled – sober.

To be sober refers to our self-control in relation to intoxication. Here, as in other New Testament usages, it has a metaphorical connotation. It includes ordering and balancing life's important issues, which requires the discipline of our mind and body in order to avoid the intoxicating allurements of the world.

- d. We must be vigilant.

The reason we must cultivate the above attitudes of submission, humility, trust and self-control is that we face a fierce and relentless adversary — Satan and his demons. If we are not vigilant we will become victims of the enemy.

- e. We must resist Satan and his temptation.

1) By being clothed in God's Armor - Eph 6:10-17.

2) By submitting to God - James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:9.

James 4:7 — "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

1Pet. 5:9 — "Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world."

3) By giving no place for him (Satan). — Eph. 4:27 — "Neither give place to the devil."

## 5. What are some of the works of Satan?

- a. He deceives when he appears as false ministers of righteousness.

"And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. <sup>15</sup> Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works" — 2 Corinthians 11:14-15

- b. He has his own doctrines.

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and **doctrines of devils**" — 1 Timothy 4:1

His own doctrines may not appear to be evil. All they need to be is a slight twist of the truth. Eve was deceived by Satan simply because she added to the Word of God.

"Ye shall not eat of it (the fruit of the tree of good and evil), **neither shall ye touch it**, lest ye die" — Genesis 3:3.

How many of us have been deceived by Satan because we did not know God's Word accurately. The deviation may seem so small. In fact, it may seem good. **Don't eat the fruit** was the command. Therefore, we foolishly add to the command what we think will be a good precaution. **Don't touch the fruit**. Yet, if you were to believe the latter part and accidentally touch the fruit and not die, it may look like God was lying. It gives room for Satan to say, "Surely you will not die, but you will be as gods, knowing good and evil."

- c. Here are some of the things Satan sows.

1) Lies that sear the conscience — 1 Timothy 4:2.

“Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron”

His emissaries may assure us that its ok, it feels good, it will make you happy, it will take away the pain. Certainly, God does not care because you have suffered so much. Certainly, God’s people don’t care. The lies of Satan have started whole movements. If we are not moored in the Word of God. If we fail to examine the Word and seek God in prayer, we are in danger of being stifled.

2) False Worship and Rituals — 1 Timothy 4:3

Forbidding to marry. That is, sacrifice your life by not marrying, and God will bless you. Yet men have been tormented with desires because of this false idea. Furthermore, the godly fail to reproduce and claim the land. False ideas about sexuality are established. It opens the doors of temptation and for perverse activity and bondage.

Satan deceives with false appearances, false doctrines, and false rituals.

3) Satan Sows Tares in Our Midst - Matthew 13:24-20, 36-43.

Tares are weeds sometimes called darnel. They look exactly like wheat in the early stages of growth. In fact, only an expert can tell the difference. Only in the later stages of growth can the differences be seen. At that point you cannot pull them out unless you damage the wheat crop. If the seed of the tare is mixed with the wheat seed it will poison the flour because of the particular fungus which develops in the seed. Satan sows tares in the church. They claim Christ as their Savior, they do good, they come and worship. It is almost impossible to tell them apart. Yet there maybe signs. An unclear testimony. No victory over sin habits. Strange doctrinal views. When these souls populate the church they can sow discord, lies, they prey on others for their gain, and they fail to act in faith.

4) He hinders the saints.

1 Thess. 2:18 “Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us.”

He hinders us through unsaved men.

“In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.”

It may be family members, it may come from friends, it may be co-workers, but they can hinder our walk. He can also hinder us directly through illness — Job 2:7.

“So went Satan forth from the presence of the LORD, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown.”

By physical affliction - 2 Cor. 12:7.

“And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.”

He hinders us by whispering lies. He accuses the saints - Job 1:7-12. 2:2-3; Zech. 3:1-4; Rev. 12:9-10. He tells us that we are no good. He uses discouragement to cripple us. More saints have fallen and quit because of discouragement. Some never found rest — wallowing in guilt.

Some fill their heads with lies and incorrectly perceive their situation and become discouraged. Some allow the root of bitterness to take hold.

5) He can prompt us to sin.

- a. He prompted David to sin.

1 Chr. 21:1 And **Satan stood** up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel.

- b. Satan influenced Peter to rebuke the Lord - Matthew 16:22-23.

“Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. <sup>23</sup> But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.”

- c. We are in a warfare. If we are not suited up and armed we will not be able to stand.

6) Victory is simple.

- a. Christ is our strength - John 15:5-6.

“I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. 6 If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.”

- b. When in the wilderness, Christ overcame Satan’s temptations. He also gained victory over the demonic realms through-out His public ministry and Christ defeated Satan at the cross - John 16:11 - “Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.”

Heb. 2:14 Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the **devil**;

8) We must resist Satan.

- a. We do this by being clothed in God’s Armor — Ephesians 6:10-17. By submitting to God — James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:9

James 4:7 — Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

1Peter 5:9 — Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.

- b. By giving no place to him.

Ephesians 4:27 - Neither give place to the devil

## 6. WE MUST HONOR AND WORSHIP CHRIST – 1 Peter 5:9b-11

